MLA Updates 2025 report
pages 3-5

# FEEDBACK

MLA – FOSTERING PROSPERITY

SUMMER 2025



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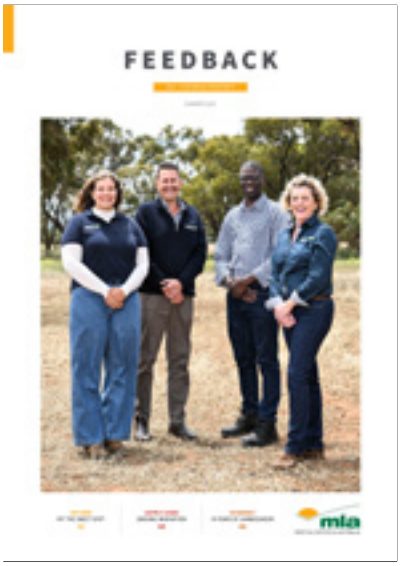
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA




**Cover:** Thomas Foods International (TFI) staff (left to right) Kassidy Coulthard, James Sage, Moses Mpandamabula and Kelly Nankivell proudly represented the company in Adelaide at the MSA Awards, where TFI was honoured with not only the Most Outstanding MSA Feedlot but, for the first time, the Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot Band 1 awards for their Southern Cross Feedlot and farm in South Australia. This recognition comes during the fifth MSA award series, with TFI having secured wins in four out of five award periods – a testament to their consistent excellence. Learn more on page 8. Image: Brenton Edwards

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## Have your say!

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MLA acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

MLA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work and care for. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, as we recognise their history, culture, connection to land and water, and share in their commitment to caring for Country.



# A note from the MD

## Welcome to the summer edition of *Feedback* magazine.

It was great to catch up with so many MLA members and industry stakeholders at MLA Updates in Adelaide in November – check out the highlights on page 3.

As well as showcasing MLA's research, marketing and adoption, the event was an opportunity to reflect on a remarkable year for the Australian red meat industry.

### Market dynamics

Demand for Australian red meat remained strong across domestic and international markets, despite shifting tariffs that dominated the operating environment. In April 2025, we saw the US impose tariffs on 187 countries including Australia. This had significant flow-on effects to many of our trading partners. Many countries took retaliatory measures or undertook bilateral negotiations with the US.

For Australia, the value of our partnerships, the way we do business and our long-term commitment to global trade underpinned the demand for our red meat products around the world. We recognise that the trade environment can change very quickly and we will not be complacent in pursuing further improvements in trade.

The US remains our largest export customer for beef, lamb and goatmeat, with 2025 volumes of red meat exports surpassing the record set in 2024. This is despite there being a 10% tariff on beef, lamb and goatmeat imports into the US from Australia (the beef tariffs have now been removed from mid-November 2025).

Our established markets in the US, Japan, China and Korea continue to underpin export demand, with strong growth in South-East Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and the UK highlight the breadth of opportunity ahead with a favourable demand outlook for beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat. Our domestic market remains our largest and most valuable market.

Live export demand remains strong across cattle and sheep markets. In FY25, Australia exported 780,919 head of cattle, with Indonesia maintaining its position as our number one market, representing 72% of total cattle exports.

Live sheep export demand remains solid into the Middle East however the trade faced challenges due to vessel availability. Competition from nearby markets has increased, yet Australian livestock continue to be preferred.

Closer to home, despite highly variable climatic conditions across the country, favourable price signals supported Australian producers throughout 2025. Check out the top 10 factors influencing prices and markets on page 10.

### Driving innovation, creating demand and capturing value

MLA will continue to ensure Australian red meat remains part of consumers' everyday repertoire. Driving productivity on farm, reducing cost of production and capturing value are essential to underpinning long term sustainability and profitability.

Turn to page 7 to see highlights from our investments in FY25 or visit **annualreport.mla.com.au** to read MLA's *Annual report 2024–25*.

In the release of our *Strategic Plan 2030* in July 2025, we remained aligned with the red meat industry's strategic plan, *Red Meat 2030*, and the Australian Government's research priorities.

The big-ticket items that will shape our investments for the next five years include:

- contributing to Australia's net zero ambitions
- delivering value-based marketing (VBM) – read about VBM in action on page 41
- multibreed genetic evaluation – see page 26 for an example of multibreed research
- driving demand through marketing, market access and social capital
- investing in our people.

In addition to delivering an ambitious and practical strategic plan, our investments aim to deliver significant benefits to our levy payers and the supply chain.

Learn more about MLA's *Strategic Plan 2030* at **mla.com.au/strategic-plan-2030**

Read more about MLA's investments in our *Annual investment plan 2025-26* at **mla.com.au/aip**

**Michael Crowley – MLA Managing Director**
I am always keen to hear MLA members' thoughts and feedback – please email me at **managing.director@mla.com.au**

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# Tariff updates

In November, the US announced tariffs on Australian beef have been removed. MLA's Managing Director Michael Crowley welcomed the news.

"The US is a valuable and long-term trading partner. MLA has an on-the-ground presence in the US and we look forward to the ongoing partnership in trade," Michael said.

At the time of printing, Australia has exported 370,357 tonnes of beef to the US so far for 2025 – 17% more than the first 10 months of 2024.

To learn more about the tariffs, visit **mla.com.au/us-tariffs**

# Adoption outcomes

MLA delivered an estimated $81.6 million in net annual benefits to producers involved in adoption activities during 2024–25.

Read the latest *Producer Adoption Outcomes Report* at **mla.com.au/adoption-report**

# Beef is back and greater than ever

Australia's most iconic beef campaign, The Greatest, has returned.

Aussie beef continues to reign supreme in the campaign's 'The kitchen' and 'The ship' commercials. These have been recognised as the most persuasive beef advertisements of the past decade, as validated by independent Kantar tracking, for their strong brand recognition, clear messaging and increased purchasing intent – with viewers more likely to choose beef following exposure to the campaign.

By leveraging the proven effectiveness of existing assets – and saving production costs in subsequent years – MLA is optimising investment in this campaign.

The campaign will be amplified through strategic broadcast media partnerships with two of the world's most watched sporting events:

**The Ashes (Channel 7)**
Aussie Beef will feature prominently throughout live telecasts during the Ashes Test matches between Australia and England, reaching an estimated audience of more than 13.5 million Aussies.

**FIFA World Cup (SBS)**
Aussie Beef will feature during SBS's broadcast of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in June–July 2026. The ads will be aired in at least two Socceroos matches and the World Cup Final, reaching millions of highly engaged viewers.

The campaign will also feature on broadcast television, online video and social media, large-format outdoor advertising and retail activations in supermarkets and butcher shops – driving more Australians to choose beef.

For more information and to view the ads, visit **australianbeef.com.au/campaigns/aussie-beef-the-greatest**

# Six resources for summer

Summer can present challenging seasonal conditions – and these can look very different across the country. Did you know MLA has a range of resource hubs, with information relevant to land, livestock and people? Please share these with your on-farm team, neighbours and friends.

- Bushfire preparation hub: **mla.com.au/bushfire**
- Drought management: **mla.com.au/drought-management**
- Flood information: **mla.com.au/flood-information**
- Wellbeing resources: **mla.com.au/mental-health**
- Containment feeding information: **mla.com.au/containment-feeding**
- Transport resources: **mla.com.au/transport-hub**

# Stay up-to-date on EUDR

The European Union Commission has released a new proposal for the implementation of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

Under the new proposal, the compliance date of 30 December 2025 remains unchanged, however a six-month transition period is proposed to operate until 30 June 2026 in relation to compliance checks.

To learn what this means for Australian producers and to stay informed of any updates, click or scan the QR code or visit **integritysystems.com.au/eudr**


# Innovation and resilience take centre stage at MLA UPDATES

**More than 470 stakeholders gathered at the Adelaide Convention Centre on 20 November for MLA's flagship event, MLA Updates.**

Under the theme Towards 2030: Driving prosperity through productivity, profitability and sustainability, the event delivered a dynamic day of insights, innovation and industry connection.

Emceed by ABC Landline's Pip Courtney, the day featured panel discussions with a broad range of industry leaders, practical demonstrations and insights into the future of the red meat industry.

## From Broken Hill to the English Channel

Keynote speaker, sheep station manager Brendan Cullen, captivated the audience with his deeply personal story of overcoming drought, isolation and mental health challenges.

His presentation traced the emotional and physical toll of managing a remote property during prolonged dry seasons, and the quiet battles that often go unseen in rural communities.

Brendan's journey from swimming laps in his dam to conquering the English Channel became a powerful metaphor for endurance, discipline and hope.

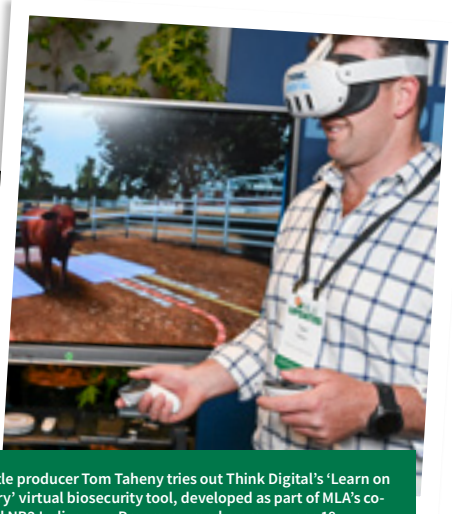
His commitment to mental health advocacy is grounded in lived experience, and his role as a Lifeline Ambassador and Royal Flying Doctor Service Champion reflects a deep desire to give back to the communities who supported him.

Brendan's presentation was a reminder to MLA Update participants that resilience isn't just about surviving tough times – it's about finding purpose, staying connected, and creating space for others to thrive.

SA producer Robert Seymour shares his love for *Feedback* magazine in an interview with MLA Communications Specialist Josephine McKellar.

Resilience, the importance of seeking help and the power of physical health were important messages in keynote speaker Bredan Cullen's presentation to MLA Updates attendees.

MLA's welcome drinks gave industry participants a chance to catch-up and check out the MLA Updates hubs.



Cattle producer Tom Taheny tries out Think Digital's 'Learn on Country' virtual biosecurity tool, developed as part of MLA's co-funded NB2 Indigenous Program – read more on page 18.

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MLA Schools and Education Manager Susan Howe (third from left) with local secondary school teachers at MLA Updates.

## Schools join MLA Updates 2025

A new initiative driving industry-to-school engagement was hosted alongside MLA Updates in Adelaide.

Secondary school teachers attended a two-day professional development experience where they gained valuable real-world industry insights, coupled with an exploration of MLA school resources and effective strategies supporting enhanced classroom delivery.

The Gourmet Goat Lady, Jo Stewart (right), was on hand to showcase why goatmeat is one of the world's most enjoyed and healthiest proteins.

## Research in action at Roseworthy

Attendees at this year's MLA Updates were invited to tour Adelaide University's Roseworthy campus ahead of the main event.

The field trip offered a behind-the-scenes look at cutting-edge livestock infrastructure, research and innovation – including methane measurement in cattle, chronic pain assessment, drought resilience trials and alternative shearing technologies.

The visit provided a hands-on experience with several MLA-Adelaide University collaborations and levy-funded projects – showcasing how research is being translated into practical solutions for producers.

The day concluded with welcome drinks hosted by MLA, followed by Livestock SA's AGM and industry dinner – giving attendees the chance to connect and reflect in a more informal setting.

Cattle producer John Humphrey gained insights from Adelaide University's team on recent research outcomes.

During the Adelaide University's Roseworthy campus tour, attendees saw MLA-Adelaide University collaborations and levy-funded projects in action.

## Showcase highlights

The MLA Updates Showcase brought together a vibrant mix of research, technology and product innovation, offering attendees a look at the future of red meat production.

From virtual fencing and feedbase monitoring to sustainability metrics and integrity systems, the displays reflected MLA's commitment to driving productivity and value across the supply chain.

A standout feature was The Gourmet Goat Lady, who drew crowds with her new goat salami – a premium smallgoods product developed with MLA support to meet growing consumer demand.

The salami, made from 100% farmed goatmeat, is the first of its kind to receive NSW Food Authority approval for safe production and is already generating interest from specialty retailers.

Also featured was MLA-supported Highlands Natural bovine product innovations, which transform secondary products into high-value bone broth and supplements for health and wellness markets.

This 'waste to wealth' initiative is helping producers unlock new revenue streams while reducing environmental impact.

Jake Campbell from Highlands Natural (right) shared his nutritious ready-made beef bone broth – developed from his own recipe – with attendees.

# Other key highlights from MLA research included:

MLA Sheep Genetics Manager Peta Bradley chats with sheep producer Scott Young.

**Genetics hub:** showcased multibreed evaluation tools and methane-reducing breeding strategies, with interactive sheep and cow models and a portable accumulation chamber used to measure emissions.

SARDI's Casey Gove explains how sterile-insect technology could offer producers a safer, chemical-free way to manage blowfly populations and improve flock health.

**On-farm productivity hub:** featured projected such as the Australian Pasture Genebank, sterile insect techniques and precision sheep management. Interactive displays included shedding sheep body condition scoring tools, eID tagging demonstrations for goats, and a virtual tour with the Indigenous NB2 group.

MLA's Dave Beatty, Group Manager - Productivity and Animal Wellbeing and Andrew Cox, International Markets General Manager, ready to take enquiries about how MLA works across more than 100 countries to grow global demand, protect market access and showcase the quality of Australian red meat.

**Marketing and market insights hub:** shared insights into domestic and international consumer trends, current advertising campaigns and market snapshots.


ISC's Digital Product Manager/UX Lead Jon Asimus shows a producer how eNVDs are the fast, easy way to complete livestock consignments.

**Integrity systems hub:** provided hands-on support with National Livestock Identification System, Livestock Production Assurance and eNVD systems, including previews of the upcoming NLIS 2.0 platform.

MEQ staff demonstrated how new research and development was enabling improved carcase feedback for producers.

**Objective measurement hub:** displayed cutting-edge grading technologies including MEQ cameras, microwave sensors and hook tracking systems, which support value-based marketing and Meat Standards Australia.

Carolyn Lewis chats sustainability and productivity with the attending Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) team.

**Peak industry body and Research Advisory Council hub:** provided pathways for producers to engage with MLA's R&D investment process and connect with industry bodies shaping the sector's future.

# MLA AGM results

**The MLA Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Adelaide, SA, on 20 November, as part of MLA Updates (see more page 3).**

MLA members voted on a series of resolutions, including the election of directors and proposed constitutional amendments. The results are as follows:

### Election of directors

- John Lloyd was elected as a director with 90.26% of votes in favour and 9.74% against.
- Tess Herbert was elected as a director with 88.59% of votes in favour and 11.41% against.
- Jack Holden was elected as a director with 89.91% of votes in favour and 10.09% against.

### Special resolutions – amendment to constitution:

- The special resolution to amend MLA's constitution was carried, with 99.34% in favour and 0.66% against. This special resolution was proposed by the MLA Board to update the constitution to ensure it remained aligned to the new levy legislation which came into effect on 1 January 2025.
- The member resolution to amend the constitution was not carried, receiving 54.07% in favour and 45.93% against. This resolution, proposed by Cattle Australia, was that article 5.4(e) of the Company's constitution is amended to read: *The Selection Committee may endorse more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled at an annual general meeting.*

Both special resolutions to amend the constitution required a 75% majority to be carried.

MLA Chair John Lloyd expressed his appreciation to members and levy payers for their engagement in the AGM.

"I want to sincerely thank our members and levy payers for their continued support and participation," John said.

"Your involvement is critical to ensuring MLA remains accountable and aligned with industry priorities. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient red meat industry that delivers value for producers and prosperity for rural and regional communities."

**mla.com.au/board**

» From left to right: Jack Holden, John Lloyd and Tess Herbert were all re-elected as MLA directors at the AGM.

# Beef, sheep celebrate sustainability

**The Australian Beef Sustainability Framework (ABSF) and Sheep Sustainability Framework (SSF) recently released their 2025 annual reports. These track performance of the industry across a range of metrics including natural resources, people and community, and animal health and welfare. Highlights include:**

### ABSF:

- Since 2005, the Australian beef industry had reduced net $CO_2$-e emissions by 70.1% in 2023, largely driven by carbon sequestration in the landscape on grazing land.
- Beef production reached an all-time high of 2.75 million tonnes, achieved with improved efficiency and reduced waste.
- Solid waste to landfill in the processing sector fell by 71.6% between 2022 and 2024, and 98% of cattle were processed through an establishment accredited under the Australian Livestock Processing Industry Animal Welfare Certification System (AAWCS).
- The beef industry alleviated $109 million in non-tariff barriers, while exports to the US surged by more than 30%.

### SSF:

- The proportion of sheep producers using appropriate pain management for key husbandry procedures continues to grow, improving animal welfare outcomes.
- More lambs and sheep are being processed through establishments accredited by the Australian Animal Welfare Certification System (AAWCS), strengthening supply chain trust.
- Greenhouse gas emission intensity in sheepmeat processing declined by 15% and water use per tonne by 7% in the past two years, reflecting improved resource efficiency.
- New SSF metrics now track lamb survival, conservation practices, and community connectedness, broadening transparency and accountability.

**To check out the current state of sustainability in the beef and sheep industries, scan or click the QR codes:**

*ABSF 2025 Annual Report:*

*SSF 2025 Annual Report:*

# Highlights from 2024–25

Here are some highlights from major projects MLA led, managed or contributed to in 2024–25. Read the full *Annual Report 2024–25* at **annualreport.mla.com.au**

**Australian red meat exports reached a record high of**
**$22.1 billion**

**MLA producer adoption programs delivered**
**$81.6 million**
annual net benefits

**Meat Standards Australia beef program delivered an estimated**
**$409 million**
in additional farm gate returns

**4.1 million**
**users accessed online market information tools and reports**

**Enteric methane ($CH_4$) emissions**
from Australian feedlot cattle found to be
**56% lower**
than previously estimated over the past five years, as a result of MLA research

**Record** Australian goatmeat production –
**47% year on year increase**
**54,017 tonnes carcase weight**

**60k downloads of eNVD app**

**Aussie Beef and Lamb logos found in >39,000**
global retail and foodservice businesses

**Award-winning Summer Lamb campaign**
*'The comments section'* most viewed lamb ad by Australians ever:
**21.4 million views**

**37%** **19 million animals moved**
**of consignments:**
with electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD)

**1.1 million**
**visits to mla.com.au**

**Australian Good Meat socials**
**Audience:** 100 million
**Video views:** 53 million
**Engagements:** 52 million

# Putting the excellence into MSA

**MLA announced the 2025 Meat Standards Australia (MSA) Excellence in Eating Quality Awards at a gala event in Adelaide in November.**

The event, on the eve of MLA Updates (read more page 3) brought together leading producers, lot feeders, processors and industry stakeholders to celebrate outstanding achievements in delivering premium eating quality beef to Australian consumers and global markets.

Program Manager for MSA, David Packer, said the awards highlighted the dedication and innovation of producers who strive for excellence in eating quality.

"These winners represent the best of the best in our industry, achieving consistently high MSA Index scores and compliance which highlights their deep understanding of genetics, nutrition and animal welfare," David said.

"It's not just about meeting standards – it's about exceeding them to deliver an exceptional eating experience every time."

## Backed by quality

MSA is a world-leading eating quality program developed by MLA. Underpinned by extensive consumer sensory testing, MSA predicts eating quality for cut across the carcase based on factors such as pH, ossification and marbling.

This empowers producers to improve on-farm practices and ensures consumers enjoy consistently tender, juicy and flavoursome beef.

The MSA Eating Quality Awards recognise producers who consistently achieve exceptional results under the MSA grading system, based on the MSA Index (a feedback benchmark tool that reflects the predicted eating quality of an entire beef carcase) and compliance to MSA minimum specifications.

MSA Program Manager David Packer with Queensland Award winners Chris and Susan Shaw from Canning Downs South Feedlot (Most Outstanding MSA Feedlot) and Maree and Glen Gray (Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot Band 2).

