

Western Division newsletter

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Agfair's big weekend – May 2 and 3

One of the biggest events in the Western Division calendar is on again in early May. The Broken Hill Agfair is held every second year on the Broken Hill racecourse.

Chairman of Agfair Mr Kevin Taylor said that with Agfair 2006 behind them plans were now under way to make 2008 an even bigger and more entertaining event. Their debriefing meeting had identified a few areas that needed improvement and the committee was in the process of addressing these matters to make for an even smoother running event in 2008.

'Agfair 2008 will mark our event's twentieth year of operation and the partnership of the Rotary Club of Broken Hill and the Pastoralists Association of West Darling is still going strong,' he said.

'Over the past twenty years Agfair has developed into the biggest biennial event on Broken Hill's calendar and draws patrons and exhibitors from all parts of Australia.

'The 2006 event had three hundred exhibitors in attendance and saw approximately twelve thousand patrons through our gates. I look forward to welcoming you to Agfair 2008 and wish you well with the opportunities that it will present,' Mr Taylor said.

Erica Malloch, the Secretary for Agfair reports that this year's event is going to be bigger than ever, with not only the many usual machinery and equipment displays for the 'fellas' but also home interest

sites for the ladies. Celebrity chef Lyndey Milan, Food Director of the Australian Women's Weekly will be making a guest appearance plus there are fashion parades, Irish and tap dancers, helicopter joy flights, children's entertainment, a guest gardener and Matt Hall entertaining the crowd with his inverted down-under aerobatic displays.

Bookings for accommodation need to be made as soon as possible. Contact the Broken Hill Visitor Information Centre ph: (08) 8080 3560. Email: tourist@brokenhill.nsw.gov.au or visit the website address: www.visitbrokenhill.com.au



Broken Hill Field Days
Friday 2 and Saturday 3 May 2008
at the Broken Hill Racecourse

Agricultural and Trade exhibitors wishing to participate are asked to contact the Agfair Secretary
Erica Malloch

Agfair Broken Hill Inc.
PO Box 372 Broken Hill 2880
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Produced for landholders in the Western Division of NSW



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Editorial

by Sally Ware
Rangelands Officer
NSW DPI, Hay

The summer storms have resulted in the growth of some different and interesting species on the plains. One plant in particular has had landholders stopping and taking a second look. Looking a bit like a miniature tomato bush, the 'Plains Spurge' (*Euphorbia planiticola*) has been seen on both the red earths and on the heavier clay soils. It is an annual and has started to set seed in most areas. Stock are consuming the plant fairly readily without ill effects to date.

Rachel Strachan from Tulney Station has sent in some wonderful photos of the Darling River flowing again. Tulney Station is located on the river between Pooncarie and Wentworth. The photo on the right shows members of the Strachan and Lambert families watching the river flow into the pump hole at the Lambert's property Lelma. Lelma is situated about 15 km upriver from Tulney. Rachel commented that it is wonderful to have 'fresh' river water for the house and the stock.



Enjoy reading this issue and remember news from the bush is always appreciated and can be sent to me – see the back page for my contact details.



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Western Division Newsletter

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Watch out for worm invasion

by Greg Curran, Senior Regional Animal Health Manager,
Western Division, NSW DPI, Broken Hill

The best season in years for Western Division sheep and goat producers could be put at risk by an abnormal incidence of worms.

NSW Department of Primary Industries has found unusually high worm egg counts in WormTest samples from flocks in the Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Cobar, Hillston, Hay, Wilcannia and Wentworth districts.

State worm control coordinator, Stephen Love, said while recent above-average rainfall was welcome it has created an ideal environment for worms.

'The first thing producers need to do is to monitor their flocks' worm egg count and if needed, drench appropriately,' Dr Love said.

'Following drenching we recommend moving animals to pasture which has not recently been grazed by goats or young sheep.

'WormTest could really pay for producers this season.'

Dr Love said that producers run the risk of significant production losses, including sheep deaths, if flocks have high egg counts and aren't drenched.

'Barber's pole worm can quickly kill animals through blood loss and is particularly dangerous in the current conditions,' he said.

'However if producers drench without first testing their flocks they could waste both time and money – some flocks are returning low egg counts, making drenching unnecessary.'

WormTest can also identify the type of worm and best drench to use.

