

FEEDBACK

MLA – FOSTERING PROSPERITY

SPRING 2026



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MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

FEEDBACK



Cover: Turn to page 10 to read how Queensland beef producers James and Aleisha Pisaturo (pictured with their children Olivia and George) are building productivity from genetic decisions. Image: Amie Hosking Photography

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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.



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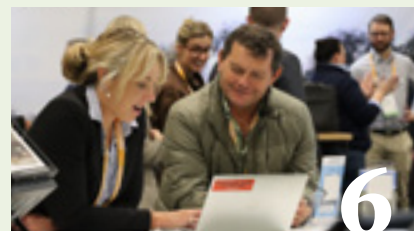
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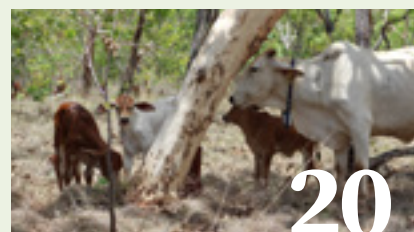
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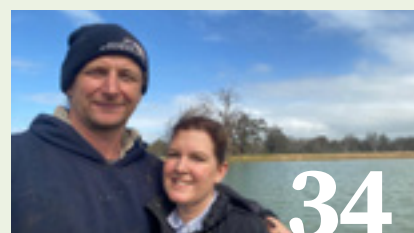
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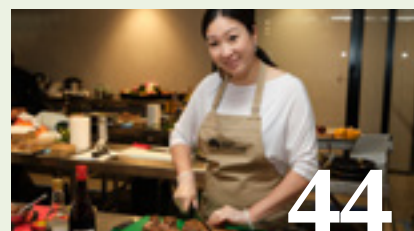
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A note from the MD

Welcome to the spring edition of *Feedback* magazine.

It has been a dynamic year on the international trade front with a number of headwinds shaping a challenging trading environment. On the other hand, demand for quality livestock is strong and prices have remained particularly resilient. In this edition, we take a deeper look into the key drivers shaping our operating environment – there is plenty to talk about as we continue to deliver our *Strategic Plan 2030*.

Trade conditions

MLA's key role in supporting ongoing demand and market access for red meat and reinforcing Australia's reputation for its quality, safety and reliability is increasingly important, particularly considering the dynamic global trading environment.

Recent challenges have included:

- China's beef safeguard was triggered in mid-June, prompting an increase in tariffs to 55% for the remainder of the calendar year.
- Korea's beef quota was reached in mid-July, meaning tariffs jumped from just over 5% to more than 24% for the rest of the year.
- US tariffs on sheepmeat and goatmeat increased to 12.5% in late July.
- Ongoing uncertainty around the conflict in the Middle East, which has disrupted trade, added considerable cost, and impacted fuel and fertiliser prices.

Australian producers should be reassured that our industry is highly diversified and resilient, with Australian red meat exported to more than 100 countries around the world.

Key markets such as the US and Japan are performing strongly from a volume perspective, while emerging markets including Canada, South-East Asia and the UK are experiencing continued growth. Willingness to pay and cost of living pressures remain challenging.

Beef delivered a record year of production in FY26, up 8.6% year-on-year to 2.985 million tonnes.

While lamb slaughter contracted, the results are cause for optimism, with strong supply and global demand.

Learn more about market trends and forecasts on pages 5 and 8 and see how producers are engaging with their live export markets on page 42.

Kicking goals with red meat

Australian beef reached millions of potential customers during the FIFA World Cup, with a marketing campaign called 'The Greatest' running across Australia's official coverage. It underscored the growth opportunity for Australian red meat.

The ad featured in almost 150 television spots across the tournament, reinforcing the premium nature and global reputation of Australian beef.

Alongside the extensive work to improve market opportunities globally, it highlights how MLA continues to drive demand and produce outcomes for Aussie producers.

Campaigns such as this also grow trust with consumers, building on the industry's already strong foundations. Our latest Consumer Sentiment research data shows 65% of Australian consumers trust the beef and lamb industries to do what is right.

This demonstrates the potential of the red meat sector, notwithstanding the challenges we are facing across the supply chain.

Turn to page 43 to learn more about The Greatest campaign and find out how MLA is growing demand for red meat through nutritionists on page 44.

Value chain innovation

MLA's research and development program continues to deliver outcomes that will benefit the entire red meat sector.

Australian producers should be reassured that our industry is highly diversified and resilient, with Australian red meat exported to more than 100 countries around the world.

One of the bold ambitions in MLA's *Strategic Plan 2030* is to establish multibreed beef genetic evaluation and livestock credentials.

We are making more information available to help industry better understand what multibreed genetic evaluation is, why it is being pursued, and how it is expected to support the future productivity, profitability and sustainability of Australian beef businesses.

MLA has played a significant role in enabling the industry to transform into a sophisticated, data-rich and science-led sector. It's the foundation of many of our activities, including another of the *Strategic Plan's* bold ambitions – value-based marketing.

MLA's new *Value chain innovation outcomes and opportunities report* recognises many aspects of this work and demonstrates how producers, partners and investors are benefitting from our focus on enabling red meat innovation.

MLA will continue to identify opportunities to unlock value creation and capture across the supply chain, particularly through our ongoing focus on objective measurement technologies which are already helping make value-based returns a reality for many producers. A link to the report is available on page 40.

MLA Updates

MLA is now in the second year of our *Strategic Plan 2030*, and we'll be sharing many of the outcomes of our work to date at MLA Updates in Townsville on 24 November. Registration details are on page 3.

We look forward to seeing you there. ■

• **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



Ekka action



MLA presented 'Queensland Beef Up Close' at the Ekka in Brisbane in August, giving show-goers an interactive opportunity to get up close to cattle while learning about the beef industry. Attendees heard from MLA's Red Meat Ambassadors, MLA staff and other industry experts, as they shared insights into animal features, beef production and fun facts about the Australian red meat industry.

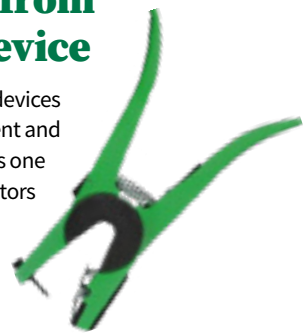
▶ Learn more about MLA's Australian Good Meat platform at: goodmeat.com.au

Get the best from your NLIS device

Electronic identification devices are a significant investment and their correct application is one of the most important factors in retention.

Using an NLIS-approved applicator helps ensure devices remain secure and readable while supporting positive animal welfare outcomes. Using the wrong applicator can contribute to device loss, infections and reduced device performance.

▶ To check which devices and applicators are approved, scan or click this QR code:



Record quarter for feedlots

Australia's feedlot sector continued its strong growth trajectory during the June 2026 quarter, with record numbers on feed, record feedlot capacity and record grainfed beef export volumes highlighting sustained confidence across the industry.

Results from the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) and MLA Feedlot Survey show Australian feedlots turned off 1,050,768 head of cattle during the June 2026 quarter, while numbers on feed reached a new record of 1,660,513 head. Feedlot capacity also rose to a record 1,794,806 head.

Queensland remained Australia's largest feedlot state, accounting for 55% of national feedlot capacity. The state's utilisation rate lifted from 94% to 98% over the quarter, with turn-off rising 3.2% to 653,734 head and numbers on feed increasing 4.5% to 973,049 head.

NSW drove most of the national capacity growth, increasing 3% to 558,601 head. While turn-off eased 3.9% to 268,112 head, numbers on feed edged higher to 503,502 head.

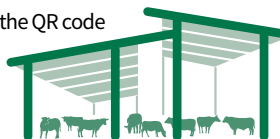
South Australia recorded modest growth in capacity and cattle on feed, while Victoria and Western Australia experienced lower numbers on feed and utilisation rates during the quarter.

Australian grainfed beef exports reached 121,750 tonnes during the June quarter, making it the largest June quarter export volume on record and 7.7% above the same period last year.

▶ mla.com.au/feedlot

▶ feedlots.com.au

▶ Scan or click the QR code to read more:



Levy roadshows

Four red meat Peak Industry Bodies are involved in consultation activities as part of a review into the levies collected from producers by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. These levies are used to fund research and development, marketing, biosecurity and residue testing.

The Goat Industry Council of Australia is well advanced in its consultation and engagement program after developing a proposal to increase its levy from 37.7c/head to 90c/head transaction.

Cattle Australia is undertaking a review and has been engaging with stakeholders after an independent analysis of the levy structure, its benefits and alternative structures.

The Australian Lot Feeders' Association and Sheep Producers Australia have also received independent reports on their levies and are considering next steps in the review process.

MLA, as the Research and Development Corporation for the red meat industry, is supporting all the Peak Industry Bodies in their reviews.

▶ Scan or click the QR code to learn more:



On the ground

with Josh Anderson



Ear to the ground

Short on time but want the latest insights on international red meat trade? MLA's *On the ground* podcast gives you access to MLA's international team of experts, wherever you are. In each episode, they unlock insights and evaluate drivers impacting global demand for Australian beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat.

▶ Scan or click the QR codes or search 'MLA on the ground' in your preferred platform to listen now:

Spotify



Apple Podcasts



How to participate in MLA's AGM

MLA's 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be a hybrid event taking place on Tuesday 24 November in Townsville, Queensland, and online.

All MLA members will receive their AGM voting packs in early October.

Following the change last year, all members who have provided an email address will receive their AGM pack electronically.

If MLA does not have an email address recorded, those members will be sent a 'notice of access' letter detailing where they can find the documents relevant to the AGM.

Members are welcome to attend the AGM in person. It will follow MLA Updates, at the same location (see below).

Voting

Any members unable to attend in person can join online and vote on all matters during the AGM. Alternatively, members can complete a proxy form appointing someone else to vote on their behalf once voting opens.

Matters to be voted on at this year's AGM will include:

- Director election
- Selection Committee member representatives' election
- Levy review motion.

Levy review

Given the importance of all levy payer views on any proposed levy review, MLA will run a separate ballot (in addition to the usual AGM vote for MLA members) to give all levy payers the opportunity to express their opinion.

The ballot papers will also be sent out in early October and MLA will utilise the details in the levy payer register (provided by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) to identify all producers eligible to vote.

- ☞ If you do not receive a ballot form and believe you are eligible to vote, contact us at companysecretary@mla.com.au
- ☞ MLA members can request a printed version of the AGM documents. Contact **1800 023 100** or membership@mla.com.au

To be eligible, producers simply need to have paid a levy relating to the relevant class in the period of 1 July 2025 – 30 June 2026.

A ballot form will be sent to producers using the details provided on their levy return notice.

📄 Scan or click the QR code to find out more about the AGM:



Join us at MLA UPDATES in Townsville

Registrations are now open for MLA's flagship event, taking place in Townsville, Queensland on 24 November 2026.

MLA Updates will bring together producers and industry stakeholders from across the red meat supply chain to hear updates on MLA's investments in research, development and marketing, and to engage directly with MLA leadership and program teams.

MLA Managing Director Mick Crowley said the program will showcase how MLA is turning producer feedback into practical outcomes under its *Strategic Plan 2030*.

"MLA Updates is an opportunity to connect directly with producers and industry participants, share the progress we've made and discuss the opportunities ahead for Australia's red meat and livestock sector," he said.

"As we move through the second year of our five-year *Strategic Plan*, we're looking forward to sharing practical outcomes and providing updates on our progress against our five bold ambitions."

Attendees will receive updates on MLA's work to:

- contribute to Australia's net zero ambition
- deliver value-based marketing
- establish multibreed genetic evaluation and livestock credentials
- drive demand through marketing, market access and social capital
- invest in our industry's people.

Alongside insights from industry leaders, attendees will have the opportunity to connect with peers from across the red meat value chain at a networking function and participate in MLA's Annual General Meeting.

MLA Updates rotates between states each year, with last year's event in Adelaide attended by 450 people.

📅 Register now to secure your place: updates.mla.com.au

📧 Don't miss speaker announcements and program details as they are released – sign up to MLA's *The Weekly* e-newsletter: mla.com.au/enews

Changes to LPA accreditation



Livestock Production
Assurance

From 1 September, producers will be required to complete or upload an On-farm Biosecurity Management Plan when seeking accreditation or re-accreditation in the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program.

What is the plan?

An On-farm Biosecurity Management Plan is a simple written record of how producers manage biosecurity risk on their property.

Having an On-farm Biosecurity Management Plan helps demonstrate that effective biosecurity practices are in place, providing an additional layer of protection against disease risk.

It can also help producers better understand their on-farm assurance practices and simplify the audit process.

Producers will need a separate plan for each property linked to their LPA account.

Each plan needs to cover the following:

- **Livestock:** how you manage and record stock entering and moving around your property to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading disease.

- **People, vehicles and equipment:** how you control and, where practicable, record who and what comes onto your property.

- **Animal health:** how you monitor your livestock and manage diseases on farm.



Tailored actions

As part of the LPA accreditation and reaccreditation process, producers must also complete a Self-Assessment quiz tailored to their on-farm operations. A personalised recommendations report will then be generated based on these answers, providing suggested learning opportunities and on-farm actions to make it easier for LPA-accredited producers to comply with their LPA obligations. ■

TOOLBOX

- ➔ To learn more about On-farm Biosecurity Management Plans visit: integritysystems.com.au/biosecurity
- ➔ Scan or click on the QR code to learn more about completing the LPA Self-Assessment or the accreditation and re-accreditation process:



Boosting soil productivity step by step

There are five easy steps to maximise pasture productivity and profitability so producers can get better bang for their phosphorus (P) buck.

Poor pasture growth can often be attributed to low P-availability. For legume-based pastures, increasing P boosts legume content which increases biological nitrogen fixation, often the most limiting soil nutrient.

To equip producers to make informed fertiliser decisions, the Five Easy Steps program was developed by CSIRO and NSW DPI. It's backed by more than 50 years of research and around 650 pasture fertiliser experiments across major production regions of Australia.

Producer and program participant Mandy Wales said the Five Easy Steps supported a more strategic approach to inputs.

"We had been looking for scientifically robust information to help guide our pasture fertiliser program, and this workshop was exactly what we needed," Mandy said.

"We feel much more confident in our ability to plan future fertiliser applications."

Practical tips

Five Easy Steps is delivered through workshops rolled out by Local Land Services (LLS), which walk producers through:

- how to take soil samples
- how to make sense of the soil test results
- how to use this information to improve fertiliser and stocking rate decisions.

As part of the workshop, participants learn how to use MLA's P Tool, which is free to access.

The online P Tool engages the five-step framework to optimise soil testing by guiding producers on how to take representative soil samples to more accurately assess pasture performance and what the next steps are for applying fertiliser and adjusting stocking rates.

The workshops are being supported by the Australian Government through funding from the Natural Heritage Trust under the Climate-

Smart Agriculture Program and delivered by LLS, a member of the Commonwealth Regional Delivery Partners panel. ■

TOOLBOX

- ➔ Access MLA's Phosphorus tool: mla.com.au/ptool
- ➔ Check out our Phosphorus hub: mla.com.au/phosphorus
- ➔ Interested in learning more about MLA's P Tool? Local Land Services will be running Five Easy Steps soil testing and fertiliser decision making workshops in the south-west slopes and south-eastern regions of NSW, beginning this spring, register your interest at: southeast.climatesmartag@lls.nsw.gov.au



Mitchell Plumbe mplumbe@mla.com.au Fiona Leech fiona.leech@lls.nsw.gov.au

Beef production smashes records, lamb and mutton production slows

Australia's beef industry has delivered a record financial year for 2025–26, with beef production reaching 2.985 million tonnes and cattle slaughter recording its highest financial-year total since 1978.

The latest livestock processing data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shows nearly 9.6 million cattle were processed during FY2025–26, up 8.1% year-on-year, while beef production increased 8.6% to a record 2.985 million tonnes.

MLA's Senior Market Information Analyst, Emiliano Diaz, said the figures highlight the strength of Australia's cattle supply and processing sector.

"Favourable seasonal conditions over recent years expanded the national herd and supported elevated cattle availability, driving historically high processing volumes across the country," Emiliano said.

"While the record result was primarily driven by strong supply conditions, the industry achieved it against a backdrop of increasingly challenging global trading conditions towards the end of the financial year.

"Demand for Australian red meat remained resilient overall, highlighting the sector's ability to adapt and compete in a more volatile global environment." ■

» Turn to page 8 for more market insights.



mla.com.au/
trends-analysis
Emiliano Diaz
ediaz@mla.com.au

Beef



The record financial year was capped by an exceptionally strong June quarter, with beef production reaching a new quarterly record of 780,620t.

NSW, Victoria and Queensland each recorded their highest quarterly beef production on record, highlighting the widespread strength of cattle supply and processing activity across Australia's major producing regions.

Beef production also strengthened in the June quarter as exporters accelerated shipments ahead of safeguard thresholds being reached in keymarkets, including China and Korea.

Typical seasonal patterns emerged during the June quarter, with increased slaughter numbers resulting in slightly lower carcase weights than the March quarter, while the female slaughter rate lifted as expected.

"The strength of the June quarter reflects both the depth of cattle supply and the processing sector's ability to efficiently handle elevated throughput across Australia's key cattle-producing states," Emiliano said.

Live cattle exports totalled 328,405 head in the seven months to July 2026, down 25% year-on-year. Indonesia remained the largest market, accounting for 79% of shipments.

Higher Australian cattle prices, exchange rate movements and Indonesian domestic price settings have weighed on importer margins, while the earlier timing of Ramadan and Lebaran shifted some 2026 demand into late 2025.

Goatmeat



Goatmeat production increased in FY2025–26. ABS goat slaughter reached 3.77 million head, up 5.4% year-on-year, while production increased 2.8% to 58,131 tonnes. Slaughter in the first six months of 2026 has eased 10% year-on-year but continue historically high driven by key markets demand.

Sheepmeat



Lamb

Lamb slaughter continued to contract during FY2025–26, however production declined at a slower rate as heavier animals drove record carcase weights.

Lamb slaughter totalled 22.075 million head, down 15.3% year-on-year, while lamb production declined 11.2% to 554,658t. Despite the reduction, FY2025–26 remained the fourth-largest lamb production year on record.

In the June quarter, lamb slaughter fell 21.6% year-on-year to 5.286 million head, while production declined 15.7% to 140,995t. The national lamb carcase weight reached a record 26.7kg per head during the quarter.

"The lamb sector is producing fewer animals than a year ago, but record carcase weights have helped offset some of the decline in slaughter numbers," Emiliano said.

Mutton

Sheep supply contracted sharply throughout the FY2025–26, driving the lowest annual mutton production and sheep slaughter levels since FY2022–23.

Annual sheep slaughter fell 31.5% to 8.045 million head, while mutton production declined 28.8% to 209,865t.

The June quarter recorded the lowest sheep slaughter and mutton production levels since June 2021, with sheep slaughter falling 46.9% year-on-year to 1.334 million head and mutton production declining 43.1% to 34,205t.

"The sheep industry is moving through a markedly different phase of the production cycle, with lower turn-off reflecting tighter sheep availability following the elevated processing levels of recent years," Emiliano said.





Grandslamb: Adelaide becomes the city of lamb

What do you get when 1,452 people gather in one place to celebrate all things lamb? A record-breaking showcase of innovation and confidence in Australia's sheep industry.

MLA was a platinum sponsor of the biennial LambEx event, which returned to Adelaide in July.

Across four days, delegates heard from more than 80 speakers covering global markets, genetics, sustainability, productivity, technology, leadership and consumer trends, topped off by tours across the region.

With this year's theme of 'Telling our stories', the event drew a record crowd of producers, researchers, processors, exporters, service providers, students and industry leaders from nine countries.

The event set new benchmarks across almost every measure, including the largest attendance in LambEx history, the highest ever proportion of sheep producers, the greatest international representation and the strongest participation from young people.

Sheep producers made up 51% of delegates, reinforcing LambEx's reputation as a conference built by industry, for industry. Nearly half of attendees were aged 40 years and under, highlighting strong engagement from both established producers and the next generation of industry leaders.

MLA on the ground

MLA had a strong presence at LambEx, from presenters to products to plates of delicious lamb.

General Manager – Research Development and Adoption Sarah Strachan and Program Manager – Carcase Value David Packer both

presented to the audience, discussing a range of industry projects and innovations as part of the AMPC Carcase Showcase session.