Ian Dickson and Renee Bergamin from Alloa Pastoral took home the Most Outstanding MSA Feedlot Award for Victoria.

Moses Mpandamabula, Kelly Nankivell, Kassidy Coulthard and James Sage from Thomas Foods International accepted the SA/NT grainfed and larger non-grainfed producer awards on behalf of the company's Southern Cross Feedlot and farm.

Lynn and Greg Walsh were the Victorian smaller non-grainfed producer award winners (Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot Band 2).

NSW award winners Barry Trethowan (Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot Band 2), Stacy Smartt from Bunnaloo Pastoral Company (Most Outstanding MSA Feedlot) and Etienne and Roger Wilkinson from Ardsley Pastoral (Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot Band 1).

## MSA smashes records

The MSA program set a new benchmark in FY25, with a record 4.13 million head of cattle presented for MSA grading.

The program delivered more than ever back to the farm gate, with an estimated $409 million in additional returns for MSA-compliant carcases.

The best eating quality result was also achieved since the MSA Index was introduced, with a record MSA Index of 58.81.

The number of brands underpinned by MSA continues to grow, with 197 beef and 22 sheep brands now MSA licensed.

In FY25, two sheepmeat supply chains partnered with MLA to begin the process of enabling the MSA sheepmeat cuts-based grading manual.

To learn more about MSA and read the *MSA Annual Outcomes Report 2024–25* visit **mla.com.au/msa**

# 2025 MSA Eating Quality Awards

**Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot (Band 1)**
for non-feedlot producers with annual consignments of 500 head or more.

**Most Outstanding MSA Non-Feedlot (Band 2)**
for non-feedlot producers with annual consignments between 100–500 head.

**Most Outstanding MSA Feedlot**
for feedlot operators delivering superior eating quality outcomes across their consigned cattle.

## Winners

- BL & SJ Nairn
- Mirreanda Pty Ltd
- Stone Axe Pastoral Company
- Thomas Foods International
- Bralyn Nominees Pty Ltd
- Thomas Foods International Southern Cross Feedlot
- Hughes & Sons Pty Ltd
- G & M Gray Family Trust
- Canning Downs South Trust Pty Ltd
- Ardsley Pastoral
- Barry Trethowan
- Bunnaloo Pastoral Co
- Woorabinda Farms
- GR Walsh
- Alloa Pastoral
- Ross & Mary Mace – Lawrenny Estate
- PN & DA Bonney

mla.com.au/msa David Packer **dpacker@mla.com.au**

# The stock/take

**with Stephen Bignell, Manager – Market Information**

MLA's Market Information team unpacks trends and data, to help inform your business.

## Each year, MLA's Market Information team releases a highly anticipated report detailing the top 10 factors influencing livestock supply, production and pricing over the past year.

The latest edition has just been published, offering valuable insights into the leading drivers for 2025.

### The US protein deficit

The US beef herd has reached its lowest level since 1952, primarily due to consecutive droughts. This reduction has led to a significant decline in beef production, with the US Department of Agriculture reporting a shortage of nearly 1.4 million tonnes. As a result, cattle and beef prices have increased domestically, prompting the US to seek additional imports. These dynamics have had global repercussions, elevating retail and livestock prices worldwide, including for lamb.

### Enhanced beef production efficiency in Australia

Australia is projected to achieve record beef production in 2025, reaching 2,792,000 tonnes. Notably, this milestone will be accomplished with 9.02 million head of cattle slaughtered, which is 300,000 fewer than in 2014 – the previous record year. This improvement reflects a 10% increase in beef yield per animal, underscoring the industry's ongoing efficiency gains.

### Record lamb prices

Lamb and mutton prices have reached unprecedented levels in 2025, with heavy lamb prices peaking at 1,245c/kg carcase weight (cwt) in August. While high prices were driven by perceptions of limited supply, actual lamb production is expected to be 610,000 tonnes – a 3% decrease from 2024, but still 1.8% higher than in 2023, when oversupply was a concern.

### Continued growth in goat production

Goat production has maintained its upward trajectory, with weekly slaughter rates consistently exceeding 70,000 head. The 2024 record of 3,393,000 head is on track to be surpassed.

### Expansion of the feedlot sector

The number of cattle as well as the capacity of Australia's feedlot sector have continued to rise. As of 30 June 2025, there were 1,579,000 cattle on feed – a new record. Feedlot capacity also reached an all-time high of 1,706,272 head, with utilisation at 93%, indicating near-full occupancy. This growth reflects sustained investment and robust demand for grainfed beef. However, it also suggests limited capacity to absorb a significant drought-induced increase in cattle turn-off.

### International trade uncertainty

The global trade environment in 2025 was marked by volatility and change. New tariffs in the US, expanded market access for South American producers, and evolving trade flows with China and North Asia have all contributed to a dynamic landscape. Despite these challenges, Australia has capitalised on strong beef, lamb and goat production, maintaining relatively high prices and record exports.

### Resilience in live cattle exports

Live cattle exports have rebounded to nearly 800,000 head, approaching 2022 levels. This recovery has been supported by strong northern cattle numbers following favourable wet seasons, with continued demand from Indonesia and emerging interest from Middle Eastern and North African markets.

### Evolution of sheep production

Australian sheep production continues to evolve, with a shift toward meat breeds driven by robust lamb prices and weaker wool prices. The national flock is now younger and more productive, reflecting genetic and management improvements made during the 2020–23 rebuild. Lamb feedlotting, though still developing, is expanding as producers seek to maximise stocking rates and manage seasonal challenges and worm burdens.

### Rise of premium lamb

The premium segment of the lamb market has grown significantly in 2025, highlighted by the launch of KS7 lamb (see page 41) and the national roll out of lamb Meat Standards Australia (MSA). Value-based marketing is expected to further enhance returns from premium lamb products.

### Weather variability and market impact

Weather conditions in 2025 continued to influence market dynamics. The north remains wet and in a rebuilding phase, while the south is experiencing destocking due to drought. Despite good conditions the wet season of 2024–25 was delayed – which impacted sentiment going into the start of the year. Then, through to April, Queensland received a cyclone and flooding events. The disparate weather cycles in northern and southern Australia have affected pricing and buying trends. Southern processors have been active in northern markets, and while restocker prices remain high in Queensland, they are subdued in the south. The outlook for this summer is average, but weather developments in 2026 will be closely watched. ■



MLA market reports: **mla.com.au/prices-markets** MLA trends analysis: **mla.com.au/trends-analysis**
Insights team **insights@mla.com.au**

# ON FARM

RESEARCH IN ACTION

# Seasonal action plan

» Turn to page 28 to learn how the Hughes family have transformed their Western Downs property through regenerative grazing, using rest, ground cover and soil hydration to build resilience and productivity.

## Northern

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**Find out how virtual reality is delivering real-world wins**

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**Shut the (sliding) gate on unsafe loading ramps**

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**Learn how data can drive reproductive gains**

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**Tap into the benefits of saltbush**

# Hitting the carrying capacity sweet spot for more profit

**Across the vast rangelands of northern Australia, a team of researchers have dived into a previously untapped gold mine of data to find the level of pasture utilisation required for optimal breeder performance in beef cattle.**

According to project lead Robyn Cowley, a Senior Rangelands Scientist with the NT Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the 'Sweet spot' project looked at breeding herd production data from more than 60 sites across Queensland and the NT dating back to the 1990s.

"Kicking things off in 2018, we knew from previous research that as pasture utilisation increased, breeder performance declined," Robyn said.

"The dataset available was great for looking at the short-term impacts of available diet on the production cycle.

"However, we wanted more insight into how much utilisation, and therefore stocking rates, influenced breeder performance decline, and more importantly, whether we could optimise pasture utilisation to improve land condition and breeder performance."

## Putting the data to the test

To better understand how pasture utilisation affects breeder performance over a long-term period and across diverse landscapes, the research team didn't just rely on historical data – they put it to work through a simulation process.

Researchers used the Crop Livestock Enterprise Model (CLEM) developed by CSIRO to run long-term simulations across representative stations in the Barkly and Burdekin districts that varied in annual rainfall, land types and soil conditions.

These models tracked thousands of individual animals monthly over four decades, factoring in climate variability, pasture growth and land condition.

"The beauty of CLEM is that it doesn't just model pasture, it models the whole system," Robyn said.

"It looks at how pasture quality affects intake, how that influences body condition, and ultimately how that then flows through to pregnancy rates, calf survival and weaning weights.

"It follows how different stocking rates handled drier years, including forced destocking when they ran out of feed, the feedback of pasture utilisation on land condition and pasture growth, the costs and ultimately the profitability of different pasture utilisations over multiple decades."

Robyn said the modelling reinforced what the data had already shown – that as pasture utilisation increases beyond safe thresholds, breeder performance declines.

"However, it also provided insights into how high utilisation influences pasture growth and land condition decline.

"As a result, the modelling determined that when utilisation is kept within the sweet spot of around 20%, the system remained productive and resilient – even through dry years," Robyn said.

Senior Rangelands Scientist, Robyn Cowley, presenting the 'Sweet spot' project results at a MLA BeefUp forum at Kidman Springs, NT.

## Regional variation

While the sweet spot held true across northern Australia, Robyn noted that ideal utilisation rates varied depending on land type and soil fertility.

"In the Barkly region, we saw Mitchell grass and cracking clay soils sustain up to 22% utilisation," she said.

The sandy soils with low fertility around Katherine were most productive, at around 10–15% utilisation.

"It's not necessarily one-size-fits-all – which is why it can also be incredibly valuable for producers to understand their land's inherent productivity," Robyn said.

A bird's-eye view of Newry Station's vast 246,700ha landscape.

# Fine-tuning stocking boosts productivity

**Mike and Kellie Bailey's management of 'Newry Station' in the NT's Victoria River region is proof that less is sometimes more – at least when it comes to stocking rate.**

Over a five-year journey to identify the station's sweet spot, Mike has landed on a 20% reduction of stocking numbers as the key to increased productivity and profitability.

Results are impressive, with an increase in weaning rates from 54–59% to approximately 80%. This has delivered 1,000 more weaners annually, despite running 2,500 fewer breeders.

## A shift in strategy

As station manager, Mike's focus has been on improving sustainability and grazing productivity in the face of environmental and operational changes.

From 2018–2022, the Victoria River district experienced a run of below-average rainfall which put pressure on pasture availability and herd performance.

"We began seeing high mortality across all classes of cattle," Mike said.

"We had entered a really tough period, and we knew we would have to make some changes if we wanted to see things improve."

In 2020, the station changed ownership, and with that came a fresh perspective.

"The new owners were open to and interested in finding new solutions to reduce mortality and boost productivity – giving us the final push we needed to take action," Mike said.

Around the same time, Newry Station became involved in the StationSmart project, led by Christie Pearson from the NT Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and funded by the Northern Hub.

The project, which ran from 2019–2021, focused on calf mortality and stocking rate management.

"Christie's work on calf mortality was a big influence," Mike said.

*continued next page*

## SNAPSHOT

**MIKE AND KELLIE BAILEY (MANAGERS), 'NEWRY STATION' –**
Newry, NT

**AREA**
246,700ha

**ENTERPRISE**
17,500 Brahman cattle

**PASTURES**
Variable native pastures

**SOILS**
Black soil flats, sand and basalt hills

**RAINFALL**
800mm

## Practical tools

According to Robyn, this is where tools like AussieGRASS, FORAGE, EDGE courses, and local land condition guidelines can come in handy.

"Producers don't need to overhaul their entire operation overnight," she said.

"Start by checking how your breeder herd performance stacks up against regional benchmarks.

"If it's lower than what's achievable, ask yourself if your stocking rates within the watered area (<4km) are higher than recommended, and take action.

"Some have started by simply reducing herd numbers and others have expanded watered areas to spread grazing pressure.

"In both cases performance has improved – you don't need to be an expert or have all the tools straight away to start making change."

## Long-term gains

Beyond the immediate productivity gains, Robyn said some stations have reported land condition recovery that led to increased pasture growth and carrying capacity.

"One of the sites – the Old Man Plains Research Station (run by the NT Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) south of Alice Springs – now gets twice as much grass per millimetre of rainfall compared to when it was degraded.

"This tells us that the investment delivers short-term production gains and builds long-term resilience – not just for the landscape, but for the business."

» *Read the next story to learn how a northern beef cattle producer, Mike Bailey, has improved his herd productivity and profitability by reducing stock numbers, increasing water supply and strategically supplementing phosphorus.*

## TOOLBOX

BeefUp forums:
**mla.com.au/beefup**

Scan or click the QR code to learn more about the 'Sweet spot' project:

Robyn Cowley
**robyn.cowley@nt.gov.au**
Tony Parker
**tparker@mla.com.au**

*continued from previous page*

**Mike looks forward to further refining his grazing management by making use of available tools and calculators – saving time and costs to hit the ideal stocking rate sweet spot.**

"Right after her trial wrapped up, we started implementing changes – using her research to guide our decisions."

### Less stock reduces grazing pressure

The first and most significant shift at Newry Station was a reduction in the breeder herd from 12,000 to 9,500 head over an 18-month period.

"We had more cattle than our land could supply during those drier years, so taking grazing pressure off the land was a key focus," Mike said.

"We also worked to improve the reliability of existing water points and invested in the development of new ones.

"That gave us more flexibility in dry times and helped spread grazing pressure more evenly across the property – it even opened up areas that hadn't been grazed much before."

### Targeted supplementation

Despite phosphorus (P) supplementation long being a cornerstone of the station's productivity gains, Mike decided to better tailor it during the wet season. Taking part in the MLA-funded 'Easy P' project led him to triple P supply.

In the first year, they fed out a third of the bags of P they had on-station throughout December to February.

"The cows were very deficient that first year – they were eating it like lollies," Mike said.

"In the second year, we decided to open all the bags in December.

"However, the cows were significantly less interested in it – their levels were up, and they were just maintaining."

As a result, Mike said supplementation has become more targeted in recent years.

"We used to feed urea to all our cows just to keep condition on them.

"Now, thanks to our boosted phosphorus program, we only feed urea to cows due to calve from July onwards each year – part of our year-round joining program."

### Tweaks to timing boosts fertility

The final key change implemented at Newry Station was shifting the timing of mustering to earlier in the year. They now muster from the end of April to mid-May, instead of from the end of May to mid-June.

"We try to get our first round done early so cows can put condition back on while there's still green grass in front of them," Mike said.

"That's been huge for fertility – it gives them the best chance to reconceive."

### Less for more

Despite reducing herd numbers, productivity has soared – and profitability hasn't been far behind.

"We've gone from a weaning rate of around 54–59% to approximately 80%," Mike said.

"That's a massive jump – and it's been consistent year-to-year.

"We're working with 2,500 fewer breeders, yet we're producing 1,000 more weaners annually.

"That increase in output, combined with lower overheads, has had a significant financial impact.

"We're handling fewer cattle, which means less mustering, less supplementation and less labour.

"If we sell that extra 1,000, that's nearly a million dollars more in revenue annually," Mike said.

The return on investment has been clear.

"We spent quite a bit of money on water infrastructure and on the Easy P program in the first year, but the gains in fertility, calf survival and overall herd performance have paid it back many times over."

### Looking ahead

Currently, Newry Station is continuing to refine its stocking rate using visual assessments and seasonal adjustments as a guide.

While challenges remain – including variable rainfall and diverse soil types – the team is committed to sustainable productivity.

"We're still working on it," Mike said.

He looks forward to further refining his grazing management by making use of available tools and calculators – saving time and costs to hit the ideal stocking rate sweet spot.

"We have built a system that can coast us through the dry years and will capitalise on the good ones."

### TOOLBOX

- Phosphorus hub: **mla.com.au/phosphorus**
- Scan or click the QR code to download the updated *Weaner management in northern beef herds*:

Mike Bailey **newrystation@outlook.com** Tony Parker **tparker@mla.com.au**

# TEKFARM links ag-tech to productivity

**Sheep producer JJ Venter draws on his skillset as an environmental scientist and agronomist to guide his focus on building a resilient, efficient and profitable business.**

JJ and his wife Karien are co-owners of a mixed farming enterprise, 'Clear Creek' at Berthong, NSW.

They joined the Farmers2Founders' TEKFARM initiative in 2023 – the program is designed to connect producers with emerging ag-tech solutions.

It's given JJ and Karien tools and knowledge to achieve their goal of harnessing the right ag-tech to ensure Clear Creek can adapt to seasonal variability and maintain long-term productivity – cost-effectively.

"We made the decision to join TEKFARM to gain access to new ideas and practical tools that would work for our business," JJ said.

"It served as a great way to explore what's out there without wasting time looking into tech that wasn't going to serve our production goals."

## Planning with confidence

One of the most valuable roles technology plays at Clear Creek is helping to guide their seasonal decisions – particularly around feed budgeting, grazing rotations and stocking rates.

Currently, the couple uses PastureKey, a product developed by Cibo Labs, to monitor pasture biomass and growth rates.

This helps determine feed on offer, when to move stock, and how many animals the land can support at any given time.

"Instead of relying on just your eyes or following a routine, we can look at the numbers and know whether the pasture is meeting animal requirements or if we need to step in with supplements," JJ said.

"It's helped us avoid both overfeeding and underfeeding, which saves money and improves animal performance."

The same data supports rotational grazing decisions, helping JJ and Karien move sheep strategically to maximise pasture and grazing crop recovery and utilisation.

It also informs stocking rate adjustments, allowing the team to respond to seasonal changes with confidence.

"We're no longer guessing how many animals we can run – we're planning based on actual pasture availability," JJ said.

"That's made a big difference in how we manage risk and optimise productivity."

## Real-time data

Alongside PastureKey, they also use AgriWebb to record and manage livestock movements, treatments, performance and paddock history.

AgriWebb allows them to track individual animal treatments and mob performance, monitor paddock usage over time, and maintain a digital record of grazing rotations.

This level of detail helps JJ identify trends, respond quickly to health issues, and plan more effectively across the enterprise.

"By streamlining record keeping with AgriWebb, we ensure decisions are backed by reliable, up-to-date information and the time spent on manual data entry is reduced," he said.

## Cost and time savings

For JJ, the value of ag-tech is measured in time saved, costs avoided and decisions made with confidence.

"Tech doesn't just give us data, it gives us clarity," he said.

"We've been able to avoid unnecessary feed costs, reduce labour hours and make grazing decisions that support pasture and crop recovery.

"That's a return on investment you can see in your bottom line."

Having access to timely, visual data has helped improve communication across the team.

"When everyone can see what's happening in the paddock or in the feed budget, it's easier to plan together and act quickly – that's a big win for us," JJ said.

## Tech that complements experience

The Clear Creek team are selective about the platforms they use.

They believe the right tool should make planning easier, reduce costs and give confidence to act quickly when conditions change.

"When I look at a new tool, I ask whether it's user-friendly and if it provides useful information that is relevant to our business goals," JJ said.

"Tech is not a replacement for good stockmanship, it's not a substitute for knowing your animals and your land, and most importantly, it's not an investment worth making just for the sake of being up-to-date with modern farming resources.

JJ and Karien Venter – pictured with their children – are co-owners of 'Clear Creek' near Berthong, NSW.

## SNAPSHOT

**JOHN AND LINDEL ROXBURGH, JJ AND KARIEN VENTER, 'CLEAR CREEK' –**
Berthong, NSW



**AREA**
785ha

**ENTERPRISE**
Self-replacing Merinos (1,750 commercial ewes, 165 stud ewes) and cropping

**PASTURES**
Lucerne, clovers and native grasses

**SOILS**
Red-brown clay loam

**RAINFALL**
600mm

"Tech is a tool that supports your goals and complements your strengths, it should make what you already do more efficient and effective.

"This is why, ultimately, the true power of ag-tech lies in one's ability to pick the right tool for their business."