Barber's pole, small brown stomach and black scour worms pose the greatest threat to sheep and goats.



Sheep with significant worm burdens may lose weight, which is particularly noticeable in younger sheep on good pasture.

Other signs of wormy sheep include scouring and the consequent occurrence of flystrike, soft swelling under the jaw, pale-looking skin and rapid breathing when moving.

Producers can contact their local NSW DPI, Rural Lands Protection Board or private veterinarian for WormTest kits and advice on worms.



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Homebush Field Day

25 km north of Balranald
on Ivanhoe Road

Friday, April 18

9.00 am – 4.00pm

All major agricultural exhibits

Contact: Alison Linnett (Secretary)

ph: (03) 5020 1934

email: homebush2007@hotmail.com

Kangaroo Management Update: Responsibilities of Licence holders

by Katie Ritchie, Public Affairs
Officer, Dept of Environment
and Climate Change



The Department of Environment and Climate Change is reminding landholders of their obligations when it comes to allowing roo trappers onto their properties, under the Kangaroo Management Program.

Manager of the Kangaroo Management Program Nicole Payne said the warning follows recent changes to licence conditions as well as some serious breaches in the last few years, where fraudulent applications have been lodged.

‘Landholders who apply for commercial tags receive a copy of the licence, as does the nominated kangaroo trapper. Licence conditions were reviewed during 2007, and licences issued for 2008 have new conditions attached. It is important that licensees are familiar with these conditions because as the licensee, a landholder can be penalised for failing to comply. DECC takes breaches of licence conditions very seriously.

‘During 2007 over 100 fines were issued for kangaroo related offences across the whole commercial harvest zone in NSW. Four people were successfully prosecuted for unauthorised shooting of kangaroos and received fines of between \$400 and \$10,000. Two trappers also had their licences cancelled,’ said Ms Payne.

DECC staff have also reported a significant increase in the number of forged or fraudulent applications for occupier’s licences over the last two years.

‘It is an offence to make a false application. This includes both the landholder and the trapper.

‘By signing an application form, the landholder is certifying that all the information on the form is true and correct. If a landholder signs a blank form and then provides it to another person, there is a significant risk that incorrect information will be supplied and the landholder can be held accountable.

‘Application forms deemed to be suspect will not be processed, and will be investigated further. Possible penalties include a \$500 fine or prosecution. Licences already issued that are subsequently found to be forged will be cancelled immediately.

Ms Payne also explained that requests for occupier’s licences for properties that haven’t previously had licences will need to be accompanied by a copy of a RLPB Rates Notice.

‘If this is not available then other formal documentation that provides the necessary information will be required.

‘This allows DECC to verify the size and ownership of the property before the licence is issued. This also prevents unauthorised people signing applications, and therefore protects the landholder as well. If DECC cannot verify these details, the licence may not be approved.

2008 quota for Far West

Following aerial surveys and data analysis, the 2007 total red and grey kangaroo population in the Far West has been estimated at 2,285,790 – a 20 per cent increase on the 2006 population.

Ms Payne said the increase was due to improvement in seasonal conditions and movement of kangaroos, especially reds, from zones to the east.

‘The total commercial quota for the Far West management zone (which includes Tibooburra, Lower Darling and Broken Hill areas), is 377,131 comprising 85,905 grey and 291,226 red kangaroos.

‘The quota is calculated as a proportion of the population estimate and is based on long-term predictions under the principles of ecological sustainability. It does not aim to keep kangaroo populations at a particular density’, Ms Payne said.

Drought doesn't deter big crowds, big winners

by Fiona Wragge, Committee Member,
Peppin-Shaw Riverina Ewe Flock Competition

Years of drought have done little to deter either the enthusiasm of Merino breeders if this year's Peppin-Shaw Riverina Ewe Flock competition is any gauge.

And a brave decision to enter the world's biggest sheep competition in the middle of a drought has paid off handsomely for the winners, while the biggest crowds ever seen for the event had organizers smiling.

Dan and Natalie Dowling from Merritop at Oxley are the first to admit they wondered why they entered the Peppin-Shaw when they were dealing with the day-to-day challenges of drought.

But since entries closed, the Dowlings and many of the other entrants in the competition have received rains, enough to turn brown paddocks green and put smiles back on faces.

A resurgence in interest in Merinos was evident at this week's two-day event, with the biggest crowd ever attending.