The carcase showcase analysed more than 5,300 lambs from producers across five states and three major processors, creating one of Australia's largest datasets linking genetics, production systems and carcase performance.

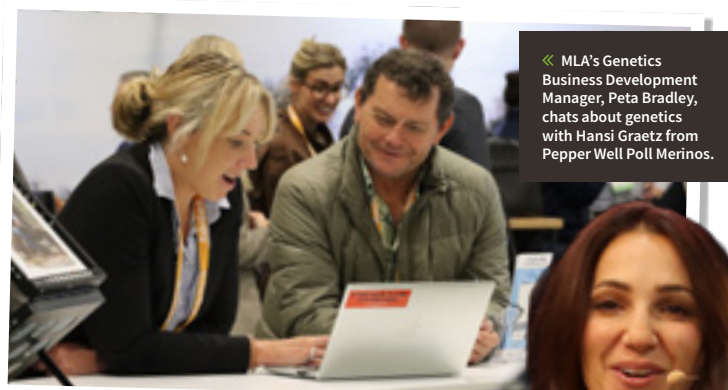
Peta Bradley, Genetics Business Development Manager, spoke as part of a panel for 'Genomics: Driving Productivity and Profitability' – one of three breakfast sessions.

Conference delegates visited MLA's stand in the LambEx Exhibition Hall, to find out more about the latest updates in research, adoption, marketing and insights.

Visitors to the MLA stand had a chance to view a new inMR live sheep measurement device (Marbl Live) to learn how it collects eating quality data from live animals.

MLA's Product and Business Development Manager and Corporate Chef, Sam Burke, was on hand to cook up delicious lamb dishes during two of the networking events, including taking to the stage with 'Hardcore Carnivore' Jess Pryles, a renowned live fire cook and meat expert.

The Lamb Made Easy project – a collaboration between Coles and MLA – was also on show during the event. Lamb Made Easy is a lamb meal range, featuring pre-marinated, slow-cooked meals which are designed to be quick, easy and hassle-free for consumers. ■



« MLA's Genetics Business Development Manager, Peta Bradley, chats about genetics with Hansi Graetz from Pepper Well Poll Merinos.

» Hardcore Carnivore founder Jess Pryles with MLA's Product and Business Development Manager and Corporate Chef, Sam Burke.



✔ MLA's Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Nathan Low (right), with Coles Senior Category Manager of Lamb, Jarrad Farmer, in front of the Lamb Made Easy display – an MLA/Coles collaborative project.



✔ (From left) MLA's General Manager – Research and Development and Adoption Sarah Strachan, SA Shadow Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Nicola Centofanti, MLA's Head of Corporate Affairs, Media and Events, Aaron Wakeley and LambEx Chair, Allison Harker.



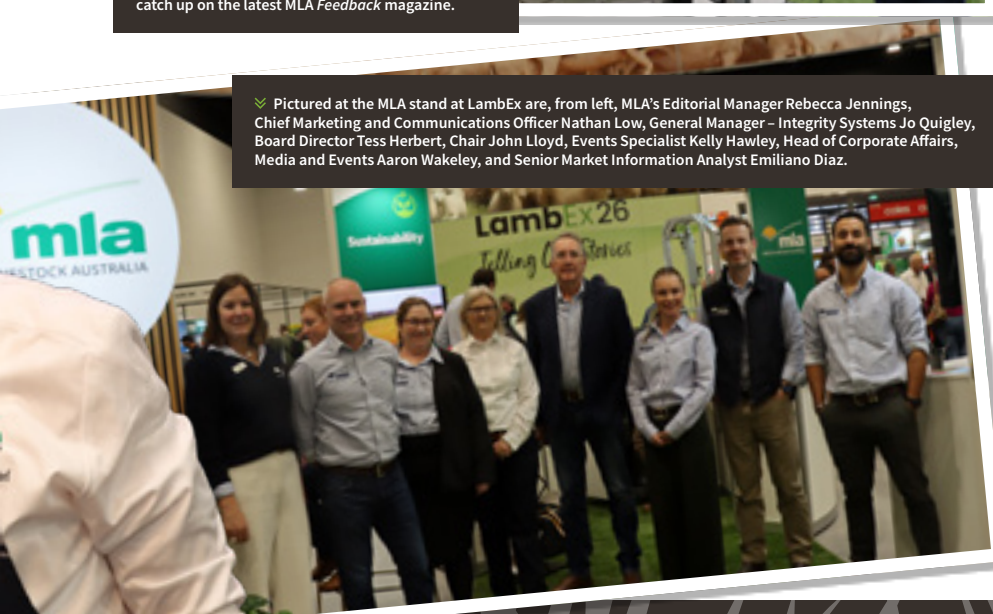
✔ MLA's Project Manager – Southern Rangelands and Western Regions Adoption Mitch Plumbe and Program Manager – Sheep and Goat Productivity Mel Smith with Steph Sammes of Feedworks and Elizabeth Jackson, Sheep Producers Australia.



✔ LambEx Coles Trailblazer semi-finalists Jordan Norman and Emily Steer, both of Adelaide University, catch up on the latest MLA Feedback magazine.



✔ MLA's Value Chain Development Manager Jack Cook and Chris Hopkins, Founder and Director of inMR Measure, look at the new inMR live sheep measurement device (Marbl Live) on display at MLA's LambEx stand.



✔ Pictured at the MLA stand at LambEx are, from left, MLA's Editorial Manager Rebecca Jennings, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Nathan Low, General Manager – Integrity Systems Jo Quigley, Board Director Tess Herbert, Chair John Lloyd, Events Specialist Kelly Hawley, Head of Corporate Affairs, Media and Events Aaron Wakeley, and Senior Market Information Analyst Emiliano Diaz.

LambEx by the numbers



1,452 delegates
– the **largest** LambEx ever held



101 international delegates from **nine** countries



51% attendees were **sheep producers**



46% attendees were **<40 years old**



624 organisations represented



1,012 delegates at Elders **Grandslamb** Gala Dinner



103 exhibitors – **largest** LambEx trade exhibition



38 sponsors supported LambEx



317 delegates participated in LambEx tours



✔ lambex.org.au
✔ mla.com.au/events

The stock/take

with Emiliano Diaz –
Senior Market Information Analyst

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



Risk vs reward in a strong mutton market

After three years of elevated turn-off, sheep availability has tightened sharply. Strong prices create an opportunity for producers to realise value from their cull stock, but they also lift the value of productive females and the cost of rebuilding. Here's what market insights mean on the ground.

The National Mutton Indicator reached 928c/kg carcase weight in early July, exceeding 900c for the first time. The supply shortage driving these higher prices reflects more than seasonal conditions.

High turn-off through 2023–25 reduced adult sheep availability, while improved conditions encouraged ewe retention.

Sheep slaughter rose from 6.2 million head (9% of the flock) in 2022 to 11.7 million head (17%) in 2024.

Over the same period, sheep and lambs processed increased by 10 million head.

Retention could tighten supply further, with 37% of producers planning to increase ewe numbers and 28% planning reductions.

What does this mean for producers?

Cull values versus future production:

Current prices give producers an opportunity to capture strong returns from genuine cull sheep and sharpen flock structure. The trade-off is that the same scarcity supporting mutton prices is also increasing the value and replacement cost of productive females.

For businesses planning to rebuild, the relevant comparison is not simply today's cull-ewe value. It is that value against expected lamb and wool income, joining potential, feed requirements and the likely cost of replacing breeding capacity later.

Businesses maintaining or reducing numbers may have an opportunity to cull harder on age, fertility and performance while retaining the females most likely to generate future returns. Where replacement stock is already secured, the current market may also improve the economics of bringing forward planned disposals.

The risk is selling productive females simply because the immediate return is attractive.

INDICATOR	INCREASE BREEDING	GROWTH	SLAUGHTER
928 c/kg cwt	37%	+1%	-40%
National Mutton Indicator	of producers intending to increase breeding ewe numbers	forecast national breeding-ewe growth	Jan–Jun 2026 vs Jan–Jun 2025

Where breeder numbers are already below target, a deep cull may create a larger exposure than the sale proceeds suggest. Replacements may be dearer, lower-performing or unavailable in the required class, while retaining home-bred ewe lambs can delay income and alter feed demand and joining plans.

Retention may support prices for longer: Stronger producer confidence will not immediately increase market supply. Retaining ewe lambs, hoggets and productive older females reduces near-term sheep availability before additional lamb production reaches the market.

The most recent *Sheep Producers Intentions Survey* forecasts a 1% increase in breeding ewe numbers. This points to a slow and uneven rebuild rather than a rapid national expansion. This could keep mutton supply constrained through 2026 and into 2027, particularly if the spring supports retention and joining.

However, seasonal conditions remain the swing factor. A poor spring or rising feed costs could reverse retention plans and bring more females forward. The market could therefore move quickly between scarcity and short bursts of higher supply, depending on the region.

Specification and timing matter:

Competition has been strongest for heavy, well-finished, processor-suitable sheep, with heavy ewes setting national and saleyard-specific price records. However, the headline indicator will not translate evenly across weights, condition scores, locations or sale weeks.

Where feed is available, adding condition may improve returns, but the margin must account for feed costs, time, freight and processor access. Low supply may also prompt changes to operating days, grids and delivery requirements.

Producers with flexibility around sale timing, drafting and market channel may be better placed to capture competition than those responding only to the national indicator.

The central decision is not whether mutton prices are attractive, but whether selling or retaining each class of sheep best supports the business's future earning capacity. ■

DIG DEEPER

The *Sheep Producers Intentions Survey* is undertaken by MLA and AWI three times a year, to help industry determine lamb and wool production forecasts. Scan or click the QR code to read the latest (May 2026) results:



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ON FARM

RESEARCH IN ACTION

Seasonal action plan

➤ Turn the page to see how James and Aleisha Pisaturo (pictured with their children George and Olivia) are building productivity from genetic decisions. Image: Amie Hosking Photography

Northern

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Learn how mustering with drones can pay off in the first year.

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Are your breeders good mums? Here's how maternal behaviour impacts calf survival.

Southern

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Make sure your sires are up for the job by preventing bull breakdown.

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Find out how soil and temperature data can deliver more bang for your pasture buck.

More than great genes:

turning herd insights into better breeding

In the Central Queensland Highlands, beef cattle producers Aleisha and James Pisaturo are leaning on herd performance data to back good stockmanship and reproductive decision making.

With the use of genomic testing, Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) and carcase feedback data, the Pisaturos are steadily improving the productivity, profitability and long-term performance of their stud operations and commercial herd.

The couple's journey began 12 years ago, when Aleisha – supported by her family – purchased the 11,572ha property 'Inga Downs', Dingo.

Joined by James a year later, the pair grew their stud Charolais and Droughtmaster operations alongside a commercial breeding herd – producing cattle suited to northern production systems while targeting heavy feeder markets.

A focus on fertility

According to James, fertility has been the number one driver behind every breeding decision made at Inga Downs, with a focus on targeting breeders that can recover and get back into calf quickly.

"Joining begins on 1 December each year, with stud females joined for approximately 12 weeks and commercial females up to 16 weeks," James said.

"This allows for calving to then occur from September through to New Years – finishing in time for the wet season, which sets in around mid-January.

"Our breeders then make the most of the wet season pastures, with weaning taking place in June."

SNAPSHOT



**ALEISHA AND
JAMES PISATURO –**
'Inga Downs',
Dingo, Queensland



AREA
11,572ha

ENTERPRISE
1,400 breeders (250 stud
Charolais, 100 stud Droughtmaster
and 1,050 commercial
Droughtmaster–Charolais cross)

PASTURES
Buffel, couch and native forest

SOILS
Brigalow melonholes, with box running
up into red tablelands

RAINFALL
675mm

✔ Aleisha and James Pisaturo with their children George and Olivia, at 'Inga Downs'.
Image: Amie Hosking Photography



"When you've got a number of good cattle that tick all the boxes structurally and phenotypically, genomic data helps identify which animals are going to deliver the greatest value."



James and Aleisha combine genetic data with carcase data from their stud herd's cull heifers – giving them a better understanding of how their herd genetics perform both on-farm and in-market. Image: Amie Hosking Photography

As higher temperatures and tick pressures pick up during the later summer period, James said their reproductive cycle is also strategically planned out to have all calves on the ground before the new year kicks off.

“We run a tight schedule but it’s what we’ve found to be most successful in the environment we are working in – which ranges from the brigalow melonhole plains to the lancewood and rosewood tablelands.”

To target breeders that fit into their reproductive management program, James said they complete genomic testing on their stud program’s entire drop of progeny.

“We want to take the guesswork out of our decision making and ensure we are optimising the best genetics,” he said.

“When you’ve got a number of good cattle that tick all the boxes structurally and phenotypically, genomic data helps identify which animals are going to deliver the greatest value.

“Combining that genomic data with recorded weights, muscle and fat scans, EBVs and any other noted physical traits also gives us a really clear picture of where our herd is at, and paints a picture of which genetics are meeting our target markets and performing best in our environment.”

For example, to target fertility they use fat and muscle scans – conducted by an accredited Performance Beef Breeders Association technician – to identify breeders with a bit more fat cover.

“This is a trait we learned to target when we noticed cows with a slightly higher fat ratio were more successful in getting into calf quickly and recovering better post-weaning.”

Genomic testing delivers more than good genes

Having incorporated genomic testing into the production cycle for almost four years now, Aleisha said the benefits are more than improved fertility to their stud and commercial enterprise.

“We implemented genomic testing on our first drop of stud progeny in January 2023 – when it had just become available for Charolais cattle,” she said.

“While we were quite happy with how our cows were performing and felt confident in our ability to identify strong breeders from the knowledge and data we already had, we are still always looking for ways to improve our birth and weaning rates – even if the improvement we see in numbers is as little as 1%.”

Looking at their genomic data, Aleisha said it’s helped them identify a few genetic underdogs in their herd.

“Sometimes you’ll have a few calves – especially those born later in the drop – that don’t stand out from the mob in terms of size and average daily weight gain,” she said.

“They might be ones you’ll usually overlook for breeding because of their weight or composition. However, when you pull up that genomic data, you’ll realise that they’re likely to be high reproductive performers.

“We have definitely had a few we’ve pulled to the front each year that we otherwise wouldn’t have, and while we aren’t seeing massive changes to our herd productivity, we are seeing a gradual improvement in our herd quality.”

Beyond the reproductive decision-making benefits, the Pisaturos said genomic testing has also made them better equipped to demonstrate the genetic potential of their sale bulls and provide buyers with greater confidence in their purchasing decisions.

➤ continued next page



➤ The Pisaturos have completed genomic testing on their entire drop of Droughtmaster and Charolais stud progeny each year since 2023. Image: Amie Hosking Photography

continued from previous page

“The bull backed by the strongest carcass performance data is often the one we’ll retain as a stud sire because we know he’s more likely to deliver value throughout the supply chain – not just on-farm.”

“As seedstock producers, there’s an expectation that our sale bulls are presented well phenotypically,” Aleisha said. “However, we don’t want our clients making decisions on appearance alone.

“Genomic data paired with EBVs has been particularly valuable for clients – especially those looking to identify bulls with strong growth and carcass performance traits, while still maintaining the fertility and adaptability required to perform in northern production systems.

“It gives them confidence that the bull they’re selecting has the genetic capacity to perform in their operation, and helps us build stronger relationships based on transparency and trust.”

Carcass feedback shapes next generation

For the Pisaturos, understanding genetic potential is only part of the equation. They also want to know how those genetics perform in-market.

At Inga Downs, surplus steers are marketed as heavy feeders into southern feedlot programs, while cull heifers from the stud herd are custom fed to capture valuable carcass feedback data.

It’s an approach that provides the couple with a clearer picture of how their genetics perform beyond the farm gate and feeds directly into future breeding decisions.

“Carcass feedback helps us understand just how profitable our cattle are within our target market, and helps identify if there’s any on-farm issues we should be addressing – both in terms of genetics and stockmanship,” James said.

“This is something we really only started three years ago, but it’s been quite valuable in its ability to boost the accuracy and profitability of our decision making.”

This carcass feedback delivers unique data that comes into play when they’re looking at the next generation of calves.

“Oftentimes, if we’re comparing two potential stud sires that are equally strong from a structural, phenotypic and genetic perspective, the carcass data can become the deciding factor,” James said.

“The bull backed by the strongest carcass performance data is often the one we’ll retain as a stud sire because we know he’s more likely to deliver value throughout the supply chain – not just on-farm.”

Data sits in the passenger seat

While genomic testing, EBVs and carcass feedback have become valuable tools within the business, Aleisha said data will never replace practical stockmanship and experience.

“We still spend a lot of time looking at cattle and assessing them visually before we ever get to the data,” she said.

“We almost see each bit of data as another piece of a puzzle we are building – helping confirm observations, identify opportunities and remove some of the uncertainty from breeding decisions.

“The puzzle pieces are all incredibly valuable, but it takes our knowledge and skillsets to put them together.” ■

TOOLBOX

- ✓ MLA’s Genetics hub: genetics.mla.com.au
- ✓ MLA’s northern grazing resources: mla.com.au/grazing
- ✓ Access carcass feedback: mla.com.au/myfeedback

« James Pisaturo in the yards at ‘Inga Downs’ with daughter Olivia, where practical stockmanship and careful breeding decisions are helping shape the next generation of the family’s cattle operation. Image: Amie Hosking Photography



Aleisha Pisaturo aleisha@ingadowns.com.au Clara Bradford cbradford@mla.com.au

Beat mites before they hatch

It's time for a green light on tackling redlegged earth mites (RLEM) – with strategic late winter and spring management critical to reduce next season's mite pressure.

RLEM are one of the most damaging pests facing newly establishing pastures across southern Australia.

As the mites feed on emerging seedlings, they can reduce pasture establishment, limit feed availability and ultimately affect livestock productivity.

With insecticide resistance becoming more widespread, Cesar Australia Extension Scientist Ian Thomas said successful RLEM control is about more than applying an insecticide when mites appear.

"It's not just about spraying – it's about understanding the pest's life cycle (Figure 1) and using the right tools so you can make better decisions," he said.

Timing matters

Waiting until RLEM appear in autumn can mean producers are already behind. The best opportunity to reduce next season's mite pressure comes months earlier, with strategic late winter–spring management that targets mites before they produce the 'over-summering' eggs which drive autumn infestations.

RLEM produce several generations between autumn and spring. The last generation before summer produces specialised eggs that survive through the hot, dry summer months before hatching the following autumn in response to cooler temperatures and adequate rainfall.

Unlike the eggs produced earlier in the season, these over-summering eggs remain inside the

bodies of the female mites after they die and are highly resistant to heat and desiccation. Once these eggs have been produced, insecticide applications will not affect them, meaning producers have a limited window to reduce the next season's population.

That makes late winter–spring the key opportunity to control mites.

"Once those over-summering eggs have been produced, you've missed the opportunity to reduce next year's numbers," Ian said.

Smarter decisions

TIMERITE® was originally developed by CSIRO and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) to help producers identify the optimum spring spray timing for RLEM control.

The tool has since been updated by Cesar Australia in collaboration with CSIRO, AWI, Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and MLA to better account for seasonal climate conditions and improve its accuracy.

The tool helps producers identify the best spray date for their location by predicting when mites are likely to begin producing over-summering eggs. Rather than reacting to autumn outbreaks, it supports strategic control that reduces mite pressure before it develops.

A second decision-support tool, the Redlegged Earth Mite Hatch Timing Tool, complements TIMERITE® by estimating when mites are likely to hatch in autumn. This gives producers a clear indication of when to increase paddock monitoring and prepare for control if required.

Used together, they allow producers to plan across seasons and make more informed decisions based on seasonal conditions rather than relying on calendar dates or reacting once damage becomes obvious.

