

## SOUTH WEST AGRICULTURAL REGION

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### Know when to water and how much to put on

Helen Ramsey, Waroona

WaterWise on the Farm Irrigation Management training will be running in Serpentine and Manjimup in February. Local irrigators are invited to participate and will be eligible to receive a \$2,000 grant for irrigation improvements. Each participant will also receive one on one follow-up on their own property.

#### During the training you will learn

- How much water can be held within your crop root zone
- How well your irrigation system is distributing water and how to fix problems
- How long to run your irrigations and how frequently to irrigate, and
- What tools are available to assist with irrigation scheduling.

#### Comments from a past participant

Sam Calameri of Baldivis Market Gardens recently completed WaterWise on the Farm Irrigation Management training and received a \$2,000 grant for irrigation efficiency improvements.

“WaterWise is a wakeup call for growers..... It gives you the opportunity to really assess the efficiency of your irrigation system”

“I was surprised to find out that my system was not efficient..... Simply by changing sprinkler heads I was able to increase the efficiency by 20%”

**More information** and to register, contact Helen Ramsey in Waroona on 9733 7704 or Peta Richards in Manjimup on 9777 0144



Sam Calameri with a recently sprayed potato crop ready for harvest



Vegetable growers Mark Anderson and Ben Element measuring the flow rate of knocker sprinklers



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# News from the *Greenerpastures* project

*John Lucey, Manjimup*

As we draw to the end of the first full season for **Greenerpastures**, it is good to reflect on what we have learnt and the benefits to the local and national dairy industries.

- Nitrogen losses from intensive dairy systems can be very high – representing a significant opportunity to improve nitrogen efficiency on dairy farms;
- Under our conditions at Vasse – up to two metres of sand over a thick, impervious clay layer - preliminary findings suggest nitrate leaching into ground water does not appear to be an issue;
- Like us, many dairy farmers have backed-off the nitrogen (“taken foot off the pedal”) to find “the sweet spot” from grazing at 2½ - 3 leaves – providing a better balanced ration for the herd;
- Preliminary results indicate that the GreenPad, a loafing pad combining layers of carbon-rich wood chips and sand, may be effective at reducing nitrogen leaching;
- Our Aquaflex moisture monitoring system has been invaluable in developing efficient and economic irrigation scheduling.

## **Silage and hay**

Despite the shocking start to the season, we had good spring production ending up with 20% more silage than last year due to a combination of cutting a slightly larger area and higher yielding crops. Feedback from farmers indicates mixed experience; some have reported increased silage and hay yields while others are reporting yields down by 50%. While there are many factors at play here, it appears that farmers who locked up early and applied nitrogen in September, partly in response to a predicted early finish to the season, saw good growth responses whereas farmers who fertilised in our dry October did not see similar responses.

With pastures drying off quickly we are into our summer feeding strategy. Our Dryland Innovation herd ran out of pasture very early (a combination of an early maturing ryegrass variety, a weed problem and hard grazing to ensure no seed set before reseeding next year with Progrow) and were started on silage on

8<sup>th</sup> November, three weeks earlier than over the last eight years.

## **Seed Set**

Once again we will be implementing the late spring grazing management developed as part of the Vasse Milk Farmlets that has enabled us to achieve good natural seed set on 75% of our paddocks, reducing the need for reseeding to only 25% of the farm. This represents a huge saving which many dairy farmers have incorporated into their systems over the last few years.

## **Irrigation Pasture**

Our Innovation Farms Management Committee (IFMC) was highly impressed with the excellent quality of our irrigation pasture during their farm walk in November. We have come a long way in our learning and management of irrigation pasture in just over a year and appreciate the support and assistance we have received from industry to achieve this.

Management of irrigation pasture at the start of the season is critical to setting it up for maximum summer production. Given our excellent perennial pasture, we had already seen excess pasture “getting away” from the herd in November. A number of options were discussed, with the key being able to be flexible to respond to the season. Being an Innovation Irrigation Farm, holding off the nitrogen was not an attractive option, nor was reducing grain to cows as they dropped condition when we did this last year. Strategic cutting of surplus as silage was an option but a better one was to use the Dryland Innovation Farm herd that had already run out of pasture and was being fed silage. The IFMC resolved these cows should be put in for a short time to “take a wedge out” of the pasture ahead of the irrigation herd. This will bring the irrigation herd’s rotation back into line with three leaves grazing at a 24 day rotation.