Peppin-Shaw president Peter Thomson said the competition had achieved new highs this year in many ways.

'It was fantastic to feel the energy of all those attending, and their enthusiasm for Merino breeding,' he said.

'There's no doubt that the Merinos we saw on our two-day tour are not only able to produce high quality wool but are also ideal for the meat market, and are true dual purpose animals.'

Mr Thomson said two coach loads of visitors from three states had travelled almost 1000 km in the two days, with many travelling more than this distance simply to be at the event.

'I think we are establishing ourselves as a must-do for enthusiastic Merino breeders, not only to be able to see thousands of



high quality sheep, but also to share in the experiences of top quality judges and like-minded breeders,' he said.

The Dowlings, who join 3400 Merino ewes, run a 16,500 ha operation north-west of Hay, and had just 205 mm of rain until October last year.

They have won the Peppin-Shaw before, most recently in 2001, but Mr Dowling said it was still a 'shock and honor' to receive the award. Earlier in the night, Merritop had taken out the northern section of the competition.

Overall runner up was Bert and Liz Matthews' Bedarbidgal flock run south-east of Hay, a run which first won the southern section of the competition, while the central section was taken out by the Gibson family of Croidon, Hay.

The top five flocks were Merritop, Bedarbidgal, Croidon, Amoilla and Nyangay.

Top: 2008 Peppin-Shaw winners with major sponsor Mark Bazeley from Riverina Wool (far left) and President Peter Thomson (kneeling).

Below: Judging in the yards at Steam Plains

Measurements on rams – making sense of the numbers workshop



Allan Casey, NSW DPI, explains to workshop participants how to select rams using Australian Sheep Breeding Values.

by Sally Ware
Rangelands Officer
NSW DPI Hay




NSW DEPARTMENT OF
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Twenty one commercial lamb producers attended a white dorper breeding and selection workshop at the Hillston community centre on February 21. The day was run in conjunction with Andrew and Megan Mosely from the Etiwanda white dorper stud and staff from NSW DPI. It was a hands-on day, with 20 young rams supplied for the workshop by Etiwanda. The objective of the day was for producers to learn the value of selecting rams using Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) in conjunction with visual selection. NSW DPI Sheep Breeding Specialist Allan Casey provided the producers with information on how to understand ASBVs, the value of ASBVs over raw data (e.g. body weight) and how to use the information to select a ram suitable for a particular breeding objective. The two LAMBPLAN indices that can be supplied for dorper rams – Carcase Plus and Dorper \$ – were also explained and used in the practical demonstration at the workshop. Megan and Andrew Mosely spoke about the operation of the Etiwanda

stud, their ram breeding objectives and the use of ASBVs in their stud whilst Geoff Duddy, NSW DPI Sheep and Wool Officer spoke of the need to breed dorpers with a target weight in mind.

For further details of this workshop contact Sally Ware, NSW DPI Hay on (02) 6993 1608 or by email sally.ware@dpi.nsw.gov.au or Andrew and Megan Mosely ah on (02) 6837 3797 or by email etiwanda@bigpond.com

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LMD 17590

Wetlands on Farms Pilot Project – an update

The Wetlands on Farms project is assisting private landholders to sustainably integrate wetlands into their farming operations. Delivered by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and funded in the Western Catchment Region by the Western Catchment Management Authority (WCMA), Wetlands on Farms will identify more sustainable wetland management practices to assist with the long term future of these valuable production systems. It is part of a larger pilot project that is working with landholders that have wetlands on their properties throughout inland NSW

A wetland can be any area of land that is flooded with water either temporarily or permanently. They can include lakes, cane grass flats, lignum swamps, billabongs and claypans. Wetlands with healthy vegetation that are connected to creeks and rivers act as filters for these systems. Well managed wetlands can enhance water quality and provide habitat for colonial and migratory bird populations, fish, invertebrates and support eucalypt forests or grasslands. They also provide an important grazing, cropping and water resource for primary producers, particularly in the Western Division.

In 2006, the Western CMA conducted a series of Community Workshops which invited landholders to have their wetlands assessed and prioritised. For those landholders who expressed an interest, consultants appointed by the CMA either visited or assessed wetlands from maps and local information. This process was completed in 2007 and a report was compiled for the Western CMA containing information on 114 wetlands across the region.