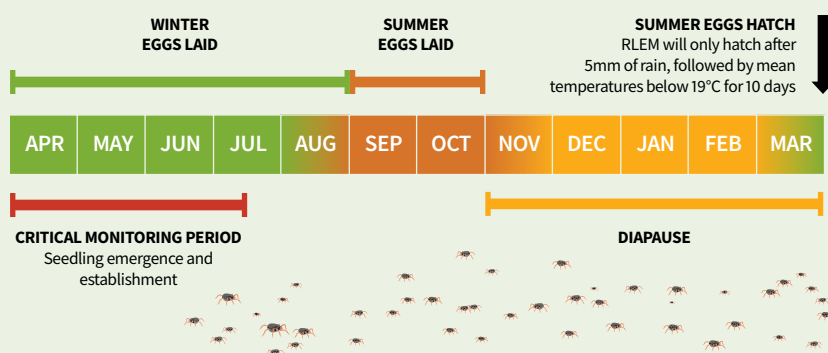
An integrated approach

Ian said producers don't need to rely on a single tactic to manage RLEM. The best results come from combining strategic spraying with regular monitoring, assessing paddock risk, managing broadleaf weeds that favour mite populations and considering crop or pasture rotations where practical.

"Planning ahead gives producers more options," he said.

"The earlier you understand your risk, the more time you have to make decisions that protect feed availability and avoid unnecessary chemical use." ■

Figure 1: Redlegged earth mite life cycle. Understanding the life cycle helps producers target control before over-summering eggs are produced, reducing mite pressure the following autumn.



TOOLBOX

➤ Learn more about the RLEM PDS: mla.com.au/pds-rlem

➤ TIMERITE® supports decisions made before spring spraying: wool.com/timerite

➤ Scan or click the QR code to access the Redlegged Earth Mite Hatch Timing Tool to help determine when autumn monitoring should begin in your area:

➤ Scan or click the QR code for GRDC's RLEM Best management practice guide:



✔ Peter, Emma and Lisa McCrabb run a self-replacing Merino flock on the saltbush-dominant Hay Plains.

Every measurement has a purpose

Today's sheep producers have access to more information than ever before, from electronic identification and pregnancy scanning to fleece weighing and carcase feedback. Here's a look at how south-west NSW producer Emma McCrabb is turning data and measurements into practical improvements on-farm.

Emma and her parents Peter and Lisa run their commercial self-replacing Merino flock near Booorooban, on the Hay Plains. The saltbush-dominated landscape has a highly variable environment where annual rainfall averages around 300mm, making feed one of the property's most valuable resources. Rather than relying on improved pastures, the family manages native country through rotational grazing and strategic supplementary feeding, meaning every management decision carries weight. It's one of the reasons Emma places such a strong emphasis on measuring flock performance. "When you start objectively measuring some traits, you realise you need to get onto others as well," Emma said. "We've just gradually increased what we're measuring." That mindset has shaped the way her family selects ewes and rams, manages pregnancy and uses technology to make everyday jobs more efficient.

Taking industry knowledge home

Although Emma always intended to return to the family business, she wanted to gain experience beyond the farm gate first. Working in MLA's Sheep Genetics team exposed Emma to seedstock producers across Australia and demonstrated how objective measurement could improve breeding and management decisions.

Rather than seeing those tools as something reserved for stud breeders, Emma saw opportunities for commercial producers to benefit too.

"I saw my time at MLA as an opportunity to build off-farm skills and understand how the wider industry works, particularly the ram breeding side," she said.

"It really opened my eyes to the possibilities that objective measurement can bring to a commercial business."

Returning home four years ago, Emma began applying many of those principles in the family flock.

Today, the McCrabbs record breech wrinkle scores at lamb marking and again as yearlings, capture birth type information through pregnancy scanning, and individually weigh the fleece of every ewe hogget.

Those measurements complement their breeding objectives, providing objective information to support selection and identify animals that are performing across the traits that matter most to the business.

Measuring what matters

"Weaning rate is one of the key profit drivers in our business, and it's something we can readily monitor and select for through pregnancy scanning, and wet and dry assessments at marking," Emma said.

"Breech wrinkle was another obvious trait for us to measure because we don't mulese.

SNAPSHOT



PETER, LISA AND EMMA MCCRABB – Booorooban, NSW



AREA
16,000ha

ENTERPRISE
Merinos (4,500 ewes)

PASTURES
Native dryland pastures, saltbush-dominant

SOILS
Variable – sandy red loams to heavier clays

RAINFALL
300mm

"At the same time, we wanted to measure fleece weight because of the unfavourable relationship between those two traits.

"Wool is another important profit driver for our business, particularly because we shear every six months."

More recently, the family has begun benchmarking the eating quality of its lamb through objective carcase assessment.

Entering lambs in a local hook competition where MLA's Meat Standards Australia team collected carcase measurements gave Emma her first opportunity to see how the flock was performing for eating quality.

"We've always eaten our own lamb and thought it was pretty good," she said.

"It's great to actually get that objective feedback and benchmark how we might perform in a future value-based market."

Turning information into action

Pregnancy scanning has become one of the most valuable management tools on the property.

Separating twin- and single-bearing ewes allows feed to be directed where it delivers the greatest return, improving both ewe management and lamb survival.

"What we found when we started scanning for multiples and managing them separately was we were able to better allocate feed to the ewes that needed it most," Emma said.

"Programs like Lifetime Ewe Management taught us how to better manage those twin-bearing ewes by tailoring feed to condition score and that's made a huge difference to our reproduction."

That thinking also drove the family's investment in electronic identification (eID).

The family began electronically identifying and recording individual animals in 2022 before purchasing an auto-drafter with the support of government funding in 2024.

Since then, Emma says the biggest gains have come through both improved data collection and labour efficiency.

"The labour savings have been pretty exciting," Emma said.

"We can now weigh every individual sheep easily, rather than relying on mob-based samples. And I can do that by running them through on my own with just a few dogs.

"In a family business, that's a big deal."

"It's great to actually get that objective feedback and benchmark how we might perform in a future value-based market."

As family labour changes over time, finding smarter ways to complete everyday jobs is becoming increasingly important.

"What Dad's been able to do forever, I hate to admit, I can't always physically do myself," Emma said.

"Finding more efficient ways to get those jobs done is really important for the sustainability of the business."

Staying curious

Emma sees curiosity as one of the most valuable tools producers can have.

"If you're introducing new technology, prepare everyone who's going to be in the yards with you to be patient on day one," she said.

"I've had everything go wrong with eID. My biggest takeaway is, just be patient."

Her advice to young people entering agriculture is equally simple: take every opportunity.

Emma credits university programs like Intercollegiate Meat Judging (ICMJ) and attending industry events like LambEx as experiences that shaped both her career and the way she thinks about the sheep industry.

"I'd just take every opportunity," she said.

"You don't know where it'll lead."

Emma, who was on the 2026 LambEx Taskforce, said she hoped producers left this year's event with practical ideas they could implement as soon as they returned home.

"My hope is everyone went home with at least one thing to try on-farm and one new person to call," she said.

"LambEx is an incredible opportunity to meet people. You never know whether it's the person on stage or the person sitting next to you that's going to change the way you think."

For Emma and her family, that's exactly how progress happens, by staying curious, measuring what matters and using every piece of information to make the next decision a better one. ■

LESSONS LEARNT

✓ Don't collect data for the sake of it. Every measurement should help answer a question or improve a management decision.

✓ Be patient when adopting new technology. There will be challenges along the way, but the long-term labour savings and management benefits are worth the effort.

✓ Never stop learning. Whether it's trying a new management practice, attending an industry event or talking to other producers, every opportunity to learn can lead to better decisions on-farm.

✓ NSW sheep producer Emma McCrabb during shearing at her family's Boooroban property.



TOOLBOX

➦ Read our LambEx26 report on **page 6**.

➦ Learn more about Lifetime Ewe Management: rist.edu.au/lifetime-ewe-management

➦ Scan or click the QR code to use the *Visual sheep scores* guide as a tool to consistently assess traits such as breech wrinkle, body condition and fleece characteristics when making breeding and management decisions:



➦ MLA's *Fit to Join* guide has practical advice on managing ewe condition, nutrition and reproductive performance before joining: mla.com.au/fittojoin

✦ The McCrabb family manages native country through rotational grazing and strategic supplementary feeding.



Emma McCrabb emmamccrabb@gmail.com Peta Bradley pbradley@mla.com.au

On-farm efficiency soars with aerial mustering

For North West Queensland cattle producer Sam Fryer, making the shift to drone mustering has delivered an immediate return on his investment and been a gamechanger for his business.

Sam estimates his \$12,000 investment in a DJI Matrice 4 thermal drone from SkyKelpie has returned around \$20,000 in savings during its first year alone.

Saving time and money

With a significant portion of his herd agisted across several leased paddocks, mustering previously required hiring a helicopter for three hours (costing \$500/hour) as well as two people on bikes (\$350–\$400/day each).

“We muster two to three times a year and I was spending around \$2,000 for each muster, so it quickly adds up,” Sam said.

“I can now do the muster on my own in two hours, using the drone to move the herd towards the water before getting on my bike for the closer handling work.”

On top of reduced mustering costs and labour requirements, he’s reduced vehicle and bike repair costs as well as the time and cost of regular water, cattle and infrastructure checks by ground.

With the value of drones now proven, Sam is seeing a real shift in how people are thinking about the technology – including his dad, who is now a convert to drone mustering.

“Recently, my old man told me that instead of spending \$13,000 on a new bike, he’s going to buy a drone instead,” Sam said.

Enhanced tracking with thermal imaging

Sam is saving more than just time and money using the drone.

He’s up at 4.30am to start the muster, and done by 9am, with the cooler early morning conditions enabling his drone’s thermal camera to easily identify any lost or concealed animals.

As a result, Sam said he hasn’t missed a single cow since introducing the drone, compared with previously missing five to 10 head per muster.

“The other day, I was up early mustering a paddock and one of the cows wandered off so I just zoomed up higher to follow her back to find her calf,” he said.

The thermal camera also allows Sam to locate pests such as dingoes, which is helping him work out where to put baits and traps.

He’s also been able to use it to locate and monitor livestock at night, quickly checking on the safety of fresh weaners when dingoes are nearby, and even tracking dingo movements around the property.

Beyond mustering

The drone has also had a huge impact on efficiency, but Sam acknowledges he’s probably only just scratching the surface of the drone’s potential, particularly in his region’s wet conditions.

While the wet can be really challenging, Sam’s strategy is to drive to the highest point of the property and send the drone from there.

SNAPSHOT



SAM FRYER –
‘Ellington’, Townsville,
Queensland

AREA
6,000ha

ENTERPRISE
300 Brangus/Droughtmaster-cross
breeders, 100 trade cattle

PASTURES
Predominantly Buffalo,
Flinders and Mitchell grasses

SOILS
Black soil and red country

RAINFALL
600mm

“You can basically track the whole place and check things like your fences or floodgates without risking the unnecessary and all too common damage to vehicles,” he said.

Looking ahead, he anticipates drones will become a major asset in fencing operations, helping to map and plan new fence lines with greater efficiency – even just checking fence lines has become so much easier.



Sam Fryer sends up a drone to muster cattle on his Townsville property.



The drone’s thermal camera lets Sam Fryer easily identify any lost or concealed animals.

» Mustering with a drone is saving Sam Fryer time and money, and increasing the efficiency of how he manages cattle.

“So, there’s two parts to it: the return on investment coupled with the improved efficiency has been an absolute game changer for us.”

“So, there’s two parts to it: the return on investment coupled with the improved efficiency has been an absolute game changer for us,” he said.

Creating opportunities for young producers

Sam is passionate about bringing more young producers into the industry. His podcast, ‘A place to call home’, is all about helping the next generation move into land ownership.

“We need to be looking at ways to bring young people back into the industry and the economics and convenience of drone technology is opening a door for them to come back,” Sam said.

Like other young producers, Sam doesn’t have the cash to hire additional people.

“A lot of the time it’s just me in my Hilux with a bike and a drone on the back,” he said.

“Having the drone is like having an extra employee and I don’t think we’d be able to do what we’re doing without it.”

Stockmanship more important than ever

While the drone is a ‘godsend’, Sam said it couldn’t replace the essential stockmanship skills of an experienced livestock producer.

“Even if you’re using a drone, you still need the basic animal handling and husbandry

skills needed to work livestock and move your cattle effectively,” he said.

“Young or inexperienced operators can run into trouble pretty quickly if they don’t know what they are doing, so having those skills is critical to reducing stress in the animals and calf losses.

“My old man would say that for every day you spend breaking in your weaners properly, you’ll save yourself months of pain down the track because you won’t have panicking animals.”

Taking that on board, Sam spends five days breaking in his weaners so that all his cattle are used to the drone.

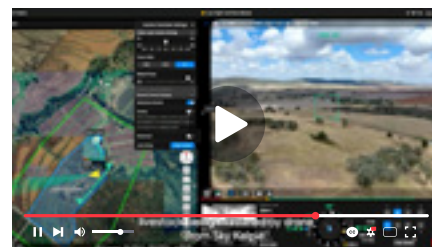
“We’ll spend time getting them used to being handled in the yard before taking them out into the paddock using a bike one day, then a horse another day,” he said.

Once they’re in the paddock, he starts introducing them to the drone, moving them from one end to the other and working in small mobs first to get to know the animals.

“You can’t just take them out of the yard and start chasing them around with the drone on the first day, you’ve got to socialise them properly,” he said. ■

Tips for getting started

- ✓ Seek advice from other producers who are using drones on their properties to see what does – and doesn’t – work.
- ✓ Ensure the drone operator has the stockmanship skills needed to manage your animals safely and effectively before you introduce aerial mustering.
- ✓ Make sure you have plenty of batteries and always carry spares with you when using the drone.
- ✓ Make sure you understand the legal requirements for drone usage in your jurisdiction.



Scan or click the QR code to watch a demonstration of remote drone mustering:



Return on investment (ROI)

Sam estimates he’s seen a **110% ROI** in the first year of using the drone, equating to **annual savings of approximately \$20,000**.

With a conservative lifespan of five years, Sam expects his **investment in drone technology to deliver a 950% ROI** – returning the equivalent of **\$9.50 in value for every \$1 invested**.



TOOLBOX

- Learn to muster from the sky at skykelpie.com/course
- Listen to Sam Fryer’s podcast: aplacetocallhome.com.au
- Scan or click on the QR codes for:
 - a step-by-step guide to mustering cattle with a drone:
 - the legal requirements for drone mustering:



Data-backed decisions drive reproductive efficiency

Producers across southern Australia with self-replacing beef herds are aiming to increase gross margins by \$50/cow/year through an MLA-supported project focused on improving reproduction, increasing weaner weights and minimising losses.

MLA is in the process of relaunching the More Beef from Pastures 2.0 program (MBfP) as an extension program of the 'Profitable and resilient southern beef herds' project. It involves researchers and facilitators working together with regional producer groups to overcome shared challenges and boost productivity. These range from reproductive performance, to optimising growth and utilisation, to improved genetic decisions.

Decisions underpinned by data

The two-year, peer-learning based program is facilitated by trained advisors, with data collected on-farm and in real time to inform

evidence-based decision making. There are learning modules on topics ranging from maternal productivity, feedbase management and herd health.

Participants collect data from groups of at least 50 heifers starting from weaning until their second pregnancy test, including:

- body weights
- calving outcomes
- condition scores
- weaning weights
- pregnancy results
- pasture availability.

This provides relevant, timely information they can use to find opportunities for gains but also identify management strategies that are working well.

Healthy heifers drive productivity

If heifers are managed well early, starting right from pre-weaning, it impacts their lifetime productivity and overall herd performance.

By measuring their herd's mature cow weights, producers can then set realistic growth targets for replacement heifers. Participants aim to achieve heifer weights of 60–65% of mature cow weight at joining, as well as steady growth, to achieve higher in-calf rates.

Meeting these targets through optimised nutrition and regular monitoring of liveweight and body condition scores is set to promote early conception and long-term performance.

Adelaide University and SA Drought Hub Livestock Technical Lead, Dr Penny Schulz, emphasises the benefits to producers of being able to apply the latest research, based on their own business goals, in an accessible and meaningful way.

"Getting that first pregnancy early, rejoining successfully as a two-year-old and maintaining condition are the foundations of a productive cow," she said.

"Those early gains compound over the animal's lifetime, so long as mature cows are also managed well in subsequent seasons."

A resilient feedbase

Optimising nutrition is an important step to achieve these early gains and reach growth targets.

The project includes testing new technologies to support better pasture management through large scale commercial trials of virtual fencing to improve grazing and pasture utilisation.

Heifer productivity is also being monitored in these commercial trials, with the findings are set to further inform the MBfP content and industry best practices.

"Virtual fencing offers real opportunities in more intensive systems to better control grazing pressure and improve feed use," Penny said.

"It can help producers better match feed supply with demand, which then feeds into improved animal performance and more efficient use of the feedbase."

Benefits to business

Data collected during the program will contribute to a regional dataset that provides valuable insights and drives innovation across the southern beef industry.

"While this is not a business benchmarking project, producers can expect to better understand where their beef enterprise is performing well and where improvements can be made," Penny said.

"They will also develop the skills to use data to guide decisions – and seeing what works on other properties can provide confidence to try new approaches." ■

"Getting that first pregnancy early, rejoining successfully as a two-year-old and maintaining condition are the foundations of a productive cow."



The Profitable and Resilient Southern Beef Herds project is led by Adelaide University through the Davies Livestock Research Centre, with funding from and partnerships with MLA Donor Company, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (University of Tasmania), WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Tasmanian Beef Industry Trust, Halter, and the Future Drought Fund through the South Australian and Tasmanian Drought Hubs. The project also acknowledges contributions from beef producer participants and TRT Pastoral Company.



🌐 mla.com.au/resource-hubs ✉ Penny Schulz penny.schulz@adelaide.edu.au
✉ Ainsley Smith asmith@mla.com.au

» Tom Green, pictured on his Tasmanian farm.

Sights set on productivity gains

Improving feedbase management and herd productivity was a drawcard for Tasmanian producer Tom Green, who jumped at the opportunity to join MLA's 'Profitable and resilient southern beef herds' project (see story opposite).

Tom is keen to make use of the on-ground support provided by researchers and project coordinators to hone his data collection and analysis skills, to achieve his goals of:

- improving maternal performance
- synchronising calving
- increasing weaner weights
- building a more even line of cattle.

He said improving nutrition and animal health and getting a better grip on optimal weight to boost herd fertility are important steps to realising these outcomes.

"I've benchmarked for 30 years but the project will help me with data collection and analysis and to refine targets for liveweight gain, weaning weights and joining weights," Tom said.

"I'll be better able to record and analyse my data and achieve goals like improving the herd's pregnancy conception rate."

Feedbase challenges

Tom is focused on getting the best out of his range of feedbase (ranging from native, to improved, to irrigated cropping) while at the same time maximising profits, through optimised rotational grazing.

"It's a balancing act – getting heifers in calf and maximising the steers' weight gain," Tom said.

"I want to shore up my pasture utilisation and better manage my herd's body condition to achieve both better fertility for my heifers and cows and faster weight gain for the steers."

His focus on fertility also includes culling heifers who don't get pregnant in the eight week joining period, and prioritising those who get in calf in their first cycle.

Weaning rates

A key project goal is to help participants increase gross margins by \$50 per cow per year

by improving reproduction, increasing weaner weights and minimising losses.

"I want to improve my weaning weights – calves are born in September/October and we wait until March to wean when they are five to six months' old," Tom said.

"There's a lot going on in a mixed farming enterprise and trade-offs you need to make.

"The project will help with the analysis side of things – sorting out a good calendar base of events and working out when things get done."

Progress so far

The project group of around 15 participants has now met several times. The first session focused on understanding how to condition score cattle.

"We went out and the coordinator helped us refine our condition scoring technique – we realised we all had slightly different opinions about the same cattle," Tom said.

"We all felt the same cattle but had different scores – so it was good to do it together and compare our results with each other and learn together."

Learning in the field

A drawcard for Tom was the chance for him and his staff to learn from others in the project and engage with experts.

"Building the capacity of my workers to analyse the data and know why certain things are done when, will keep us working on the same page and improve the way our business operates," he said.

Making connections with other producers is another highlight.

"Here in Tasmania, there aren't a lot of training opportunities available to people later in their careers, so the project's on-site help and support is great," Tom said. ■

SNAPSHOT



TOM GREEN –
Cressy, Tasmania



AREA
2,800ha

ENTERPRISE
5,000 Merino sheep, 400 Angus breeding cows, irrigated cropping

PASTURES
Native, improved and semi improved

SOILS
Duplex

RAINFALL
700mm

Tom's three steps to boost herd productivity

1 Reduce joining period

Tom aims to reduce this from eight to seven weeks or even shorter – the main advantage will be a more uniform drop across the herd and more time to recover and get back into calf.