After last year’s experience of excess pasture under the pivot, the IFMC have decided to cut our nitrogen back to 1 kg N/ha/day compared to the 1.5 kg N/ha used last summer to ensure we do not graze at less than 2½ leaves. This should provide a better balanced ration by lowering protein loading and reducing the excessive urine scalding we saw last summer. A feed budget will be produced

for the irrigation herd which will include maize silage to be fed over summer to improve the efficiency of N use. This will also identify opportunities for increasing the stocking rate for the 07/08 summer.

## **Partner Farmers**

The four Partner Farmers have completed their Red Sky business analysis and there have been some very interesting learnings and findings:

- Many dairy businesses have the potential to grow but are choosing not to invest in the current economic environment
- With milk price lower than Victoria, livestock sales have been our saviour
- With many dairy farmers choosing not to sell stock (no kill space and low prices), income will be tight so farmers need to do sums to see if it is worth feeding extra stock
- Grain is not cheap in WA compared to northern Victoria, but there is a huge range in prices, highlighting the opportunity to shop around
- Strong financial management is a critical factor to a profitable dairy business (programs like Red Sky help improve this)
- Opportunity to “educate” WA financial institutions of more appropriate benchmarks for determining their lending risk profiles

**More information** from me on 9777 0124.



# Feed testing even more important this year

**Richard Morris, Bunbury**

This season has been a difficult one for many farmers. The late start resulted in generally poor winter growth and a run down in fodder reserves. Silage and hay yields on many farms are well down and bought-in fodder will be expensive. All this means that it is more important than ever to test your fodder so you know before feed out if the quality is low enough to require extra supplementation. Don't wait until you see a drop in the vat over summer.

Feed testing provides the basic feed nutritive information for ration formulation. But can you be sure that the test results represent what you are feeding out? Poor sampling and handling methods will produce unreliable feed test results. Feed tests are only a true indication of feed value if the sample tested is representative of the batch being fed and, particularly with silage, if the sample is handled correctly to minimise the risk of deterioration during transportation to the laboratory.

Silage should not be sampled until after the silage fermentation process is complete. Six weeks is a reasonable delay for well-preserved silages but delaying sampling for 12 weeks ensures that even the less efficient fermentations are complete.

Because there can be large variations in the composition of silage in a pit or a 'batch' of bales, it is important that sufficient samples are taken for the feed test to represent the average of the whole batch. Each sample should only contain silage that was harvested from

the same paddock, ideally within a two to three day period.

## Sampling method

The most practical way to sample from bunkers or pits is during feeding, collecting at least 12 samples across the freshly cut silage face. However, as the silage face only represents a small proportion of the pit, the value of the sample test results will depend on the variation in quality over the whole pit.

Sampling unopened bunkers is more difficult and the plastic seal will have to be cut. It is critical that samples are not taken from non-representative areas, such as low spots where water lies or near existing holes in the plastic.

Using a corer, sample from several areas along the length of the pit, discarding the top 50 cm of silage. This material may not be representative of the pit if air infiltrated during storage. Ensure your corer is long enough to drill deep into the bunker. This may require several corers of increasing length. The common practice of using a single core 60-80 cm long is not likely to give a representative sample from a 2 m high bunker.

For baled silage, collect cores from at least 10 to 12 bales from each silage 'batch'. The corer should be pushed through to the middle of the bale from the middle of the curved side of a round bale or from the end of a square bale.

## Resealing bunkers, pits and bales

Silage will quickly deteriorate around holes left after sampling. These should

be repaired immediately, using commercially available tapes or patches designed specifically for use on silage plastics. Other tapes, such as duct tape, are a waste of time; they do not provide a long-term seal.

## Packaging for delivery

Poorly packaged samples will deteriorate during sampling and transporting to the laboratory. Silage is a perishable product and will deteriorate if it is left exposed to the air.

- **Do not leave samples unsealed**
- **Do not allow samples to become heated**

Thoroughly mix the samples taken from each batch and sub-sample the amount needed for testing; place this in a plastic bag, squeeze the bag to remove any air and then seal the bag. Double sealing is a good insurance. Freeze the sample immediately; if this is not possible, store it in an insulated cooler until it can be frozen. Wrap the frozen sample in newspaper just before mailing to minimise deterioration during transportation. Samples should be mailed to the testing laboratory early in the week to avoid being delayed in the mailing system.

Good sampling and handling procedure is essential for feed test results to be representative of the silage being fed. Feed tests are expensive; it is well worth the effort to get a meaningful result.