The Wetlands on Farms team is working closely with 13 Western Division landholders and their families, across a combined area of 511,336 hectares. The wetland assessment and prioritisation



process determined that their wetlands displayed significant ecological and/or cultural value. To date, site inspections by NSW DPI with the landholders have been conducted at each wetland and information about current management has been compiled. Property maps are being supplied to these landholders to help them with planning of future management actions around or within their wetlands. Types of actions may include development of an Enterprise Based Conservation (EBC), stock management during specific times on all or part of the wetland, weed control in inlet channels into the wetland or floodplain areas and establishment of off-wetland stock watering points.

Property specific wetland management plans are being developed, with each landholder determining their management actions based on information that has been sourced for them by the NSW DPI Wetlands on Farms team. Detailed high resolution property maps will be delivered toward the end of the project (June 2008) along with a comprehensive booklet detailing best management practice for wetlands, with a focus on sustainable management and input by Western Region landholders.

Jon Pocknell's wetland on Springvale near Walgett is being managed for both conservation and production outcomes.

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NSW DEPARTMENT OF
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Western Catchment people invest \$4.3 M to improve environment

by Rory Treweek, Chair of the Western CMA



Land managers in the Western Catchment have received \$4.3 million in grants to undertake on-ground works or training to improve natural resource management in their area through the Western Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) 2007 Incentive Program.

One hundred and three applicants received funding towards projects which meet the CMAs natural resource management targets, which include native pasture recovery, riverine habitat and water quality improvement, pest management and sustainable agriculture.

As we start 2008 it's important to recognise the achievements of the previous year.

The 2007 program yielded significant results and shows the interest and willingness of Western Catchment people to improve the natural resources of their local environment.

The funding is part of the NSW and Australian Government's combined \$23 million commitment to the Western Catchment over a four-year period.

Gary Davies of the Grawin-Glengarry Sheeppark Miners' Association and Daryl Green of the Western CMA inspect treated Hudson Pear near Lightning Ridge.



Major projects include:

- \$2 million committed to 43 applicants for native pasture recovery and sustainable agriculture.
 - o Land managers will use a total of 680 km of fencing, and the installation of 11 watering points to assist with the management of grazing pressure which will encourage native pasture growth on a total of 143,140 hectares (1,430 km²).
 - o In addition, 33 trapyards will be erected to exclude goats from a total of 103,300 hectares (1,033 km²).
 - o As a result, native pasture recovery works will be undertaken on an area of 2,474 km², which is equivalent to the area of the Australian Capital Territory or approximately four times the size of the Gundabooka National Park near Bourke.
- \$1.42 million was committed to 22 applicants for riverine habitat and water quality improvements. 58 off-river watering points have been installed to stop stock accessing waterways and 383 km of waterways have been fenced (equivalent to the distance by road from Sydney to Port Macquarie). As a result, 17,060 hectares (170 km²) of riverine vegetation is now protected, which is equivalent in size to the Ledknapper Native Reserve near Enngonia.
- \$440,500 was committed to 18 applicants treat 117,500 hectares (1,175 km²) affected by invasive native scrub using a range of techniques including chemical spot-treatment, chaining and raking. This is equivalent in size to the Yathong Nature Reserve near Cobar. Although invasive native scrub or woody weeds are native plants, they out-compete native pastures and

result in bare and eroded soil, so their management is essential.

- \$180,000 was committed to three applicants to control noxious weeds, including \$65,000 to control Hudson Pear on 4,000 hectares in the Lightning Ridge area and \$30,000 to control Athol Pine, which affects wetlands and riverine corridors.
- \$80,400 was committed to four applicants to undertake rangeland rehabilitation works on 1,638 hectares using a combination of engineering works and revegetation of native species.
- \$135,000 was committed to seven applicants to encourage sustainable agriculture through conservation farming. Four machines have been converted to direct drill and one purchased, resulting in 10,400 hectares (104 km²) of cropping land converted to no-till agriculture.
- A further \$400,000 was committed to applicants for:
 - o training to improve their natural resource management skills; and
 - o protecting the variety of plant and animal life (biodiversity) through the Environmentally Significant Areas program.

The 2008 Incentive Program was launched in March at the Sustainable Grazing Forum in Broken Hill. For more information visit the Western CMA's website www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au or your local Western CMA office.