## TOOLBOX

- TEKFARM: **farmers2founders.com/tekfarm**
- AgriWebb: **agriwebb.com**
- PastureKey: **cibolabs.com.au/products/pasturekey**

JJ Venter **jj.venter@elders.com.au** Sarah Strachan **sstrachan@mla.com.au**

# Grazing in a more variable climate

**As Australia's climate continues to warm, pasture systems across southern Australia will need to adapt to a drier and more variable climate.**

To help producers prepare, researchers at Western Sydney University's Hawkesbury campus are testing how temperate pastures respond to different rainfall and grazing regimens, to quantify species' climate and grazing resilience across seasons.

Professor Sally Power, an ecosystem ecologist at Western Sydney University, leads the 'Grazing for climate resilience' project, funded by MLA. Using the university's Pastures and Climate Extremes (PACE) facility at Richmond, her team can simulate both drought and above-average rainfall scenarios to see how various pasture species perform.

"It is important producers are aware of how the more extreme climates we're experiencing – those wet and dry swings – impact the productivity of temperate pastures, and how rainfall interacts with grazing frequency," Sally said.

## Pasture performance

Over two years, perennial pastures containing lucerne, sainfoin, cocksfoot, prairie grass and plantain were grown under rainfall scenarios that represented either low (around 580mm) or high (around 1,080mm) rainfall years at the study site. Each was cut either frequently (every four to six weeks) or infrequently (every 12 weeks) to mimic different grazing intensities.

"The low-rainfall treatment reduced pasture growth by almost 60% overall, and by more than 70% in spring," Sally said.

"We also found that grazing more often reduced total biomass by around 28% overall and by 51% in spring, relative to less frequent grazing, because plants simply didn't have time to recover between grazing events."

Lucerne and the temperate grasses were more affected than plantain, especially under the combination of dry conditions and high grazing pressure.

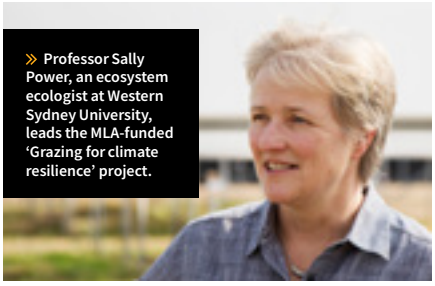
"Although low rainfall reduced plantain's productivity, it actually increased its cover under more frequent clipping.

"That deep tap root stores plenty of carbohydrates and allows it to access moisture when other species can't. It's a good reminder that herbs with different root traits can play an important role in pasture resilience."

## What does it mean on-farm?

The message for producers, Sally said, is to manage both climate risk and grazing intensity together, particularly in spring.

"Reducing grazing intensity during dry springs can make a big difference to pasture persistence and overall feed quality later in the season," she said.



» Professor Sally Power, an ecosystem ecologist at Western Sydney University, leads the MLA-funded 'Grazing for climate resilience' project.

Ben Azzopardi from Greater Sydney Local Land Services said the results gave advisors and producers more confidence when selecting species mixes suited to future conditions.

"The trial showed how biodiversity in a pasture can buffer production," Ben said.

"It helps us guide producers – whether they're running high-input temperate systems or low-input subtropical ones – to choose plants that match their rainfall pattern and risk tolerance."

He said having comparable data on temperate versus subtropical species will help producers plan pasture improvements or renovation programs with greater certainty.

"They can see how mixes perform under wet and dry extremes on the same soil type. That's valuable when you're deciding where to invest."

Sally hopes the findings encourage producers to look more closely at species traits when selecting pastures to preferentially sow/manage, especially root depth and recovery rates, to increase their resilience in a variable climate.

» *See next page to meet a NSW producer who is implementing resilience business strategies in the face of a changing climate.*

> **"Reducing grazing intensity during dry springs can make a big difference to pasture persistence and overall feed quality later in the season."**

» Western Sydney University's Pastures and Climate Extremes (PACE) facility at Richmond allows researchers to simulate both drought and above-average rainfall scenarios to see how various pasture species perform.

## TOOLBOX

- Sustainability hub: **mla.com.au/sustainability-hub**
- Feedbase hub: **mla.com.au/feedbase-hub**
- Environmental sustainability program: **mla.com.au/environment-sustainability**
- MLA Carbon Calculator : **carbon-calculator.mla.com.au**
- Australian Beef Sustainability Framework: **sustainableaustralianbeef.com.au**

Sally Power **s.power@westernsydney.edu.au** Alister Hawksford **ahawksford@mla.com.au**

» The Mackenzies are investing in elite Angus genetics with strong feed conversion and intramuscular fat traits to drive both sustainability and eating quality.

# Climate resilience grounded in pasture diversity

**Robert Mackenzie and his family have taken a proactive approach to building climate resilience into their business.**

Across their mixed breeding and seedstock enterprise in NSW, Macka's Beef, the Mackenzies have made pasture improvement and soil health the focus of their strategy to withstand both the extremes of climate and the demands of a changing market.

Each year, around 400ha are sown to new or renovated legume-rich pastures selected for complementary root structures – from shallow clovers to deep-tap-rooted chicory and lucerne – to boost carbon sequestration and moisture retention.

"By mixing species with different root zones and tap roots, we're sequestering carbon deeper into the soil and holding more moisture," Robert said.

That focus on soil and feedbase diversity has been central to a decade-long transformation of the business.

"Over the past five or six years we've seen droughts we'd never seen before, as well as floods we'd never seen before," Robert said.

"Every time we get knocked down, we get back up and think about what we can do differently."

The answer, he said, has been to make every part of the business more self-reliant. The Mackenzies have expanded water storage and infrastructure across their eight properties to ensure no animal walks more than 800 metres to water. They've also built four hay sheds and stored 10,000 tonnes of silage to buffer against drought.

## Soil health

Soil health underpins every decision. Each February, the family takes 1,400 soil samples across their 6,500ha to track carbon, biology and fertility. The data guides variable-rate fertiliser application and helps target areas for further pasture improvement.

"We reduced our inputs and our labour by understanding our soils," Robert said.

"It's about managing what you can measure."

A rotational grazing system with small groups of around 120 cattle supports pasture recovery and animal welfare.

"Cattle will stay in a paddock for three to five days, then it's rested," Robert said.

"Happy, relaxed animals are more productive."

## Genetic investments

The Mackenzies' approach combines genetics, management and measurement to improve both productivity and sustainability. The family has invested heavily in high-feed-efficiency Angus genetics, integrated their data through AgriWebb for animal tracking, and developed their own mineral lick combining probiotics and Australian-grown asparagopsis to improve animal health and reduce methane emissions.

Every aspect of the Mackenzie family's approach to business decisions is innovative and proactive, so for Robert, sustainability is about ensuring both future viability and succession.

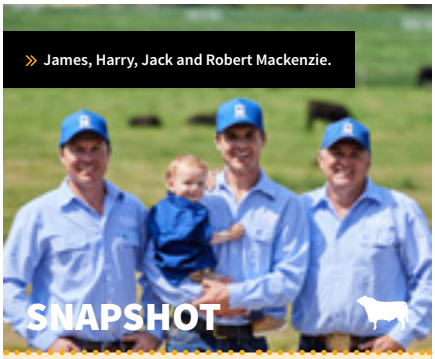
"We're a multi-generational business," he said. "Everything we do now is about setting the next generation up for success, leaving the land and the business in better shape."

The pasture work sits within a broader focus on carbon neutrality and efficiency. Since undertaking soil carbon sampling and mapping, Macka's Beef has determined that, through improved pastures and soil management, it sequesters more carbon than it emits each year.

"We're drought-proofing ourselves and future-proofing the business," Robert said.

"A 1% gain in soil carbon means 160,000 litres more water per hectare, and that's our insurance in dry years."

He believes climate resilience starts with measurement and mindset.



» James, Harry, Jack and Robert Mackenzie.

## SNAPSHOT

**MACKENZIE FAMILY –** Eight properties from Newcastle to Gloucester, NSW



**AREA**
6,500ha

**ENTERPRISE**
3,500 commercial Angus cows and a 500–600 head seedstock operation

**PASTURES**
Kikuyu-based coastal country, festulolium, cocksfoot, ryegrasses, prairie grass, sub, white and Persian clovers and chicory, irrigated lucerne on flats

**SOILS**
Predominantly black basalt with some light clays

**RAINFALL**
850mm

"Know your footprint, understand your soils and work with an agronomist who knows your country," he said.

"And share what works. If we can all rise together, it's better for the industry and the country."

**agriwebb.com** Robert Mackenzie **robert@mackas.com.au** Julia Waite **jwaite@mla.com.au**

Mount Isa NB2 workshop participants (left to right) Tyler Boyle, Ashur Perkins, Jacob Cassady, Cassy Stevens and Craig Young, test out the virtual 'fireside chat' feature – a tool designed to bridge the distance between geographically isolated cattle stations. Image: Think Digital

# Virtual connections become reality on country

**An MLA-supported Northern Breeding Business (NB2) project is using virtual reality to bridge the divide between remote Indigenous beef enterprises and access to the latest biosecurity training.**

A virtual farm tour and augmented reality experience app are proving engaging and effective ways to upskill users in how to recognise emergency animal diseases (EAD) in cattle and protect Australia's biosecurity.

Co-funded through MLA Donor Company, the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and Animal Health Australia (AHA), the project's approach ensures the participating Indigenous-run cattle enterprises are the drivers of their own business growth, professional development and management goals.

NB2 group facilitator Ian Perkins is a passionate advocate for the program's capacity building framework.

Kat Bidstrup, Jon Motlop and Tim Gentle (left to right) at 'Bulimba', where they filmed the virtual reality biosecurity training tool. Image: Think Digital

"One of the strengths of the group has been the willingness to share and the openness to learn from each other," he said.

One of the tools is a 'virtual reality campfire chat', which builds on these strengths.

"It's a unique management tool that takes advantage of the opportunities offered by innovative technology to involve and engage Indigenous participants," Ian said.

"It utilises Indigenous story-telling and harnesses participants' interests, abilities and experiences to achieve outcomes which combine non-Indigenous ways of presenting and consuming information with Indigenous ways of being and doing."

## Removing barriers

ILSC Chief Operating Officer, Matthew Salmon, noted the NB2 program's importance in providing communities access to professional development and training opportunities in technological spaces.

"There have been many powerful outcomes of this program – in particular, removing barriers for Indigenous people who are caring for and managing Country," Matthew said.

"This has ultimately helped empower First Nations groups to achieve greater self-determination – which forms part of the ILSC's core mission."

## Virtual reality

Tim Gentle, founder of the project's immersive technology provider Think Digital, is keen to showcase the potential of augmented and virtual reality to bring the digital and real worlds together.

"We see the technology as a way of not only building connections between users and the learning they're engaging with, but also with their peers in other communities and locations across northern Australia," Tim said.

Creating a network where Indigenous landholders can work together to share experiences, data, knowledge and successes has been powerful.

Bringing communities together to solve problems collectively, rather than in isolation, was a key project goal and one which inspired Tim to facilitate a virtual 'fireside chat' at a workshop with participants from several Indigenous enterprises at Mt Isa in June 2025.

After donning the virtual reality headsets and generating personalised avatars for themselves, they discussed management strategies around the 'fire'.

While in this instance everyone was in the same room, Tim explains the technology enables people from various locations to connect in a fun and engaging way to share knowledge and nut out any business or on-farm challenges they're facing.

## Biosecurity benefits

For Rob Barwell, Head of Program – Biosecurity, at Animal Health Australia, the biosecurity virtual farm tour developed as part of the project not only provides an immersive and memorable learning experience, but also adds meaningful value to the Indigenous enterprises involved in the project.

"This type of immersive professional development goes beyond simply accessing training and information. We have developed the tool with Indigenous staff delivering the content in a relatable way," Rob said.

"There are opportunities to expand this training into workplace health and safety, staff induction and even the sharing of cultural knowledge for future generations."

On the tour, brothers Kawane and Jon Motlop – station hands at 'Bulimba Station' – present biosecurity information in a range of key locations via pre-recorded videos. These include the homestead, property entrance, sheds and watering points.

The tour can be taken online via a phone or computer or by using a virtual reality headset at a field day or in a workshop setting. The headset allows users to swivel their heads to look around the property and then click on various locations to access more information and watch the videos.

**Scan or click the QR code to take the biosecurity virtual tour:**

## A virtual herd in the palm of your hand

The project also saw the development of the Cattle EAD augmented reality app where users can engage in immersive play to learn how to recognise EADs.

Digital cows are projected into the real world with users simply requiring a smart phone and blank background. The 3D cows can be inspected from all angles as users determine which signs indicate a range of EADs.

"It means people can access training in their own environment – it helps overcome distance and lack of resources," Rob said.

"It can be a considerable distance to the nearest vet and animals may only be yarded once or twice annually, usually for branding, weaning or selling livestock."

The virtual farm tour and app are proving to be impactful, novel ways of delivering training which may encourage deeper knowledge retention than more passive training modes such as reading printed materials or watching a PowerPoint presentation.

**The app is freely available to producers or anyone handling cattle who is keen to improve their biosecurity awareness. Scan or click the QR codes to download the app from your app store:**

Google Play

Download on the App Store

Microsoft HoloLens

Scan or click this QR code to watch an NB2 project video and see how virtual reality is building connections between Indigenous-run northern beef enterprises:

## Disease frontline

Most of the project's Indigenous cattle stations are located in northern Queensland, with modelling indicating they are key potential entry points for some EADs. It makes them ideally placed to identify any early incursions of those EADs.

"Extra eyes looking out for diseases to Australia's north such as foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease are a great boost to our biosecurity capacity," Rob said.

"Keeping up good biosecurity practices will also mean lower levels of endemic diseases and pests and therefore better productivity, which in turn will lead to better profitability for these businesses."

Rob encourages producers to have a robust biosecurity plan that doesn't just sit on the shelf but is implemented on a daily basis.

**If producers see anything unusual in their livestock, they should call the EAD Hotline: 1800 675 888 as early reporting is a vital opportunity to get a handle on any potential outbreak of disease.**

> **"There are opportunities to expand this training into workplace health and safety, staff induction and even the sharing of cultural knowledge for future generations."**

» The Cattle EAD app trains participants to identify biosecurity issues in their actual herds by projecting images of virtual animals displaying various signs of EADs. Pictured left to right at the Mt Isa workshop are Rob Barwell (AHA), Thomas Holden (Nirrwara Global and Chair of Girringun Aboriginal Corporation) and Tim Gentle (Think Digital). Image: Think Digital

## TOOLBOX

- Animal Health Australia: **animalhealthaustralia.com.au**
- Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation: **ilsc.gov.au**
- Think Digital: **think.digital**
- Northern cattle tools and resources: **mla.com.au/northern-cattle**

**Biosecurity resources**

- **integritysystems.com.au/on-farm-assurance/biosecurity**
- **farmbiosecurity.com.au**

**mla.com.au/nb2** Rob Barwell **rbarwell@animalhealthaustralia.com.au** Tony Parker **tparker@mla.com.au**

Alison Henderson keeps an eye on pregnant ewes during the PDS. Image: Alison Henderson

# Detail in data delivers consistent lambing

**Fifth generation SA sheep producer Alison Henderson believes attention to detail is the key to running a profitable enterprise.**

Participating in an MLA-funded 'Lotsa Lambs' Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) run by Upper North Farming Systems (UNFS) equipped her with the details and data to make informed decisions and maintain lambing results despite seasonal variability.

The Hendersons operate a mixed farm in the state's Mid North. Their soft rolling skin (SRS) Merino enterprise includes both commercial and stud flocks, making data an important tool to maintain breeding objectives. Their flock is founded on Baderloo bloodlines, with the Hendersons acquiring the Baderloo Stud in 2024 as an addition to their Hendowie Stud.

Hendowie Stud has used Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) to make flock decisions since 2008, in conjunction with visual assessments. Selection traits include long staple and fleece weight, fat and muscle, and early growth.

Their specific targets are:

- 1.3 lambs/ewe/year
- 6kg wool
- lambs to grow out to 50kg within seven to eight months.

"Our breeding objective is to breed a dual-purpose, productive, balanced Merino sheep that thrives in a range of environments," Alison said.

"If I'm going to push for reproduction, there will be sacrifices in areas such as growth, but having a clear breeding objective ensures a balance."

They introduced electronic identification (eID) technology in 2018. They use AgriWebb to manage stock and BreedElite to record data, genetic tools such as RamSelect, DNA testing in the stud flock, and the flock profile test for commercial sheep.

## Livestock management

The Hendersons' livestock management calendar includes shearing twice a year (mid-April and mid-October). They ceased mulesing wether lambs in 2018, and all lambs the following year.

They join for five weeks in February/March, which is timed to optimise conception rates as day length shortens, so ewes are lambing onto green feed in July/August.

The Hendersons have used pregnancy scanning since 2018 and automatically cull dry ewes when they are not in a flock-building phase.

"The preg-scanning technology enables us to better manage pregnant ewes, with more nutrition provided to smaller mobs of multiple-bearing ewes during pregnancy and lambing," Alison said.

> **"Our breeding objective is to breed a dual-purpose, productive, balanced Merino sheep that thrives in a range of environments."**

## SNAPSHOT



**ALISON HENDERSON –**
Caltowie and Booborowie, SA

**AREA**
1,600ha owned/share-farmed

**ENTERPRISE**
800 SRS Merinos (300 stud ewes)

**PASTURES**
Sown pasture and crops

**SOILS**
Red clay loam

**RAINFALL**
425mm

They lamb into separate twin and single paddocks so multiples can receive preferential nutrition.

Paddocks are split with electric fencing to allow for smaller twin-bearing mobs of around 100 ewes, while singles are run in mobs of 150–250 head. Identifying and splitting singles and twins has lifted lambing by 20% – up to around 120%.

The Hendersons' nutrition strategies are based on principles adopted from the Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) program, such as condition scoring and feed budgeting.

"The LTEM course included training in body condition scoring, and I have used that ever since as a crucial tool to improve lamb survival and reduce ewe mortality," Alison said.

They match land type to the enterprise where possible. Regular pasture paddocks have

a medic base and sown pastures include a rotation of vetch.

Containment feeding helps the Hendersons bridge the autumn feed gap.

If there is an early break, ewes go into the paddock sooner to make the most of the feed on offer, topped up with supplementary feed. However, in the dry years of the PDS (2022 and 2024), they were supplementary fed from March until just before lambing in early June.

## PDS results

The site Alison allocated to the PDS was a grazing block without a cropping rotation. During lambing, exposure is an issue and Alison intends to plant shelter belts in the future. In the meantime, she makes use of a north-facing slope and electric fencing to keep ewes in the most sheltered area.

"Paddock characteristics contribute significantly to lambing percentage. We've seen lamb survival rates increase by up to 10% in paddocks with shelter and reduced exposure to weather fronts when compared to poorer lambing paddocks lacking shelter, or which are close to train lines or busy roads," Alison said.

After scanning and separating ewes based on pregnancy status, ewes were put into containment with supplementary feeding. For this PDS, Alison aimed for 100 or fewer twin-bearing ewes in a mob for lambing.

Ewes are usually released from containment 10 days before lambing to help preserve feed. However, in seasons with late breaks, supplementary feeding continues in the paddock to meet the ewes' nutrition requirements.

The prolonged dry conditions of 2024 resulted in a very late seasonal break in June, so they had to rely on a full ration of supplementary feed to meet the ewes' energy requirements during the lambing period.

## Survival focus

The Hendersons already had low ewe mortality (2% or less), which Alison attributed to the role of genetics, specifically their focus on fat and muscle, as well as the right nutrition.

They identified twin survival, through fine-tuning nutrition and lambing conditions, as a big opportunity to make productivity gains.

As part of the PDS, Alison weighed any dead lambs to build a picture of what was causing mortality – and birth weight under 3kg was a contributing factor.

The goal is now to increase twin lamb birth weights, while ensuring feeding for growth is balanced against too much weight gain (which can lead to dystocia).

Alison achieved ideal condition scores of an average of 3.5 at preg-scanning for all three seasons of the demonstration.

## Seasonal challenges

Although seasonal conditions were different across the three years, Alison's consistent lambing results demonstrate how implementing a combination of best practices can help achieve production targets despite seasonal challenges and feed gaps.