**More information** from me on 9780 6282.

# Blackberry rust fungus released in the south

**west**

**Andrew Reeves, Bunbury**

Eight strains of Blackberry leaf-rust fungus have been released in the Dardanup shire in co-operation with a local landholder who is keen to see the invasive weed eradicated from his property.

The fungus was released using a kit developed by CSIRO and the Cooperative Research Centre for Australian Weed Management. The kits have easy-to-follow guidelines and are being made available over the next three years to landowners and managers in Western Australia.

Before being approved for release, the leaf fungus was rigorously tested in

CSIRO's Containment Facility in Canberra to show it was not a threat to commercial Blackberry cultivars or native *Rubus* species.

Since its introduction, the leaf-rust has provided useful Blackberry control in some areas, but its effectiveness has been limited by resistance in some Blackberry biotypes. Simultaneous releases of the additional rust strains will hopefully overcome this because, as a group, they can infect the range of Blackberry biotypes.

Where the rust strains establish, they should reduce - but not eradicate -

Blackberry infestations. Biological control using the rust fungus will complement existing control methods. It will be particularly useful at sites where the use of other control methods is inappropriate or impractical.

Land owners or managers who want to lodge an expression of interest should contact Paul Yeoh, Temperate Weed Ecology and Management, CSIRO Entomology on 9333 6645

Fax 9333 6646. Email: [Paul.Yeoh@csiro.au](mailto:Paul.Yeoh@csiro.au)

**More information** from me on 9780 6224.

# Weeds, tyres and locusts

**Andrew Reeves, Bunbury**

Staff from the south west agricultural region have been involved with one of the largest locust campaigns ever and have been undertaking control work in areas such as Merredin, Kondinin, Kulin, Naremben, Lake Grace, Hyden, Katanning and Dumbleyung.

While inspecting pasture paddocks for locusts, staff have had to be aware of the need to inspect vehicles for

biosecurity threats such as Doublegees and Caltrop which could be easily moved between paddocks or properties.

At the meetings arranged by the Local Operations Co-ordinator, farmers are asked to identify any risks that surveillance staff need to consider while on their properties and any measures needed to reduce a risk are implemented. Where there is a

biosecurity issue, clean paddocks are inspected first and risk paddocks inspected last before the vehicles are inspected and cleaned as required.

Survey teams check their tyres before entering and leaving every property and, in some cases, at every paddock.

**More information** from me on 9780 6224



*These Doublegees were found in vehicle tyres and were removed to ensure that the weed is not spread to neighbouring properties.*

## Powdery Mildew in vineyards - where does research head next?

**Andrew Taylor, Manjimup**

A meeting of plant pathologists from across Australia was held recently to discuss Powdery Mildew, the most economically damaging disease of grapevines in Australia. Powdery Mildew can directly affect berry development and lead to detrimental effects on wine quality. The workshop was primarily to consider the future direction for research. It was also an opportunity to review what is already known about the disease.

Presentations from both industry and scientific perspectives were presented. The grape industry is placing more and more pressure on vineyards to produce grapes with low levels of disease and Powdery Mildew is no exception. With several chemical groups available, it can be successfully controlled if the correct monitoring and preventative strategies are implemented. Relying on a reactive program can often lead to disease

problems. Monitoring is critical for control but, at present, there are no standardised techniques available. This is one area where further research will be undertaken.

Several models can predict when an epidemic will occur and hence the best time to spray. However, conditions for epidemics differ between regions and, because many of these models were designed under Northern Hemisphere conditions, they don't work well here. It is hoped that the basis of these models can be used to develop one that fits the disease development that occurs in Australia.

Powdery Mildew is a complex disease due to the nature of its spread. It spreads through a vineyard in two ways - through flag shoots (asexual stage) and through cleistothecia (sexual stage). In WA we

see both of these stages and they must be managed differently. Recent research indicates that early season control of flag shoots is very important in prevention of disease in both the current season and the next. Variety also plays an important part with flag shoots; varieties such as Verdelho produce more flag shoots than other varieties. Cleistothecia are more important for disease spread after spring rains but what is not known is how many spores each produce. Knowing this would clarify the critical number of cleistothecia for epidemics to occur. This was considered an important topic for research.

The workshop enabled researchers to come up with several key knowledge gaps for the management of powdery mildew of grapevines.

