**Queensland Government**

**Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**

**Media Release**

28 February 2018

**Prepare your flock ready for autumn joining**

Queensland’s sheep and wool producers are being urged to prepare their flocks for autumn joining.

Industry consultant Geoff Duddy, from Sheep Solutions, said preparing the flock was critical for effective results and involved a lot more than simply opening the gate to let the rams in with the ewes.

“Current buoyant wool and store prices give producers added incentive this season to ensure their flock is ready for joining,” Mr Duddy said.

“Ideally producers should be checking their ewes and rams eight weeks before joining to ensure they were in good condition and fit to work.

“Producers should focus on teeth, toes, torso, tossle and testicles when preparing their rams.

“Sperm production takes up to six or seven weeks within the testicles so any infection or health issue during the eight weeks prior to joining can affect sperm production and viability.

Mr Duddy said health checks for ewes were also important.

“Ewes should have a condition score of three or more on a rising plane of nutrition to improve ovulation and conception rates,” Mr Duddy said.

“Producers should vaccinate and drench both pre-joining rams and ewes.

“Animals should not be shorn within eight weeks of joining.”

In August 2017, Mr Duddy ran a series of ‘Preparing your flock for joining’ workshops across central west Queensland as part of a Leading Sheep initiative.

More than 40 producers attended the workshops held at Ilfracombe, Barcaldine and Winton with all attendees saying they learnt something new.

Leading Sheep is a partnership between the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Australian Wool Innovation and is supported by AgForce.

For more information about preparing your flock visit the Leading Sheep website [www.leadingsheep.com.au](http://www.leadingsheep.com.au) or the Leading Sheep Facebook page.

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