The late break in 2022 meant there was no green feed to lamb onto, contributing to the lambing results. Mismothering at feeders was an issue but with no feed on offer in paddocks, supplementary feeding was the only option.

There was an earlier break in 2023 with a useful 30mm of rain in April. Follow-up rain in May helped deliver nutritional green feed and pasture growth to lamb onto. This removed the need for supplementary feed during lambing and reduced mismothering. However, cold/wet snaps contributed to some mortalities from exposure.

Mob size was more than 100 head in 2024 because of low feed on offer due to drought conditions – but condition scores were maintained around 3.5 from joining with supplementary feeding.

## Mob size

During 2024, the Hendersons also had the chance to see the impact of mob size when they purchased additional stud ewes. While these ewes were not included in the PDS, they provided a direct comparison as both were twinning mobs with one feeder and access to scrub areas for shelter – the mob of 120 ewes (on 4ha) produced 140% lambing, compared with 125% for 170 ewes (on 7ha).

Alison also observed how other factors, such as lack of shelter, cold/wet snaps and genetics, impacted lamb survival.

The PDS reaffirmed Alison's focus on breeding and selecting for lamb survival characteristics, such as fat and eye muscle area, which correlate with resilience.

## Infrastructure and labour

Reducing mob size for lambing required investment in temporary fencing to split up paddocks.

Alison purchased two 500m electric fence kits with energisers and posts for $1,000, which enabled her to divide a 20ha paddock in half to run twinning ewes in smaller mobs. It took two hours to erect/deconstruct the fence.

Looking ahead, she plans on permanently splitting some of the paddocks to enable smaller mobs at lambing. Existing water points will enable these permanent areas to be reduced into smaller areas (10–15ha) with temporary electric fencing to be rotationally grazed over the growing season. ■

Mid North SA sheep producer Alison Henderson conducts preg-scanning as a ewe management strategy. Image: Rachel Trengove, UNFS

The Hendersons operate commercial and stud Merino flocks on their Caltowie and Booborowie farms. Image: Alison Henderson

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# Top-notch management drives Tassie productivity

**MLA is the event partner of Tasmania's Red Meat Updates, which shines the light on the latest innovations in agribusiness, pastures, livestock and more. Each year, the flagship event invites attendees on a 'virtual farm tour' (sponsored this year by Pinion Advisory) to see how innovative red meat producers are achieving profitable and sustainable business success.**

This year the spotlight was on Tasmanian mixed livestock and irrigated cropping business and Angus stud, Cluden Newry Pastoral, owned and managed by Jock Hughes and Claire Burbury.

The business has been family-owned for close to a century. Under Jock and Claire's stewardship, the focus has shifted to growth and business development, with their long-term goal to pass on a thriving business to their three young sons. Maintaining a work–life balance to enjoy family time with them is an equally important priority.

They shared how their management strategies have delivered an impressive productivity uplift.

As shown in the virtual tour, the couple have seen stocking rate increase from 9,527 dry sheep equivalent (DSE) managed in 2012–13 at an average annual stocking rate of 12.3 DSE/ha to 27,592 DSE in 2024–25 at an average stocking rate of 19.7 DSE/ha.

Jock Hughes and Claire Burbury run Cluden Newry Pastoral with their three sons. Image: Pip Williams Photography

Their profit has increased from $338/ha to $933/ha over the same period.

## Where it all began

Jock and Claire's property 'Jessiefield' has been in the family since 1927 – it was established as an Angus stud by Jock's grandfather, Richard Hughes, in 1956.

Today, Jock and Claire target calving ease and high growth with a focus on carcase and eating quality, using fixed-time artificial insemination to achieve their breeding objectives.

Their annual on-site bull sale is a highlight of the year, and the offering is backed by a dedication to data. Bulls are videoed for AuctionsPlus, semen-tested and thoroughly catalogued for the sale.

## Investments spark growth

In 2018, Jock and Claire decided to expand their commercial beef enterprise and bought 'Biddle Creek' at East Tamar. They invested in irrigation infrastructure to scale the business quickly and provide plenty of grass for weaners.

Cows which are culled from the seedstock herd are moved across into the commercial herd at Biddle Creek.

"They're still good functional cows even if they're not good enough to stay in the stud," Jock said.

"All heifers and cows are joined with yearling bulls at 14–15 months old. The bulls then come home to Jessiefield and are sold through the sale.

"It's pretty complementary in that respect – we get access to what we think are the best genetics commercially."

## SNAPSHOT

**JOCK HUGHES AND CLAIRE BURBURY, CLUDEN NEWRY PASTORAL –** Longford, East Tamar and Perth, Tasmania

**AREA**
'Jessiefield' – 800ha, 'Biddle Creek' – 550ha and 'Glen Ireh' – 200ha

**ENTERPRISE**
Angus seedstock (400 head) and commercial (700 head) beef operation, prime lambs (2,000 ewes, 4,000 lambs) and mixed irrigated cropping

**PASTURES**
Predominantly perennial ryegrass, sub-clover and white clover, some chicory, plantain, clover mixes under irrigation

**SOILS**
Variable

**RAINFALL**
620–800mm

Jock and Claire built their base of commercial breeders by buying heifers from the mainland, where dry conditions had produced fairly lightweight heifers. So it wasn't a surprise that, at first, conception rates were lower than ideal.

Their investment paid off however, with close to 700 commercial calves born each year.

Around 350 steers are sold each year weighing between 400–500kg to meet feedlot entry weights, an approach Jock says gives him flexibility to sell earlier depending on how the season goes. He joins all heifers and sells them pregnancy tested in calf, or fattened, to Greenham or JBS.

## Prime lamb

Jessiefield is home to 2,000 ewes which are joined for a winter lambing. This year, 4,000 prime lambs – some of which are trade lambs – will be finished.

Infrastructure investments in irrigation have driven on-farm productivity. Image: Jock Hughes

"We buy in replacement ewes and join everything to a terminal sire and finish the lambs with an aim for roughly a 23kg carcase," Jock said.

"This year, however, we didn't buy in any ewes – we're weighing up the returns and deciding whether we want to keep running ewes long-term."

Shifting from a spring to a winter lambing system means they can get as much finishing done as possible without having to rely on irrigation.

"We want the dryland system to stand on its own rather than relying on growing feed under irrigation," Jock said.

"We prioritise our water for the high-value cash crops we grow including poppies, peas, potatoes and grass seed."

## Infrastructure key to business growth

Investment in irrigation has been a significant driver of productivity at Cluden Newry Pastoral.

Jock introduced pivots at Jessiefield in 2005, and this property is now fully developed.

Biddle Creek has also undergone significant improvements and boasts 95ha of irrigation systems – a marked difference from when they bought the ex-plantation property, which had little to no quality pasture or yards.

Their neighbour kindly lent them his yards in those early days with Jock subsequently installing yards of his own.

At their leased property, 'Glen Ireh', near the town of Perth, ample shelter belts planted by the owner have been a boon for calf survival rates. Jock has also added paddock drains at this property to manage the wet winters.

## Industry involvement

Off farm, Jock maintains an active involvement in industry. His membership of the Southern Australia Livestock Research Council (SALRC) sees him contribute to which research priorities are funded by MLA on behalf of levy payers.

"It's about sharing regional problems and making sure that MLA is across the producer issues around the country," Jock said.

Industry connections and access to support and advice from other producers are key benefits Jock has identified from his involvement in a range of producer groups. He said being part of the Longford Red Meat Group has been a key driver of change.

"We've been part of two MLA Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) projects – one on rotational grazing versus set-stocking lambs under pivots with clover and ryegrass, and the other on lamb mortality on legume crops which is already providing some useful data and learnings," Jock said.

Participation in the Australian Wool Innovation-funded Lifetime Wool project, the Rural Industries Skill Training course Lifetime Ewe Management and MLA's Pasture Principles has added to his grazing management toolkit.

## Controlling cost of production

As Jock explains, cost of production is one of the few things that can be controlled in a red meat business.

Benchmarking and collecting data on farm productivity has firmed up Jock and Claire's understanding of where their business can improve and what is actually driving profitability.

Joining a producer benchmarking group in 2017 has been a valuable opportunity to discuss group members' businesses and help each other identify where improvements can be made.


Cluden Newry Pastoral's Angus seedstock stud was established by Jock's grandfather, Richard Hughes, in 1956. Image: Jock Hughes

### TOOLBOX

- Take the Red Meat Updates virtual tour of Cluden Newry Pastoral: **redmeatupdates.com/vft**
- Pinion Advisory: **pinionadvisory.com**
- MLA's Feedbase hub: **mla.com.au/feedbase-hub**

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# Productive pastures worth their salt

**MLA's 'Productive saltland pastures for southern WA' Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) has created fertile ground for WA's Gillamii group to solve a salty problem.**

The group of local sheep producers harnessed the potential of saltland pasture systems to transform areas of their land impacted by salt into productive pastures – a boon for their flocks and overall land condition.

## Solving salt challenge

Production in areas of southern WA can be hindered by salt-affected land, which presents poor growing conditions and is often unusable.

A goal of the PDS was to upskill producers in how to establish and manage salt-tolerant forage systems on moderately salt-affected land.

The four participating producers planted saltland pasture systems, including saltbush and grass understorey.

Project coordinator, Jenna Walliser, said that despite promising results to date, this hasn't been a widespread practice.

"Salt-tolerant pasture systems tend to be used on the really marginal land, such as near salt lakes, but they haven't been widely adopted," Jenna said.

Four years into the six-year PDS, three out of four landholders have seen positive results, with pastures establishing through the once unproductive land.

"The one landholder who saw poor establishment suffered from a lack of initial site preparation (the knockdown spray) which resulted in overgrowth of existing ryegrass which essentially smothered the saltbush seeds," Jenna said.

## Making the most of arable land

As farmland values in the local area climb, producers are happy with the opportunity to further utilise the land they have.

"Landholders are looking to invest in their properties rather than acquiring additional land elsewhere. The new pasture system is being used to improve their marginal land," she said.

## Impressive results

At Gillamii's most recent spring field day, the PDS host site on display showcased the impact of salt-tolerant pastures that had been planted along a creek line.

"Prior to the project, the site hadn't been incorporated into the landholder's livestock grazing system," Jenna said.

"However, in 2025, the landholder was able to graze the site for the first time."

Over 24 grazing days, 135 dry ewes (50kg) grazed the paddock at 1.1 dry sheep equivalent (DSE)/ha, complemented by trail-fed barley once a week.

On another PDS site, the Tomlinsons (see case study opposite) were able to graze their newly established pasture over lambing, utilising a paddock that was once unproductive and unusable for grazing.

Nearby, another PDS participant achieved increased food on offer across both trial sites, allowing 237 dry ewes to graze at 1.1 DSE/ha.

"There was significant interest from attending landholders around planting saltbush and grass understorey," Jenna said.

### TOOLBOX

- Learn more about grazing land management: **mla.com.au/glm**
- Shore up your feedbase at MLA's Feedbase hub: **mla.com.au/feedbase-hub**
- Scan or click this QR code to learn more about this PDS:
- Check out **mla.com.au/pds** to:
  - find a PDS near you
  - search PDS list by topic
  - sign up to *PDS Updates* for the latest PDS news.

The PDS results were on display at the recent Gillamii Field Day.

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# A dash of saltbush transforms problem to productivity

The Tomlinsons used saltbush to increase their area of grazing land.

**Sheep producer Chris Tomlinson hates to see farmland wasted, but on his long-term lease property near Cranbrook, WA, salt-affected land has rendered some areas unusable and unproductive.**

Joining the 'Productive saltland pastures for southern WA' Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) provided the perfect opportunity to trial saltbush and other salt-tolerant pasture species as a solution – see story on previous page.

His 2,200 Merino-cross ewes are reaping the rewards of an enhanced feedbase and improved shelter during lambing.

## Sown saltbush lifts production

The Tomlinsons decided to trial a new saltbush-based forage system across 13ha in an effort to reinvigorate unproductive land.

"Parts of this farm have saline wet areas, which is flat, waterlogged country that just doesn't really produce," Chris said.

"Through the PDS, we're trying to lift our production levels by introducing shrubs and tall wheat grass."

In August 2022, the Tomlinsons planted saltbush sown from seed, and under-sowed the paddock with tall wheat grass and balansa clovers.

The crop was a long-term investment, with the expectation that any lift in productivity could take years to see.

"We were warned we would need to give it time for the paddock to establish, and it did take a couple of years for all of that saltbush to germinate," Chris said.

## Reduced waterlogging

Today, the paddock is a transformed landscape.

"It's been a game changer. I quite enjoy driving down there now and seeing the difference in the landscape," Chris said.

"This time of year, you'd usually be looking at waterlogging with no production whatsoever, but the plot has really been turned around."

## Patience is a virtue

Following years of waiting for the salt-tolerant system to establish, Chris has been careful to protect it.

"Now that we have this pasture, we're a bit reluctant on grazing it too soon because the sheep would graze it off completely and it would take a long time to recover," he said.

Instead, the paddock was slowly introduced to grazing for six weeks during lambing, in conjunction with other paddocks the sheep had access to.

Chris found that when given the choice of paddocks, the salt-tolerant system was popular.

"Despite having 50ha of pasture beside this 13ha paddock, the sheep liked to graze on the saltbush."

Combined, the paddocks were grazed by 250 single-lambing ewes at 1.6–3.1 dry sheep equivalent.

"The protection while lambing – particularly from the tall wheat grass – seemed to be just as valuable as the food," he said.

When the paddock is more established and in rotation, Chris will be able to gauge the impact on the productivity levels of his flock and conduct a cost–benefit analysis of establishing the crop.

Still, Chris is confident enough in the solution that he will implement it further in his operation.

"We're definitely going to be growing more of it.

"I hate to have land sitting idle, so we've got more areas in mind to establish the same pasture system," he said.

## Results for the region

Chris believes the PDS is just the beginning for more salt-tolerant forage systems in the region.

"We're a heavily stock-orientated area. There are a lot of areas that could be producing a lot more but are saline areas. It's just about putting the right species in there," he said.

"I think we'll start seeing a lot more of this in the area."

Western Australia producer Chris Tomlinson.

## SNAPSHOT

**CHRIS TOMLINSON –**
Cranbrook, WA



**AREA**
2,300ha

**ENTERPRISE**
2,200 Merino ewes joined to White Suffolk rams, mixed cropping

**PASTURES**
Sub-clover and ryegrass

**SOILS**
Sand over gravel over clay to granite loams

**RAINFALL**
450–500mm

## LESSONS LEARNT

- Preparation is key – treat the new pastures as you would any other crop.
- Be patient – wait until the pasture is established before grazing.
- Planting from seed will save costs, but establishment will take longer.

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# Fewer sick days for southern cattle

**Livestock mortalities, hefty vet bills and medication costs can stack up when sickness makes its way through a mob of cattle – but what if producers could select for disease resistance?**

MLA's 'Southern multibreed immune competence project' is investigating if disease resistance can be bred into cattle – regardless of their breed – to boost the overall health of the Australian herd.

During the project, researchers from CSIRO Agriculture and Food measured the immune competence (IC) of cattle in feedlots. IC reflects an animal's ability to cope with disease by mounting an effective immune response.

More than 3,000 cattle from the Southern Multibreed reference population were measured by testing their response to vaccinations.

Researcher Dr Aaron Ingham said until now, measurement of the IC trait had been limited to two breeds.

"Prior to this project we had measured IC predominantly in Angus and Brahman cattle," he said.

"This project, however, aimed to measure the trait in multiple breeds in the same environment. The result allowed us to find the genotypes which are common to the trait and develop a multibreed prediction equation which can be used to generate a breeding value."

An important characteristic of the IC trait is that it identifies animals with a functional immune system able to fight any disease, rather than just focusing on one.

## Growing need for IC trait

Research findings emphasised the importance of producers being able to select for immune competency.

"Immune competence was shown to have a slightly negative correlation with productivity traits like growth," Aaron said.

### Southern Multibreed reference population

The Southern Multibreed reference population is a herd of Angus, Brahman, Charolais, Hereford, Shorthorn, Wagyu and associated crossbreeds. It is used for data collection in research projects, to allow for benchmarking across different breeds.

"This means a sole emphasis on selection for productivity traits is likely to inadvertently drive immune competence down in your herd."

However, focusing only on immune competence may negatively impact productivity traits, so balanced trait selection is key – as is the case for all genetic selection.

"Now that we have the immune competence trait, and because the negative correlation is low, we're closer to stopping that decline from occurring. Producers will be able to select for both productivity and immune competence traits at the same time," Aaron said.

While each breed had high and low performers when it came to disease resistance, low immune competence within the Australian herd was difficult to identify. It is often masked by therapeutic interventions used to treat disease, such as antibiotics.

"There's a big animal welfare benefit in reducing the incidence and severity of disease in animals," Aaron said.

"With increasing pressure to reduce antibiotics from the system, having animals with a natural ability to fight disease is more important than ever.

The project tested IC across several breeds from the Southern Multibreed reference population.

"We found there was a natural distribution of performance (high and low immune competence animals) across every breed.

"This is important, because it means there doesn't need to be a competition about disease resistance between breeds. If the breeding value is used, immune competence in any breed can be advanced."

### Making it to market

Ultimately, the goal is to develop a commercially available multibreed breeding value for IC which producers can select for and consider within their breeding objectives.

Fellow researcher Dr Toni Reverter-Gomez said there's still some way to go, before that point is reached.

"We created a relationship matrix based on the observed genotype of each animal, and were able to estimate the heritability and genetic correlation consistent with expectations," Toni said.

"In theory, we could generate a breeding value for an individual animal today using the multibreed genomic prediction equation developed from this project.

"However, the accuracy of this value would not match that of a breeding value derived from further research that incorporates a larger number of animals into the reference population."

Around a third of the animals measured were Angus.

"To improve the accuracy of genomic predictions, we'd like to increase the research to measure larger numbers of each breed we've considered."

Once achieved, the maintained IC levels are expected to be an important metric in demonstrating the beef industry's commitment to sustainability and consumer confidence.

**TOOLBOX**

- Visit MLA's Genetics Hub: **genetics.mla.com.au**
- Upskill with the More Beef from Pastures program: **mbfp.mla.com.au**

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# The crucial gates for safe livestock loading

**An accident when loading cattle 13 years ago cost Queensland livestock transporter David Scott his business, seven operations and could have cost his life. David says a single, sliding gate would have changed everything.**

"We were loading a B Double – we had the top three pens loaded without any problems, but there was this one cow that was a leader that kept going right to the back," David said.

"The other nine walked in no problems but there was nothing to stop her coming back out, not enough people to close my sliding gate and not enough time for me to slide my back gate shut."

David was crushed by the cow in the race and sustained a broken pelvis and cracked vertebrae from the incident, which left him in hospital for 12 months learning to walk again.

"It got to the stage where I sold all my trucks and trailers because I was bedridden, in hospital and couldn't do anything."

Eight years and seven operations later, David is back doing what he loves, running Scott's Haulage in Roma. He said sharing his story has encouraged others to consider fitting sliding gates on loading ramps.

"The minute the beast walks past you can close it," he said. "You've got control.

"It's so simple. To me it is one of the most crucial gates in a set of yards."

The sliding gates can be retrofitted and retail for between $250–$1,300.

### Clever on-farm modifications

Roma cattle producer Peter Thompson said David's accident reinforced the need for safe loading facilities on their property, 'Echo Hills'.

Livestock transporter David Scott, Scott's Haulage, Roma.

"We've known David forever. He was so lucky to come out of that accident alive," Peter said.

"It reinforced in our own minds the need for safe loading facilities.

"We added a slide gate about four head back down, as well as one at the top of the loading ramp.

"It can help control the flow of the cattle.

"We also had a people ramp extension added on the off side of the loading ramp and handrails.

"It's a simple thing. You don't have to be overly skilled with a welder to add it on to an existing loading ramp.

"If you're side loading or rear loading it keeps it safer. It costs bugger all in reality."