**More information** from me on 9777 0126.

# Fertigation *James Dee, Bunbury*

Using the irrigation system to spread fertilisers and chemicals is becoming quite a common practice. The advantages are:-

- Time saved not having to spread solid fertiliser
- Changes to the type of fertiliser applied is quite easy
- The right fertiliser is applied at the right time in the right concentration.
- If done correctly, there is less environmental impact

If fertigation is not done properly, water and fertiliser will be wasted. If too much water is used, there is a possibility of a large environmental impact. To fertigate properly, certain things need to be in place.

The **distribution uniformity** of your irrigation system should be at least 85 percent so that you spread the irrigation water evenly around the roots of the plants. If you want to know more about this, contact one of the WaterWise team listed below.

Your **irrigation scheduling** needs to apply the right amount of water at the right time to make sure that the irrigation water stays within the rootzone of the plants and not leak past the roots. Soil moisture monitoring equipment will help you do this.

The **fertigation system** should be the right one for the job. For a small orchard, a simple system is appropriate - one or two small tanks, an injection system and capacity within the controller to manage the fertigation injection. As the orchard becomes more complex with different blocks or different crops, the fertigation system needs to accommodate this complexity. Consultants and irrigation suppliers with experience in fertigation systems design can assist you put together the right system. If you design the system yourself, get someone to check it for you.

Because fertigation will apply the right fertiliser at the right time in the right concentration, you need to have a nutrient plan that maps the different

nutrients needed over the lifetime of the crop. This will guide you in selecting the right fertiliser at the right time. Industry Development Officers should be able to assist you with the development of this nutrient plan.

**More information** about any of the points mentioned above from the following members of the **WaterWise on the Farm** team.

**James Dee Bunbury 9780-6285**  
[jdee@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:jdee@agric.wa.gov.au)

**Helen Ramsey Waroona**  
**9733-7714**

[hramsey@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:hramsey@agric.wa.gov.au)

**Peta Richards Manjimup**  
**9777-0000**

[prichards@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:prichards@agric.wa.gov.au)

**Cameron McPhee Perth**  
**9374-0685**

[cameron.mcphee@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:cameron.mcphee@dec.wa.gov.au)

**David Gibb Perth**  
**9374-3306**

[david.gibb@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:david.gibb@dec.wa.gov.au)

## Home grown pork or ham for Christmas?

### **Roy Butler, Merredin**

In the 60s it was reasonably common and acceptable in rural areas to raise a pig or two for domestic consumption. When I was a child in central Victoria, our neighbours, the Ryans, raised a couple of pigs in their backyard to kill for Christmas. There were quite a few Ryans and they all helped, including the provision of food scraps, or swill, for the pigs.

Though much less common now, it is still possible to raise and eat your own pig, whether for Christmas or some other time.

There are many differences, however, between the permitted methods of keeping and processing pigs in the 60s and now, and many by-laws and laws of various local, state and federal authorities to satisfy.

**A very important difference now is that pigs can no longer be fed on swill. Swill feeding of pigs is illegal**

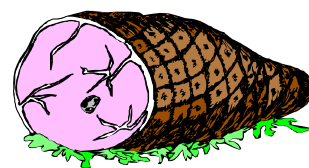
**throughout Australia and has been for more than 30 years.**

Swill feeding is illegal because it could be responsible for the introduction and rapid spread of some major livestock diseases, including Foot and Mouth and Classical Swine Fever.

#### **What is swill?**

Swill is any food that contains meat or that has been in contact with meat. It includes whole animal carcasses or parts of carcasses. Even bakery and fruit and vegetable waste can be classified as swill if it has been in contact with meat. Swill may come from the best restaurant in town or the home table. Food that is safe for humans may not be free of exotic viruses or other agents infectious for pigs.

By the way, not only is it illegal to feed swill to pigs, it is also illegal to provide swill to others to feed to pigs.



For further information, or if you have any particular concerns about issues relating to pig feeding or swill disposal, contact your local private or Department of Agriculture and Food veterinarian.

Remember too, if you are a pig owner, to report any signs of unusual illness or unexpected deaths in your pigs to a veterinarian, or call the Emergency Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

**More information** from me on 9081 3111.

# Garden Weevil watch - the vineyard sentry

**Mark Stanaway, Manjimup**

**Garden Weevil watch** has been in full swing through October and November, with counts from 24 vignerons, representing the major wine growing regions in the south west. This data is placed on the DAFWA web site to assist vignerons make decisions on whether control measures are needed.

The service is mainly geared to advising of the best timing for **butt drenching** because this can mean that subsequent foliar spraying won't be necessary, reducing the chance of secondary pest outbreaks. But monitoring is also applicable when deciding whether a **foliar spray** is needed to protect the vines.