Randall Whytcross of Kia Ora Station 80 km south-west of Cobar received funding to undertake stage two of a project to improve total grazing pressure and encourage native pasture recovery. Through the 2007 program, the Whytcross family installed two additional watering points (two tanks, two troughs and 8.5 km of piping) to reduce grazing pressure on their paddocks and encourage groundcover and healthier soils.



Andrew Scott, Manager of Nantilla and Garden Vale Stations near Wanaaring, with one of seven goat traps installed as part of the Western CMA's Incentives Program.



Duncan and Chris Ferguson of Myrnong Station, 60 km south-west of Wanaaring, have had excellent results regenerating native perennial grass thanks to 86 km of total grazing pressure fencing funded through the 2007 program. The fencing complements a comprehensive system of trapyards and total grazing control paddocks and their rotational grazing system, which allows them to effectively manage their groundcover and promote perennial grass species.

Screensaver celebrates ten years of spectacular photographs

by Maree Barnes, Media and PR Officer, Western CMA



A collection of the best photographs submitted to the 'Life and Light of the Western Catchment' photographic competition over the past ten years is available as a commemorative screensaver and was exhibited at three major Western NSW centres from mid-December 2007.

The Light and Life of the Western Catchment Commemorative Screensaver was produced by the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the photographic competition.

The screensaver and exhibition features 115 images chosen from over a thousand submitted between 1998 and 2007 that capture the Western Catchment.

In addition, the collection was exhibited at the Western Plains Cultural Centre in Dubbo and at the Broken Hill Regional Gallery and continues to be shown at the Cobar Museum, where it was officially launched in mid-December. The winning entries from the 2007 competition are also on exhibit at the Cobar Museum.

The screensaver has proven very popular since its launch. They were very popular for people to send with their Christmas cards to family and friends living interstate or overseas to showcase their local area and we're still receiving an average of five requests per week from members of the public.

Isabella Gale with sisters, Millie and Lucy, on woolbales showing the family's switch to organic wool by Zanna Gale, Pincally Station, Broken Hill 2007.



George and Sophie playing on dirt road by Sue Currey, Walgett 2002

So many spectacular images have been submitted over the past ten years that we wanted to mark the ten year milestone by compiling them into a collection that both residents and tourists could enjoy.

They reflect the changing seasons of the Western Catchment: from droughts to flooding rains; good times and bad.

During good years the photographs often feature the life-giving nature of water while the prolonged drought years have prompted images of resilience and bush humour. Each year one or more themes is set, which have included: My Favourite Place; Year of the Outback; Life Goes On; and Biodiversity at its Best.

During The Year of the Outback, entries came from all parts of Australia, reflecting the unprecedented number of tourists who visited Western NSW during 2002.

The winning photographs have been exhibited at numerous local venues including council chambers, field days and shows as well as the Royal Easter Show in Sydney in 2000, where they successfully communicated the beauty and diversity of Western NSW to a national audience.

Photographs are assessed by a judging panel on the basis of suitability to theme, composition, focus or sharpness of image, exposure and creativity.

The most successful entrant has been Sheree Bamforth of Cobar who has

featured in all competitions since 2002, often winning both first and runner-up place in the black and white section. Others who featured regularly on the winners list include Suzanne Mansell and Heather Buster of Bourke, Sue Currey of Walgett and Ruth Sandow of Milparinka. The youngest winner was kindergarten student, Jake Smyth of Cobar, who used the prize-money from the 2005 competition to purchase his own camera.

Researching the collection also provided an opportunity to catch up with previous

participants. In 2002, Zanna Gale of Pincally Station, Broken Hill photographed her six-month-old daughter, Isabella, perched on a wool bale. In 2007, Isabella is now big sister to Millie and Lucy, and their woolbales show the family's switch to organic wool.

The screensaver is available free of charge by ringing the Western CMA on 1800 032 101.

Australia Day award for Clive

Almost a lifetime commitment on the Ivanhoe Bushfire Brigade plus numerous long hours as a strident volunteer Committee member of the Rural Fire Service has earned Clive Linnett of 'Kilfera' Ivanhoe an Australia Day award for Australian Fire Service.

Clive and his family Fay and Peter also run the Kilfera Field Day which is run every year on the first Wednesday in October. Over the past 18 years, over \$170,000 has been raised from the proceeds of the Field Day to be donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Ivanhoe District Hospital.