2 Synchronise weaning and fattening

This will deliver a more even line of cattle and calves for weaning and fattening – streamlining management and allowing for greater efficiencies.

3 Better production rates on weaner steers

This is a key goal and optimising nutrition will positively impact weight gain.

Mooternal instinct: smart tech tracks best mothers

In northern beef systems, factors contributing to calf mortality are often widely misunderstood – especially when it comes to understanding how maternal behavioural patterns influence survivability.

To address this challenge, Central Queensland University (CQU) and the Northern Territory Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (NT DAF), with support from MLA, have launched Mooternal – a collaborative research project investigating the impact of maternal investment on calf productivity and survival.

Using a combination of sensors, GPS tracking technology and on-ground observations, the project is uncovering what makes a successful beef cow mother and how those traits contribute to calf productivity and survival in northern Australia.

Team effort

Mooternal is led by Dr Anita Chang, a Senior Postdoctoral Research Fellow with CQU's Precision Livestock Management team.

Anita's fascination with maternal behaviour began during her PhD research with Professor Mark Trotter, where she used sensors to detect calving events.

"During my PhD, I spent hours sitting in paddocks watching cows calve and interact with their calves," Anita said.

"I could see that some cows were incredibly attentive mothers, while others seemed much less invested.

"It made me wonder whether those differences in behaviour were influencing calf outcomes and how we could actually measure that."

Anita discovered her observations were shared by fellow researcher Dr Christie Pearson from NT DAF, with both noting a major knowledge gap in understanding maternal investment in northern beef systems.

In their quest to uncover how maternal behaviour contributes to calf survival, they've followed highly protective 'helicopter mums' that always kept their calves close, through to groups of cows that would leave their calves together in a crèche-like setting while they went off to graze.

Monitoring mothers-to-be

The team kicked things off at the NT DAF-leased and managed 'Manbulloo' research station near Katherine in late September 2025. They equipped 100 pregnancy-tested breeders with GPS collars and accelerometer ear tags.

The technology was designed to provide researchers with a detailed picture of what cows are doing before, during and after calving in an extensive northern production system, where monitoring livestock can be challenging.

"The accelerometer ear tags recorded detailed movement data that can be translated into behaviours such as grazing, ruminating and interacting with calves, while GPS tracking revealed how cows utilised resources across the landscape," Anita said.

"The use of Smart Paddock real-time GPS tracking also meant we had the ability to easily locate our mothers within Manbulloo's large paddocks."

The researchers watched for pregnant cows isolating themselves from the rest of the herd and displaying reduced movement.

"This usually indicated she was calving and allowed us to get out to her to confirm the birth.

"We could check that her calf was alive, healthy and vigorous, as well as how protective she was of her calf, before evaluating her udder and teat conformation.

"It also meant that if she lost her calf, we would already have some detailed notes on what could have gone wrong."



✔ Anita Chang and Christie Pearson at 'Manbulloo'.

SNAPSHOT

'MANBULLOO STATION' –

owned by Cross Pacific Investments, leased by NTDAF, Katherine, NT



AREA

5,180ha

ENTERPRISE

500 Brahman breeders

PASTURES

Tropical tall grasses and mixed perennial grasses

SOILS

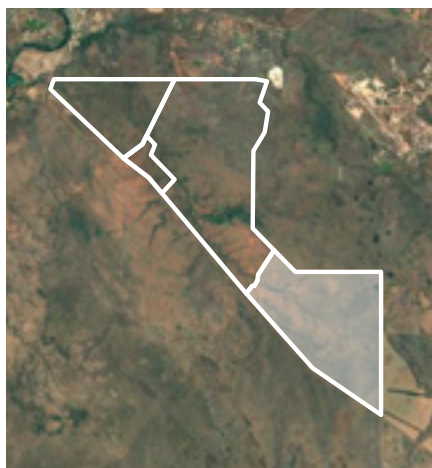
Tippera soils

RAINFALL

963mm



» Mooternal data showed Brahman cows preferred to keep their calves with them while they grazed, rather than leave them in a group with other calves.

Figure 1: Paddocks at 'Manbulloo'

Alongside the sensor technology, the team also recorded a range of physical and maternal traits including body condition score, udder and teat conformation, and maternal defensiveness.

For Anita, one of the most exciting aspects of the project is the ability to collect information that would otherwise be impossible to capture in northern grazing systems.

"A big challenge in the north is understanding exactly when a calf is lost and what happened leading up to that event," she said.

"Historically, we've looked at losses from pregnancy testing through to weaning, but that's a very large window of time.

"We're trying to narrow that down and understand what is actually happening around calving and in the weeks afterwards."

Uncovering the maternal advantage

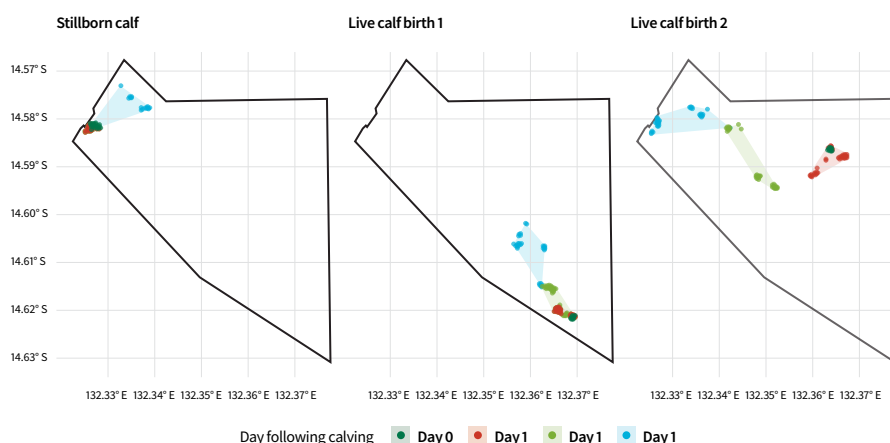
Out of the 100 pregnant breeders involved in the trial, 89 successfully calved.

According to Anita, their movements following the live birth or loss of their calf have helped shape a better understanding of what factors may drive maternal behaviours.

"With our Brahman cows at Manbulloo, we noticed the majority tended to keep their calves close to them – especially within the first week following birth," she said.

"Later we began seeing a small group of mothers begin leaving their calves in that crèche-like setting with a single cow while the others went off and grazed.

"Our secondary research station, 'Belmont' at Rockhampton, Queensland, further supported this pattern with all Brahman cows electing to keep their calf with them as they moved around the paddock to graze and access water points.

Figure 2: Movement from cows three days post-calving – (one cow had a stillborn calf, two had live calves)

"Belmont also had some composite cows which displayed a totally different form of mothering by setting that crèche up almost immediately after birth.

"This suggests that climate, breed and available resources may also be components driving maternal behaviour.

"But, despite the clear differences in mothering we are seeing, the data we have collected is yet to confirm if one form is better than the other."

At Manbulloo, Anita said tracked data also led the team to theorise that cow movement compared to their pre-birth baseline is indicative of how vigorous or mobile their calf is.

"Cows that had healthy calves typically began moving with their calf a day after giving birth, with movement gradually increasing over the next few days," she said.

"When cows were more restricted in the ground they covered, we often found it was due to an issue with her calf.

"As seen in Figure 2, this was demonstrative by a cow with a stillborn who stayed within close proximity of her calf's body for three days post-calving."

As the project progresses, Anita and the team will unpack which behaviours contribute most to calf survival and productivity, to build practical tools to help producers manage maternal performance.

Mooving forward

With the first stage of data collection complete, the Mooternal team is now turning its attention to the next phase of the project – expanding research beyond dedicated trial sites and onto commercial beef operations across northern Australia.

"The causes of calf loss are likely to be different between properties and even from one season to the next," Anita said.

"By working directly with producers, we'll be able to test how the technology performs in commercial herds and better understand the factors influencing calf survival under real-world conditions. And, most importantly, use those findings to drive practical changes that improve reproductive performance." ■

Using GPS collars and accelerometer ear tags, the research team behind Mooternal used cow movement to help collect data on maternal behavioural patterns.



TOOLBOX

Scan or click the QR code to learn more about the Mooternal Project:



Northern Breeding Business (NB2) program: mla.com.au/nb2

Read *Weaner management in northern beef herds*: mla.com.au/weaner-management

Join us at MLA Updates in Townsville, Queensland, on 24 November for practical insights, market updates and proven tools to help you make the most of your northern beef business: updates.mla.com.au



Anita Chang a.chang@cqu.edu.au Ainsley Smith asmith@mla.com.au

» Fifth-generation producers Jack and Jen Medway's farm 'Hillcrest' lies in the NSW Southern Tablelands. Image: Pete White (Twin Pete's Creative)

Medways make headway with data

Fifth-generation producers Jack and Jen Medway, along with their three children, run a dual-purpose sheep enterprise at 'Hillcrest' in the NSW Southern Tablelands.

They opened their gate to participants at an MLA MeatUp Forum in Cooma earlier this year, for a virtual farm tour.

Here's a look at how they've invested in electronic identification (eID) tags to fast-track their transition from superfine wool growers to include a meat focus, and how they are harnessing data to hit production targets.

Ag-tech powers productivity

The tight-knit team run their operation largely by themselves, with Jen focusing on the data analysis and business side of things, while Jack manages the livestock operation. They are supported by a small group of valued contractors.

Early adoption of data collection and ag-tech has helped the couple optimise their business and farming efficiencies, and reduced their labour requirements.

Best of all, their data-backed approach has given them the confidence and ability to make astute and timely decisions in the hard times.

Around 1,500–2,000 of the couple's crossbred (Border Leicester–Merino) lambs are turned off at the three-month mark most years, while on the Merino side, they sell off most of their wethers around five years old at about 1,000 per year. The older ewes go off into their crossbred operation.

"We cull wethers according to visual assessment and age but would like to start collecting data using their eIDs in the October/November shearing window," Jen said.

Ewes are culled using a data-informed approach after an initial visual cull, which takes out about 8% of their hoggets.

"We get an indexing through Ram Power and then use the data to skim off the bottom-producing ewes up to whatever number we need for that year.

"The lowest performers go through to the crossbred operation, as the genetics are not passed on, given we put them with a Border Leicester ram.

"With the remaining ewes, we then pick specific traits, separate into mobs and use ram

SNAPSHOT



**JACK AND
JEN MEDWAY –**
'Hillcrest', Gunning, NSW



AREA
1,821ha

ENTERPRISE
10,000 sheep, lambing 70% Merino,
30% Border Leicester–Merino

PASTURES
Native and improved pastures, mix of
sub-clover, phalaris and ryegrass

SOILS
Granite and basalt

RAINFALL
550–650mm

genetics to cross them, for example putting heavy-cutting rams with lighter-cutting sheep.

“The gist of our plan is to lift the overall productivity of our mob, taking out the bottom performers and improving those animals we retain on the property,” Jen said.

“We also have a stud program for our top performers, to keep the tops powering ahead, using the data captured over the past nine years.”

Achieving productivity targets

This approach, linked with eID data generated across the farm, gives the couple the confidence that the flock they have retained will help them achieve their overall productivity targets year on year.

Jack uses three key breeding values to achieve his breeding objectives:

- wool cut
- fertility
- body weight.

Depending on prices, around 60% of their income comes from wool, with Jack's targets set at each sheep providing around 5.5kg of wool at 17 micron.

He targets a mature liveweight of around 60–65kg liveweight, for optimal feed efficiency.

The Medways only containment feed when necessary, such as during drought or dry times, although this may be an area for development in the future.

They supplementary feed fairly regularly and provide mineral blocks to ensure optimal nutrition.

Soil and animal testing has shown sheep to be prone to deficiencies at certain times of the year so this approach helps to proactively address deficiencies.

eID tags a game changer

Almost a decade after implementing eID tags to fast-track their transition from superfine wool growers to a dual-purpose sheep enterprise, Jen's efforts in data collection and analysis have paid off.

A key shift in their approach has been the move from a mob-based to a more individual style of management.

“We started out making the mistake of trying to capture everything, which was expensive and a complete waste of our time and money,” she said.

“We weren't using the data that we were actually getting. We sat down and acknowledged we weren't getting where we needed to.”

By narrowing their focus to wool testing, they were able to accurately determine their micron and fleece weight, while on the other side they concentrated on body weight and fertility.

Recording data on pregnancy status (singles, multiples or dry) using scanning data has also made a big difference.

Once they had a clearer idea of what they were trying to measure and why, as well as investing in technology by BreedELITE, things really fell into place. The technology's interoperability was key to maximising the insights they now had access to.

“We use the data to index our hoggets each year through Ram Power, which gives us a list of our most productive animals from one to 2,000,” Jen said.

“While the data helps to manage our genetics, in a drought, it also allows us to know which animals to cull and which to retain.”

Their return on investment became apparent early on, with the couple achieving half a kilo increase of wool year-on-year. Having the data enables them to leverage and track the gains they are making.

Challenges

Finding the right people to help them in the early stages of data implementation was a significant challenge.

Cost was another obstacle, although with their healthy return on investment and the increased confidence about which animals to cull during droughts, for example, investing in ag-tech was a no-brainer.

“It means we're not feeding sheep that aren't going to pay us back,” Jack said. ■

✓ The Medways' property 'Hillcrest', Gunning, NSW, was featured in an MLA MeatUp virtual farm tour. Image: Pete White (Twin Pete's Creative)

“We also have a stud program for our top performers, to keep the tops powering ahead, using the data captured over the past nine years.”

LESSONS LEARNT

- ✓ Don't be scared about data implementation.
- ✓ Figure out what data points you need to capture – be specific.
- ✓ Don't overinvest early.

TOOLBOX

- ✓ MLA's genetics hub: genetics.mla.com.au
- ✓ Register for a MeatUp forum near you: mla.com.au/meatup
- ✓ Click or scan the QR code to learn more about an MLA and Australian Wool Innovation co-funded levy investment on Precision Sheep Management:
- ✓ Click or scan the QR code to access MLA's Ag-tech Return on investment (ROI) tool:



Jen and Jack Medway jen.medway@penrosepastoral.com.au Elizabeth Thelander ethelander@mla.com.au

How resilient grazing makes every drop count

On the undulating terrains of western Queensland's Red Mulga country, Will and Sasha Treloar have spent the past decade building a more resilient grazing landscape capable of withstanding both flood and drought.

Based near Cooladdi, west of Charleville, the couple own and operate their 72,979ha organic beef enterprise.

They took over the reins from Will's parents. Since his return to the property in 2012, with Sasha joining him in 2013, Will said they have focused on improving landscape functions, particularly in an environment where every rainfall event needs to count.

More recently, the pair became involved in the Lachlan Hughes Foundation (LHF) – a program offered to 10 participants annually to build capabilities in:

- land management
- capacity building
- personal development
- landscape and project design
- regenerative agriculture.

Will said it was a move which has helped them grow both personally and professionally, giving them greater confidence to pursue new opportunities and continue exploring ways to improve their landscape.

Resting, rotation and really giving it a crack

Prior to their participation in LHF in 2023, Will and Sasha started their journey with the goal of better utilising annual rainfall events.

"We were repeatedly watching what we now know was 90% of our water run off the property after every rainfall event – which was really limiting our grazing country's ability to sustain itself through dry periods," Will said.

"2013 also marked the beginning of several years of drought for us, so seeing what little rain we did receive leave the landscape so quickly really motivated us to look for ways to keep more of that water in the system."

Alongside lost water, the pair noted that there was likely also a loss of soil fertility. They made the call to attend an RCS Grazing for Profit course in Rockhampton as their first step to action.

"To improve our grazing land management strategy following the course, we slowly began reducing our paddock sizes and increasing water point access for cattle," Will said.

"We then introduced a rotational grazing and paddock rest system to optimise our pasture availability and utilisation.

"We now have around 40 paddocks that we aim to rest for a minimum of two months – relying on visual cues to determine when we rotate."

SNAPSHOT



WILL AND SASHA TRELOAR – 'Boothulla', Cooladdi, Queensland

AREA
72,979ha

ENTERPRISE
Cattle (1,000–2,000 head): organic breeding, backgrounding, trading and opportunistic agistment

PASTURES
Mulga Mitchell, mulga oats, kangaroo grass and Mitchell grass

SOILS
Red mulga, cracking clay and alluvial flats

RAINFALL
325mm

In addition to increasing ground cover, slowing water run-off and improving carrying capacity, Sasha said the rotational grazing strategy encouraged them to take a closer look at the relationship between pasture composition, soil health and overall landscape function.

"It reinforces that there's no one-size-fits-all solution, but there's a lot we can learn from each other."

« Will and Sasha Treloar with their sons Campbell and Zander.

As paddocks were afforded longer rest periods, the couple began noticing greater diversity in the species returning to the landscape. They questioned what those plants revealed about the condition of their country.

“Rather than seeing non-preferred species or weeds as a problem that needed to be immediately dealt with, we became more interested in understanding why they were there first,” Sasha said.

“What was that plant telling us about the health of our soils? Was it playing a role in preparing the landscape for the next stage of succession?

“There’s a quote I love from the book *The Power of Intention* which reads, ‘if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.’

“It’s probably reframed the way we respond to things and allowed us to step outside some of our traditional approaches and try new ideas, with the long-term health of the landscape always front of mind.”

Regenerating land and reviving curiosity

Invigorated by the insights gained through attending workshops and connecting with industry experts, Will jumped at the chance to attend Tarwyn Park Training’s Natural Sequence Farming course with Stuart Andrews in 2022, when it was recommended by a fellow producer.

This is where he met Philip and Adele Hughes – parents of the late Lachlan, who founded LHF in his memory.

Will and Sasha began their involvement in the foundation in 2023. In 2024, they were successful recipients of the Lachlan Hughes annual scholarship, which linked them with regenerative agriculture professionals for training and mentoring.

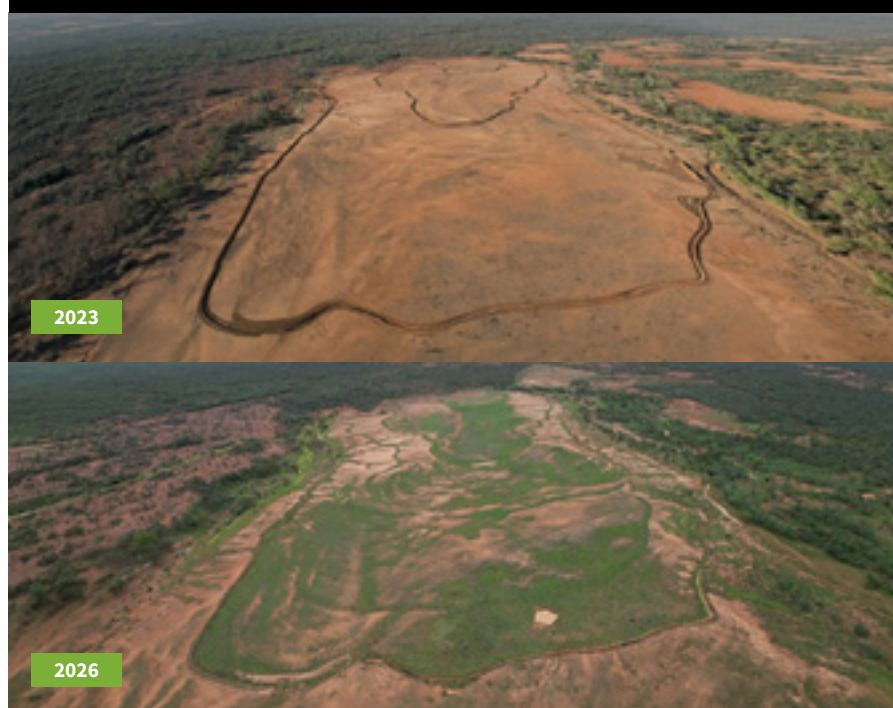
Through a series of workshops, guest speakers and mentoring sessions, the program exposed participants to a broad range of topics spanning business management, leadership, communication and regenerative agriculture.

For Will and Sasha, one of the most valuable learning opportunities came through sessions focused on soil health, microbiology and plant succession.