The use of monitoring bands provides a standardised measure to check on insecticide treatments and this, combined with damage observations, allows for comparison of weevil pressure before and after treatments and between seasons.

This season, weather conditions were favourable for the earlier emergence of weevil adults, with air and soil temperatures on average two degrees higher in September and October than in 2005.

A couple of properties reported early damage from **Apple Weevil**, a species which is not normally considered a pest in vines. These are considered to be

over-wintering adults and they attacked the vines just after budburst, killing off some of the developing buds. The damage was restricted to hotspots and, although it has been seen in the past, it seems to be becoming more widespread.

Similar damage was reported by early emerging **Garden Weevil**. This emphasises the importance of checking vines for damage and not relying exclusively on the numbers picked up in the bands. It is the combination of checking the vines and assessing the feeding which helps you make a decision about the need to protect vines. During early stages of canopy development, a low number of weevils can cause a disproportionate amount of damage so that control measures may be warranted.

Vignerons who had decided on the butt spray option to control weevil numbers had done so by early November. In some hot spots, a **follow up application** may be necessary. Where large numbers of weevils were present in the canopy, some vignerons applied foliar sprays to reduce the population and hopefully control the numbers that will emerge next season.

There is some suggestion that foliar sprays for Garden Weevil control increase the risk of secondary pests so you need to consider whether the weevils are causing enough damage to warrant

a foliar spray. It is generally better to tolerate a small amount of damage than to apply a foliar spray which will affect beneficials and increase the risk of secondary pest outbreaks.

Large numbers of **European Earwigs** reported in the monitoring bands from some vineyards lead to some uncertainty on the reliability of the monitoring bands to record weevil activity. In these cases, it is important to distinguish weevil and earwig feeding, or even to get out the torch and check on nocturnal insect activity. Weevil-type feeding is characterised by notching on the young stems of canes and bunches, as well as the usual scalloping of the leaves. Earwig feeding tends to result in lace-like windowing of leaves. In general, feeding by European Earwigs is not considered worth treating, but experience in the previous season with the presence of large numbers of earwigs at vintage may provide justification for reducing their numbers the following spring.

**Garden Weevil watch** is updated weekly and covers the main period of weevil emergence from spring to mid December. It can be found on the DAFWA website: [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au)

**More information** from me on 9777 0135.

## Update on pest activity in grapevines

**Stewart Learmonth, Manjimup**

The situation regarding **weevils** has been reported separately by Mark Stanaway in his article on **Garden Weevil watch**. In general terms, where the newly registered product Avatar has been used, control has been good. Whether follow-up applications are required remains to be seen.

The abundance of **Long-tailed Mealybug** in the coastal wine growing regions remains an enigma. There have been the usual surprises from last season to this, from no or low numbers present to very high populations. Early monitoring for crawlers moving from the trunk and cordons has again been useful in detecting pest populations early. In two notable cases of high pest pressure, well timed applications of Applaud gave good control - though there was no untreated area for comparison. Where lower numbers were found, such that control was not recommended, sampling will continue to monitor insect levels and

potential for damage. **Pheromone traps** have been set up across the Manjimup, Pemberton and Margaret River regions



to monitor the timing of presence of males to gain a better understanding of the insect's biology.

First sampling in two vineyards where **Six-spotted Mite** was seen last season resulted in no detection of this new vineyard pest. More sampling is planned.

Vignerons are encouraged to be aware of the characteristic symptoms on infested leaves and report any sightings of this mite. Photos of leaf feeding signs are on the DAFWA Farmnote No. 146. The pesticide registration authority APVMA has approved an emergency use permit for use of miticides this season – permit number is PER9680.

Other pests noted so far this season have been **European Earwig** and **Wingless Grasshopper**. Baits have been used.

So far this season there have been no signs of **Onion Thrips** damaging grape berries as seen last season. These insects can be monitored by tapping bunches over a light coloured ice cream container. If you locate any outbreaks of large numbers, DAFWA will assist with identification and discuss control options. For identification, collect thrips into a glass jar with methylated spirits.

**More information** from me on 9777 0167.

# Exporting seed potatoes

Dale Spencer, Manjimup

Seed Potatoes exported overseas from Western Australia have attracted widespread recognition in recent years. Importing countries, however, are now demanding more specific product description so that product defects are measured prior to shipment and the importer is confident that it meets the desired standard.

