**Queensland Government**

**Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**

**Media release**

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**Western producer on the right side of the fence**

Wool producer Donald Truss has erected more than 100km of exclusion fencing on his property in an effort to minimise the devastating impact of wild dogs.

Now he wants to share his experience and encourage others to take action.

Mr Truss, from south of Quilpie, is the newest member of the Leading Sheep South West Committee, joining six other regional producers responsible for setting local priorities for the program.

Mr Truss said his motivation for joining Leading Sheep stemmed from a desire to share his pest management experience and support other producers to adopt new business practices that maximise production.

“Joining the Leading Sheep committee is an excellent opportunity to help identify local priorities and the biggest issue we face in the south west region is wild dogs,” Mr Truss said.

“The wake-up call for my family came this time last year. We had had a couple of good years but dog numbers were high – when 10 to 20 dogs were being captured annually, we realised we needed to take urgent action if we wanted to maintain profitability.

“So in the past 12 months we have built 103km of exclusion fencing around the perimeter of our property and already we have seen a reduction in dog numbers.

“So sharing information about how we and other producers are managing the wild dog problem is an important part of the Leading Sheep program.

“The program provides a central point from where we can learn from each other and about other innovative developments and practices that can improve production,” he said.

Mr Truss, with his wife Laura, manages two family properties, Boran, 45km east of Toompine, and neighbouring Wareo, for a total of 45,730 hectares of mulga country currently carrying around 9000 sheep and 500 cattle.

While the exclusion fencing upgrade represents a significant investment for the family, the young grazier believes it will bring major production advantages and protect his livestock for the next 80 years.

“Exclusion fencing will allow us to increase our flock size to 11,000 sheep and reduce our cattle numbers. Sheep are much more suited to the mulga country and are a more economical option for us,” Mr Truss said.

“It has been a major financial investment in our future, but now that it is installed, I believe maintenance will be minimal and the production gains significant.”

As the family business shifts its focus to increasing wool production, Mr Truss is optimistic about the future of the Queensland sheep and wool industry.

“Wool prices are very good at the moment, up 5 to 10 cents/kg over the past few years which is welcome news,” he said.

“The demand for good quality Australian wool in China is growing, this is very positive for us as producers and being involved in the Leading Sheep program is a good opportunity to help shape the direction of the industry to leverage off this emerging market.”

Mr Truss said Leading Sheep ensured producers received the latest information on industry issues, as well as advice on new practices and technologies that would lead to long-term sustainability for the Queensland industry.

“It’s important that there is collaboration within the industry, and the south west committee is working hard to ensure they understand producer issues and can provide information that improves productivity and profitability,” he said.

Leading Sheep is a joint initiative of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Australian Wool Innovation and is supported by AgForce. For more information about Leading Sheep visit [www.leadingsheep.com.au](http://www.leadingsheep.com.au) or like Leading Sheep on Facebook.