Roma cattle producer Peter Thompson with the slide gate he installed on his loading ramp.

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» Philip, Anna and Alister Hughes.

# Family legacy grounded in soil, pastures

**The Hughes family has been on a journey to restore the health of their grazing land for the past 16 years. Introducing rest through rotational grazing, measuring ground cover and implementing techniques to hydrate soils and cycle nutrients are just some of the tools they have used to manage grazing.**

## Down the track

**To follow the Hughes family's journey in *Feedback*, check out our 2013–14 archives at mla.com.au/feedback, starting with the August 2013 edition.**


The Hughes family own and operate a paddock-to-plate vertically integrated branded beef supply chain. Philip, Adele and their daughter-in-law Anna oversee the grazing operations at Dulacca on the Western Downs in southern Queensland, and Alister is in charge of the wholesale beef operation, Rangeland Quality Meats, in Brisbane.

As long-term advocates of regenerative agriculture, they regard soil hydration, nutrient cycling and minimum ground cover thresholds to be critical in managing healthy soils, which in turn support a well-functioning environment and a productive beef business.

### A new system

The extended run of dry years in the early 2000s forced the family to rethink their grazing management philosophy.

"This country was quite run down at the time we purchased it," Philip said.

"We tried a few of the older style methods – we ripped country and seeded it and so on, and it failed. And then we ran into a run of dry years that just compounded the problem.

"Then we sat down as a family and said, 'we've got to do something different'. And that started us on a journey – trying to understand how the system functions and trying to replicate some of that back into our land."

### MLA Challenge

Another key turning point came in 2013 when Anna and her late husband Lachlan Hughes took part in the inaugural MLA Challenge – a 12-month program that saw six producer families make improvements to their businesses with the help of research outcomes, mentors and benchmarking.

Philip said Anna and Lachlan's participation in the challenge, and their "very organic thinking", were big drivers in the family's move to adopting regenerative grazing principles.

"The MLA Challenge played a massive role in the business side of the business, and also the production side," Anna agreed.

### Introducing rest

Philip said removing set stocking and introducing rest through rotational grazing was critical to the family's changed grazing management regimen.

"That's the first thing you need to do, which is pretty simple – it's just removing set stocking out of your system, then you can start building from there."

### Monitor and measure

The family also began measuring landscape changes and pasture status as part of their overall management strategy.

"We've done baseline soil testing and seasonal grass sample testing to see energy contents," Anna said.

"Then we can provide the cattle with a supplement to balance the mineral and vitamin requirements that they're not accessing in the grass itself."

## SNAPSHOT

**PHILIP, ADELE AND ANNA HUGHES, 'BANCHORY GRAZING' –** Dulacca, Queensland

**ALISTER HUGHES, RANGELAND QUALITY MEATS –** Brisbane, Queensland

**AREA**
5,115ha over two properties

**ENTERPRISE**
Vertically integrated beef supply and wholesale branded beef program, using traded heifers

**PASTURES**
Native bluegrass, Mitchell and forest bluegrass, and introduced buffel, green panic, Rhodes and urochloa

**SOILS**
Heavy Brigalow/Belah, numerous areas of loamy floodplain soils, to lighter ridge soils

**RAINFALL**
600mm

### Herd health

The family has taken a holistic approach to herd management and have moved away from large herd volumes and an 'engineered approach' to cattle management, to one that takes into greater consideration soil and pasture health, and synchronisation of pasture growth with grazing density.

This has involved a switch from a complex breeding system to a predominantly trade cattle operation, the use of probiotics to encourage rumen activity, time socialising the cattle on arrival, and not boxing cattle for at least 14 days prior to slaughter.

"A lot of what we've done is on the animal health itself. When we purchase cattle they go through an induction process," Anna said.

"A lot of that has a focus on gut health of the animal before they are put out into the paddock."

### Retaining moisture in the system

As part of an industry that is "always hanging out for rain", Philip said the business had to change its approach to conserving moisture on-farm.

"I remember Lach and I used to say if we didn't get 30mm of rain in an event we might as well not have had it," Philip said.

"If you go back through your rainfall charts, there's probably only four or five events of 30mm and over in a really good year, and in a bad year there might only be one.

"It became obvious we needed to keep our country in a rain ready state, so we could take advantage of the smaller 10–15mm falls.

"And that was before we learned about the small water cycle and the critical importance of that."

### Maximising the small water cycle

In simple terms, the small water cycle is the 'closed circulation' system of transpiration, evaporation and precipitation that happens within a local environment, and which is heavily reliant on the presence of ground cover to minimise run-off and cool the soil.

"We've done a lot of training in rotational grazing, cycling our minerals, cycling our nutrients and our water, and so on," Philip said.

"We're doing a lot of work trying to work out what is the minimum amount of grass cover you need to get the maximum result from your small water cycle.

"There is some data saying you should probably only take 50% out, trample 20% and then leave 30% standing in the paddock.

"From a grazing perspective, you have to have discipline around leaving whatever that number is, whether it's 30% or 40%, in the paddock. On our country we think it's somewhere around 1,000–1,200kg/ha – that's what we're working on now to keep our land resilient and rain ready.

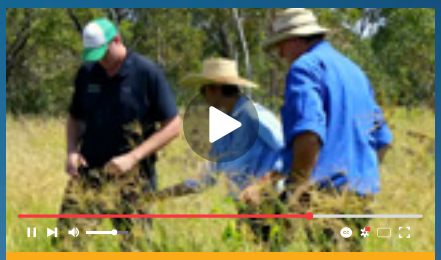
"You have to have cover on your land, because it's the only way you'll get your water filtration and microbial activity functioning, and keep your soil cool in the summer and warm in the winter."

### Switching focus from grass to soil

As part of their learning journey, the Hughes family now focuses more on what's under their grass, as they recognise that functioning healthy soils are essential to water retention, good pasture biomass and animal performance.

"We place so much significance and weight on how much grass we have and how much cover there is," Anna said.

"I think it's probably a progression of our thinking that we're [now] going, 'okay, so what's underneath that grass is the soil – how do we help it become a functioning system of its own?'"



Watch the Hughes family sharing their story – scan or click the QR code to watch:

### Using data for decision making

The Hughes family relies on stock management and pasture biomass software programs to track animal and pasture performance, and inform feed budgets.

Their ag-tech toolbox includes:

- AgriWebb – for stock management
- Cibo Labs' satellite imaging, to assess dry matter availability
- Farmbot – to monitor water levels in their tanks and to electronically measure rainfall at various sites around the property, with all information accessed on the family's mobile phones
- Black Box – a whole-of-life, individual animal data collection system – to identify the performance of each animal and inform purchasing and marketing decisions
- Figured – a livestock management and budgeting system that links into Xero, their cashbook accounting and financial management system.

LACHLAN HUGHES FOUNDATION

The Lachlan Hughes Foundation was created to honour Lachlan. It's a legacy of his vision and passion to develop regenerative agricultural practices for the grazing lands. Each year, a group of participants are selected for a 12-month program – covering capacity building, personal development, regenerative agriculture training and mentoring.

To learn more, visit **lachlanhughesfoundation.org.au**

Philip Hughes will present at the MLA Beef Industry Breakfast at the Northern Beef Research Update Conference in Brisbane on 11 March 2026. Visit **nbruc.com.au** to register.

Adele Hughes **adele@banchorygrazing.com.au** Ainsley Smith **asmith@mla.com.au**

# Mind your methane:

## how pastures can reduce emissions and boost productivity

**Producers have new information to guide decisions about which feedbase options are not only best for reducing methane emissions, but can also deliver economic and productivity benefits.**

A review co-funded by MLA and the Zero Net Emissions Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre (ZNE-Ag CRC) and undertaken by CSIRO has delivered sustainability and productivity insights into which pastures and forages are most effective at reducing methane emissions from ruminant grazing systems.

Researchers evaluated a range of pasture species for their methane-reducing potential, cost-effectiveness and feed quality.

Productive pastures shorten the time producers grow and turn-off their livestock – and are another significant contributor to overall methane reductions by the red meat industry.

### Weighing up the options

Lead researcher and team leader of CSIRO's Tropical Livestock Systems, Dr Ed Charmley, said there were several factors to determine whether species should be promoted to producers or researched further.

"We looked at whether or not they're agronomically useful in Australia, if they're going to cover a large proportion of the sheep flock and beef herd, and whether it's a forage for minor use with a niche role in a particular area," Ed said.

Using the available research, the pastures were evaluated to show their anti-methanogenic potential (potential to reduce methane production) through in vitro (lab-based) or in vivo (in livestock) testing.

"If they were suitable, we looked at their value and whether producers would use them."

### Output versus intensity

Understanding the difference between total methane output and emissions intensity is important when producers choose a pasture.

"A lot of the species we recommended aren't necessarily high in the amount of methane they can reduce but they are high in feed quality. This means they would help improve liveweight gain and increase turn-off rates," Ed said.

"If you're looking at methane production in total, higher beef and sheep production would mean more methane, but the methane produced per unit would go down. This lowers your emissions intensity.

"It's the eternal conundrum – if you want to improve your product and reduce your emissions intensity, these species will do that, but they won't necessarily lower your total methane output."

### Pastures in the paddock

While Ed recognised further research is required to fully understand some species' potential benefits, he said there are others which producers can sow now with confidence.

"For species like leucaena, the data is convincing and the benefits are well known. For others, like biserrula, initial data looks very promising, however more data is still needed. Right now, we can confidently recommend leucaena to producers in areas it will grow," he said.

"Lucerne is already well-adopted, and while it doesn't have a dramatic impact on reducing methane, it is great for production and turning off livestock faster.

"For stylos and desmanthus, we should be planting them because we need to get more legumes in the north, irrespective of any carbon benefit. There won't be any disadvantages to adding these to pastures and desmanthus should reduce emissions too."

He said more research will need to be done on brassicas before its full impact on the Australian landscape is known.

### Cost a key consideration

The review also evaluated the likelihood of producers to introduce the selected species into their pastures – and the level of impact they may have.

Cost, production, carbon benefit, climate variability, producer attitude and access to information were all factored in.

"Speaking to livestock advisors and producers, we found the cost of introducing pastures and how many seasons they're likely to succeed is a much bigger influence than the potential carbon benefit," Ed said.

"It's important to have these discussions to make sure this doesn't just work on paper but that it works in the real world too."

### Small steps, steady progress

Despite methane reduction potential being relatively low across pasture species, Ed said small improvements in methane and emissions intensity are still important.

"With 95% of total methane emissions from pasture, even relatively small reductions can have a major impact when applied at scale across grazing systems.

"Added to this, the higher yielding and higher quality pasture species will see increases in livestock production and financial returns for the producer."

### Seeing more from species

The review formed a key part of a larger research program to develop low-emissions plant solutions.

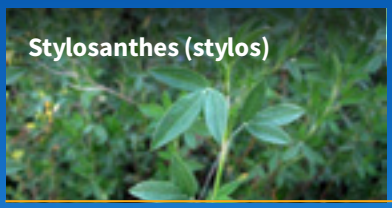
ZNE-Ag CRC Research Program leader, Vicki Lane, said it was valuable in identifying how to progress the potential of the identified species.

"There is a pathway forward – there are some species that can be adopted immediately, as well as some where extra research is needed. Into the future, the key will be integrating them into whole farm systems," she said.

"The recommendations are all actionable and we're in a great position now to make good decisions moving forward in terms of the further research needed." ■

**"With 95% of total methane emissions from pasture, even relatively small reductions can have a major impact when applied at scale across grazing systems."**

## Six species for emissions reduction

| Pasture species | Region | Methane impact | Considerations |
|---|---|---|---|
|  **Lucerne** | Southern Australia | ■ low methane reduction (up to 5%)<br>■ high potential for reducing emissions intensity | ■ high quality feed<br>■ widespread use |
|  **Brassicas** | Southern Australia | ■ potential for high methane reductions (up to 20%) | ■ most research is NZ-based, need localised data<br>■ difficult to grow |
|  **Leucaena** | Northern Australia | ■ high methane reduction (up to 20%, depending on diet) | ■ suited to expansion in northern Australia |
|  **Desmanthus** | Northern Australia | ■ could reduce methane by 5–10% | ■ thrives in clay soils, unlike many legumes |
|  **Stylosanthes (stylos)** | Northern Australia | ■ more testing in vivo (in livestock) required<br>■ likely to impact emissions intensity | ■ widely used<br>■ little research data available |
|  **Biserrula** | Western Australia | ■ high methane reductions (up to 40%) | ■ expansion tempered by dominance of other species |

Early research suggests brassicas have high potential for methane reduction. Image: Matt Pierce, NSW DPIRD

### TOOLBOX

- MLA's Feedbase hub: **mla.com.au/feedbase-hub**
- Crunch your numbers with MLA's Carbon Calculator: **mla.com.au/carbon-calculator**
- Scan or click this QR code to read the *Leucaena* manual:

Ed Charmley **ed.charmley@csiro.au** Vicki Lane **vlane@zneagcrc.com.au** Joe Gebbels **jgebbels@mla.com.au**

# Sticking power key to dehorning patch success

**MLA-funded research to develop an effective and commercially viable patch for dehorning wounds is tackling a sticky challenge.**

Researchers are exploring the potential of hydrogel wound treatment to overcome the adhesion challenges faced in the development and testing phase of the patch prototype.

The team is focused on further refining the prototype to improve its ability to effectively seal wounds and therefore aid healing and prevent infection.

Researchers from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) have joined forces with The University of Sydney (USYD) team, led by Dr Dominique Van der Saag and PhD candidate Samantha Rudd, to realise this goal and improve the wellbeing of cattle.

Work in this area is vital for both productivity and welfare reasons, as an easy-to-apply wound treatment would not only protect wounds but also potentially deliver pain relief medication, antiseptic and antimicrobial ingredients following dehorning procedures.

Consultation with northern Australian cattle producers has confirmed the need for a cost-effective, affordable patch that is quick and easy to apply. While genetic breeding strategies continue to drive the transition to a fully polled national herd, dehorning remains a necessary husbandry procedure to ensure staff and cattle safety, and retain carcase quality and value.

## A sticky situation

Dr Sabrina Lomax, lead scientist at the Livestock Production and Welfare Group at USYD, emphasises the importance of developing a wound patch with effective sticking power. The nature of dehorning wounds makes this a significant challenge, as blood flow can prevent both adequate adhesion and delivery of any therapeutic ingredients infused into the patch.

"Tri-Solfen's® pain relief efficacy is limited for dehorning wounds as it performs best when absorbed through mucosal tissue and blood vessels, such as in castration and mulesing wounds.

"Dehorning wounds, however, have very little soft tissue to absorb the product, and the bleeding washes away much of the product, limiting absorption," Sabrina said.

Earlier experimentation with electrospun polycaprolactone (PCL) patches showed good sticking properties, however the time and cost required to produce them commercially limits their scalability.

## Hydrogel potential

The researchers went back to the lab and put their heads together to see how they could come up with an affordable patch that was quick and easy to apply and sealed wounds effectively. Hydrogel is one possible answer.

"We moved away from the PCL patches on their own and sought the expertise of UNSW researchers in the use of hydrogels. Hydrogels can be manipulated to have better adhesion properties as well as the potential to be infused with therapeutic ingredients," Samantha said.

"We're working on improving the adhesion of the hydrogel discs – which are like a gel disc rather than a fabric patch. Now we're looking at how to combine the right combination of hydrogel with the PCL patch.

"We may need to find an engineering solution to develop a type of applicator as getting them to stick in the field raises some challenges."

The first priority is simply sealing the wound – this alone would help with many of the issues, especially preventing infection.


Scan or click the QR code to read *A guide to best practice husbandry in beef cattle: Branding, castrating and dehorning – 2nd edition:*

Samantha Rudd administering a cornual nerve block with local anaesthetic to desensitise the horn area before dehorning. Image: Samantha Rudd

## Dehorning dos and don'ts

✔ follow best practice guidelines for pain relief

✔ do maintain a hygienic environment and disinfect tools between each animal

✔ do conduct dehorning as early as possible before the horn fuses to the skull at around two months old

✘ don't dehorn during dusty or rainy conditions – it can impact wound healing

✘ don't dehorn straight after mustering – let cattle rest for a day as stress levels can impact their recovery time.

### Innovation in the lab

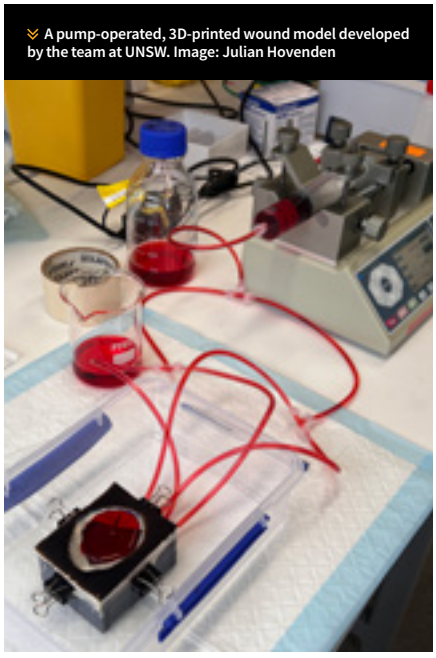
UNSW researcher Professor Penny Martens and USYD technical officer Julian Hovenden have worked extensively on developing and testing various patch solutions.

"The team is testing a model in the lab, where they're replicating the wound by using a hide, complete with hair, and using high-pressure glycerine to replicate the in vitro dehorning wound model," Samantha said.

"The glycerine is pumped through the bony surface and the hair, to ensure the patch can stick in real-life conditions."

This innovative approach to testing is a win for animal welfare as it reduces the need to test the patches on live animals during this early phase of development.

The researchers are hopeful that their ongoing work will soon deliver an effective, easy-to-use patch that will provide positive outcomes for Australia's cattle industry.



A pump-operated, 3D-printed wound model developed by the team at UNSW. Image: Julian Hovenden

**TOOLBOX**

MLA's pain relief and husbandry resources: **mla.com.au/pain-relief** and **mla.com.au/husbandry**

Samantha Rudd **samantha.rudd@sydney.edu.au**
Sabrina Lomax **sabrina.lomax@sydney.edu.au**
Sharon Dundon **sdundon@mla.com.au**

# Maintaining the integrity of your NLIS account

**Maintaining the integrity of Australia's livestock traceability systems requires that all livestock movements between different Property Identification Codes (PICs) are recorded in the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database.**

To remain compliant with state/territory legislation, receivers of livestock must ensure livestock transfers are recorded in the NLIS database within 48 hours of livestock arriving. This helps ensure rapid traceability is possible should any biosecurity or food safety threat emerge.

### Completing an NLIS transfer

It is the receiver's responsibility to ensure livestock transfers are completed in the NLIS.

**Scan or click the QR code to review the steps required to undertake an NLIS transfer and confirm that it has been recorded in the NLIS:**

### System transfer warnings

The number one reason producers contact our Customer Service team each month is when they receive a warning email about an NLIS system transfer. These warnings occur when a device (tag) has been transferred off a different PIC to the one it is registered to in the NLIS.

**Scan or click the QR code to learn more about resolving system transfer warnings:**

### Not sure what has happened to a device?

When you don't know whether a device has been lost or damaged, or whether an animal has died or been sold, you can assign the device an 'Inactive' status.

**Scan or click the QR code to learn how:**

**Did you know you can now complete your NLIS transfer via the eNVD?**

Whether you are sending livestock off your property or receiving them, you can add the eID device numbers of your livestock directly to an eNVD consignment. Receivers will then be able to confirm and complete the NLIS transfer directly via the eNVD.

Scan or click the QR code to watch a video guide:

### Confirming your transfers have been recorded

While completing a transfer is the responsibility of the receiver, sellers should also check the NLIS to confirm the relevant devices have been transferred off their PIC. This will help you maintain accurate records and ensure traceability is maintained.

**Scan or click the QR code to learn how to conduct a PIC reconciliation:**

Conducting regular PIC reconciliations allows you to compare the devices physically on your property with the devices registered to your PIC in the NLIS database, enabling you to identify (and rectify) any outstanding transfers before they become an issue.