To ensure that AQIS and DAFWA are consistent in their definitions of what constitutes a defect for seed potato tubers, a workshop was conducted in early 2006 to address the following items:

- sampling procedure
- National Standards for Certified Seed Potatoes
- Product Description Language Manual (AQIS and DAWA to concur on what constitutes a defect for seed potato tubers)

The workshop addressed the above items, together with a revised Seed Potato Tuber Inspection document (TADS) to be presented to the Seed

Potato Advisory Committee, the body representing the Seed Potato Industry.

A meeting of the Seed Potato Advisory Committee was held recently and the recommendations considered. The committee made some changes to the recommendations and endorsed the Sampling Procedures, incorporating the Product Description for certain defects as outlined in the TADS form.

**More information** from me on 9777 0142.



# Hormone herbicides and off-target spray damage

Diana Fisher, Manjimup

Every growing season, grapevines are reported that have symptoms of hormone herbicide damage. Hormone herbicides translocate through plants and concentrate in the growing points. These herbicides interfere with cell division which results in the development of malformed leaves and stems. This damage is usually the result of off-target spray damage.

**Off-target spray damage** can occur either by:

- **Droplet drift** - the movement in the wind of small droplets that fail to settle onto the target plants. All chemicals are subject to droplet drift.
- **Vapour drift** - is caused by the herbicide evaporating and moving as a vapour with the wind. The evaporation rate will depend on the volatility of the chemical. Hormone herbicides are volatile.

There are restrictions on the use of hormone herbicides. Under the 'Agriculture and Related Resources Protection (Spraying Restrictions) Regulations 1979', the use of the restricted hormone herbicides is

controlled within a 10 km radius of commercial vineyards and tomato gardens. Their use near other sensitive



crops (eg. brassicas, cucurbits, beans, pulses and oilseeds) is not controlled by the Regulations, but any spraying activity should be undertaken with a 'duty

of care'. This 'duty of care' also applies to off-target spray damage by other pesticides like insecticides, where care needs to be taken near marron dams, livestock grazing pasture or even next to other crops where pesticide off target deposits may have adverse effects in relation to residues or safety issues.

The Regulations are administered by DAFWA. Anyone who would like to use hormone herbicides within a 10 km radius of a commercial vineyard needs to contact DAFWA for a Permit prior to the use of the hormone herbicide.

The 'Agriculture and Related Resources Protection (Spraying Restrictions) Regulations 1979' will be repealed with the introduction of the 'Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Bill'. It is expected that the new legislation will focus on a 'duty of care' for all users of all chemicals in all situations.

More information from me on 9777 0128 or ChemCert WA Inc. Contact Terry O'Beirne, ChemCert Executive Officer Tel: (08) 9341 5325 E-mail: farmcarewa@bigpond.com.au

# Sheep welfare – what of it?

**Roy Butler, Merredin**

Did you know that there is a nationally accepted Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Sheep?

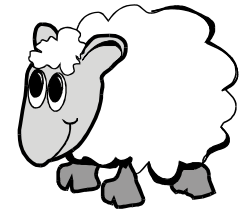
There is, and you can read it on the Department of Local Government and Regional Development web site (<http://www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au/Legislation/Docs/imageT.sheep.pdf>), or call any Department of Agriculture and Food district office for a copy of the Code.

The Code of Practice, or Standard, is a guide to the **minimum** welfare standards that should apply to grazing sheep.

Another Code is being developed for intensively managed sheep.

Like the sheep code, all welfare codes of practice are important because they recommend good animal husbandry practices that result in healthy, productive animals. It's important too because the Courts might use the Code as a yardstick to assess husbandry and management practices in any sheep cruelty cases.

Cruelty is not always a clear-cut or absolute issue. Society's standards are



changing and farmers' actions are more likely now to be questioned and criticised by people with no farming background. A practice that may appear to a city-dwelling tourist as cruel may be regarded as normal by farmers.

# Importing cattle into Western Australia

**Matt Bullard, Broome**

Do you import cattle into Western Australia from other states? Do you make sure that the cattle are eligible to come into Western Australia?

As the purchaser and importer, it is **your** responsibility to ensure that stock importations are legal and comply with Western Australian importation requirements. This includes freedom from specific stock diseases, such as Bovine Johne's Disease, as well as compliance with the requirements of the National Livestock Identification System.

It is especially important that all documentation is complete and

accurate, with particular reference to the origin of the stock involved. This does not mean where they have **just** come from, for example sale yards or other points of sale, but where they were **born and grazed at all times in-between**.