“A lot of the learning helped us better understand what was happening below the surface,” Sasha said.

“There was a big focus on soil health, microbes and understanding how different plant species contribute to the broader function of the landscape.

✓ Aerial view of ‘Boothulla’, comparing 2023 (top image) grazing land conditions with 2026 (bottom image).



“The sessions reinforced our growing belief that landscape recovery is a long-term process and that management interventions should work with natural systems rather than attempt to force rapid change.

“The country didn’t get like this overnight and it won’t return to what it was overnight either,” she said.

“Understanding succession and the role different plants play has helped us become more patient and more observant in how we manage the landscape.”

Personal growth

Beyond the technical learnings, the couple said some of the program’s greatest impacts were personal.

“There was a lot of focus on personal growth and development – particularly in terms of building the confidence to step outside of your comfort zone,” Will said.

“On-farm, that translated to having the confidence to trial new ideas and trust the decisions we were making.

“We’d already started changing things, but the program reinforced that it was okay to think differently, keep learning and be open to trying new approaches if we thought they could improve our landscape.”

That confidence has also provided reassurance as the couple look towards the inevitable next dry period, giving them

greater faith in the systems they have put in place to improve ground cover, water infiltration and landscape resilience.

Off-farm, Sasha said one of the most noticeable changes was Will’s willingness to step outside his comfort zone and share their story with others, such as at the MLA beef industry breakfast as part of this year’s Northern Beef Research Update Conference.

“Those public speaking events alone have created so many more opportunities to connect with other producers and learn from their experiences,” Sasha said.

“Quite often people will come up and start conversations about the challenges they’re facing on their own properties and how some of these ideas might work in their landscape.

“It reinforces that there’s no one-size-fits-all solution, but there’s a lot we can learn from each other.

“I think we can both agree that the key take-home from this project is the need to be both curious and confident in not just yourself, but in your land, and in our industry.” ■

TOOLBOX

✓ Check out MLA’s grazing land management hub for tools and resources: mla.com.au/grazing

✓ Learn more about the Lachlan Hughes Foundation: lachlanhughesfoundation.org.au



Will Treloar waspastoral@gmail.com Tony Parker tparker@mla.com.au

✔ Simon Fowler hosted an MLA Producer Demonstration Site, focusing on preventing bull breakdown.

Vaccination reduces costly bull breakdown

Losing young bulls to breakdown was once a major cost for the Fowler family's 'Chilwell Farms', but almost 20 years of vaccinating virgin bulls before joining has helped them reduce losses and improve their confidence in investing in better genetics.

Participating in MLA's Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) 'Preventing bull preputial breakdown by vaccination' helped Simon Fowler validate long-term observations with broader regional data and wider producer participation.

The three-year project, which was run by ASHEEP & BEEF in collaboration with Swans Veterinary Services, investigated strategies to reduce infectious balanoposthitis (IBP) and associated bull preputial breakdown in virgin bulls.

Return on genetic investment

For Simon, the impact of bull breakdown extended well beyond the immediate loss of individual animals. Over time, it began influencing breeding decisions and confidence to invest in new genetics.

"It got to the point where I was reluctant to spend money on superior genetics because of the risk of losing them," Simon said.

At Chilwell Farms, new Angus bulls are initially used to back up a fixed-time AI program before moving into the wider breeding herd, making the performance and longevity of young bulls particularly important to the business.

Before vaccination became part of the operation's standard management program, breakdown losses during first joinings were making those investments increasingly difficult to justify.

"We were seeing up to 50% of our first-year bulls suffering penile breakdown within the first three weeks of joining," Simon said.

Young bull breakdown

Simon had been vaccinating virgin bulls for many years before the PDS began.

Like many producers in the Esperance region, he observed that breakdown was far more common in young bulls during their first joining.

"We were seeing the same pattern year after year," Simon said.

To better understand the issue, Simon worked closely with local veterinarian Dr Enoch Bergman, who suspected bovine herpesvirus was contributing to the high rates of IBP.

"Young bulls were breaking down within weeks of joining, while older bulls were far less affected," Enoch said.

"Recognising that bovine herpesvirus can cause inflammation of the penis and prepuce,

SNAPSHOT



SIMON AND ROBYN FOWLER, ANDREW AND MARIE FOWLER –
Esperance, WA



AREA
50,000ha

ENTERPRISE
2,000 Angus cattle, 28,000 Merino ewes, 2,000 UltraWhite ewes

PASTURES
Clover, serradella, tetraploid ryegrass, vetch

SOILS
Largely duplex sand over clays with some heavy clay on the coast

RAINFALL
350–500mm

I began blood testing affected bulls and found most virgin bulls appeared to be exposed during their first joining opportunity."

Enoch said some local producers began using Rhinogard prior to joining and believed they were seeing fewer breakdowns as a result.

“The PDS gave us an opportunity to test those observations across a larger group of producers and build confidence in what people were seeing on-farm,” Enoch said.

Putting observations to the test

While the practice itself was not new at Chilwell Farms, the PDS created an opportunity to gather larger-scale regional data and compare vaccinated and unvaccinated groups over multiple seasons.

Across the Esperance district, more than 3,500 bulls were monitored throughout the project.

The results consistently showed increased rates of penile breakdown amongst virgin bulls as compared to experienced bulls, and lower rates of penile breakdown amongst vaccinated virgin bulls as compared to unvaccinated virgin bulls.

For Simon, the findings reinforced what he had already seen on-farm.

“Before vaccination we were losing up to half our virgin bulls,” he said.

“Now we might lose two bulls out of 20 or 25. It’s a much better result.”

The business also saw fewer bulls failing observational testing in subsequent seasons due to corkscrewing, also known as premature spiral deviation of the penis.

“We had years where we were losing a third of our bulls at testing,” Simon said.

“Now it’s only two or three.”

Enoch explained that corkscrewing is a progressive syndrome, worsening amongst bulls with age, and is thought to be related to low-level trauma and scar tissue formation.

“I believe preputial injury could contribute to the syndrome,” he said.

“If vaccination reduces preputial injury, I believe it could also reduce the incidence of corkscrewing later in some bulls’ careers.”

Prevention and early action

Today, vaccinating virgin bulls before joining is standard practice at Chilwell Farms, but Simon said vaccination is only part of the solution.

Close monitoring during joining has become equally important, particularly during the first few weeks when breakdown risk is highest.

“Now that we understand the condition better, we can identify bulls showing early swelling or injury and remove them quickly, allowing us to treat them,” Simon said.

Improving awareness of the early signs of breakdown has been one of the key benefits of the project.

“If you can identify them early, pull them out, treat them and give them sexual rest, you’ve got a much better chance of saving that bull for next season,” Enoch said.

The project also highlighted the influence seasonal conditions can have on breakdown

rates, with wet and muddy conditions associated with a higher incidence of injury during joining.

Producer confidence

Rather than introducing a completely new practice, Simon said the project helped strengthen producer confidence in a management strategy many local producers were already trialling and some had never even considered.

“I think the PDS was important because it helped put science behind what producers were seeing in the paddock,” he said.

“It gave us confidence that vaccination was making a real difference.”

Dr Bergman said the project also improved producer awareness of early signs and intervention strategies.

“Vaccination is not a silver bullet,” he said.

“But it does appear to reduce both the incidence and severity of preputial and penile breakdowns, and thanks to the PDS, more local producers are much better at proactively managing as well as recognising clinical cases early now.

“That is a great welfare outcome.” ■

SEASONAL ACTION PLAN

! Pre-joining

- Vaccinate all virgin bulls against bovine herpesvirus one to three weeks before joining.
- Conduct pre-joining fertility and structural soundness checks.

! During joining

- Monitor bulls closely, particularly during the first few weeks.
- Remove bulls immediately if swelling, injury or serving issues are observed.

! Post-joining

- Assess recovery of affected bulls.
- Review breakdown incidence and management strategies.

TOOLBOX

- 🔍 Find out more about this PDS:
 - mla.com.au/bull-breakdown
 - asheepbeef.org.au/bullbreakdown
- 📧 Sign up for PDS Updates: mla.com.au/pds

Protecting bull performance

- ✓ Vaccinating virgin bulls prior to joining reduces the risk of bull breakdown.
- ✓ Virgin bulls are most at risk due to first exposure to herpesvirus.
- ✓ Early detection and removal significantly improves recovery outcomes.
- ✓ Bull breakdown is multifactorial, with infectious and environmental contributors.
- ✓ Vaccination improves confidence to invest in better genetics.



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Warrens hold key to rabbit pasture pressure

Rabbits remain one of the most persistent pressures on pasture and regeneration across grazing landscapes, often limiting feed availability long before producers realise how big the problem has become.

Speaking at a recent Feral Cat and Fox Management Forum, Aaron Stephens, Invasive Species Coordinator at Bass Coast Landcare Network, said rabbit biology explains why feed losses can escalate so quickly.

"Rabbits have a gestation period of about one month. The average litter is five to eight kittens, and those kittens reach sexual maturity in about three months," Aaron said.

"A rabbit that has just given birth can become pregnant again about half an hour later."

That breeding speed becomes a major issue when conditions are good.

"When there's lots of feed around, they can just breed continuously across the landscape," he said.

Even low numbers can cause long-term pasture damage.

"As little as one to three rabbits per hectare is enough to stop regeneration of many native species. When you're looking at landscapes with hundreds of rabbits per hectare, nothing is going to survive and grow," Aaron said.

For producers, the impact shows up as weakened pasture persistence, selective grazing of high-value species like clover and perennials, and declining ground cover resulting in an increase in weeds.

"They destroy crops, they damage pastures and reduce overall productivity," he said.

One of the strongest messages from the forum was about reframing control targets.

"Is it achievable to have zero rabbits in a landscape like this? The answer is no," Aaron said. "Rabbits will always move in from surrounding areas."

Instead, Aaron encouraged producers to focus on what actually underpins rabbit survival.

"The warren is the rabbit's Achilles heel. Without it, they can't breed effectively and the young don't stand much of a chance."

That principle underpins what Aaron calls the golden formula for rabbit control.

"You reduce the population, then you remove the warrens, then you follow up," he said. "If you skip that middle step, you'll always be chasing rabbits."

He was blunt about partial control.

"You could bait every year for the rest of your life and still have rabbits if the warrens remain."

"As long as those burrows are there, more rabbits will move in and start breeding again."

Seven on-farm steps to protect your feedbase

The bottom line for producers is that reducing rabbit numbers helps in the short term, but removing active warrens is what delivers lasting pasture recovery, stronger pastures and better returns on rainfall and fertiliser. Here are some tips:

1 Start with pasture, not rabbits

Identify paddocks where pasture isn't regenerating properly, valuable species are disappearing, or soil erosion is increasing. These signs often appear before rabbit numbers look high.

2 Map active warrens

Walk paddocks, fence lines, dam walls and creek banks to locate and record active warrens. This allows effort to be focused where it will deliver the greatest pasture benefit.

3 Reduce numbers before disturbing warrens

Lower rabbit numbers first to increase the success of warren destruction. Use baiting in dry conditions, fumigation in targeted areas, and shooting as a clean-up tool rather than a standalone solution.

4 Destroy warrens permanently

Rip or excavate warrens wherever access allows, extending excavation at least 4m in every direction beyond the visible burrow

entrances. Compact soil after ripping to prevent re-digging. Although machinery has an upfront cost, it usually delivers long-term savings and feedbase recovery.

5 Protect high-value feed and assets

Use rabbit-proof fencing strategically to protect high-value pasture, fodder crops, regeneration areas or infrastructure. Ensure fences are correctly designed at ground level and well maintained.

6 Follow up and monitor

Recheck treated areas, respond quickly to any surviving activity, and keep basic records. Early intervention prevents small problems turning back into large ones.

7 Treat disease as a bonus, not a strategy

Disease events may temporarily reduce rabbit numbers but won't remove warrens or guarantee long-term pasture recovery.



» Click or scan the QR code to watch Aaron's presentation at the Feral Cat and Fox Management Forum:



Search 'FeralScan' on your app store or click the links below to access RabbitScan:



TOOLBOX

Producers can record rabbit activity (including sightings, warrens and damage) and control activities in RabbitScan: feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan

Scan or click the QR code to access the PestSmart Glovebox Guide for Managing Rabbits:

Access PestSmart's toolkit for European rabbits: pestsmart.org.au/european-rabbits



Aaron Stephens aaron.stephens@basscoastlandcare.org.au

Northern focus on horns and health delivers solutions for scale

An MLA-supported project, in partnership with the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), is testing animal wellbeing practices under extensive grazing conditions.

The ‘Horns and Health’ project takes into account how, in northern beef systems, cows do much of their work unobserved. They may only be handled a handful of times each year, making it difficult to detect reproductive losses while also presenting practical challenges for implementing animal wellbeing initiatives.

The project is testing solutions that work in extensive beef businesses by tackling two longstanding challenges facing northern producers:

- reducing the need for dehorning through increased use of polled genetics
- improving the management of reproductive diseases that can quietly erode herd productivity.

For Michael McGowan, Professor Emeritus Livestock Medicine at The University of Queensland (UQ), the project’s greatest strength is that it is being tested under real commercial conditions.

“These kinds of projects are really important because they’re being done at scale, in the actual rangeland environment,” Michael said.

“It’s not a research station. It’s working within a large commercial system where cattle are routinely moved between paddocks and properties, and management decisions have to be practical.”

A systems approach to animal wellbeing

While the project has two distinct focus areas, both are aimed at improving animal wellbeing while supporting business performance.

The move towards polled cattle reduces the need for dehorning, while improved disease management seeks to reduce reproductive losses and lift herd productivity.

“There are enormous costs associated with dehorning: labour, weight loss, mortalities, bruising, and occupational health and safety risks,” Michael said.

The disease management component has an equally ambitious target. Across

AACo’s operations, the project aims to increase weaning rates by 5% through improved understanding and management of four key diseases: trichomoniasis, vibriosis, pestivirus and leptospirosis.

A marathon, not a sprint

One of the clearest lessons emerging from the project is that meaningful genetic change takes time.

AACo began its poll breeding program several years ago with the long-term goal of eliminating the need for dehorning. Rather than selecting solely for the poll gene, the business focused on maintaining fertility, structure and overall genetic merit alongside poll status.

The results have been significant:

- The proportion of polled animals in AACo’s Mitchell stud herd increased from 55% in 2017 to 100% by 2021.
- Commercial bull teams have also progressed from 70% polled in 2022 to 100% polled in 2026, while the proportion of polled commercial progeny has increased from ~25% to 70%.

According to AACo, fixing poll in the stud herd took approximately five years, or around one female generation.

The experience reinforces a message Michael believes is critical for producers.

“If you only select for poll genetics but don’t address factors affecting reproductive performance, your progress will be slower,” he said.

“You’re managing a system – it can’t be piecemeal.”

Tackling hidden reproductive losses

While the benefits of polled cattle are easy to see, reproductive diseases often operate below the surface.

UQ veterinarian Ben Wood said diseases such as trichomoniasis can persist unnoticed in extensive systems, where producers have limited opportunities to observe breeding performance.

Four tips for more productive herds

While it can be challenging in extensive production systems, there are four practical steps to achieve disease control and genetic improvement:

- 1 Maintain clean musters
- 2 Control bull movements
- 3 Handle vaccines correctly
- 4 Keep accurate animal husbandry records.



“In northern systems, we simply don’t see the animals often enough to know exactly what’s happening,” Ben said.

“Cows are doing their job largely unobserved, so issues like reproductive loss can go undetected.”

The project is helping establish practical testing and management protocols for the four key reproductive diseases, while also investigating technologies that could allow faster diagnosis in the field.

continued from previous page

Almost 38,000 disease tests have already been completed across AACo since the start of the Horns and Health project.

Testing at this scale has helped build a clearer picture of disease prevalence and informs future management decisions.

One of the strongest results to date has been the reduction of trichomoniasis through targeted testing and culling programs. Ben said through testing and culling, they have achieved up to 75% reduction in some herds.

The project has also reinforced the importance of bull age structure, with older bulls more likely to become long-term carriers of reproductive diseases such as trichomoniasis and vibriosis.

Making adoption practical

For Michael, the science behind disease control and genetic improvement is only part of the challenge.

“You have to get the ‘two-legged animal’ on side,” he said.

“People underestimate the complexity of implementing these programs at scale.”

Maintaining clean musters, controlling bull movements, handling vaccines correctly and maintaining accurate records all are challenging in large, extensive production systems.

This practicality is one of the reasons the project has been extended through to 2028.

Researchers are continuing to monitor herd performance, refine management recommendations and build evidence around the productivity benefits of reducing disease prevalence.

Beyond the on-farm research, the project is focused on building practical adoption pathways for industry. Through field days, workshops, online resources and producer demonstration activities, the project aims to provide producers with the tools and confidence to implement both reproductive disease management programs and polled breeding strategies in their own herds in extensive operations in the north. ■

» *Keep reading to see how AACo is managing herd health on stations.*

TOOLBOX

More Beef from Pastures resource guide:
mbfp.mla.com.au

MLA's herd health resources:
mbfp.mla.com.au/herd-health-and-welfare

Scan or click the QR code to access the MLA e-learning course ‘Concepts of animal breeding and genetics’:



How small changes deliver big gains for AACo

The MLA-supported Horns and Health project – see previous article – is helping the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) demonstrate practical pathways to improve animal wellbeing through both the transition to polled cattle and the implementation of herd health strategies targeting reproductive disease.

For AACo Station Manager Mary Vaughan, one of the most rewarding outcomes of the project is visible every time cattle come through the yards.

“Now you look across a yard full of cattle and about 70% of them are polled – that’s unreal,” she said.

While the long-term goals of the project are ambitious, the benefits are already being seen on the ground.

The scale of the project reflects the scale of the business itself. AACo operates across a network of properties spanning Queensland and the Northern Territory, meaning any new practice must work under a range of seasonal conditions, production systems and management environments.

Station managers and technical staff are central to that process.

Mary, who manages ‘Anthony Lagoon’ and ‘Eva Downs’ in the NT, and Stacey Murray, Technical Officer at ‘Wylarah’ in Central Queensland, are two of the people helping put the project’s learnings into practice and demonstrating what works under commercial conditions.

Breeding out the need for dehorning

Mary has spent more than two decades working in northern beef production and has seen first-hand the challenges associated with dehorning cattle.

“We saw a lot of incorrect dehorning and the damage associated with that,” she said.

“The production benefits are there. It might only be 1–2%, but if it’s across a herd of 10,000 head, it’s enough. It pays for itself.”

» The benefits of a polled herd include reduced labour, and improved weight gain and lower stress in cattle. Image: AACo



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"It takes cattle back a long way if you're not doing it properly."

Beyond animal welfare, dehorning also creates additional labour, handling and safety challenges for staff working in the yards.

For AACo, increasing the number of polled animals in the herd offered an opportunity to reduce those impacts while maintaining productivity.

However, Mary said the project team was careful not to focus solely on the poll gene.

"We were really focused on not losing the integrity of our bulls just to be selecting for the poll gene all the time," she said.

"We made sure we were selecting the right bulls, not just because they were polled."

This balanced approach is now paying dividends, with polled genetics becoming increasingly common throughout the herd.

Small changes deliver practical benefits

While reducing the need for dehorning was the original goal, the flow-on benefits have been broader than expected.

Mary said fewer horned cattle means less time spent processing animals, reduced stress through the yards, fewer safety risks for both cattle and people, and less weight loss in stock.

At Wylarah, Stacey has observed similar benefits.

"The biggest benefit would obviously be eliminating the need to dehorn," Stacey said.

She said reducing the number of horned cattle also improves processing efficiency during branding.

"It takes at least two extra labour units for us to do the dehorning process," she said.

"There's a lot of efficiencies there that we would gain by having a totally polled herd."

Health and productivity go hand-in-hand

Alongside the genetics work, the project is also helping strengthen herd health through improved vaccination programs and reproductive disease management.

Stacey said one of the biggest learnings for her team has been seeing the benefits of comprehensive vaccination protocols in terms of herd health.

For example, vaccinating for bovine respiratory disease (BRD) has a clear benefit, with less calves presenting with pneumonia symptoms at weaning.

"That's been a massive uplift for us here at Wylarah," Stacey said.