**integritysystems.com.au/nlis** **1800 683 111**
**info@integritysystems.com.au**
Elizabeth Bradley **ebradley@integritysystems.com.au**

« Improving water retention on-farm helped boost soil health and increased carbon sequestration.

# No more chasing credits: Casino bets on soil benefits

**When producer-run Casino Food Company first started researching low or carbon neutral farming options, their goal was simple. They wanted to develop a modelled approach to estimating soil carbon sequestration that generated cost-effective carbon credits to improve market outcomes.**

## A cooperative advantage

Located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, the Casino Food Company is Australia's largest meat processing cooperative – currently bringing together 465 shareholders.

They initiated an MLA Co-Innovation project, which wrapped up at the end of 2024. Project lead and Casino Food Company Member Services Manager, Joseph Leven, said the company's reach meant it had the benefit of independently trialling the practical application of multiple aggregated soil carbon sequestration projects within a commercial supply chain.

"For many producers, developing carbon credits under one of the existing systems is too costly," Joseph said.

"Our goal was to find a more affordable solution for the industry, a way to quantify the environmental credentials we achieved without breaking the bank."

## Finding the real value of carbon

As the project progressed, Joseph said it became clear that carbon itself wasn't the value proposition – it was the outcome of something with even more impact.

"We realised pretty quickly that carbon isn't the headline when it comes to improving land productivity and profitability," Joseph said.

"If you focus on improving soil health, landscape hydration and biodiversity, carbon reduces naturally.

"Regardless of the carbon credits, implementing these practices wasn't just environmentally beneficial – it was economically sound."

While the project confirmed that producers could generate positive environmental outcomes, it also highlighted the limitations of existing carbon market mechanisms.

"We still don't have a reliable, cost-effective way to measure soil carbon change," Joseph said.

"The variability in soil types across even a single paddock makes modelling difficult.

"To get accurate data, you need intensive sampling, and that drives costs through the roof.

"Even if producers could afford the upfront investment, the market wasn't offering a clear return.

"There's no guarantee of a premium.

"Buyers aren't paying more for carbon-neutral beef, they just expect it – it's becoming a baseline standard, not a differentiator."

## A shift in mindset

According to Joseph, the project's most valuable outcome may be its shift in perspective.

"Instead of trying to fit producers into carbon frameworks, it validated what many were already doing and gave them confidence to keep going," he said.

"For the company, the value in simply doing it was much greater than the value of certifying it."

As a result, Joseph said the co-op is now focused on supporting its shareholders to continue improving their landscapes, knowing that carbon benefits will follow.

"Carbon is a great means of measuring success," he said.

"But the real value of that success is the improved soil health, increased landscape hydration and pasture availability on-farm, and riparian restoration that boosts productivity in both the land and the animals."

« Casino Food Company members focused heavily on improving landscape hydration throughout their independently run carbon project.

## TOOLBOX

- Learn more about carbon by attending MLA's Carbon EDGE workshop: **mla.com.au/carbon-edge**
- Calculate your total enterprise greenhouse gas emissions and emissions intensity per product produced with MLA's Carbon Calculator: **carbon-calculator.mla.com.au**

Joseph Leven **joseph.leven@casinofoodco.com.au** Alicia Waddington **awaddington@mla.com.au**

# Soil success good news for cattle and carbon

**NSW beef producers Tom and Katie Botfield's involvement in Casino Food Company's carbon project (see story opposite) has delivered more kilos of beef and healthier soils at their Northern Rivers property.**

The results have been impressive, with steer weights increasing from 250–300kg to 400–450kg and an average daily weight gain of 0.9–1.2kg over six to eight months.

## Shifting focus

The Botfield family's farm enterprise currently encompasses three properties, with two neighbouring blocks owned by Tom's parents and a third recently added by Tom and Katie.

"About 10 years ago, when I started becoming more involved in the family business, I decided I wanted to try doing things differently," said Tom, a former electrician.

"I mustered my parents' cattle in with mine to form one single mob and started completing a holistic land management course.

"It was a very different approach to what we'd previously done and definitely ruffled a few feathers at home, but I think when you're looking to get the best out of your land and improve your profitability, you need to be willing to look at all the options available to you."

Tom sold off his breeder herd and transitioned to a steer backgrounding operation in 2024.

He saw this as an opportunity to mix things up and investigate how focusing on soil health and carbon sequestration could improve market opportunities and his on-farm productivity. As a producer shareholder of Casino Food Company, Tom jumped at the chance to get on board the organisation's carbon project.

## A good fit

The carbon project worked seamlessly into what he was already doing to improve land condition and soil health.

"An increase in organic matter will aid in sequestering carbon from the atmosphere," he said.

"I was already working to do that because increased organic matter also allows for humus to form in the soil, which then almost becomes a battery that releases moisture and minerals that charge your pastures.

"Throughout the course of the project we've watched our lighter soils transform from a grey rocky sand to a smooth dark chocolate.

"Our pastures are growing in thickets and are supplying our cattle for longer."

While the broader project aimed to measure carbon sequestration, variability in soil types across the region made consistent testing difficult – for Tom, this challenge became a turning point.

"We couldn't get reliable carbon data because the soils were so different from paddock to paddock and year to year," he said.

"But what we could see – plain as day – was that the land was improving.

"Pastures were stronger, cattle were healthier, and erosion was down.

"At the end of the day, we weren't trying to tick boxes, we were trying to improve our land – if accurately measuring carbon sequestration was volatile across paddocks and years, then we felt we couldn't commit to carbon accreditation without financial risk.

"There was so much value in simply undertaking these steps as part of improved grazing land management that I felt more than happy to reduce carbon without the badge of honour."

## SNAPSHOT



**TOM AND KATIE BOTFIELD, 'BOTFIELD FARMS' –** Mummulgum, NSW

**AREA**
263ha

**ENTERPRISE**
Steer backgrounding (80 agistment cattle, 180 backgrounder steers)

**PASTURES**
Subtropical perennials, cool season multispecies mix

**SOILS**
Black basalt and sandy loams

**RAINFALL**
1,200mm

The Botfields have increased soil and pasture productivity through the project.

## Five steps for healthy soils

**These strategies are delivering benefits for Tom's cattle, land and bottom line.**

1 **Rest paddocks:** Tom rests his 48 paddocks from 50–60 days to increase ground cover, reduce erosion and improve pasture resilience.

2 **High-impact grazing:** Tom's grazing strategy now involves short, intense bursts of grazing between rest periods. This high-impact method mimics natural herd movement and encourages uniform manure distribution, improved soil biology and stronger pasture regrowth.

3 **Multispecies planting:** Tom introduced multispecies to boost biodiversity. These mixes have improved soil structure, increased biomass and supported a wider range of soil microbes.

4 **Solar pumps and increased water points:** Tom replaced traditional water infrastructure with solar-powered pumps and increased water points to reduce energy costs and manage grazing pressures by encouraging cattle to move across the landscape.

5 **Supplementing on high ground:** To reduce pressure on low-lying, erosion-prone areas, Tom directs cattle to higher ground with strategic placement of supplementary feed when required.

Tom Botfield **botfieldfarms@outlook.com** Alicia Waddington **awaddington@mla.com.au**

# Smarter breeding, lighter workload

**Central West NSW sheep producer Helen Woods picked up some valuable insights around nutrition, genetics and breeding objectives when she attended one of MLA's recent BredWell FedWell (BWFW) workshops.**

Other highlights included the value of safe handling and making sure farm activities were in sync with her breeding objectives.

Helen runs a prime lamb operation, joining Merino ewes to Border Leicesters, and joining first-cross ewes to Poll Dorset rams.

As she often works solo, Helen designed her operation with a focus on ease and safety. Her attendance at the workshop has set her up well to make the most of a combination of Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) and visual inspection to select rams to help her achieve this.

## Matching ASBVs to on-farm needs

At BWFW, producers learn how to improve their choice of rams through building an understanding of how to select genetics according to ASBVs and visual assessment.

Helen breeds lambs with low birth weights to improve lambing ease for her ewes.

This means she focuses on the birth weight (BWT) ASBV when selecting rams. Rams with a more negative BWT ASBV produce lambs which are lighter at birth.

She also considers reproduction and health ASBVs when making ram-purchasing decisions.

"If a ewe displays flystrike, it's just another job added to the maintenance of your flock. If you can select against that trait, it's a good outcome," Helen said.

To increase flystrike resistance through breeding, producers can select rams with lower early breech wrinkle (EBWR) and late dag (LDAG) ASBVs – both of which limit the conditions that promote flystrike.

Helen combines the use of ASBVs with visual assessment and culling criteria to ensure issues like flystrike are minimised within her flock.

"If I have sheep come through with flystrike I'll send them straight to market, because for me there's nothing to gain from it other than more work," she said.

"At least you can get a little bit of money back for the animal, rather than the risk of losing it."

## Safety first

Helen focuses on a range of visual traits when it gets to sale day – one of these is identifying those rams that are relatively calm and easy to work with.

"I focus on low stress stock handling, so if most of my stock are reasonably calm in the first place, then handling them is safer," she said.

"I'm still manual handling rather than using any handling equipment, so I work very closely with the sheep. I need everything to be safe and easy to handle. It's less stress for me and less stress on them."

## Insights from across the room

While Helen was already considering ASBVs, the expertise in the room at BWFW – from both the presenter and other attendees – was invaluable.

"There are so many ideas I'm going to try, it was such a great day for learning extra insights," she said.

"I've already been sharing the advice with people I know and telling them they need to attend the workshop."

## SNAPSHOT



**HELEN WOODS –**
Tullamore, NSW

**AREA**
364ha

**ENTERPRISE**
Wool and lamb production – 350 ewes

**PASTURES**
Native and naturalised species, including clovers and ryegrass

**SOILS**
Red alluvial to grey

**RAINFALL**
500mm

## TOOLBOX

- Find a BredWell FedWell workshop near you: **mla.com.au/bwfw**
- Learn more about sheep genetics: **sheepgenetics.org.au**
- Scan or click the QR code to download *A pocket guide to ASBVs*:

Mitchell Plumbe **mplumbe@mla.com.au**

# Making it to market

**Nine Queensland beef producers have been working towards unlocking the opportunities offered from environmental markets and incentives for reducing emissions.**

Currently, livestock producers can enter environmental markets through various methodologies, each of which involve rigorous data collection and evidence of changes made on-farm.

However, a group of north Queensland producers felt opportunities to be rewarded for their efforts to reduce carbon emissions were limited, rarely meeting the eligibility to enter the market. MLA's 'Method to market' (M2M) project is helping them navigate the challenges.

## Finding opportunities

Research lead Steven Bray said when the project began six years ago, environmental markets were relatively new.

"There was a lot of uncertainty around how producers could participate and whether it would be worthwhile for their business," Steven said.

During the project, the status of all nine properties and businesses were analysed from a productivity and profitability lens, and their carbon emissions estimated.

"It's a time-consuming process to collate all of this data, and a really important learning.

"We need to support and encourage landholders to retain appropriate business records. It makes good business sense and is critical for demonstrating environmental changes on a property," Steven said.

Once the data was collected, appropriate pathways to improve emissions and biodiversity were identified, as well as the potential impact those options might have on each business.

"After considering the options, most properties within the project have not undertaken a carbon project, because there were no carbon project methods suitable for their business," Steven said.

## Chasing the challenge

Steven said while being a difficult feat in northern Australia, environmental markets are an overall positive.

"If you can access them, environmental markets can provide a financial incentive to take steps which will improve your productivity and demonstrate improvement in the environment," he said.

While producers around Australia have had success in the carbon market through implementing appropriate practice changes to their businesses, survey results indicated negative sentiment in northern areas.

This largely stemmed from project design and implementation requiring broad systemic change or significant upfront costs if widespread uptake in grazing systems is to be achieved.

"Given the commitment, one of the challenges for most producers is recognising if this is a good business decision for their situation," Steven said.

Within M2M, two participating producers did take up the challenge, undertaking activities that have made them eligible to participate in the environmental markets.

With some Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) methodologies currently under review, that eligibility could increase across the region.

"The insights from this project are contributing to the potential redesign of those methods," Steven said.

Key findings from the project for consideration include:

- Current methods don't have the capacity to neutralise production emissions indefinitely, but only for a short period.
- Often large proportions of vegetated areas are ineligible for carbon projects and ACCU generation, though they represent environmental stewardship by producers.

## More from Method to Market

Following the M2M project's conclusion, a new project is being developed to drive further market access through improving biodiversity assessment and monitoring on-farm.

"Method to Market assessed the biodiversity value of the different land uses on properties, and examined how conditions could be further improved to enhance biodiversity," Steven said.

"The new project will develop a producer-ready tool to map the bio-condition of a property, including where bio-condition is improving, declining or remaining stable.

"The aim of the project is to use that research to demonstrate improvements in bio-condition for environmental markets or processors, retailers and ultimately consumers."

The project is expected to operate over the next four to five years.

**TOOLBOX**

- MLA's Sustainability Hub: **mla.com.au/sustainability-hub**
- MLA Carbon Calculator: **mla.com.au/carbon-calculator**
- Scan or click the QR code to learn more about ACCUs:

Steven Bray **steven.bray@dpi.qld.gov.au** Julia Waite **jwaite@mla.com.au**

# eID takes guesswork out of decision making

**For Victorian producer Jonathan Jenkin, electronic identification (eID) in sheep wasn't a leap into the unknown, but rather a natural extension of the systems already working in his cattle enterprise.**

Jonathan and his wife Jo run 450 first-cross beef cattle (turning off 375 yearling steers and heifers to feedlots annually) and a self-replacing composite flock of 2,000 ewes (selling to processors and restockers) at 'Banemore', Penshurst.

With 15 years of experience on the property and full ownership since 2020, the couple has steadily built a business focused on precision, performance and sustainability.

Jonathan had already successfully implemented National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) technology with their cattle, so saw immediate potential to apply eID in the lamb operation.

"We already knew the value of individual animal data and had seen how it could drive performance with our cattle," he said.

"The question was how to use it to make better decisions in the sheep side of the business."

## Taking the first step

Jonathan's interest in sheep eID technology gained momentum when he joined the 'Realising benefits from sheep eIDs' MLA Producer Demonstration Site (PDS), coordinated by Southern Farming Systems.

The project was designed to help producers define the benefits they were seeking from eID and trial practical applications that could improve productivity, labour efficiency and decision making.

"The PDS gave us the structure to test ideas and see what worked," Jonathan said.

"It wasn't just about getting the gear, it was about understanding how to use it to make our sheep enterprise more efficient."

Drawing on his experience with NLIS in cattle and with the added support through the PDS, Jonathan quickly identified several areas in his lamb operation where eID could be applied.

As a result, he determined he would class lambs by weight range and growth rate, identify high-performing self-replacing ewes, manage ewe condition ahead of lambing, and distinguish between single and twin-bearing ewes.

## Putting eID to work

Lambing at Banemore occurs over a five-week period, beginning in July.

To establish individual records from the outset, Jonathan decided to tag lambs with eIDs at marking.

From November through to March, he weighs lambs monthly to monitor growth rates.

"The monthly weigh-ins give us a clear picture of how each lamb is tracking, to make decisions about selling, retaining or adjusting feed based on real data – not guesswork.

"The first weigh-in – at weaning in November – is particularly important as it's when we group our lambs into weight ranges to guide early management decisions.

"Then, at the December weigh-in, the heaviest ewe lambs are selected for retention and are shorn that same month.

"Depending on seasonal conditions and market demand, decisions around shearing or selling older lambs are also informed by growth data."

Jonathan and Jo use eID tags in combination with a sheep handler, auto-drafter and a tag-reading system.

Data collected includes weaning and post-weaning weights, condition scores, health treatment records and reproductive data – such as the number of ewes joined to terminal sires.

All information is integrated into Mobble, allowing for seamless tracking and informed decision making throughout the season.

Victorian producer Jonathan Jenkin uses eID to support strategic decision making.

## SNAPSHOT

**JONATHAN AND JO JENKIN –**
Penshurst, Victoria



**AREA**
1,000ha

**ENTERPRISE**
450 cows, 2,000 ewes

**PASTURES**
Perennial and annual ryegrass, phalaris, clovers, tall fescue, summer crops

**SOILS**
Clay loam basalt, peat swamps, cracking clays

**RAINFALL**
643mm (long term 700mm)

> **"Depending on seasonal conditions and market demand, decisions around shearing or selling older lambs are also informed by growth data."**

# Tips for first-time users of eID

Jonathan said accuracy and consistency of data collection are key to getting the most out of eID.

"You need to be confident in the data to use it for decision-making," he said.

"More importantly, you need to maintain a consistent record of that data to use it for good decision making."

### Be clear on what you want to measure

"Pick which areas you want to track or improve upon – for example, growth rates in lambs," Jonathan said.

"Collecting data via eID takes time – you want to ensure you're focusing that time on collecting and analysing traits that you will use and will supply value."

### Know how the data downloads and how to manage it

Jonathan uses a tag reader, a panel reader and an auto-drafter to collect and store data – with all data integrated into his Mobble account.

He emphasises the importance of being able to sort and filter data in spreadsheets, as this enables meaningful analysis and supports confident, evidence-based decision making.

### Maintain your equipment

Jonathan said part of ensuring accurate data collection is keeping the weighing equipment clean, particularly around the weigh bar.

"A clean machine also allows you to gain accurate readings by being able to confirm animals are standing correctly during weighing," he said.

Jonathan found the battery systems a limiting factor when it came to accuracy as, even when they showed 100% charge, they didn't always record consistently.

To address this, he recommends using solar power or hard wiring the system.

### Stick with it

"After one season of consistent use, the process becomes second nature and the benefits become clear," Jonathan said.

"If you maintain that consistency long-term, you will see that gradual improvement in your flock's genetics and gain that return of investment."

### Results that matter

Since adopting eID technology, Jonathan has seen measurable improvements in how his lamb enterprise operates.

The ability to class lambs by weight and growth rate has allowed him to target specific markets with greater precision, smoothing out turn-off timing and improving cash flow during summer.

"We're not just selling when the season tells us to, we're selling when the lambs are ready and when the market suits."

Beyond sales, the system has helped Jonathan identify high-performing ewe lambs for retention – strengthening the genetic base of the flock and supporting long-term productivity.

Pre-lambing condition monitoring has become more targeted, with eID data helping Jonathan distinguish between single and twin-bearing ewes.

This has enabled more tailored feeding and care, improving outcomes for both ewes and lambs.

"It helps identify animal nutrition and health needs over this high growth period and alerts you to any issues," he said.

"This process works and was well worth investing in – it was also easy with everything linking to the one spot."

**TOOLBOX**

Scan or click the QR code to read more about this PDS:
Check out the latest on all our PDS projects at **mla.com.au/pds**

Jessie Wettenhall **jwettenhall@sfs.org.au**
Alana McEwan **amcewan@mla.com.au**

# Goats go for gold eID retention

Electronic identification (eID) devices are more than critical traceability and biosecurity tools – they provide opportunities for producers to transition herd management from a mob to an individual animal level.

Following the mandatory adoption of eIDs for sheep and goats in Australia from 1 January 2025, MLA is rolling out a new project funded by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) Livestock and Animal Traceability Development, Implementation and Improvement grant.

The aim of the project is to:

- investigate NLIS-approved eID devices' retention rates
- understand the causes of eID device losses
- explore strategies to enable greater eID retention for producers throughout the Australian goat industry.

### Want to be involved?

Goat producers across Queensland, NSW and SA were recently invited to contribute to this important research and be part of the project. Around 15 properties (each stocking at least 500 goats) are participating in the trial, delivered by AbacusBio on behalf of MLA and DAFF.

The properties will have two on-farm data visitations by AbacusBio between October 2025 and March 2026 with results expected to be shared prior to 30 June 2026.

### Why is it important?

MLA's Sheep and Goat Productivity Project Manager Dr Daniel Forwood said with mandatory eID adoption, understanding tag loss was more important than ever.