This is of particular importance for stock coming in from the Northern Territory and Queensland through our State's northern entry points. The cattle may have originated from areas further south and not be compliant with Western Australian requirements. Problems have arisen with cattle purchased in Queensland sales that have been born on properties in NSW.

scenario where you, the buyer, will be responsible for the consequences.

Animals which do not meet entry requirements will usually be required to be re-exported from Western Australia.

If you have questions on stock movements or cattle importation requirements, contact your nearest Department Agriculture and Food office and ask to speak to a stock inspector.

**More information** from Ian Spicer in Bunbury on 9780 6299.





# Identification requirements for cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats

*Beth Green, Vasse*

	NLIS CATTLE and BUFFALO	NLIS SHEEP and GOATS
Brands/earmarks	MUST be branded and/or earmarked.	Sheep MUST be branded and earmarked. Goats must be branded.
NLIS identification - animal on the property of birth	WHITE NLIS electronic device in the (animal's) RIGHT ear.	YEAR COLOUR TAG with your brand imprinted (as done currently).
NLIS identification - purchased animals	ONE NLIS device for life ORANGE electronic device only for cattle brought onto your property <b>without</b> an existing NLIS device. <i>Do not remove an NLIS tag.</i>	Additional PINK TAG with your brand imprinted placed in ear with earmark - before dispatch from property. <i>Do not remove any of the tags</i>
NLIS Database transfers and records required.	When moving between PICs, animals must be transferred to the new PIC on the NLIS database.  For animals transferred to or from saleyards, abattoirs, or export depots, this is done by those operators.  For direct property to property sales, the purchaser is responsible for the transfer on the database.	No database Waybill records required to be kept for at least 3 years.  Saleyards, abattoirs and export depots have record keeping requirements.
Exemptions	Homebred cattle going directly to abattoir without being offloaded during transport may have a tail tag, transaction ear tag, or NLIS electronic ID tag or bolus.  Homebred cattle going directly to live export depot without being offloaded during transport may have a transaction ear tag or NLIS electronic ID tag or bolus.	Lambs sent from the property of birth directly to abattoir without being offloaded during transport do not require tags but must be earmarked.  (Some abattoirs may not accept lambs without tags - check before delivery.)
Waybills, NVD/Waybills	All stock movements must have a completed waybill.  Any lots moved with an exemption must have a separate waybill.	All stock movements must have a completed waybill.  Any lots moved with an exemption must have a separate waybill.

For further information, please either email [nlis@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:nlis@agric.wa.gov.au) or phone Beth Green at the Vasse Research Centre, 9753 0302

# New publications



## **DairyCatch - environmental best practice guidelines: Bulletin 4689**

**DairyCatch** is an industry-driven partnership for sustainable and profitable dairy farming in Western Australia.

## **Virus diseases of cucurbit crops: Farmnote 166**

Five principal viruses are recorded infecting cucurbit crops in Western Australia. Virus hosts, symptoms, distribution and spread are detailed

## **Control of body lice on some new breeds of sheep: Farmnote 158**

Farmnote covers the reasons for treating new breeds for lice, lice treatment, off-shears lice treatment and long wool lice treatment.

## **Farming for the Future - self assessment tool: Bulletin 4694**

**Farming for the Future** will recognise primary producers who are using industry agreed practices. They can be recognised by participating in an existing industry assurance program or by successfully completing a **Farming for the Future** Self-Assessment Tool

## **Land is in Your Hands: Bulletin 4686**

The **Land is in Your Hands** booklet is targeted at small landholders and aims to promote a better understanding of the importance of caring for the land and being a 'good neighbour' in the rural community.

These publications can be downloaded from the Department's web site at [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au) by entering the type of publication [Bulletin, FarmNote etc] and its number in the Search box. Only limited quantities are printed and held in district offices.

# Small Landholder Information Service

## **Neil Guise and Yolande Jones, Waroona**

If you own or manage a small property (1 – 100 ha) in the South West, we have good news for you!

The Department of Agriculture and Food's Small Landholder Information Service (SLIS) will be running a series of seminars, property planning workshops and field walks in 2007 and 2008, thanks to federal funding through the South West Catchments Council. This continues the successful small landholder program that we ran last year, with five introductory workshops, eight property planning workshops and ten field days. The program was very popular, with attendances overall exceeding targets and very positive feedback on content, information and deliverers.