She also believes vaccination programs contribute to the strong fertility performance being achieved across the herd.

Benefits for whole industry

While the project is being delivered across AACo properties, both station managers believe the learnings have value well beyond a single business.

For Mary, the message is that even small gains can have a meaningful impact when applied across large herds.

"The production benefits are there," she said.

"It might only be 1-2%, but if it's across a herd of 10,000 head, it's enough. It pays for itself."

Stacey agrees.

"Anyone can start looking at their herd health straight away," she said. "That health piece is a really easy win for producers." ■

Five steps for polled progress

1 Genetic change takes time, but progress is measurable

Transitioning to a polled herd doesn't happen overnight. AACo's experience highlights the importance of taking a long-term approach, while maintaining focus on other important production traits such as fertility, structure and overall genetic merit.

2 Animal wellbeing and productivity go hand in hand

Reducing the need for dehorning delivers obvious welfare benefits, but it can also improve labour efficiency, safety, reduce handling time and minimise production setbacks associated with processing cattle.

3 Herd health programs deliver benefits beyond disease prevention

Comprehensive vaccination programs have supported healthier cattle, improved calf health and strong fertility outcomes, reinforcing the value of preventative herd health management.

4 Small improvements can deliver significant returns at scale

In large northern herds, even modest gains in animal health, reproductive performance or labour efficiency can generate meaningful productivity and economic benefits across the business.

5 Practical implementation is critical to success

The most effective wellbeing initiatives are those that fit within existing management systems. Success depends on developing practical approaches that staff can consistently implement under commercial conditions.

SEASONAL ACTION PLAN

📌 **Review dehorning rates:** Assess the portion of horned cattle entering your herd and identify opportunities to increase the use of polled genetics.

📌 **Evaluate vaccination protocols:** Work with your veterinarian to ensure breeder and young stock vaccination programs are targeting key reproductive and production diseases.

📌 **Focus on bull quality and management:** Select bulls based on overall performance, fertility and health traits alongside poll status.

Soil probes drive smarter seasonal decisions

Gippsland livestock producers are digging deep to make better pasture management decisions based on soil moisture and temperature data.

An MLA Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) run by Agriculture Victoria is overcoming regional challenges of unpredictable rainfall, late autumn breaks and cold winter soils, which can quickly turn pasture planning into costly guesswork.

Agriculture Victoria's James Paulet said producers worked together to test how soil moisture probes and temperature data could improve seasonal preparedness and guide decisions about sowing, fertiliser application and grazing.

"The main issue is seasonal variability," James said. "A lot of our rainfall comes from east coast low systems, which aren't always reliable or predictable."

Over two years, demonstration sites at Bairnsdale, Buchan South and Omeo gave producers the opportunity to see how seasonal conditions and management decisions interact, to apply this understanding within their own systems.

The project reinforced that seasonal conditions alone do not determine pasture performance.

Instead, producers observed firsthand how management decisions – including grazing timing, pasture species and sowing date – influenced how effectively available soil moisture is converted into feed.

Turning data into practical decisions

James said soil probes provide producers with practical 'trigger points' to guide this seasonal decision making.

"Whenever you need to start predicting growth rates, soil moisture can be a key indicator of what kind of growth rates to expect," he said.

"Adequate soil moisture and temperature at sowing in autumn is probably the first trigger point producers should start tracking."

He said it was important to interpret probe data carefully.

"Differences in pasture or crop type can mean soil moisture varies across a paddock compared to what a nearby probe is showing," he said.

Rather than checking data daily, he recommended monitoring trends weekly to better understand how quickly stored moisture is being used and whether conditions are likely to support future growth.

Management drives production

Some of the largest gains seen across the demonstration sites came from management changes, reinforcing the value of timing decisions based on seasonal conditions rather than calendar dates.

At the Bairnsdale site, earlier autumn sowing produced substantially more feed than traditional later sowing, despite later rainfall appearing more favourable. Cooler soil temperatures reduced establishment and total production compared to those sown earlier.

In this case, soil probes assisted producers to understand that reaching optimal stages can vary depending on:

- how much moisture is available for regrowth
- whether conditions are likely to support strong pasture growth
- when recovery rates slow due to moisture or temperature limitations.

The Buchan South site simulated rotational grazing based on ryegrass leaf stage, reinforcing the impact grazing timing can have. Compared to grazing every 30 days, this approach almost doubled pasture production. Over 26 months, the leaf-stage approach produced an additional 18.2 tonnes of dry matter per hectare.

"It was really good to see confirmation of how much extra feed you can grow by grazing to leaf stage," James said.

Extension activities build confidence

As part of the PDS, producers in the region had access to live data from 17 soil moisture probes. The data was supported by regular analysis connecting it to pasture growth and management decisions, so producers could relate the information back to their own systems.



James Paulet performs maintenance on a soil moisture probe at Omeo.

Field days, paddock walks and workshops gave producers the opportunity to build confidence interpreting probe data in practical farm situations.

By the end of the project, all core participants and 73% of observer producers reported using soil moisture data to guide decisions around grazing, sowing and fertiliser timing. ■

» Meet one of the producers involved in the PDS on the next page.

TOOLBOX

Scan or click the QR code to learn more about this PDS:

Access live soil probe data from Agriculture Victoria soil probe monitoring sites: extensionaus.com.au/soilmoisturemonitoring

MLA's More Beef from Pastures resources: mbfp.mla.com.au



James Paulet james.paulet@agriculture.vic.gov.au Alana McEwan amcewan@mla.com.au

Probing into pasture performance

Improving soil health and pasture productivity has become a major focus for East Gippsland producer **Quentin Hodge** across his two very different properties.

Quentin operates breeding country near Gelantipy alongside a second property at Bairnsdale, where he backgrounds and trades cattle and lambs while progressively renovating pastures.

Together, the two properties give him flexibility across varying seasonal conditions, but they also present two very different management challenges.

“At Gelantipy we’re running a permanent pasture-based breeding system, while Bairnsdale is more annual crops and pasture renovation,” Quentin said.

His focus on productivity led Quentin to become involved in the MLA-funded Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) project exploring how soil moisture probes can be applied for seasonal preparedness in a commercial setting – see story previous page.

“I’ve become a bit of a dog with a bone about soil fertility,” he said. “If you haven’t got the building blocks right, then all the other work you do in the business just won’t work for you.”

Beyond calendar decisions

Before becoming involved in the project, Quentin said many decisions around sowing and fertiliser timing were largely based on habit and seasonal expectations.

“It was all pretty seasonal and calendar-based,” he said. “Around here it was traditionally, ‘put your fertiliser out in autumn’ because that’s what everyone did.”

Using soil moisture and temperature data has shifted that approach toward more targeted, informed decision making.

For Quentin, one of the biggest advantages has been improving crop establishment timing, particularly for warm-season species like millet and sorghum.

“You hear people say they planted millet and rape together and the rape came up but the millet didn’t,” he said. “Then you look at the soil temperature and realise the millet never really had a chance.”

The probe data has also helped guide decisions around nitrogen applications and pasture stimulants, supporting application when conditions are likely to deliver a response.

Looking below the surface

One of the key observations for Quentin came from comparing soil moisture trends under annual crops versus perennial pastures.

“The graphs were almost opposite to each other,” he said. “The annuals were using that top moisture, while the perennial pastures were pulling moisture from much deeper in the profile.”

Seeing how differently pasture systems used water helped inform how he approached feed supply and seasonal resilience.

“It really surprised me just how deep those perennial roots were getting,” he said.

Quentin believes having access to soil moisture information has significantly improved confidence in seasonal planning and risk management.

“If we think we’re heading into a dry period, we can now look deeper into the profile and work out whether there’s still enough moisture there to carry us through,” he said.

“That changes decisions around supplementary feeding, fertiliser and stocking pressure.”

Another tool in the toolbox

Quentin said one of the biggest benefits of participating in the PDS was having access to practical information he could apply both on his own farm and in conversations with clients through his role as area manager for a fertiliser company.

The ability to access local soil moisture probe readings has helped shift decision making around pasture planning and fertiliser timing from relying on instinct alone to using data more confidently.

“Having that little snapshot into what’s happening underneath our feet is critical,” he said. ■

SNAPSHOT



QUENTIN HODGE –
‘Kallara Downs’,
Gelantipy and
Bairnsdale, Victoria



AREA
290ha

ENTERPRISE
230 Poll Herefords, 300 second-cross
Border Leicester–Merino and
Poll Dorset-cross sheep

PASTURES
Permanent perennial pastures
and annual forage crops

SOILS
Bairnsdale: sandy loam over clay
Gelantipy: heavier sandy loam

RAINFALL
600mm

✔ Quentin Hodge said soil moisture data has helped him make more informed decisions around pasture planning, species selection and seasonal risk management.



📍 mla.com.au/pds
✉ James Paulet james.paulet@agriculture.vic.gov.au
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» The Webbs graze stubbles to support sheep performance over summer.

Making stubbles work harder in mixed systems

With their mixed farming enterprise, stubble grazing has always been a focus for WA producers Ben and Emily Webb, but until recently, their approach was based on experience and visual assessment.

Now, they are taking a more data-driven approach to grazing stubbles, using liveweight monitoring to better understand how long stubbles deliver value and when to intervene.

This shift has come through their involvement in an MLA/GRDC Producer Demonstration Site (PDS), delivered in partnership with Southern Dirt. The PDS is focused on strategies to optimise stubble grazing in WA's Great Southern.

Role of stubbles

The Webbs' Kojonup enterprise involves cropping their more productive country, and running a Merino flock on permanent pastures and less arable areas.

Ben sees stubble grazing as essential to maintaining stocking rates while protecting pastures.

"It allows us to run a higher stocking rate because we can put the sheep somewhere over the summer. Without those stubbles it would put too much pressure on the pastures," he said.

Stubbles also play a critical role in bridging the summer–autumn feed gap and reducing reliance on supplementary feeding.

Measured management

Traditionally, Ben's approach to stubble grazing was straightforward. He used large mobs to graze paddocks sequentially until feed ran out.

The PDS introduced a more structured approach, centred on weekly liveweight

monitoring, as an indicator of the nutritional value of stubbles.

With existing infrastructure from his ram breeding enterprise, including auto-drafting and electronic identification (eID), Ben was well placed to adopt the system.

"We had the set up so it was quite simple. We just ran them in and weighed them," he said.

What the data revealed

For Ben, feed testing results largely confirmed expectations and, importantly, added confidence and clarity.

"Feed testing reinforced what we hoped was right and put some numbers around the quality – it was actually slightly better than I expected," he said.

Across the broader project, feed testing highlighted a clear nutritional hierarchy in stubbles, with grain driving early performance and lower-value components contributing less as grazing progresses.

However, it was the liveweight data that proved most valuable, by clearly showing when animal performance peaked and began to decline.

Findings across the PDS sites demonstrated that:

- sheep typically achieve strong early gains (100g/hd/day)
- performance peaks around 20–30 days of grazing
- liveweight then stabilises and declines as feed quality drops.

» Emily and Ben Webb run a mixed cropping and Merino enterprise, integrating stubble grazing to improve feed utilisation.

SNAPSHOT

BEN AND EMILY WEBB –
Kojonup, WA



AREA
2,150ha

ENTERPRISE
Merinos and cropping

PASTURES
Annual sub-clover base with a mix of grasses and broadleaves

SOILS
Gravel duplex transitioning to loamy duplex

RAINFALL
535mm

"Feed testing reinforced what we hoped was right and put some numbers around the quality – it was actually slightly better than I expected."

Five steps for stubble success

Ben's involvement in the PDS reinforced several practical lessons for producers looking to improve their stubble grazing strategy.

1 Measure performance, don't guess

Liveweight monitoring provides the clearest indication of when stubble is delivering value.

2 Maximise the early grazing window

The first 3–4 weeks deliver the highest animal performance.

3 Plan supplementation timing

Monitor condition closely to introduce feed before performance declines.

4 Understand paddock differences

Different crops and stubbles vary in how long they provide value.

5 Keep systems practical

Simple set-ups, such as grazing near yards, make regular weighing easier.

✦ Making better use of crop stubbles can increase grazing days and carrying capacity, support liveweight gain and prime lamb production, and reduce reliance on supplementary feeding.

This reinforced to Ben the importance of timing grazing rotations and supplementation decisions carefully.

From learning to action

For Ben, being involved in the PDS has helped him better predict how long different stubbles will last and how they perform.

"I'd like to see how the wheat compares to the barley, so we can work the numbers out around that and how long the paddocks will last," he said.

This level of insight allows for more proactive decision making, including when to move stock or introduce supplementary feeding.

Rather than reacting to declining condition, Ben is now aiming to anticipate it.

Ben, who became involved in the PDS through his connection with Southern Dirt, sees clear value from participating.

"I always like looking for ways to improve. It's good to meet different people and get some numbers around what you're doing, so you know you're on the right track," he said. ■

SEASONAL ACTION PLAN

- ⚙️ Weigh mobs weekly to track trends and identify performance peaks.
- ⚙️ Prioritise high-value stock (e.g. lambs or young ewes) for early grazing windows.
- ⚙️ Set trigger points for supplementation based on weight decline, not paddock appearance.
- ⚙️ Match stocking rate to stubble availability to extend grazing duration.
- ⚙️ Plan paddock sequence early to optimise use of different crop residues.

TOOLBOX

- 🔍 Find out more about the Stubble Grazing project at: mla.com.au/stubble-grazing
- 📄 Learn more about PDS and sign up for PDS Updates: mla.com.au/pds

New hub helps WA sheep producers plan ahead

MLA has launched the WA Sheep Transition Hub, a new platform designed to help the state's sheep producers navigate the phase-out of live sheep exports by sea ahead of the May 2028 deadline.

The hub brings together market insights, research and development summaries, funding opportunities and practical on-farm resources in a single location.

David Beatty, MLA's Group Manager – Livestock and Land Productivity, said the platform is intended to support both immediate production decisions and longer-term business planning.

"We're highlighting practical, proven tools that producers can adopt now, from feedbase and grazing systems through to new approaches like confinement feeding," David said.

"The focus is on improving productivity and resilience at the farm level."

In addition, the hub showcases MLA's market development programs, including Lambassador, the Aussie Meat Academy and in-market sheepmeat technical specialists, aimed at strengthening domestic and export demand for Australian sheepmeat.

Producers can also find links to grants and transition funding, including the Australian Government's Transition Assistance Package, DPIRD's Supply Chain Capacity Program and support available through the Livestock Transport Industry Transition program.

🔍 To find out more, visit: mla.com.au/wa-transition

✔ A METOS 5 weather station on George Galbraith's property near Khancoban, NSW. The system collects farm-specific weather and soil data that can be accessed in real time via a mobile app.

Weather tech grows input investment

Fertiliser is one of the biggest input costs on George Galbraith's Upper Murray beef enterprise – here's how he's turning soil and weather data into dollars.

Making sure every fertiliser application delivers the greatest possible return has become increasingly important, particularly when seasonal conditions can vary significantly across the region.

Based near Khancoban in NSW, George and his family run a self-replacing Angus herd across a mix of owned and leased country. While rainfall is an important part of the equation, George has discovered that soil temperature can be just as critical in determining when pastures are ready to respond to fertiliser.

Through the Farmers2Founders (F2F) TEKfarm program, George installed a weather station and soil moisture monitoring system to gain access to farm-specific weather and soil data.

TEKfarm connects producers with technology providers and technical support to help overcome barriers to adoption.

George was one of several producers involved in the first Phase of his Upper Murray project delivered by Upper Murray Producers plus (UMP+) and Upper Murray Inc in partnership with the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), Food Agility and Charles Sturt University.

For George, the technology is removing some of the guesswork from key management decisions by providing a better understanding of the conditions driving pasture growth.

Timing matters

Before installing the monitoring system, George relied on weather information from the nearest available weather station at Corryong. The challenge was that local conditions on his property were often very different.

"Quite often through the winter months we'd be getting frosts and Corryong might be a few degrees warmer," he said.

"We're probably another 250–300m higher above sea level."

Those seemingly small differences influence how quickly soils warm after winter and when pasture begins actively growing.

Rather than applying fertiliser as soon as seasonal conditions begin to improve, George now uses soil temperature, rainfall and soil moisture data specific to his farm to help decide when the investment is most likely to deliver a response.

"A lot of people might start spreading urea and the grass seems to get going three weeks or a month earlier in Corryong," George said.

SNAPSHOT



GALBRAITH PASTORAL –
Khancoban, NSW



AREA
650ha

ENTERPRISE
Self-replacing Angus (400 breeders)

PASTURES
Perennial ryegrass, phalaris, annual ryegrass and clover-based grazing systems

SOILS
Variable

RAINFALL
950mm

"You can just look on the app and go, well, it's not worth spreading fertiliser at present because the soil temperature's not there."

George said the technology has not necessarily reduced fertiliser use, but it has increased confidence that applications are being made at the right time.

“What we’re seeing is probably a better result from spreading fertiliser at certain times and waiting until the time is right,” he said.

More confidence, less guesswork

The value of the monitoring system extends beyond fertiliser decisions.

Historical weather and soil data also gives George something to compare against from one season to the next, helping put current conditions into context.

“We can be standing at the shed having a toolbox meeting and go, ‘righto, this time last year we’d only had this much rain and soil temperature was this,’” George said.

As the dataset grows, George expects the information will become an increasingly useful tool for planning grazing management.

“If the season tightens, it will help us work out when we could potentially start pulling cattle off those perennial pastures to preserve them,” he said.

Having objective, farm-specific information gives the business greater confidence that management decisions are being made at the right time rather than relying solely on observation or regional weather information.

Opening the door to ag-tech

For George, the experience has shown that practical technologies don’t need to be complicated to make a difference.

“I nearly 100% would say that we wouldn’t have even looked at a weather station if they didn’t approach us about it,” George said.

“At the time, we didn’t know how it could benefit us.”

As part of the TEKfarm project, participating producers received installation and training support from weather monitoring company METOS.

“It’s very user-friendly – we haven’t had any problems with it at all,” George said.

His advice to other producers is to keep an open mind.

“Don’t be afraid to step outside the box and look at the technology that’s available,” he said. ■

📍 To find out more, visit:
farmers2founders.com/tekfarm

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Goat grazing trial reduces bushfire risk

Goats are earning their place as a tool in reducing the risk of bushfire.

The inquiry responding to the widespread devastation of the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires recommended implementation of alternative methods to mitigate and reduce potential fuel load in fire-prone areas – and one of these methods was controlled grazing using goats.

Since February 2021, ‘goat brigades’ have been supporting rural firefighting efforts through deployment into Asset Protection Zones (the areas surrounding built assets such as residential housing, commercial infrastructure, or machinery sheds) and Strategic Fire Advantage Zones, or control points near Asset Protection Zones to reduce risk of spread or spot fires.

Through controlled grazing in areas with varying vegetation types, density and differing topography, goats have been effective in reducing and mitigating fuel loads from fire-prone regions.

This initiative was funded by the NSW Government’s Bush Fire Risk Mitigation Program through to the end of June 2026.

Goat brigade at work

The goat brigade is made up of vendors verified by the Rural Fire Service (RFS). These vendors have established businesses and associated practices to responsibly hire goats for vegetation clearing.

Depending on the location and size of the project, the size of the mobs hired for grazing are scaled up and down.

Grazing is controlled in a ‘cell’ process, which replicates managed paddock grazing in other livestock industries.

Goats are rotated through cells that are set up with temporary electric fences. They are rotated through the designated area over a series of weeks to complete the fuel load clearing.

Kim Smith, NSW Rural Fire Service Preparedness Lead – Area Operations, said the impact of the practice has been significant.

“To date, these jobs take place in areas ranging from one to 80ha,” she said.

“The average size of the Asset Protection Zones we clear is around 5ha, which takes the goats around eight to 12 weeks to clear in its entirety.

“The program is often used in areas where traditional methods of hazard mitigation – such as burning and mechanical activities –

Goat brigade benefits

- **Accessibility:** goats are versatile and can access areas that are inaccessible to land-clearing machinery.
- **Reduced workplace health and safety issues:** reduction in human intervention means less risk to workforce during fuel-load clearing.
- **Unimpeded by weather:** grazing isn’t weather dependent and can be completed throughout the year.
- **Low maintenance:** once established, goats are easily contained and self-reliant.
- **Minimal community impact:** no interference with the community through smoke, noise or road closures typically required for safe fuel-load clearing.
- **Thorough clearing:** will mitigate a majority of plant species, including weeds, and areas can be repeatedly grazed if necessary.
- **Competitive cost:** cost is comparable to other methods of mitigation.
- **Support other mitigation methods:** can be used to reduce fuel loading prior to a prescribed burn.