"Although National Livestock Identification System (NLIS)-approved eID devices go through strict approval processes, some producers report high tag loss," he said.

"We want to work with those producers to identify what's causing the loss and explore how we can improve device retention."

Producers involved in this research will not only provide the first verifiable datasets for NLIS-approved eID device retention, but will also provide invaluable insights to support producers to select preferred eIDs for their property.

Daniel Forwood
**dforwood@mla.com.au**

# Choosing and using the correct devices for all species

**Prior to leaving their property of birth, it's compulsory for all Australian cattle, sheep and goats to be fitted with a National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) approved device.**

Once an animal has been tagged, the NLIS-approved device must remain with the animal for life. It's an offence under legislation to remove an NLIS device (tag) without permission from the relevant state or territory government.

## Each electronic identification (eID) device is unique

NLIS-approved eIDs enable the recording of individual stock movements on the NLIS database so animals can be effectively and quickly traced throughout the supply chain.

Each NLIS eID has two numbers assigned to it:

1. **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) number:** encoded on the device's internal microchip. This number can only be read electronically by a scanner and contains a globally unique sequence comprised of the manufacturer's code and the device number.
2. **NLIS ID number:** printed on the outside of the device which is comprised of the Property Identification Code (PIC), manufacturer code, device type or species code, the year of manufacture and a serial number.

Either the RFID number or the NLIS ID number can be used to record the movement of individual livestock on the NLIS database.

You will know a device is NLIS-approved because it will have the NLIS logo printed on it. Cattle devices will also have the words 'Do not remove' printed on them.

## Choosing the right device

To ensure you're using NLIS-approved devices or to find contact details for the device suppliers, visit:

- **integritysystems.com.au/cattle-nlis**
- **integritysystems.com.au/sheep-goat-nlis**

When choosing your device, ensure you make the correct selection by referring to the following guidance:

- for cattle, NLIS-approved devices can either be a single ear tag or a rumen bolus combined with a visual ear tag – all NLIS-approved breeder devices are white and post-breeder devices are orange

for sheep or goats, please scan or click this QR code for a fact sheet outlining the various requirements for each species:

## A PIC number is required

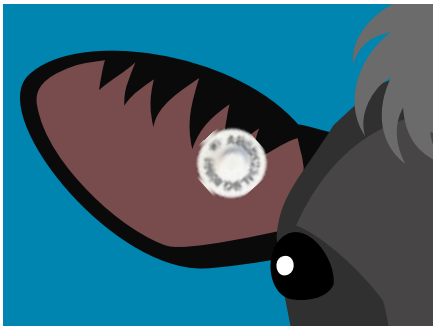
A PIC is an eight-character code that is required for all livestock movements in the NLIS.

PICs are provided by the relevant state or territory government. When you purchase NLIS-approved devices, suppliers will verify your PIC before processing the order. A list of the purchased devices (the RFID and NLIS ID numbers) is uploaded to your PIC in the NLIS database, where they will remain until they are moved, marked as deceased, or deactivated.

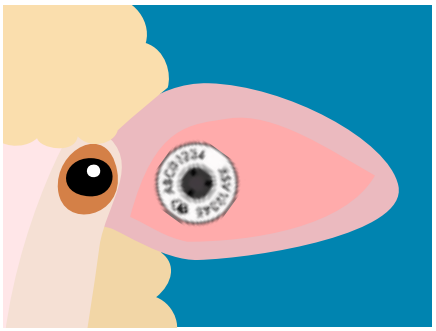
## Applying your devices correctly

All NLIS-approved devices should be applied according to the supplier's instructions.

Cattle devices should be positioned in the middle of the animal's right ear:



For sheep and goats, refer to your state or territory NLIS authority for any specific requirements on colour and placement. In general, devices should be applied to the animal's left ear:



## Replacing a lost tag

Where an animal has lost a tag, ensure it maintains lifetime traceability by applying a replacement device, considering the following points:

- if the animal is still on its property of birth when the device is lost, an NLIS breeder device must be used
- if the animal is no longer on its property of birth when the device is lost, an NLIS post-breeder device must be used.

If you're applying a post-breeder device and know the NLIS device number that was lost, you can complete a replacement in the NLIS database by scanning or clicking this QR code:

This will link the lost device to the new device number and retain the lifetime traceability status of the animal.

Where livestock is coming onto your property, ensure you have a supply of post-breeder devices on hand to ensure you can maintain lifetime traceability of these animals should any devices be lost.

Remember, it is an offence to remove NLIS devices. It is also an offence to use a breeder device on animals that have been introduced to your property.

## Problems with your devices

If you are having retention issues with your NLIS-approved devices, contact your supplier and they will investigate the issue. The supplier may replace, refund or take other action depending on what the issue is.

If you are unhappy with the supplier's response, you can submit a complaint to Integrity Systems Company (ISC) and ISC will then investigate the issue – scan or click the QR code to access the online complaint form on the ISC website:

ISC can only investigate issues relating to NLIS-approved devices. ■

## TOOLBOX

Read more about livestock identification by scanning or clicking the QR code:

Learn more about ordering your NLIS-approved devices by scanning or clicking the QR code:

**integritysystems.com.au/nlis** **1800 683 111** **info@integritysystems.com.au**
Elizabeth Bradley **ebradley@integritysystems.com.au**

# A cutlet above the rest:

## value-based marketing redefines premium lamb

**A world-first lamb product graded at 7% intramuscular fat (IMF) and above has hit premium restaurant plates in Sydney, following its launch earlier this year by Kinross Station and Endeavour Meats, in collaboration with MLA.**

The KS7 brand was officially unveiled at MLA's state-of-the-art kitchen in North Sydney, where chefs, producers and industry leaders, including celebrity chef Matt Moran, tasted this latest innovation in lamb for foodservice.

The launch directly aligns to MLA's ambition to deliver value-based marketing (VBM), a strategic approach that connects livestock production and product development with exceeding consumer expectations for quality, provenance and a luxury eating experience.

Read more in MLA's *Strategic Plan 2030*: **mla.com.au/strategic-plan**

KS7's high IMF delivers a luxurious mouthfeel, superior juiciness and depth of flavour that rivals the best cuts of beef, making it ideal for premium dining experiences.

### High marbling, high taste

The KS7 brand is supplied by Tom Bull, founder of Kinross Station, whose clients have been selectively breeding for high marbling traits.

Celebrity chef Matt Moran, who helped launch the brand, has featured KS7 lamb on the menu at his restaurant, Chophouse, giving diners a first taste of this ultra-premium innovation.

"I have known Tom Bull for a few years now and have watched him grow the Kinross brand, raising the bar higher and higher. KS7 is a product raised from sheer determination, dedication and bloody hard work," Matt said.

"KS7 is the first of its kind with 7% intramuscular fat and has everything it takes to showcase Australian lamb on the world stage. Congratulations Tom and the Kinross team."

### World-first

According to Tom, KS7 is lamb's first entry into the ultra-premium meat market.

"We've seen flocks where up to 60% of lambs meet KS7's stringent specifications. For producers, the payoff is significant," he said.

"Lambs that meet the marbling standard can attract up to $1 more per kilogram, which means an extra $35 per head at export weights.

"It's also about creating a product that chefs trust and diners will remember."

MLA's Managing Director, Michael Crowley, said KS7 represents a bold leap forward for the lamb industry.

"KS7 demonstrates innovation at its highest level. It's the result of decades of commitment and dedication to identify superior genetics, optimisation of production with a crystal-clear focus on delivering a luxury consumer experience that elevates lamb to new heights," he said.

### Benefits for value chain

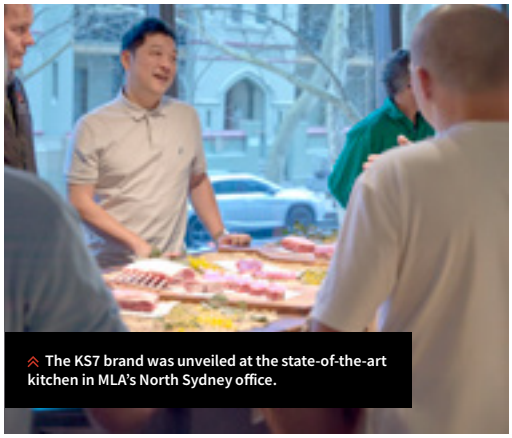
Michael said MLA has identified the significant upside opportunities for the industry through the focus on value-based marketing in the new *Strategic Plan 2030*.

"Producers like Tom Bull are demonstrating what is possible for the industry and consumers with a focus on premium product," he said.

"This brand is based on elite genetic selection, targeted breeding for IMF traits, precision feeding systems and advanced objective measurement technologies to measure IMF.

"KS7 is a fantastic example of how lamb can become a serious premium product when strict specifications backed up with a dedicated supply chain delivers a truly luxury experience.

"For the broader industry, genomics, objective measurement technology and individual carcase feedback are critical to unlocking further lamb and sheep industry value that will also enable the adoption of the cuts-based eating quality model for sheepmeat through Meat Standards Australia (MSA)."



The KS7 brand was unveiled at the state-of-the-art kitchen in MLA's North Sydney office.

Pictured at the launch of KS7 in the MLA North Sydney office are chef Matt Moran (second from right) with Hamish, Eddie, Tom and Phoebe Bull, Kinross Station.

**endeavourmeats.com.au/brand/kinross-station** **mla.com.au/msa**

# Driving demand for Aussie cattle

**When a Filipino cattle importer wanted to pivot from offering lower prices to delivering higher value, MLA's Live Export Program (LEP) and LiveCorp co-funded a three-month technical consultancy which enabled the business to transform – increasing their demand for Australian cattle by around 54%.**

RSRH Livestock Corporation is one of the two main feeder/slaughter importers in the Philippines, relying primarily on cattle from north-western Australia which it processes through its own abattoir and feedlot operation.

As a result of shifting consumer preferences and increasing competition from frozen imports, RSRH has looked to diversify its sales channels beyond wet market trading in recent years.

Spencer Whitaker, MLA's Asia Pacific Trade and Market Access Manager, said the company had established its own retail outlet and a line of affordable steak restaurants, as well as launching four new brands which they sell to trade and retail customers.

"Initially, they had been competing on cost alone but found this wasn't sustainable due to increasing competition and changing consumer preferences, together with the ongoing challenge of fluctuating Australian cattle prices," Spencer said.

"Despite establishing their own sales channels, RSRH's processing volume and profitability was not growing, so our Live Export Team worked with the business to modernise operations and set it up for future growth.

"That was a lot easier due to RSRH having already undertaken significant work to improve their business model and diversify their products, and they were able to realise the full benefit of the project as a result."

## Improved eating quality

The three-month technical consultancy involved two six-week blocks where the RSRH team worked under the guidance of Master Butcher Greg Butler, a butchery consultant with 20 years' experience working with MLA and Meat Standards Australia (MSA).

Greg was able to look at the business as a whole and demonstrate to RSRH how data-driven insights could deliver value to their business.

"RSRH was able to capture carcase feedback and connect that data to their specific brands to help understand which cattle were needed and what premiums they'd attract. They could then plan their import volumes well in advance to ensure they were meeting the demands of their market," Spencer said.

The RSRH team worked under the guidance of Master Butcher Greg Butler.

Greg also drew on MSA concepts, such as methods for hanging and ageing the carcases, to deliver significant improvements to RSRH products.

"As a result, multiple stakeholder groups assessed the RSRH product as having an eating quality that was on par with the more premium frozen beef products imported from the USA, which have been a popular choice for families in the Philippines who are willing to pay more for quality," Spencer said.

## Enhanced cattle management

To achieve these improvements, RSRH didn't need to make major changes to their order specifications for Australian exporters except to increase the percentage of steers. Instead, it was achieved through live animal and carcase management at their feedlot and abattoir.

Spencer said that by improving their transport efficiency and limiting the mixing of cattle at the feedlot, RSRH was able to reduce animal stress levels and improve their overall pH levels.

Under Greg's guidance, RSRH adopted the tenderstretch method when processing the animal. This is where the animal is hung from the hips instead of the heel (the Achilles method) to prevent muscle shortening and deliver improved quality and tenderness in hindquarter meat.

Hanging the carcases prior to boning also enabled the business to modernise and adopt chill boning in their restaurants and supermarkets, as opposed to the hot boning technique previously in use.

Efficiencies introduced throughout the consultancy saw chilled processing numbers quadruple (going from seven head to 30 per night), while boning room labour costs decreased by almost 70%.

## Return on investment

Until this year, sales at RSRH retail outlets had grown around 17% year-on-year (YoY), with March–May 2025 sales increasing 45% compared to the same time last year.

Performance in that three-month period alone demonstrated an immediate return of around AUD$3.80 for every MLA dollar invested.

Spencer said that while this value was realised by the importer, it has enabled RSRH to expand their import operations and substantially increase their demand for Australian cattle.

## Benefit to the Australian cattle industry

RSRH anticipates their orders for cattle from north-west Australia will increase by 54% this year. If this outcome could be replicated in other processors in the region, the benefits for Australia's cattle industry could be significant.

## Future projects

Spencer said this has been an important program that the LEP team were looking to expand into other countries such as Vietnam and possibly Brunei in the near future.

"By helping importers increase market demand for their product, we're also building a more robust demand for live cattle across the region for the long-term benefit of Australia's northern cattle producers."

**rsrhlivestock.com.ph** **rslivestockcorp@gmail.com**
**mla.com.au/livestock-export** Spencer Whitaker **swhitaker@mla.com.au**

# Lights, camera, grading: MEQ tech makes the cut

**JBS Australia has become Australia's first beef processor to receive 'Facility objective carcase measurement (OCM) device approval' from AUS-MEAT for the MEQ Solutions' cold carcase grading camera – marking a major milestone in the evolution of carcase grading technology.**

Resulting from the collaborative effort between JBS, MLA, the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC) and MEQ Solutions, three JBS sites are now approved for camera grading using MEQ Solutions' cutting-edge system.

## Driving consistency

With eight beef processing facilities across eastern Australia, JBS is uniquely positioned to meet diverse global market demands.

According to JBS Australia Northern Chief Operating Officer Brendan Tatt, this implementation is more than a technological upgrade, it's a strategic investment for the future of Australian beef.

"By integrating OCM technology, we're enhancing grading consistency and reinforcing our commitment to delivering a uniform eating experience for consumers, regardless of where the product is processed," he said.

## Enhancing quality

By replacing traditional subjective assessments with technology-driven evaluations, Remo Carbone, CEO of MEQ Solutions, said the MEQ Camera has been designed to reduce grading variability and enhance carcase value.

"Our camera gives JBS complete confidence in product quality, ensuring consistency for both domestic and export markets," he said.

"With the United States' herd at historical lows, it's more important than ever for Australian red meat brands to understand their product composition and adapt to changing market conditions."

## Meeting market expectations

MLA's Objective Measurement Program Manager Dr Dean Gutzke said tools like the MEQ Camera demonstrate how value can be created through consistent objective grading aligned with market expectations.

"This innovation supports the long-term competitiveness of Australian red meat," Dean said.

"The MEQ Camera's ability to deliver precise and repeatable measurements plays a critical role in aligning carcase grading with consumer expectations and market specifications.

> **"Our camera gives JBS complete confidence in product quality, ensuring consistency for both domestic and export markets."**

Three JBS sites are now approved for camera grading using MEQ Solutions' cutting-edge system.

"By removing subjectivity from the grading process, processors can more accurately predict eating quality outcomes – an essential factor in maintaining consumer trust and brand loyalty."

This level of consistency is especially important for branded beef programs, where uniformity in tenderness, marbling and overall eating experience is key to premium positioning in both domestic and international markets.

With objective grading also enabling processors to better segment products, tailor offerings to specific market needs and optimise value across the carcase, Dean said the technology's integration into commercial operations reflects a broader industry shift toward data-driven decision making.

"Objective measurement tools like the MEQ Camera are not just about improving grading accuracy, they're about enabling a more transparent and responsive supply chain," he said.

"This helps ensure that Australian beef continues to meet evolving consumer preferences and maintains its reputation for quality and integrity."

## Benefiting producers

Beyond internal quality assurance, Dean said OCM technology also benefits cattle producers by providing more accurate carcase feedback.

"This data-driven insight allows producers to better understand how specific traits – such as marbling, fat distribution and muscle conformation – impact grading outcomes and market performance," he said.

"With access to objective measurements, producers can make more informed decisions around breeding, nutrition and herd management strategies.

"Over time, this leads to improvements in herd genetics, carcase quality and overall productivity – ultimately boosting profitability and competitiveness."

**mla.com.au/objective-measurement** Dean Gutzke **dgutkze@mla.com.au**

# Lambassador turns 10

## Celebrating a global network of Aussie lamb lovers

**A decade ago, Australian lamb held an emerging presence within many global markets. Today, it's a premium product enjoyed in more than 90 countries, with more than 359,000 tonnes shipped globally in 2024 alone – generating more than AU$3.7 billion.**

Australia may produce just 7% of the world's sheepmeat, but it punches well above its weight – accounting for more than 40% of global exports, it is the world's leading sheepmeat exporter.

Here, we celebrate MLA's Lambassador program's 10th birthday.

### Lambassador's Japanese origins

It's been 12 years since MLA's Japan-based Senior Foodservice Manager, Kazunori Mitsuhashi, began developing opportunities to promote Australian lamb within the nation that was only consuming 200g per person annually at the time.

Employing the aid of sheepmeat butcher Mori Higashizawa – the third-generation owner of Toyo Meat in Nayoro, Japan – and with support from International Markets General Manager (at the time, Japan Regional Manager) Andrew Cox, the idea of the Lambassador program was born.

Taking inspiration from MLA's annual 'eat more Australian lamb' advertising campaign that kicked off in 2005 with Sam Kekovich – dubbed the 'Lambassador' – the trio sought Japanese chefs and butchers who could serve as ambassadors for the Australian-grown protein.

"Japan is home to only about 25,000 sheep. With such a limited local supply, I saw a real opportunity for Australian lamb – but before we could build demand, we had to first build awareness," Kazunori said.

### Lamb's built-in legacy

Mori can claim to be the program's very first Lambassador – he even helped design the logo when the program came to life in 2015 – but sharing his love for lamb is not a new concept.

Toyo Meat, which was founded by his grandfather in 1928, specialises in sheepmeat cuts and has been selling Australian-grown lamb and mutton to customers for almost 50 years.

"Until the 1980s, I had only ever seen frozen meat, so when chilled Australian lamb was first imported to Japan, it felt like a revelation," Mori said.

"The beautiful aroma the fat produced when cooked seeded my love and desire for Australian lamb as an elementary student.

"Paired with the consistent size, balanced eating quality and lean meat yield, and strong traceability that showcased the passion and hard work behind the Australian lamb industry, my desire could only grow."

Today, 99% of the sheepmeat Mori stocks is Australian-grown.

According to Mori, the most popular sheepmeat dish in Japan is Jingisukan (Genghis Khan) – a Mongolian-style barbecue that is traditionally made with lamb or mutton.

"We specialise in secondary cuts suited for Jingisukan dishes, bone-in smoked lamb hams, lamb sausages and lamb prosciutto – we even have rarer items available like pastrami from lamb and smoked lamb tongue.

"One of the keys to promoting Australian lamb in Japan is adapting it to suit our dining styles, taste preferences and occasions," he said.

Mori Higashizawa was MLA's first Lambassador in 2015 – he even helped design the Lambassador logo.

"By crafting products that feel familiar yet exciting, we help people discover lamb in a way that fits seamlessly into their lives."

More recently, Mori has moved beyond Japan's borders to conduct butcher masterclasses in Thailand and Vietnam – forming global relationships through his love for Australian lamb.

### Becoming a global phenomenon

The year 2022 marked a major milestone for the Lambassador program, with the reopening of international borders following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognising the pivotal role of Australian lamb in keeping the Lambassadors connected with each other and Australia, Kazunori saw value in broadening the program and seeking Lambassadors from other Australian lamb export markets.