Next year, the SLIS, with the support of our advocate team (mostly NRM officers) and technical staff, will run a variety of workshops covering soil and

water management, weed identification and control, orchard management, property planning, livestock management and much more. The team is hoping to kick off the program late February to early March, so stay tuned for details.

If you are a small property owner and interested in learning how to manage your property better or would like to hook into a network of

likeminded people, grab a registration form from your local DAFWA office or ring the Waroona Office on 9733 7777.

Whilst 2005/06 was a productive year for SLIS, we also faced a few challenges. We lost an experienced Development Officer, Megan Narducci, and our Administration Officer Chris Morton, but gained a new Development Officer Yolande Jones (also known as Landy) who is based at Waroona. Janet Conte has also stepped in to help us out.

On behalf of the staff from the SLIS, we would like to thank all of our advocate partners who worked tirelessly to make the past year so successful and we now look forward to working with you all again in the coming year. From

the staff at SLIS, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. **More information** from the SLIS team in Waroona on 9733 7777.

# NLIS (Sheep and Goats) regulations in place

Clare Nixon, South Perth

New National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) regulations that require all sheep and goats to be tagged before moving off property are now being enforced.

NLIS eartags must be imprinted with the owner's brand which is registered to that property. The tags may only be used on the property to which they are registered.

NLIS tagging is additional to earmarking for sheep. The registered earmark is still required and must be placed in the left ear for female sheep and the right ear for males.

If the animals are still on the property of birth, the eartags to be used are colour coded for year of birth and are placed in the ear opposite the registered earmark

– right ear for females and left ear for males.

For sheep or goats not on the property of birth, each subsequent owner applies a pink NLIS tag, imprinted with the owner's brand registered to the property of residence.

The tag is placed in the same ear as the earmark - the opposite ear to the coloured year of birth tag. It is recommended that the tags, which provide evidence of ownership, should be applied when sheep arrive on a property so that it is easier to trace them if they stray.

NLIS eartags previously applied must not be removed. This will enable individual animals to be tracked from their property

of birth through all changes of ownership and geographic location until they are sent for slaughter or die.

Animals being moved from property to property in the same ownership don't require an additional tag but must be accompanied by a completed waybill which must be kept for a minimum of three years.

Producers not complying with NLIS regulations for sheep and goats will now be liable for prosecution.

For further information, contact your local office of the Department of Agriculture and Food or visit the website – [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au)

**More information** from me on 9368 3120.

## REMINDER TO ALL CATTLE OWNERS

### **Cattle MUST be registered to current PIC before dispatch**

It is a legal requirement for all cattle to be registered on the NLIS database against their current Property Identification Code (PIC) **before** they are dispatched from the property.

All cattle should be transferred on the database within 48 hours of arriving at a different PIC. If you do not have the facilities to do this yourself, contact your Department of Agriculture and Food office for a list of your local scanning contractors.

Cattle arriving from a saleyard or export depot will already be transferred for you.

For assistance to set up your own database account to monitor which animals are on your property, send your details to [nlis@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:nlis@agric.wa.gov.au) or phone 9780 6207.

## REMINDER TO ALL CATTLE OWNERS

## AgMemo mailing list

Your South West Regional AgMemo is now direct mailed, rather than being delivered via Australia Post's 'Householder' service. Developing and maintaining a comprehensive mailing list is not easy and we need your assistance to keep it accurate.

Please let us know if:

- The address on the label is not accurate
- You do not wish to receive future copies of the AgMemo
- You received more than one copy of the AgMemo
- You know someone who did not receive a copy and would like to

You can make required changes on this page and fax it to the Bunbury office of the Department of Agriculture and Food on 9780 6136 or phone 9780 6100.



## Season's Greetings

*Department of Agriculture and Food* staff extend season's greetings to all in our rural communities. For farmers in the northern parts of our region, the season started late, giving us an autumn which was a complete contrast to last year. The dry winter may have reduced waterlogging on many farms, but spring growth generally wasn't enough to allow farmers to replenish fodder reserves exhausted by the poor break. Combined with uncertainties in supply and cost of grain and killing space at abattoirs, we could be in for a challenging summer. We look forward to a better break next autumn.

We will continue working with you to make our communities more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.

## Christmas closing

The four offices in the Region – Waroona, Bunbury, Vasse and Manjimup – will be closed from Monday, December 26 to Monday, January 1 inclusive. They will open for business at 8.00 am on Tuesday, January 2.



Department of  
Agriculture



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## TO THE FARMER

### Disclaimer

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