

The Leading Sheep Project

South West Region practical information booklet for new and existing sheep and wool producers.



Leading Sheep maximising productivity in good and hard times.



About Leading Sheep

We know that many producers are thinking about running sheep on their property, this booklet is to increase the awareness of the Leading Sheep Project and the work that we do.

Leading Sheep assists Queensland's sheep and wool producers to maximise productivity in good and hard times. To do this, Leading Sheep maintains a high level of engagement with producers in three regions across Queensland - south, south west and north/central west.

For each region there is a committee of local producers and service providers, who are engaged with local sheep and wool producers. This committee works together to determine and deliver on local priorities. The Leading Sheep Project creates, identifies and promotes opportunities for sheep and wool industry members to shape the direction of a thriving industry.

Leading Sheep encourages all producers, and particularly those aged between 18 and 39 years, to take part in the program. Our priority objectives include:

- drought planning and management
- pest animal management
- ewe and lamb survival
- business performance and
- beneficial technologies.

To subscribe to the Leading Sheep newsletter, visit leadingsheep.com.au and click subscribe. You can nominate to receive information relevant to your region and interests. Email leadingsheep@daf.qld.gov.au for feedback or more information.

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



Managing Wild Dogs

In much of Queensland, if you have sheep on your property, you've got wild dogs. This then means that you most likely have fencing to help manage the impact of wild dogs.

Fencing, be it netting, hingejoint or electric has become the go-to tool to help manage wild dogs across Australia. While it is very effective, fencing alone will not solve the wild dog problem - other tools also need to be used.

A combination of fencing, baiting, trapping, shooting and working with neighbors is needed to minimise the impact that wild dogs and other pests have on your sheep's health and level of productivity.



One of the limiting factors in relation to building a fence is cost. It is expensive. Is it too expensive? Be sure to do your research and calculations for your individual situation. Don't forget to take into account the cost of removing the wild dogs that you fence in, purchasing additional stock and maintaining your fence.

While it is very effective, fencing alone will not solve the wild dog problem - other tools also need to be used.

Visit leadingsheep.com.au for information on fencing and wild dog management. Click on the Resources tab for webinars, podcasts, eBooks, Around the Camp eNewsletter articles, factsheets and producer case studies that can assist you in your decision making.

Q Fever in Producers

Q Fever is a bacterial disease that is spread from animals to humans causing severe flu-like illness. It is commonly found in livestock and can easily transmit to producers handling livestock as part of their daily work. Q Fever can be extremely debilitating and can affect a producer's health and ability to work for several years.



Anyone who comes into frequent contact with livestock and other animals is at risk of infection. Most infections of Q Fever occur in graziers. It can be contracted from physical contact with an infected animal, or simply by inhaling air or dust where the bacteria is present. It is important to get tested and vaccinated for Q Fever. This is available through your local GP here in the South West.

Effect of Pimelea on Sheep

Dry summers and winter rain in the region has brought growth of the native Pimelea plant on many pastures. With the outlook of a wetter than average winter, it is likely that the growth of this weed will continue throughout the south west during 2020. Sheep ingesting the varieties of Pimelea will show poisoning symptoms such as:

- gastrointestinal issues
- loss of condition
- black scours
- swelling of head and jaw (rare).

Pimelea poisoning of sheep is rarely fatal but can be debilitating to your flock. If you suspect poisoning, move affected sheep to alternative feed sources as soon as possible. Contact Leading Sheep at leadingsheep@daf.qld.gov.au for more information.



Taking on Agistment

What to Consider

Many in the south west have been fortunate to receive beneficial rain over the last 12 months. You may be considering taking agisted stock on to your property. It can be an excellent way to utilise feed and generate some quick cash flow, but there are issues you should consider before taking on stock from a different area.



Consider the following points when you are deciding whether to take on agistment:

- **Infrastructure on your property** - are your yards, fences and watering points up to scratch for the agisted stock? Do you have appropriate loading and unloading facilities? If you are a sheep producer, will your facilities be adequate for cattle, or different breeds of sheep to your own?

- **Biosecurity issues with stock** - are there any pests or diseases that may be present in the incoming stock that you need to avoid? Check the health and vaccination history of the stock, and ensure adequate treatment is given if there are any issues imminent. Incoming stock can also carry remnants of weeds that can easily take hold on your property if not addressed. Prior inspection of the stock before they arrive on your property can assist in reducing this risk. Quarantining of incoming stock is also prudent.



- **Feed available** – the volume and type of feed available is critical to stock wellbeing. Ensure the pastures available on your property are suitable for the incoming stock to avoid unnecessary and costly health issues and losses.

Learning from the Drought

Over the past 12 months Leading Sheep asked Queensland sheep and wool producers what they learnt from the recent drought. Their answers were circulated to all Leading Sheep subscribers – the following is a summary of the key points.

- Plan with fixed dates to make decisions.
- Be flexible.
- Keep your stock in good enough condition that you still have options. Stock need to be strong enough to walk in the mud for a week if that is how the drought breaks.
- Keep an eye on your stock and destock progressively and early.

“Look after yourself, your family and your friends.”

At the conclusion of the drought learnings series, the South West Committee were asked what they were going to do now to recover from drought. The key points were:

- Cash flow budgeting and evaluation of enterprise performance to put yourself in the best position to make good decisions when opportunities arise.
- Stock conservatively - especially considering current economic uncertainty.
- Consider options such as water ponding to increase pasture response from future rainfall.
- Check in on your neighbours - this season has been very patchy and not everyone might be experiencing the same relief that you are feeling.

Visit wool.com and search for drought resources to access material to help you manage and plan for drought.



Your Local Contacts

The Regional Coordinator for the south west region is Hannah McKillop and Hannah Vicary is your local Extension Officer. The remainder of the South West consultative committee consists of producers and service providers, including Anthony Glasson, Bruce Lines, Amy McKenzie, Jesse Moody and Ange Smith.

For further information or feedback contact the **Regional Coordinator**: Hannah McKillop on 07 4655 4922, or via email at mckillopavondale@outlook.com or your nearest committee member.



Your South West Region Leading Sheep Extension Officer facilitates and runs regionally focused events in communication with your regional consultative committee Contact your **Extension Officer**: Hannah Vicary on 04 3684 9799 or via email at Hannah.vicary@daf.qld.gov.au

Tune in to our Podcasts & Webinars



Keep up-to-date with the latest trends, research, and practices in the sheep and wool industry with Around the Camp - our new podcast.

Our new H Series of webinars covers a range of topics and aims to give new and aspiring producers a step up into the sheep and wool industry. To watch previous episodes and register for upcoming webinars go to leadingsheep.com.au and search for H Series.



LEADING THE WAY productivity in good and hard times.

Leading Sheep helps Queensland's sheep and wool producers to become more profitable through hosting events and providing information on new technologies, knowledge and skills.

Leading Sheep is a proactive network of Queensland sheep and wool businesses at the forefront of practical and relevant information and technology to equip progressive and thriving producers for the future.

To receive information and updates relevant to your area straight to your inbox, go to leadingsheep.com.au and click the subscribe button.

Contact Us



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leadingsheep@daf.qld.gov.au



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