



Secretariat C/- Bluesee | PO Box 668, Denmark 6333 Western Australia | esther@bluesee.com.au

Aug 1, 2016

SILC TRANSITIONS TO SHEEP ALLIANCE

Member Update # 1

THE WA sheep industry formalised its plans to take a whole-of-supply-chain approach to arresting the decline in the WA sheep population, by voting to form the Sheep Alliance of WA on Friday, with a founding membership of 42 industry entities.

The transition to the Sheep Alliance of WA formally took when the SILC board adopted a new constitution including name change, membership and accountability structure and mounted a fresh call for directors in order to broaden the reach and influence of the board.

An independent selection panel reviewed 16 applications and recommended to The Alliance members who formally endorsed the following directors, who will be responsible to the membership for driving the agreed initiatives:

- Craig Heggaton – Interim Chair (Processor/Producer/Veterinarian)
- Richard Coole – producer
- Bindi Murray - producer
- John Edwards – live exporter
- Andrew Ritchie – ag consultant specialising in sheep
- Tim Watts – veterinarian, consultant, sheep producer
- Wayne Pech – producer
- Andrew Lindsay – Livestock Agent
- Prof David Pethick – Sheep researcher

Members' Forum summary

With the new structure in place, the balance of the first Alliance Meeting was devoted to:

- (a) Providing context to the current sheep population scenario and implications of 'no intervention' with perspectives from meat processors, wool exporters, sheep exporters, livestock agents and farmers;
- (b) Understanding the current initiatives being funded through the Royalties for Regions Sheep Industries Business Innovation project;
- (c) Specifically considering the quantum gain available to industry via a Lambs Alive campaign – and in particular the opportunity lost from the number of lambs lost in the first 48 hours of birth (presentation from Jason Trompf); and
- (d) Collectively feeding back to the new directors the priorities and opportunities to make a difference and help arrest the decline through a round table forum.



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What we took out of Friday – *in brief*

AWI: AWI General Manager Research Dr Paul Swan was a key observer and contributor to the meeting and has already come back to The Alliance noting that the commentary provided by the new members was consistent with AWI's strategic plan and has provided an indication that he is 'investor ready', particularly in the area of driving greater adoption of Life Time Ewe Management (LTEM) principles that would in turn drive greater lamb survival and production efficiencies.

MLA: Renelle Jeffrey Research Extension Sheep Project Manager Livestock Productivity, was another key participant and told us that the development of the Alliance had come at the 'perfect time' – where coordination and collaboration was needed in order to generate greater sustainability. Recommendations from the Sheep Alliance will be put to MLA via the WA Livestock Research Council (the body responsible for prioritising red meat R&D in WA), as described in the MOU that is currently under development between The Alliance and WALRC. **Note, WALRC is a member of The Alliance and was represented at Friday's meeting by Gina Micke.*

Key observations

- There is a huge amount of activity going on, designed to drive supply chain productivity – (SIBI, UWA, Murdoch, CSRIO, various Grower Group Ag Science R&D projects) – but unless these are linked and someone/organisation is charged with the responsibility of talking about these 'as one' we risk diluting their potential/combined impact;
- The sheep industry retaining its social license to operate is critical and building in a philosophy of best-practise animal welfare into all activity is essential;
- There is opportunity for significant industry gain through an improved lamb survival rate (both in terms of our welfare performance record, but also in terms of farm productivity) – and this could be driven through a much more vibrant LTEM program that is supported by complimentary activities;
- We must better understand why people are going out of sheep when market signals are positive, and part of that, we *think* is:
 - The lack of 'gold standard' sheep industry benchmarking/analysis of performance/profitability – and possible lack of preparedness from mixed farmers to truly understand the performance of sheep within their business;
 - The culture and habits of the cropping enterprise (ingrained monitoring and evaluation of crop performance through the season so adjustments can be made to drive margin) are not generally applied to sheep production – so how can we develop a sheep management culture that is similar to grains management?



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- There is technology available to help 'make sheep easy' but it is often passed up for cropping technology investments. How can the Alliance help support existing and emerging sheep technology projects to help activate uptake of these technologies?
- The pastoral sector is a huge opportunity to grow the sheep sector (pending the adoption of the Wild Dogs Committee recommendations);
- A WA sheep industry communication/campaign that is usable by all Alliance members will be a valuable asset.

NOTE: The above dot points attempts to distil the intent of the commentary provided on Friday and should not be considered the full 'outcome report'. A more formal summary of the meeting will be developed but meanwhile in response to many requests for 'how did the meeting go' we provide the 'in brief' version in the interests of expediency!

Next Steps

The Alliance board will meet next Monday to review the feedback (copies of the full meeting notes that were put forward are available on request, in ppt format) and start formulating how it will progress the objectives of the Alliance.

The Directors welcome and encourage further member feedback at any time but in particular ahead of next week's meeting and their contact details are printed below.

Meanwhile, all Alliance members will be invited to participate in a review of the Sheep Industry Business Innovation Project (SIBI) that will take place on Monday August 29 at UWA – the afternoon before Sheep Updates. Members are really encouraged to be part of this direct opportunity to contribute to the direction of SIBI activities.

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List of Alliance Members

AAAWA (inc)
Australian Wool Testing Authority
AgInnovate
ASHEEP Inc
Australian Dohne Breeders Association
AWH Pty Ltd
Bedbrook Johnston Williams
Corrigin Farm Improvement Group
CSIRO
Department of Agriculture and Food WA
Dyson Jones Wool Marketing Services
Elders Rural Services
Emanuel Exports Pty Ltd
Farm Eastern Ag Research Group
Fletcher International WA
Grower Group Alliance
Hillside Meat Processors
Icon Agriculture
Landmark Operations
Liebe Group
Livestock Shipping Services
Micron Man Pty Ltd
Murdoch University
Muresk Institute

Perennial Pastoral Company
Peter Scanlan Wools
Planfarm
PJ Morris Wools Pty Ltd
Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network
Primaries of WA Pty Ltd
Rural Export and Trading WA Pty Ltd
Spearwood Wool
Stirlings to Coast Farmers
Stud Merino Breeders Association of WA
Swan Wool Processors P/L
The Gillamii Centre Inc
UWA Institute of Agriculture
WA Livestock Research Council
WAFarmers Federation
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