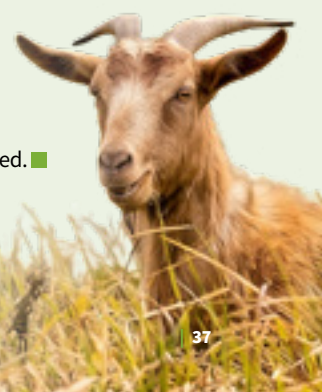
aren’t an option because the resulting smoke, traffic or noise impact on the surrounding community is too great.

“The program is regularly used in visible spaces around hospitals, schools and public recreation areas, so we often hear comments from community members who enjoy seeing the goats doing their job so thoroughly.”

The impact so far

Although initially funded for the first 12 months of the program, the continued renewal of the program through subsequent years reflects the impact it’s delivered to the regional Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.

With the trial now ended, the effectiveness of the program is being measured by the University of Melbourne, and results and data will be available when completed. ■



📍 mla.com.au/bushfire 📍 mla.com.au/goats-hub
📧 Daniel Forwood dforwood@mla.com.au



Disease detector improves carcase feedback

For decades, disease detection in offal has been dependent on visual assessments by meat inspectors – a labour-intensive process that can vary between people and processing sites – but that's set to change with new technology.

To bring greater consistency and accuracy to the task, the new technology has been developed by Charles Sturt University (CSU) and P&P Optica with support from MLA and Tey's Australia. It works alongside meat inspectors to provide an objective and repeatable method of diagnosing disease and defects in offal.

The MLA Donor Company-funded project is investigating how hyperspectral imaging and machine learning can support more consistent disease assessment in lungs, livers and kidneys, while generating detailed health data that can be fed back to producers.

The goal of this initiative is to improve consistency, accuracy and decision making across the supply chain.

The brains behind the initiative

Leading the project is Professor Jane Quinn from CSU's School of Agricultural, Environmental and Veterinary Sciences, who developed the original concept after identifying a need for more objective disease assessment at slaughter.

"The project itself builds on earlier proof-of-concept work we completed, showing machine learning could successfully differentiate between disease states in beef lungs," she said.

"The idea first emerged almost a decade ago when we began exploring how technology could help overcome some of the limitations associated with traditional visual inspection and consistency of data capture."

According to Jane, while meat inspectors play a critical role in protecting food safety and identifying the presence of disease in tissues destined for human or animal consumption, there can be limitations in the amount of information captured and reported.

"The role of the meat inspector is to identify whether the presence of disease that impacts food safety exists, not to necessarily diagnose the disease or defect and communicate it back to producers," she said.

Machine learning models can distinguish between healthy and diseased tissue.

"You can look at a lot of animals from the outside and they all look the same, but the inside will tell a different story."

“This leaves a gap in the flow of information through the supply chain, which presented to us as an opportunity to develop a tool that could operate alongside existing inspection systems, and provide producers with consistent feedback to support better on-farm decision making.”

Machine learning

While Jane identified the industry challenge, turning veterinary knowledge into something a machine could understand was undertaken by Professor Lihong Zheng from CSU's School of Computing, Mathematics and Engineering. She worked in conjunction with P&P Optica's model development team.

As a specialist in image processing and machine learning, Lihong focused on developing the algorithms capable of detecting and accurately diagnosing disease and defects in offal via camera.

At the same time, P&P Optica developed similar algorithms for hyperspectral image capture.

“My role in this project was to interpret Jane's expert knowledge into machine-actionable information,” Lihong said.

“In simple terms, that meant teaching a computer to recognise the same disease indicators that an experienced meat inspector or veterinarian would identify during an assessment.”

Drawing on thousands of images collected throughout the project, P&P Optica trained machine learning models to distinguish between healthy tissue and six different disease conditions affecting lungs, livers and kidneys. This included:

- liver abscess
- pneumonia
- liver fluke
- pleurisy
- kidney cysts
- nephritis.

The addition of hyperspectral imaging added another layer of information, allowing the system to analyse characteristics beyond those visible to the human eye.

“P&P Optica was then able to integrate the established machine learning model into a commercial product that was installed at CSU's Food Pilot Plant for pre-commercial testing,” Lihong said.

“For the first time, we were able to see the technology operating under realistic processing conditions, assessing offal in real time and generating objective defect identification.

“In simple terms, that meant teaching a computer to recognise the same disease indicators that an experienced meat inspector or veterinarian would identify during an assessment.”

“From there, the focus shifted to refining the system and validating its accuracy under commercial conditions.”

Closing the feedback loop

On the processing floor, Dr Stephen Cork – a research fellow at CSU with extensive experience in meat processing and quality assurance – took the lead in ensuring the technology could perform reliably in a commercial environment.

“We were able to achieve an accuracy rating of 88% for our six identifiable diseases across the three offals – that will gradually improve as we gain access to more samples for scanning,” he said.

For Stephen, the significance of those results lies in the quality of information that can be returned to producers.

“You can look at a lot of animals from the outside and they all look the same, but the inside will tell a different story,” he said.

“By providing objective and consistent health data, the technology has the potential to give producers greater visibility of the health challenges affecting their livestock. This will help them identify trends, assess the effectiveness of management practices, and make more informed decisions to improve productivity and carcase quality over time.”

The next phase of the project will focus on refining the design of the scanning system,



▲ Lihong Zheng, Jane Quinn and Stephen Cork at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, NSW.



▲ P&P Optica's offal disease detection device in action.

by developing a more modular structure that can be seamlessly integrated into existing processing plant infrastructure and adopted more broadly across the red meat industry. ■

Turning innovation into opportunity

The Australian red meat industry's willingness to embrace change – whether it's the seasons, markets or consumer expectations – has been central to its longevity.

In recent years the pace of this change has accelerated in response to an increasingly complex and competitive trading environment.

As a result, our industry has rapidly transformed into a sophisticated, data-rich sector where innovation has become pivotal.

MLA has played a significant role in enabling this and helping reshape the opportunities available to producers at many points across the value chain – from our investments in objective measurement technologies and digital decision-making tools, through to our work developing advanced processing automation and new product offerings.

MLA's first *Value chain innovation outcomes and opportunities report* demonstrates the many benefits this approach has delivered for producers, co-partners, investors, and the wider red meat supply chain in recent years.

Beyond MLA's existing innovation outcomes, the report explores emerging opportunities by focusing on new or early-stage projects which show real promise, as well as identifying the key market growth opportunities which are helping to inform our future innovation investments.

Impact on producers and brand owners

For producers and red meat brand owners, the report demonstrates how red meat innovations are delivering improvements in productivity, profitability, market access and industry sustainability.

Some of the ways this is happening include:

- new value-based trading models underpinned by objective measurement technologies which can deliver improved trait measurement and grading accuracy
- de-risked adoption of on-farm digital and data solutions which have improved productivity, profitability and safety

- new products to drive full-carcase utilisation while capturing premium prices for low-value cuts and by-products
- a suite of food technology innovations to extend shelf life and increase size, scope and value of market access
- robotics and automation capability required to secure a commercially sustainable processing sector
- innovative value chains to build the capability of employees, enterprises, communities and entrepreneurs by delivering the technical, leadership and practice change tools required to secure a prosperous future for the industry.

Commercialising new solutions

The report demonstrates how MLA has supported our innovation partners to commercialise transformational technologies, including its investments in off-farm productivity spanning more than two decades.

MLA's longstanding collaboration with the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC) and processing technology providers has delivered major advancements in robotics and automation across the processing sector.

Many of these technologies are now fully commercialised and MLA was able to transition the ongoing management of this processing automation program to AMPC.

MLA
INVESTED **\$152M**
IN RED MEAT VALUE CHAIN INNOVATION
BETWEEN FY21-25



Investing for long-term industry impact

MLA continues to invest in research and development which is designed to ensure the long-term profitability, resilience and sustainability of the industry, leaving us well-placed to pursue many of the key ambitions outlined in MLA's *Strategic Plan 2030*. In particular, this will focus on three key strategic priorities:

Value-based marketing

The advances made in processor automation and objective measurement will be key to embedding value-based marketing (VBM) across the supply chain – ensuring the industry is delivering what consumers value and rewarding those who do it best.

MLA investments in value chain innovation will continue to focus on objective measurement technologies, together with meat science research and development.

Through a focus on enhanced carcase/live animal trait feedback (including more timely detection of offal disease and defects), objective measurement will also provide producers with the vital guidance required to inform their genetic decision making and improve breeding outcomes that align to market demands.

Product innovation

Through its High value food frontiers sub-program, MLA has used market insights to identify innovative product and packaging technology opportunities to help industry capture new markets, reduce waste and increase carcase value.

Capability building

The Innovation capability building sub-program will continue to support the development of a skilled workforce and create the leadership and value chain design required to accelerate and invest in innovation at multiple levels across the supply chain, ensuring the industry will be well-placed to move forward.

✓ MLA's investment in research and development is advancing value-based marketing, product innovation and industry capability to support long-term industry growth.



These technologies have delivered improvements in productivity, safety and sustainability – helping ensure a more robust processing sector and creating more certainty and choice for red meat producers.

Beyond this, research indicates that the outcomes from R&D investment will often benefit the wider value chain, with modelling suggesting that a 1% lift in processing productivity can deliver triple that benefit to producers.

Returns on investment

Between FY21–25, MLA invested \$152 million in red meat value chain innovation, with a combination of producer and processor levies accounting for 10% of this.

By enabling MLA Donor Company research and development funds to be pooled with partner and technology provider investment, and minimal levy contributions, MLA has been able to manage cost and project risk more effectively – delivering stronger outcomes and extracting optimum value from the investment of government and levy payer funds.

This partnership and co-investment approach has helped de-risk investment and paved the way for many red meat innovations to be more rapidly proven, commercialised and successfully integrated within the value chain. ■

A 1% lift in processing productivity can deliver triple that benefit to producers.

TOOLBOX

➤ MLA's *Strategic Plan 2030*: mla.com.au/strategic-plan

➤ MLA product and packaging innovation: mla.com.au/innovation

➤ Scan or click the QR code to learn about the Innovation capability building program:



mla.com.au/vci-report



Mick Lee mlee@mla.com.au

» NT producers Trudi Oxley and Sam McBean with Indonesia Livestock Operations General Manager Jack Webb (left) at the Brahman Perkasa Sentosa Feedlot.

NT producers explore trade ties with Indonesia

A group of NT producers and industry representatives recently travelled to Indonesia for a first-hand look at the country's cattle and feedlot operations, to boost ties and grow their shared understanding of the live export supply chain.

The delegation, supported by MLA and the Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association (NTCA), equipped producers with a better understanding of what happens to their cattle in Indonesia.

Producers visited feedlots and abattoirs in Lampung, Banten and West Java.

"Our Indonesian supply chain partners were very welcoming and pleased to see engagement from Australian cattle producers to help them better understand the trade," MLA's Indonesia and Asia Pacific Trade and Market Access manager Spencer Whitaker said.

"To fully understand Indonesia's protein landscape there's nothing better than seeing it with your own eyes.

"Producers on the tour were impressed with the animal welfare outcomes they saw, as well as the size, investment and professionalism of the operations."

Important market

Indonesia is a key destination for many northern Australian beef producers, while for Indonesia – which has limited space to sustainably produce its own herds – live export provides an important supply of cattle and protein.

In 2025, about 583,000 head of cattle entered the Indonesian market from Australia through live trade export.

One of the producers on the delegation, Trudi Oxley, said Indonesia was a crucial market for her family's operation Oxley Grazing and accounted for nearly 100% of their business.

They supply Brahman steers to the live export market, so seeing the distribution chain in action was invaluable for Trudi.

"You think you have a reasonable understanding of how the supply chain works but it's not until you actually get to a country that you understand how the culture and conditions shape it," she said.

"I've seen how calm the animals are outside the abattoirs and can now visualise the conditions my cattle are in when they are in Indonesia."

The delegation visited the Great Giant Livestock (GGL) and Juang Jaya Abdi Alam (JJAA) feedlots in Lampung which between them provide thousands of domestic jobs.

Trudi said seeing the feedlots firsthand helped her appreciate the socio-economic impact of the Australian-Indonesia live export trade.

"I gained an understanding of how important the live export trade is as an employer of local people," she said.

Managing costs

One of the central messages producers heard was that some Indonesian operators faced thin profit margins due to high cattle prices, input price rises and a poor exchange rate.

Lotfeeders also shared how price caps placed on live cattle sales by Indonesia's regulatory authority has limited their ability to pass on costs.

"We didn't understand the impact of having a weaker local currency against the US dollar, on top of increasing Australian cattle prices," Trudi said.

Trudi is now interested in forming a greater business-to-business relationship with Indonesian processors, to benefit all links in the supply chain.

"By understanding the customer, we can better prepare cattle for them so they have better margins and we can get more efficiency

in our business by being able to better plan supply," she said.

Building the relationship

NTCA Top End Branch chair and NT producer Sam McBean said the eagerness of Indonesian operators to meet with the delegation emphasised the value of the trade relationship.

"Ongoing dialogue between government and industry officials will help to further strengthen the trade," he said.

"I'm really keen to send someone from our business to Indonesia each year."

The delegation met Indonesia's Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health Services (DGLAHS), who reinforced Australia's important partnership.

"There is recognition that Australian cattle are an important part of the system in Indonesia, but we can't rest on our laurels," Spencer said.

"We need to ensure the supply chain is profitable and running as efficiently as possible to achieve positive outcomes over the long-term."

Opening the door to feedback

Spencer said improving the feedback loop between Australian cattle producers and Indonesian operators was a key takeaway from the tour.

"Currently, there's limited feedback to Australian producers from Indonesia, but with data collected in feedlots, there is opportunity to grow this," he said.

He said producers can encourage information sharing with Indonesian lotfeeders by engaging with opportunities through MLA. ■



• mla.com.au/snapshot-indonesia • Sam McBean sam@northernlivestock.com.au
• [Trudi Oxley trudi@uprivernt.com](mailto:TrudiOxley@uprivernt.com) • Spencer Whitaker swhitaker@mla.com.au



IN MARKET

providing demand

Aussie beef scores gold with consumers

Millions of people had a taste of Aussie Beef during the FIFA World Cup, with an ad campaign by MLA scoring goals across SBS's coverage.

'The Greatest' campaign featured in 144 television spots across the tournament, including key placements in Australia's group stage matches and the Cup final on July 20.

The campaign – which includes a new ad, 'The intern', to build on the original 'The kitchen' and 'The ship' ads – is driving strong results for the Australian beef industry at a significant scale.

In the opening weeks of the FIFA World Cup tournament alone, Aussie Beef was on centre plate for more than 18.7 million viewers, with campaign delivery tracking at 89% across total TV and broadcast video on demand, highlighting strong early performance.

This platform reinforced Aussie Beef's premium positioning and iconic status, reaching mass audiences at scale, including 4.5 million Australians who watched the Socceroos' match against Paraguay, and maintaining consistent brand presence throughout the tournament.

MLA Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Nathan Low said the campaign's performance highlights the strength of sustained investment in building the Australian beef brand.

"Aligning Aussie Beef with SBS's coverage of a global event of this scale allowed us to showcase our product in front of large and highly engaged audiences," Nathan said.

"It reinforced the premium nature and global reputation of Australian beef, while continuing to drive demand and preference with consumers."

Historic highs

The World Cup activity builds on strong recent campaign performance, including the Ashes series, which delivered more than 60 million impressions across October to December and more than 20million in reach during the cricket series.

Brand metrics for Aussie Beef are now at historical highs for the 12 months leading into Q1

2026, with 41% of consumers

agreeing

beef is worth

paying more

for and 44%

identifying it as 'the greatest meat'.

Consumer consideration has also reached 83%, the highest annual result in the past five years.

Nathan said these results demonstrate the direct benefit of the campaign for Australian beef producers.

"Strong brand performance and increased consideration ultimately support greater demand for Australian beef, which is critical for delivering long-term value back to producers," he said.

"As we continue to build the campaign, we are focused on reinforcing why Aussie Beef stands apart, ensuring it remains the protein of choice in moments that matter most."



Aussie Beef scored with millions of consumers during the FIFA World Cup, reinforcing its position as a premium protein choice.

High steaks

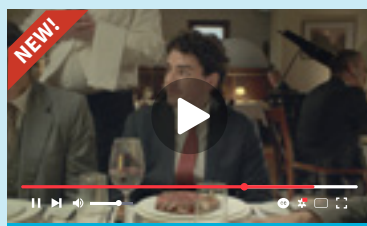
The latest creative instalment, 'The intern', continues the established platform introduced in earlier films, 'The kitchen' and 'The ship'.

Set in a high-pressure business dinner, the film follows an unlikely intern faced with a defining choice between playing it safe or choosing Aussie Beef.

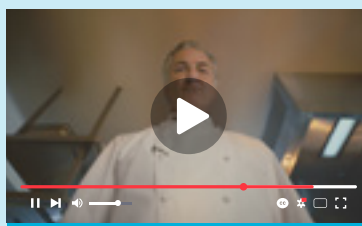
The decision to select a perfectly cooked bone-in ribeye sees the intern risk upstaging a formidable boss, reinforcing the powerful idea that when the stakes are high, people choose beef.

"These stories bring to life the lengths people will go for Aussie Beef and reinforce its position as the superior protein choice," Nathan said. ■

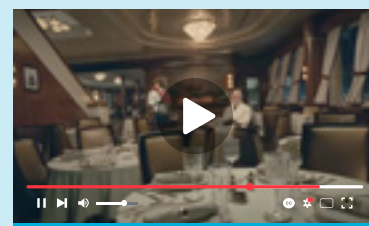
Aussie Beef's 'The Greatest' campaign



The Greatest – intern. Scan or click the QR code to watch on YouTube.



The Greatest – kitchen. Scan or click the QR code to watch on YouTube.



The Greatest – ship. Scan or click the QR code to watch on YouTube.



australianbeef.com.au



Tim Lau tlau@mla.com.au

Nutritionists get a serve of Aussie red meat

« Producer Joe Leven with the tour participants.
Image: Omid Daghighi

A new MLA initiative helped elevate Aussie red meat on plates around the world by taking nutrition, healthcare and content experts into the paddock, ultimately connecting to their more than one million followers.

MLA invited 13 guests from 10 nations across North America and Asia on the first Aussie Red Meat Nutrition Tour in July, to share the Australian red meat story with them and, ultimately, their extensive networks.

The tour reflected the successful model of MLA's Lambassador and Aussie Beef Mates delegations. This time, however, the spotlight was on health and nutrition experts in response to insights which reveal the majority of consumers are increasing red meat intake based on its health benefits.

From kitchen to paddock

To start, the tour spent a day in Sydney with qualified nutrition scientist Dr Joanna McMillan, hearing the latest science-backed information about red meat. This equipped participants with evidence to tackle common misunderstandings about its place in a healthy diet.

To truly appreciate Australian red meat, the participants had to see where production begins. So, the next stop was the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

There, they met beef producer Joe Leven, who shared how his livestock are integrated into mixed farming systems, the challenges he faces, and sustainability strategies.

They also took part in a masterclass with chef Glenn Flood, who showcased the versatility of Aussie beef and lamb. Participants had the opportunity to observe, smell and taste Australian products and discuss how different cuts can be utilised.

Food content creator Stella Chan, from China, called it an eyeopener.

"Cuts of meat can be confusing. People know their names and what they look like, but they cannot connect them," she said.

"I filmed all of them to show my audience what they're really choosing so they can make decisions based on their preference or health concern."

Most delegates had never been on a farm, let alone heard terms such as feedbase – including Australian nutritionist Prue Mynard.

"One of the things that really resonated with me was the importance of soil quality in raising cattle and sheep, and just how much the health and quality of the soil impacts that final product in a sustainable way," Prue said.

For Canadian dietitian Rowena Leung, it was the paddock of 'happy cattle' which resonated most with her.