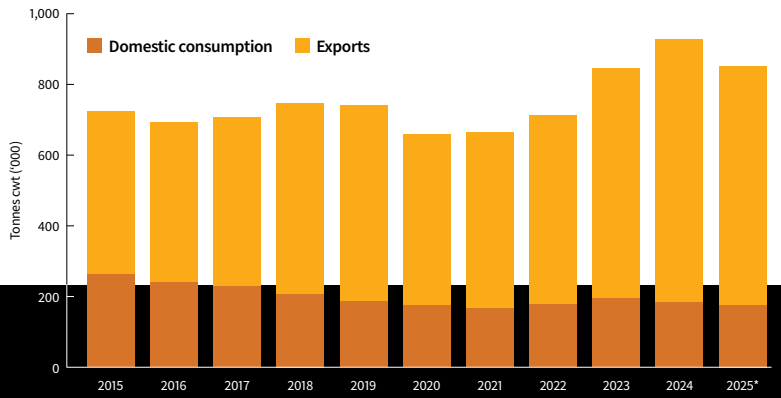



Table 1: **Australian sheepmeat domestic utilisation and export (2015–2025)**

*Source: DAFF, ABS, Trade Data Monitor (TDM), MLA calculations.*
**Forecast (MLA March 2025 Sheep projections).*


During the 10-year celebration of Lambassador in October, Lambassadors cooked lamb dishes for industry guests in the MLA Sydney office.

"The Victorian State Government has supported the program from the beginning," Kazunori said.

"Their continuous backing throughout the pandemic gave us confidence to think bigger – to take Lambassador beyond Japan and into other regions where Australian lamb was gaining traction."

Today, the program encompasses a network of 123 Lambassadors across 19 markets.

### Be a Lambassador

With the expanded global reach, the Lambassador program now includes food influencers and nutritionists, in addition to chefs and butchers.

"Our continued focus is on market diversification, understanding unique market requirements, and supporting marketing efforts through targeting younger and culturally diverse consumers," Kazunori said.

"Diversifying our team of Lambassadors algins perfectly with our goal to grow demand. It also aligns with our belief that lamb brings people together.

"Our slogan is 'Be a Lambassador' – anyone who loves Australian lamb and shares it is a Lambassador in my books."

# Aussie lamb's top fans

## The US

In 2024, North America became Australia's top lamb export market, receiving 83,513t of product valued at A$1.26 billion.

MLA's Market Development Associate for North America, Andy Groneman, said the region's appetite for Australian lamb is linked to the key elements of trust the Aussie Lamb logo represents.

"We're seeing more restaurants and retailers in the US explicitly call out 'Australian lamb' because it signals quality, provenance and integrity," he said.

"It fits perfectly into the kind of foodservice stories consumers care about – fresh, sustainable, grassfed, hormone-free and often halal."

Andy Groneman, MLA Market Development Associate – North America.

Over the past decade, Australian lamb exports to the US have grown by more than 70% to now make up around 70% of total sheepmeat imports in the US.

## MENA

Despite competing with a strong domestic supply, the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region was Australia's second largest export market for lamb in 2024 – importing 98,917t valued at A$964 million.

The new Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Australia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as the extension of shelf-life in Gulf markets from 70 to 90 days, are set to further support trade by reducing costs and expanding opportunities.

MLA's Corporate Chef for MENA, Tarek Ibrahim, has championed Australian red meat across the region since 2005.

He is co-founder of six restaurants across Egypt under the Umami brand and works in educating chefs, consumers and foodservice professionals on the quality, versatility and sustainability of Australian red meat.

As part of his involvement in the Lambassador program, Tarek balances the positioning of Australian lamb as a premium quality item, while also ensuring it remains in the daily consumption repertoire.

"The Middle East is a unique market in being known as 'the land of lamb'," Tarek said.

"But Australia has worked hard in making its product's presence – and desirability – gradually more known.

Tarek Ibrahim, MLA Corporate Chef – MENA.

"In the last five to six years especially, Australian lamb has become more attractive to younger chefs as they gain more knowledge of Australian red meat production standards, eating quality excellence and compliance with halal certification.

"The introduction of the Lambassador program to the region in 2022 enabled this knowledge to expand further amongst chefs and enable them in turn to educate their customers and staff.

"As Lambassadors, they take what they learn through the program – from production standards to cooking techniques – and deliver it to consumers' plates in ways that are culturally relevant and exciting."

## Greater China

The Greater China region is another top lamb export market for Australia, with 56,337t of sheepmeat exported in 2024, bringing in a revenue of A$376 million.

While China Mainland is our top export market for frozen lamb, this year saw the approval of 17 new Australian establishments for chilled lamb – with chilled lamb export volume already tripling this October compared to 2024.

**lambassadors.com** Mori's Toyo Meat **@29notoyo_official**
**mla.com.au/international-markets** Joshua Anderson **janderson@mla.com.au**

LAMBASSADOR of Aussie Lamb

» Producer Deb Gray presenting to students at a farm day.

# School is in session

**When it comes to a viable future for agriculture, the workforce and public perception are two critical pieces of the puzzle. MLA's Australian Good Meat Education school program underpins both, working to support the growth of quality-based red meat industry education in classrooms nationally – and inspire student interest as a future career pathway.**

The program's hero asset is a suite of more than 100 curriculum-aligned primary and secondary school resources that support all dimensions of the Australian Curriculum and multiple subject area learning outcomes.

MLA Schools and Education Manager Susan Howe, who has spent nearly five years in the role with the goal of enhancing industry education, said there was a growing emphasis on pathways to support confident content delivery.

"We can't assume that students will gravitate towards an ag career without prior early exposure to it. Similarly, teachers unfamiliar with agriculture usually lack the confidence to introduce this content in the classroom. Everything starts with education," Susan said.


## Step inside the virtual classroom

**Meet one of the red meat producers who engages with primary students through 'virtual classroom' online education sessions.**

Both from her farm near Araluen, NSW, and out and about, Deb Gray is an active participant in the Australian Good Meat Education program.

In her role as an Ambassador for the Red Meat Industry, Deb attends agriculture shows and career days, visits schools, and participates in virtual classrooms.

» Deb Gray can often be found in action, sharing her producer knowledge with students.

"It's such a thrill to show students how everything connects from paddock to plate," Deb said.

"The students are always amazed to hear about all of the ag-tech that is used, and that there are so many jobs beyond being a producer."

Since being involved with the education program, Deb said the interest from schools has grown, and there is more opportunity than ever to interact with students.

"There are some really good agriculture teachers in metro areas too, and it's great to be able to support them with MLA's school resources where we can."

In her own community, Deb supported the local high school's agriculture program through donating a steer, U46.

"The students found so much value in having access to that steer. They designed feeding rations, got him to the top of his weight class, and washed and trained him to be led," Deb said.

"He's been a great tool for getting the students excited about agriculture."

Deb recommends any producers interested in supporting red meat education should call their local school's ag teacher and ask how they can help, and refer to MLA's education resources.

"This industry will keep changing, and we need generations of the future to gravitate towards a career in ag to conquer any future challenges."

"Ag teachers are highly engaged with our resources, yet scope remains for wider adoption, particularly across primary school educators. Insights tell us that educators lack confidence in teaching ag content, and those more confident with the subject are seeking to upskill their industry knowledge."

The education program uses several avenues to drive red meat classroom education, including:

- live-streamed 'Smart Farming' virtual education sessions for primary schools
- agricultural society school programs
- teacher conferences
- teacher professional development
- digital promotion
- utilising MLA's Red Meat Ambassadors.

"Our Red Meat Ambassadors play a crucial role in our school education program, helping to share red meat's story," Susan said.

"Teachers are the most direct pathway to drive industry education, so our program efforts primarily centre on enabling this audience through impactful opportunities to form stronger industry-to-teacher connections."

### National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy

The recently released National Schools Food and Fibre Education Strategy is a collaboration from the 15 Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) to expand the reach and deepen the impact of food and fibre education.

The early years of implementation will focus on cross-RDC collaboration to streamline access and use of classroom resources, opportunities for practical learning and increasing industry-to-school connections.

"We all share the desire to increasingly connect today's classrooms with Australian agriculture," Susan said.

"Collaboration and sharing our resources makes great sense to reach this goal more efficiently and effectively."

### TOOLBOX

- Share the resources with a teacher you know: **goodmeat.com.au/educational-resources**
- Scan or click the QR code to experience what students see in the virtual classroom:
- Know someone who is interested in a career in the red meat industry? Check out **mla.com.au/career-hub**

Susan Howe
**showe@mla.com.au**

# A taste of the future of red meat

**More than 140 guests from the foodservice industry joined MLA recently for Rare Medium Live – a night showcasing innovation on a plate using beef and lamb from some of Australia's most watched chefs and rising stars in culinary circles.**

In its third year, the event has become an opportunity to demonstrate the versatility of red meat, sharing dining inspiration with higher-volume foodservice operators and retailers.

Flavour combinations and trends presented on the night in previous years have led to expanded menu offers with beef and lamb, and even a new product line at retail.

This year our guest chefs were tasked with creating a plate representing what modern Australian cuisine means to them.

**Scan or click the QR code to watch the chefs talk about what modern Australian cuisine means to them:**

### Baba's Place – Baba's Place, Marrickville, NSW

"For me…it's the migrant story, and sharing the lives first and second-generation migrants lived, the food they cooked. As a chef, you want to use the best ingredients and having such prime lamb is really exciting. We're ticking both boxes: telling the story and using the best produce."



### Olympus Dining – Redfern, NSW

"To me, modern Australian cuisine means freedom – using any cuisine and any ingredients I want. We can do any dish as modern Australian."

### King Clarence – Sydney, NSW

"There are a lot of bits and pieces from everywhere. I think it makes it unique. In Europe, you won't find anything as multicultural and diverse as what we have in Australia."


### What the diners said

"To the producers, thank you! Please keep doing what you're doing. It hasn't been an easy few years, yet the eating quality and consistency remain outstanding. Your commitment to welfare, sustainability and innovation helps chefs like me create better food every day. Continued collaboration, especially around secondary cuts, portion formats and clear provenance, will help us reduce waste, improve value and tell the full paddock-to-plate story to our guests."

**Luiza Gomes, Head of Culinary, Guzman y Gomez Mexican Kitchen**

**raremedium.com.au** **australianbeef.com.au**
**australianlamb.com.au** Catherine Golding **cgolding@mla.com.au**

# The role of red meat in tackling 'hidden hunger'

**Australians, generally, are overfed but undernourished – a phenomenon scientists refer to as the 'hidden hunger'.**

Animal-sourced protein is key to overcoming this imbalance between the quantity and quality of many Australians' diets.

A recent study by CSIRO found Australian diets that contain 60–80% of protein derived from animal sources are nutritionally beneficial.

CSIRO researcher, Brad Ridoutt, said the research aimed to find out what dietary behaviours are most beneficial. This information could contribute to the current review of the national dietary guidelines.

"Evidence is emerging internationally, but we wanted to investigate the situation on a local level, with consideration for our food production systems, dietary habits and environmental pressures," Brad said.

With increasing concern that Australians are consuming inadequate amounts of important micronutrients, the research is an opportunity to point people to appropriate food sources.

## Perfecting your protein

- **Diets with less than 20% animal protein were least likely to meet nutrient requirements and had higher kilojoule intake.**
- **Diets with 60–80% animal protein:**
  - **most likely to meet Estimated Average Requirements (EARs) for essential micronutrients such as iron, zinc, vitamin B12 and protein**
  - **had a lower total kilojoule intake, reducing overall environmental impact.**
- **The average protein intake in the average Australian diet is 55% animal-sourced.**

### Animal protein packs a punch

To identify the ideal diet, the study reviewed almost 10,000 real diets reported within the Australian Health Survey.

"For each of those diets, we evaluated how closely they conformed with the Australian dietary guidelines, and an environmental score related to four indicators, including pesticides, climate impact and land and water use," Brad said.

Rather than reviewing the benefits of individual ingredients or elements, the entire diet was considered.

The benefits of a high animal-protein diet came from both the protein itself, and the other food choices people were more likely to make because of that protein intake.

As a result, the subgroup of Australians whose protein was 60–80% animal-sourced were most likely to meet their estimated average requirements for micronutrients.

"Animal-sourced proteins are likely to be eaten in combination with other foods which offer important but often under-consumed micronutrients like magnesium, zinc, calcium and vitamin A," Brad said.

The protein-rich foods – including meat, seafood, eggs and dairy foods – can themselves be important sources of micronutrients.

Diets including less than 20% animal protein were least likely to meet nutrient requirements and had a higher energy intake.

### Impact to diet

"Our research, however, shows animal-sourced foods have a very important role to play in a more healthy, sustainable diet," Brad said.

"While consuming protein which is 60–80% animal-sourced is optimal, 55% is the average anyway, so we're not too far from the goal.

"These results suggest people don't need to change their diet in a dramatic way – it gives them the permission and the evidence to support what they're already doing."

## MLA nutrition

MLA's Nutrition program promotes Australian red meat by showcasing its role in a healthy and sustainable diet. Through credible research and communications with health professionals, media and consumers, the program builds trust and reinforces red meat's value in today's changing food environment. This ensures red meat remains relevant, respected and recommended. Learn more at **mlahealthymeals.com.au**

Scan or click the QR code to download *Protein Source and Micronutrient Adequacy in Australian Adult Diets with Higher Diet Quality Score and Lower Environmental Impacts*:

Brad Ridoutt **brad.ridoutt@csiro.au** **mlahealthymeals.com.au** Monique Cashion **mcashion@mla.com.au**

# Lemongrass and chilli lamb cutlets

Share the Lamb
100% AUSTRALIAN

**Spice up summer dining with this fresh dish which is guaranteed to get tastebuds tingling. For more delicious lamb recipes, visit australianlamb.com.au**

Serves **4** Prep time **10 minutes** Cooking time **15 minutes (plus 5 minutes resting)**

## INGREDIENTS

8 lamb cutlets, excess fat trimmed
2 tbsp olive oil
1 long red chilli, seeds removed, finely chopped
½ red onion, finely diced
1 lemongrass stalk, white part only, finely chopped
1 large avocado, diced
150g grape tomatoes, diced
1 Lebanese cucumber, diced

**To serve:**

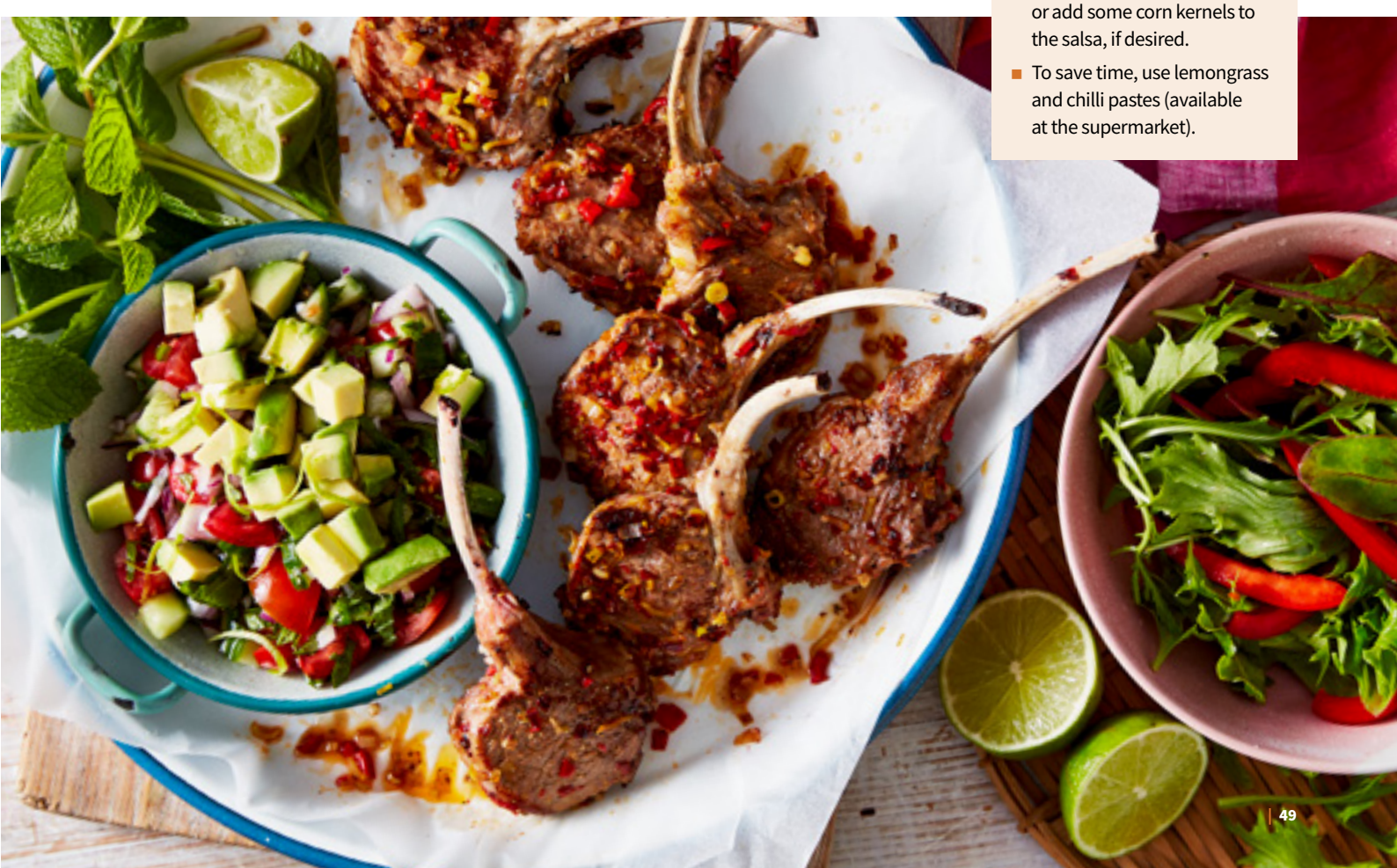
zest and juice of 1 lime plus extra wedges
2 tbsp mint leaves, finely chopped plus extra sprigs
baby salad leaves
red capsicum, thinly sliced

## METHOD

1. Place lamb cutlets, half the oil, chilli and lemongrass in a large snap-lock bag. Season and toss well to coat.
2. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat and cook cutlets, in batches if necessary, for three to four minutes each side or until cooked to your liking. Set aside on a plate loosely covered with foil to rest for five minutes.
3. In a medium bowl place onion, avocado, tomatoes and cucumber and add lime zest and juice, mint and remaining oil. Season and toss well to coat.
4. Serve cutlets with avocado salsa, lime wedges, mint leaves, salad leaves and capsicum.

## TIPS

- Lamb loin chops, forequarter chops or chump chops would also work well in this recipe.
- For frenched lamb cutlets, reduce cooking time by half.
- Use your choice of herbs – coriander, oregano or parsley would also work well.
- Finely dice some capsicum or add some corn kernels to the salsa, if desired.
- To save time, use lemongrass and chilli pastes (available at the supermarket).



MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

# Pasture insights to power your paddock

**With summer's arrival, it's time to plan for your 2026 grazing needs. Whether you're budgeting available feed after peak pasture growth in the north or preparing perennial pastures for winter sowing in the south, taking steps to measure growth, estimate livestock demand and map out your grazing strategy will set you up for more profitable decisions.**

**MLA offers a range of options – including in-person workshops, online training modules, tools and resources – to help fuel your feedbase.**

### Farm system and feedbase workshops and training programs

- BredWell FedWell
- Making More From Sheep
- More Beef from Pastures
- EDGE network
- Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS).

### Online learning and tools

The Toolbox provides self-paced learning modules, practical tools and calculators covering feedbase, soils, animal welbeing and genetics – helping producers build skills, support decision making and apply best-practice management on-farm.

### Resource hubs

Explore themed resource hubs with practical videos, fact sheets, case studies and guides on soil, pasture and weed management to improve pasture production, quality and persistence – all grounded in the latest research and development.

Scan or click the QR code to check out our upcoming training workshops or visit **mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools** to find out more: