**Southern Mallee & Wimmera Mixed Farming Issues**

Issues/opportunities derived from BCG advisory committees, Grain & Graze and BWBL groups.

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| **Feedbase development** | Pastures are part of annual systems. Tradeoffs with cropping. |
| Still have an autumn feedgap even with early sown cereals and later lambing (AB) |
| How to grow the most feed for the least dollars. Use of farm resources. Can now grow crops faster than traditional pastures. But we don’t know their TOS x time of year growth rates. |
| What to grow on marginal country. Make Seredella work. |
| **Better extension of existing technologies** | Private providers are moving into the area to deliver LTEM, BWBL, MLMO, WFGS |
| But need more local data. Deliverers come from outside, use HRZ Hamilton data only. |
| Evaluation of managing large paddocks using electric fencing. No-one is doing it - is it really worth it? |
| **New technology development & application** | EID for sheep. Inevitable. How do we value it (biosecurity awareness) and use to $ advantage?  Is it worth it for commercial producers (not just breeders)? |
| Role for transformative technologies, eg. UAV's, smart tags for EID & virtual fencing. |
| Change of virtual fencing legislation to enable virtual fencing development |
| Adoption of labour saving investments (keep young ones in sheep) - sheep handlers, fast processing of sheep (eg. weigh, draft, hunghole easily and quickly), new yard and shed designs, how to incorporate into existing yards - need to physically be able to get work done. |
| **Business skills development, financial literacy & risk mangement** | Benchmarking livestock production, cost conversion of grain to meat |
| Understanding the value of investment in genetics, infrastructure & technology |
| Keep revisiting cropping:livestock ratio - it's dynamic. Strategies to change up and down. |
| **Human capacity building** | Grow livestock management skills of younger generation. |
| **Improving animal welfare practice and perception** | Social media from our area about good practice and production outcomes - lambs, meat quality. |
| **Improving animal health and productivity** | Nutritional limitations. Opportunity for supplements - grain feeding, monoculture crops, exhausted stubbles etc. Mixed messages between the experts on some things. What is best bang for your buck. |
| Develop guidelines to help growers meet nutritional demands for ewe status and lamb survival at different time of the year using feed on farm - or specify supplements where needed. Make sure 70-80 kg ewes included. Often literature has 40-60kg sheep. Lift lambing and weaning rates. |
| **NRM Plan - improved management** | Important that we keep groundcover.  Cant overgraze stubbles. |
| **Vertical coordination in supply chain (VBM strategy)** | Meeting specs, value of being MSA accredited - must be paid for it (could be in assuring market) |
| Abbottoir feedback - how does one best use the information if not breeding? |
| Know backgounding of purchased lambs for finishing |
| **Regional Best Practice** | Needs to be responsive to enterprises and season. |
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