"Never have I seen cows who have been able to roam as freely as I have today," she said.

With MLA insights revealing that around one in six consumers purchase red meat based on whether it was produced sustainably, this first-hand experience was important to show the participants how Australian livestock are raised.

From paddock to plate

With renewed confidence and an appreciation for how producers look after their livestock and land, the Aussie Red Meat Nutrition Tour participants said they were now confident in recommending Australian red meat to their clients and audience.

"I think it's really important to emphasise and remind people

that there are certain nutrients you can only get from red meat," Rowena said.

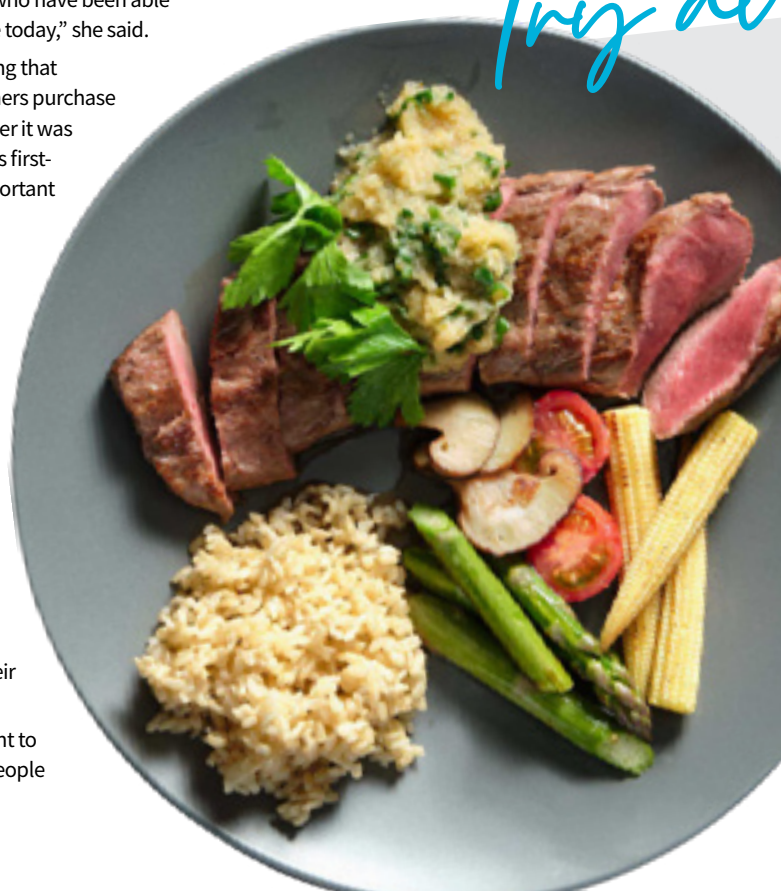
It was this message that was baked into a range of culturally diverse recipes delegates made to bookend the tour.

Each of the culinary creations were shared online, reaching more than one million global consumers, clinical patients and athletes – with Aussie producers clearly in the picture.

» Scan or click the QR code to read more about Joe's approach to sustainable beef production in the Summer 2025 edition of Feedback:



Try at



Meet two of the delegates on MLA's first Aussie Red Meat Nutrition Tour

Dr Joanna McMillan was one of the Australian guests on the tour. Not only is she a PhD-qualified nutrition scientist and lifestyle medicine expert, but her influence extends across her work as a bestselling author, speaker and TV presenter.

While she has worked with MLA in recent years and was supported by MLA during her PhD, the tour taught her a lot about where red meat's nutrition comes from.

"My standout moment was standing in a paddock with a herd of beef cattle and producer Joe Leven explaining the importance of pasture and soil," she said.

"Pasture is not like someone's city front lawn, but is rather a complex ecosystem of different plants, microbes, birds, insects and animals. It was fascinating."

Joanna also presented to her fellow delegates on the tour. She explained how Australian red meat not only offers high-quality nutrition, but also fits within a sustainable diet.

She used the concept of 'plant-rich omnivore eating'.

"This resonated and helped them to see that recommending red meat can actually help with improving fibre intakes, veggies and other plant foods," Joanna said.

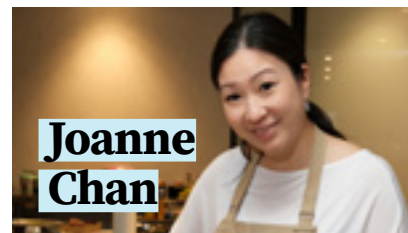


Dr Joanna McMillan

Joanna explained that prior to the tour, delegates had difficulties in recommending red meat to their clients and followers. Yet after, this perception had shifted significantly away from a 'plants versus animal' mentality.

"They were impressed with the quality of meat, consider it to be amongst the world's best and have confidence to recommend it back in their own countries," Joanna said.

✉ jo@drjoanna.com



Joanne Chan

Joanne Chan was invited to the tour as a registered dietitian based in Hong Kong with more than 20 years of experience in clinical practice and health promotion.

She serves as an advisor to the Cancer Information Network Charitable Foundation, has authored four books, and has appeared on numerous TV and radio programmes.

While Joanne was previously aware of the high nutritional value within Australian red meat, she hadn't realised the extent of hard work that takes place behind the scenes.

From understanding the AUS-MEAT marbling score and how different cuts and preparation methods affect texture and mouthfeel, to the critical role soil health, biodiversity and cattle management play in sustainable farming practices, Joanne was able to see how Australian meat derives its quality and integrity from farm to table.

"I'm inspired by producers' passion for their craft, their deep expertise and knowledge, and their dedication to delivering high-quality meat while safeguarding the environment," she said.

"I am deeply honoured to share it with the community in Hong Kong. I can truly feel the hard work and dedication you have put into this, and it is deeply inspiring."

✉ joanneychan@gmail.com

Here is one of the recipes created by pharmacist and fitness influencer Sakura Shimoka as part of the tour.

Australian lamb backstrap with Japanese yuzu-daikon sauce

This recipe features Australian lamb served with a refreshing Japanese-style sauce made from grated daikon, ponzu and yuzu pepper. It highlights the natural flavour of the lamb while offering a healthy, well-balanced meal with seasonal vegetables and multigrain rice.

INGREDIENTS

Main

300–400 g Australian lamb backstrap (or rump or beef fillet)
salt
black pepper
olive oil

Sauce

150 g grated daikon radish
3 tbsp ponzu sauce
1 tsp yuzu pepper paste (adjust to taste)
chopped green onions

Side dishes

asparagus
baby corn
shiitake mushrooms
cherry tomatoes
multigrain rice

METHOD

1. Season and oil lamb backstrap.
2. Mix sauce ingredients and set aside.
3. Prepare side dishes.
4. Grill or pan fry lamb on high heat for 2–3 mins per side and rest for a few minutes before thinly slicing to serve.

TOOLBOX

Scan or click the QR codes to discover how:

- red meat fits into a healthy, balanced diet:
- nutrition drives red meat consumption in Australia:
- sustainability influences global red meat demand:
- knowledge sharing can improve red meat consumption:



✉ Monique Cashion mcashion@mla.com.au ✉ Mary Johnson mjohnson@mla.com.au

NATIV nourishment

From rehabilitation to regenerative farming, here's how a beef producer, a butcher and an exercise coach are building demand for red meat.

When NSW producer Jimmy Luscombe took over his family's Southern Highlands cattle enterprise following his father's passing in 2018, he took the time to re-evaluate how they did things. He soon began shifting the business to a regenerative operation – one that would go on to produce nose-to-tail beef products that provide valuable nutrition to consumers across the nation.

Jimmy's journey to producing organic grassfed cattle for his co-founded business, NATIV, began several years earlier following a series of major back surgeries in his mid-20s.

Close friend and NATIV co-founder, Jake Campbell, built Jimmy's rehabilitation program as a holistic exercise coach – centring his recovery on functional health and fitness, and nourishing whole food.

“Organic beef was a key pillar of my recovery nutrition protocol, and taking over the family farm enabled me to become more immersed in that journey from paddock to plate,” Jimmy said.

“It was also a bit of a turning point, where Jake and I realised my beef could play a role on other people's health journey too.”

Jimmy and Jake collaborated with third-generation butcher (and NATIV co-founder) Mat Mauger and worked through an abattoir at Picton, NSW, which did private kills. They began processing beef from the farm and putting together beef boxes for their gym community.

A new opportunity

What began as a small direct-to-consumer venture out of a cold room installed in their local gym soon highlighted another opportunity.

The leftover bones, fat and offal needed a purpose, and Jake happened to have one that not only captured full carcase utilisation, but took their business to the next level.

“Jake is a pretty passionate cook, and at the time he happened to be in pursuit of the perfect beef bone broth,” Jimmy said.

“We rented out the Collaroy Surf Life Saving Club commercial kitchen for Jake to experiment in. Sure enough, he developed some deeply satisfying bone broths that would take NATIV beyond our local gym.”

Taking time to learn a thing or two

On-farm, Jimmy said drought conditions around the time of his father's passing had forced destocking before he stepped in to manage the enterprise, serving as an opportunity to reassess current grazing land management systems.

“Dad had already been producing organic beef before he passed, but I felt there was value in exploring different systems that might help optimise soil and pasture nutrient density,” he said.

“Our destocked numbers gave me a bit of time to focus on educating myself before I made any management decisions.”

Firstly, he completed a Certificate in Nutrition Farming in Yandina, Queensland, with Graeme Sait, which was heavily focused on soil and plant health, and associated carbon sequestration. He then did a Farming and Grazing for Profit course with Resource Consulting Services (RCS), looking at:

- finance and business management
- feedbase budgeting
- grazing land management
- improving soil health
- maximising rainfall events.

The new plan on rotation

Armed with new knowledge and insights, Jimmy began making changes to improve his grazing land management and optimise pasture utilisation, yield and quality.

SNAPSHOT



JIMMY LUSCOMBE –
‘Mika's Rest’,
Sutton Forest, NSW



AREA

208ha

ENTERPRISE

Black Angus and Angus-cross

PASTURES

Phalaris, cocksfoot and rye, with sorghum, millet, radish, turnip, crimson clover, plantain and mungbeans

SOILS

Brown Krasnozems

RAINFALL

800mm

“My dad had already reduced paddock sizes into 4ha grids,” Jimmy said.

“To optimise pasture utilisation, I relocated water troughs to the middle of each paddock and installed a series of automatic spring-release fences to create 1ha cells.

“These automatic springs release a new fence each day, enabling my herd to graze on fresh grasses daily for a rotation of approximately 30–38 days in the growing season.

“It's obviously very labour intensive – as we are physically moving cattle every four days – but we are achieving an optimal rest period that is playing an essential role in keeping our pastures productive year-round.

» In amongst his perennial pastures, Jimmy also includes sorghum, millet, radish, turnip, crimson clover, plantain and mungbeans into his feedbase.



“I think a big component behind what makes our meat cuts and beef products so appealing to consumers is our transparency in relation to our farming practices.”

Jimmy Luscombe uses the help of some unique on-farm workers at Mika's Rest to improve pasture and soil health, including bees, dung beetles and worms.

“When the livestock only have the chance to chew each plant once, we have found it yields the best recovery as it leaves enough solar panel on the leaf to ensure a strong regrowth for the next rotation.”

He said another benefit to these 1ha cells is that it makes stocking rate calculations easier to monitor.

The process is extended during the non-growing season to deliver 70–75 days of rest to each paddock – reducing the stocking rates by 35–50% to allow for the slowed grazing rotation.

Grown from the ground up

Jimmy is a firm believer that all great food starts with good soils.

To better his soil health and nutrition, he began:

- adding prescription blend composts for mineral balance
- introducing dung beetles to increase nutrients and carbon into the root zones of pastures
- sowing a cocktail mix of cover crops to improve soil biology
- regularly using worm castings and worm juice foliar applications to maximise plant health and growth.

“Traditionally, our focus has been on nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium for improved pasture productivity, but there’s so much more happening underground that is also super important to pasture quality and its nutritional value,” he said.

“Introducing dung beetles in particular has been a practical way to support the biology of our soils to deliver healthier and more productive pastures.

“Their tunnelling cycles soil and moves manure into the ground – improving the flow of water, nutrients and carbon into the root zones of pastures.

“Combined with our use of composts and our cocktail cover crop mix of sorghum, millet, radish, turnip, crimson clover, plantain and mungbeans, we have seen a great improvement to our feedbase quality.

“Moreover, we’ve started experiencing longer growing seasons, which have in turn led to better weight gains and animal performance.”

More business for more meats

Beyond the bone broth, Jimmy said NATIV has found additional uses for his leftover fats and offal.

“We completed a research project with MLA in 2024, where we focused on uncovering value-adding opportunities for our beef bone broth,” he said.

“The project helped us determine the ideal ratio of beef bones that would produce a superior amino acid profile. It also helped us realise more functional food options for beef products that targeted health-conscious consumers, and enhanced carcase utilisation.

“We’ve now got beef tallow for cooking, biltong snacks, and supplements made from freeze-dried beef spleen, liver, heart, kidney and bovine gelatin – all of which cater to our goal of improved sustainability and full carcase utilisation.”

NATIV has also seen growth in working with other proteins, including lamb, pork and chicken, bringing a whole new range to NATIV Meats.

“Throughout our business journey, we have come into contact with a lot of amazing

producers who align heavily with our brand messaging and values,” Jimmy said.

As demand continues to grow, expanding partnerships with like-minded producers remains a priority for the business.

“We’re always interested in working with producers who are passionate about regenerative farming and sharing their paddock-to-plate story with consumers,” he said.

“I think a big component behind what makes our meat cuts and beef products so appealing to consumers is our transparency in relation to our farming practices.

“It allows them to trust us, but more importantly, it allows for the continuous prosperity of our industries.

“We’ve got some of the best producers and livestock systems in the world, and through NATIV, I’d love to see more of our products reaching consumers both here and eventually overseas.” ■

TOOLBOX

Learn more about NATIV’s:

- products using beef fat and offal: nativfoods.com
- meat cuts: nativmeats.com

Visit MLA’s healthy soils hub: mla.com.au/healthy-soils

Attend a Grazing land management EDGE workshop: mla.com.au/edge

Learn how dung beetles can improve pastures: mla.com.au/dung-beetles

Find out about other MLA product and packaging innovation projects: mla.com.au/innovation



Jimmy Luscombe jimmy@nativfoods.com Angelica Pickup apickup@mla.com.au

US takes a bite of ready-to-eat Aussie lamb

In the US, lamb remains a special-occasion protein, with Americans consuming just over 0.5kg per person each year. In comparison, Australians consume an average of 6.7kg of sheepmeat per person/year. For Food and Beverage Marketing Specialist Jaclyn Oyola, that consumption gap represented an opportunity rather than a challenge.

Drawing on more than two decades of food marketing experience, she set out to create an everyday lamb product designed to appear in lunchboxes, deli sandwiches and grazing platters across the country.

Following an early-stage research and development project with MLA in 2022, the 'Aussie Select' brand has now commercially released a range of sliced deli-style products made with Australian lamb. Over the past 12 months, it has grown to now be offered in 350 storefronts across the US.

Putting lamb back on the menu

Jaclyn, who is based in Atlanta, Georgia, has spent much of her career helping food and drink brands develop go-to-market strategies across foodservice, retail and consumer channels.

The idea behind Aussie Select emerged in 2019 while she was at her local supermarket deli counter and noticed that nearly every major protein was represented – except for lamb.

“My job is very much identifying ‘white space’ and then trying to figure out how I can help fill it,” she said.

When she and her team discussed the barriers preventing greater lamb consumption in the US market, they could see that while consumers generally had a positive perception of the protein, many felt intimidated by the prospect of preparing it at home.

“In the foodservice sector, we noted a similar story, but through a shortage of skilled chefs,” Jaclyn said.

“It led us to wonder, could we do for lamb what turkey deli meat did for the turkey industry and make it more of an everyday protein?”

Backing an Australian-sourced product

For Jaclyn, sourcing Australian lamb to build her product was a no-brainer.

“Australian producers are incredibly reliable in providing a consistent year-round supply

of product, especially in terms of size, taste and eating quality,” she said.

“Australia’s strong animal welfare credentials, sustainability story and halal certification systems also provide important advantages when marketing lamb to retailers and foodservice operators.

“Moreover, those standards of production significantly appeal to the average consumer.”

Australian lamb also aligned closely with the values she wanted the brand to represent.

“The work and care the Australian lamb industry puts into its product does stand out,” she said.

“More importantly, it showcases a prioritisation on animal welfare and consumer safety standards.”

Through Aussie Select, trimmed Australian lamb legs are imported to the US before being cured, smoked, sliced and packaged into ready-to-eat products for retail and foodservice customers.

While it was commercially launched just last year, the business has grown rapidly with more than 27 tonnes of Australian lamb imported by Aussie Select as of 30 June.

Seeing demand grow

Bringing the product to market has been a long-term undertaking.

The business navigated a range of challenges during its development, including COVID-19 disruptions, processing partner hurdles and broader market conditions, before gaining commercial traction in the past 12 months.

✓ Jaclyn Oyola, CEO and founder of Aussie Select, showcases her Australian-grown lamb product at food trade shows, to grow retail and consumer demand.



As a startup, Aussie Select remains relatively small compared to established protein categories. However, Jaclyn believes consumer enthusiasm for the product points to significant long-term growth potential.

“There is not a single person, other than vegetarians or vegans, that I show this product to whose eyes don’t light up,” she said.

“People do truly enjoy eating lamb, and our sliced deli product helps eliminate a lot of the previous barriers that prevented individuals from consuming it.

“I am excited to see demand for our product continue to grow. If I could even capture one additional kg of lamb per year per person, that would be an audacious goal.” ■

TOOLBOX

➔ Learn more about Aussie Select: aussieselect.com

➔ Scan or click the QR code to read this project’s final report:



Jaclyn Oyola jaclyn@worldselectcuts.com Angelica Pickup apickup@mla.com.au

Flank steak with miso pepper pan sauce and roasted wedges



Turn weeknight dinner into something special with this flavour-packed flank steak from Danielle Alvarez. A rich miso and black pepper pan sauce elevates perfectly seared Aussie beef, served with crispy roasted potato wedges for the ultimate comfort meal. For more mouth-watering beef recipes, visit australianbeef.com.au

Serves 4 Prep time 20 minutes Cooking time 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Steak and pan sauce

500g flank steak
Salt
1 tbsp black peppercorns, crushed
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves
3 sprigs thyme

20g butter
1 shallot, peeled and diced
¼ cup cognac or white wine
2 tsp white miso
1 tsp Dijon mustard
½ cup cream
2 tsp lemon juice

Potato wedges

1kg potatoes, cut into wedges

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 220°C (200°C fan). Place a large tray inside to heat.
2. Prepare potatoes: Boil in salted water until tender. Drain and add to the hot tray with oil, salt and pepper. Roast 30–40 min until golden, adding garlic and rosemary for the last 5 min.
3. Cook the steak: Crush peppercorns, season steak with salt and most of the pepper. Heat a cast-iron pan, add oil and cook 2–3 min per side. Add butter, thyme and garlic; baste for 1 min. Remove steak to rest.
4. Make the sauce: Add shallots to the pan and sauté 1 min. Add cognac and reduce. Stir in miso, mustard and cream. Simmer until thickened and reduced by half. Finish with lemon juice and remaining pepper.
5. Slice steak against the grain and serve with pan sauce and potato wedges.

TIPS

- Always slice flank steak against the grain for tender results.
- Bring steak to room temperature before cooking.
- Use the same pan for the sauce to capture all the flavour.
- A pan sauce is an easy way to add a restaurant touch at home.





MLA UPDATES



24 November 2026 | Townsville, Queensland

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Join us to:

Hear how MLA is delivering results through its *Strategic Plan 2030*

Discover the latest insights on marketing, genetics, sustainability and more

Network with industry leaders and like-minded producers.



updates.mla.com.au

Register now



MLA Annual General Meeting (AGM)

24 November 2026 | In-person and online

MLA's AGM will be held in Townsville following MLA Updates, giving members the opportunity to hear about MLA's performance and vote on important matters, including:

✓ Director election

✓ Selection Committee member representatives' election

✓ Levy review motion

All MLA members will receive their AGM voting packs in early October. To find out more, visit **mla.com.au/agm**