

## Eyre Peninsula Leading the Way

The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board and Australian Wool Innovation Limited have joined forces to pilot a new project, Sheep Connect, on Eyre Peninsula.

Plans are in place to launch Sheep Connect state wide in 2009.

Sheep Connect aims to support existing farmer groups to facilitate change in sheep businesses, towards more resilient, environmentally sustainable, and profitable production systems.

Sheep Connect will identify key sheep industry issues each year in collaboration with producer groups. Support will be provided to groups that wish to address these issues. Support will include meeting presentations, field days and workshops.

The key areas that Sheep Connect will focus on this year include:

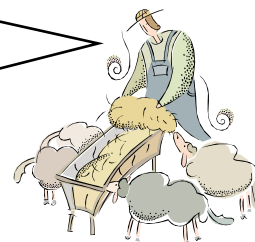
- risk management and seasonal strategies
- farm business management and sustainability
- animal welfare – breech strike management with no mulesing

Four Sheep Connect demonstration sites focussing on grazing management and the role of perennial pastures will be established on Eyre Peninsula.

A Livestock Update conference is planned for 2009 targeting producers and the advisory, agribusiness and research sectors

For EP Producers a series of field days have been developed to cover various topics that are relevant to the key issues. (See back page)

If your group wishes to become involved in Sheep Connect contact Ian McFarland on Ph 8226 1875 or Mob 0437 659 353

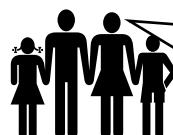


## Breech Strike Management

Whilst the issue of mulesing has created great debate it is highly desirable that we attempt to phase out the practice by 2011. We are fortunate on Eyre Peninsula with our dry climate, plain bodied sheep, and good management, that this may only require minor changes in sheep management.

So, what are your options?

- Hope it will go away
- Wait for a 'silver bullet' solution
- Continue your normal management but selecting ewe hoggets and rams for low wrinkle score/bare breech
- Stop mulesing and rely on an extra crutch, chemical control, or genetics to control breech strike
- A combination of these options



We are keen to discuss the options with your group – Contact us at Rural Solutions SA in Pt Lincoln.

Sheep with a wrinkle score of 1 or 2 probably don't need to be mulesed. What percentage of these is in your flock?


Call Rural Solutions SA in Port Lincoln (8688 3400) for an AWI Visual Sheep Score booklet.

## Temporary electric fences and the Rappa System improves pasture utilisation on Eyre Peninsula

Managing small mobs of livestock in large paddocks can result in poor pasture utilisation and grazing management.

A project funded by the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board, Woolworths and Landcare Australia provided funding to set up 20 on-farm demonstration sites looking at improving grazing management, feed utilisation through paddock sub division and livestock watering systems.



 *Locations of the 20 Demonstration Sites*

Temporary electric fencing was a key tool in efficient grazing management. However one of the main disadvantages with electric fencing is the time required to erect.

Four Rappa systems were trialled to assess their practical application on EP. All of the producers who used the Rappa to put out and take down the temporary electric fence had a positive experience.



*Chris Lymn used a temporary electric fence powered by a solar panel to grazing triticales with a mob of 220 sheep.*

The Rappa, which is pictured below, costs approximately \$2,800 but this does not include reels.

The disadvantage is that a 4-wheel motorbike is required, although there are trailer mounted systems commercially available.

The reels that fit on the Rappa only hold 500m of good quality electric fencing wire. However the wire can be easily joined if longer runs are required.

The Rappa systems used in the trial will be located at the Ceduna, Streaky Bay, Cleve and Port Lincoln NRM offices after February 2009. These systems are available for loan so that producers can have a go. They come as the bare machine and do not include the electric fencing equipment.

There have been some great results from the project and a booklet will be produced in February to show- case each producer who was involved in the trials. Keep an eye out for this. It is guaranteed to be a great little publication with details of practical ways of improving grazing management.

For more information contact the Project Manager, Daniel Schuppan, Livestock Consultant, Rural Solutions SA Port Lincoln Ph 0428 102 276



*John Flavel, of Cleve, rolling up temporary electric fence using the Rappa System mounted on a 4 wheel motorbike.*

# Stubble Grazing Management

by Tim Prance, Rural Solutions SA

## Water

Small troughs will remain cleaner and cooler. They are also easier to clean, and less water is wasted during cleaning. However flow rate needs to be sufficient.

If livestock know there is always water in the trough, they will move considerable distance to graze e.g. 1-2 km, rather than camp near the trough. Stock, especially sheep, need to learn how to graze away from a trough, so patience is necessary. It could take a summer for a mob of ewes to “unlearn” several seasons of inadequate water supply.

## Daily Water Requirements in Summer

Sheep	Daily Consumption (Litres per day)
- Weaner	2-4
- Adult dry sheep <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• grass land</li><li>• saltbush</li></ul>	2-7 4-14
- Ewes with lambs	4-10



Shannon Mayfield at Kimba has installed a central watering system to water 4 paddocks efficiently.

## Grazing dry feed including stubbles.

- A good water supply is critical. Livestock water requirements are determined by flow rate (= pipe size and pressure), **not trough size**. Pipe diameter into a trough should be 40 – 50mm if water is under low pressure eg water coming from a storage tank.

- Use a tank to store water not a trough!
- A combination of a good water system and summer grazing management can be used to maintain ground cover over summer/autumn.
- Rotational grazing is critical to efficiently ration dry feed/stubbles and to prevent overgrazing - especially on hills and in paddocks where animals tend to graze into the wind.
- The bigger the mob, and the more paddocks in the rotation, the more efficiently dry feed is used. Stocking a paddock at 20 – 30 dse/ha and moving a mob every week works very well – provided water supply is adequate.
- Allow 1.5 kg dm/day/dse for dry feed as wastage is higher compared to green feed. *Rule of thumb – the poorer the feed quality the higher the wastage.*
- Moving animals weekly will improve their feed intake on dry feed. Leaving them in the paddock for an extra two or three weeks result in the stock leaving large areas of uneaten feed.
- Dry feed is not very palatable or nutritious! You have to use a combination of high stocking pressure, and frequent shifts, to enable **all the dry feed to be utilised** - not just the good bits.
- Monitor stock condition (older animals) or body weight (young animals) during summer/autumn, and provide appropriate supplementation – which may be minerals, energy or protein, depending on feed tests and animal requirements.

## Water quality – upper salinity levels

	Ec(mS/m)	ppm
Lambs, weaners, lactating ewes	930	6000
Adult dry sheep	2030	13000
Saltbush or Bluebush diet	1250	8000

## Sheep Connect Field Days or Workshops

As a result of discussion with approximately 370 farmers across Eyre Peninsula, a series of field days are being developed to address the issues raised. These field days are available to all producer groups across EP in February and March. Groups can choose one field day or a mix and match between several topics. Contact one of the people below to discuss field day sessions with your group.

### 1. Pasture and Grazing Management

Topics include

- Early feed options
- Getting the best out of your stubbles
- Keeping adequate soil cover
- Temporary electric fencing
- Confinement feeding

### 2. Livestock Management and Animal Welfare

Topics include

- Risk management – making the most from sheep
- Breech strike management
- Labour saving options
- Wool v prime lamb breeds

### 3. Finishing Lambs (Fattening)

Topics include

- Feedlot design
- Economics
- Rations
- Health and welfare in feedlots

### 4. Feed Budgeting and Animal Nutrition (Paddock feeding)

Topics include

- How much does a sheep eat?
- Matching availability to requirements
- Confinement feedlot design
- Feed budget tables
- Supplementary feed calculator
- Surface cover for soil protection

## Drinking Rate Model

When estimating how much water should be allowed the following factors must be considered:

- Salinity of water
- Walking distance
- Feed type
- Time of year
- Species of stock
- Size of stock
- Lactating animals

Include spillage, evaporation, cleaning and seepage from dams when working out the water budget for your property.

## Ground cover over summer is important.

Maintain adequate cover on susceptible soils to reduce risk of wind erosion.

	Minimum cover		Desirable cover	
	%	Tonnes/ha	%	Tonnes/ha
Loam	15	0.5	35	1
Sandy Loam	20	0.6	50	1.5
Sand	50	1.5	70	2.5

## Sheep Connect Rural Solutions SA Team

*Please feel free to contact any of the Team below if you have any questions about Sheep Connect or wish to invite them to speak at meetings, field days or to organise workshops.*

<i>Ian McFarland</i>	<i>Ph</i>	<i>8226 1875</i>
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<i>Brett Masters</i>	<i>Ph</i>	<i>8688 3460</i>
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