This year the Field Day will be held on Wednesday October 1 2008.



Western Division Newsletter

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\$2.3 million for fresh air not farming for fifteen years



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Six landholders within the NSW Western Division will manage a total of 48,000 hectares (480 km²) for conservation products rather than agriculture over the next fifteen years through the Enterprise Based Conservation program.

The original fund of \$1 million from the NSW and Australian Governments has been supplemented by an additional \$1 million from the Western CMA and \$334,000 from the Lower Murray-Darling CMA.

Both CMAs are working towards meeting management targets for conservation land use. CMAs will monitor the progress of the properties involved in their Catchment through Property Vegetation Plan Agreements. The program will be administered through the Western CMA.

Chair of the Western CMA, Rory Treweeke, says the Enterprise Based Conservation grants provide financial incentives for landholders to actively manage part or all of their property for specific conservation goals.

‘It’s an innovative idea that is actually very simple. Payments allow the landholders to remove stock and manage the area to assist native animals and plants to thrive.

‘It will protect the variety of plants and animals within the ecosystem and the natural resources base while maintaining the financial viability of landholders,’ Mr Treweeke said.

Three properties are located within the Western Catchment: Will and Denise Turnbull of ‘Greenvale’ near Bourke, Tas and Penne Clarke of ‘Kayrunnera’, near White Cliffs, and Mick and Michaela Fisher of ‘Kilberoo’ near Yantabulla will take part.

The other three properties are from the Lower Murray-Darling Catchment: Andy and Fiona McLeod of ‘Coombah’ near Wentworth, Laurence and Helen Barnes of ‘Lethero’ south of Pooncarie, and Gary and Tracey Neyland of ‘Mandelman’ east of Pooncarie will receive grants.

Chair of the Lower Murray-Darling CMA, Mark King, says that as well as conserving a total area of 480 square kilometres, which is larger than the Kinchega National Park, it recognises conservation is a legitimate commercial land-use.

‘Conservation produces clean air, healthy soils and water and a diversity of plants and animals, all of which benefit the public,’ Mr King said.

‘The program built on the highly successful WEST 2000 Pilot project, which involved ten properties over five years, and made it available to all landholders within the Western Division.

‘It is the first time that this initiative has been widely available to landholders across the Western Division, which comprises 42 per cent of the state and there was quite significant interest. An assessment panel chose the six properties expected to yield the most benefits from the funds invested.

‘Landholders will access two, linked forms of assistance: negotiated payments to establish the conservation area and payments for costs relating to the management of the area for fifteen years,’ Mr King said.

‘The funding is designed to cover costs of actively managing the conservation area and to provide income similar to forgone agricultural production to maintain the viability of the farm business,’ he said.

The recipients have been encouraged to invest payments into a long-term



investment security to provide an on-going income stream,' Mr King said.

Lower Murray Darling Catchment case study: Neyland family, 'Mandelman' near Pooncarie

Based on their successful participation in the WEST 2000 Plus pilot project, Tracey and Gary Neyland have agreed to manage for conservation the remaining 10,760 hectares (107 km²) of their property, Mandelman Station. Between the two schemes, the entire property, or 33,157 ha (331km²) is now being managed for conservation.

Located between Mungo National Park and Ivanhoe, the country is mostly undulating sandplains. The fragile environment is home to a variety of uncommon animals such as the endangered Malleefowl and the vulnerable Southern Ningau (a small marsupial).

Tracey Neyland says they've seen marked improvements since they destocked the property and undertook regular fox and cat management programs.

'The Malleefowl population has increased, the damage around waterholes has disappeared and despite the drought we have good levels of groundcover,' Mrs Neyland said.

'We used recycled rack-netting that was previously used to dry grapes to keep feral goats out as they damage the fragile soil and plants.

'Having an income from the WEST 2000 Plus program alleviated some of the

pressure from the drought and allowed us to see how the land could heal itself without the damage of stock.

'While it's in our power, this land will never be stocked.

'We've got a huge variety of birds, lizards and echidnas. It's alive everywhere when you take a step back and look around,' Mrs Neyland said.

The Neylands are currently renovating their now redundant shearing quarters into guest accommodation and hope that visitors, including tourists, birdwatchers, university students and researchers, may be interested in experiencing their unique environment.

Western catchment case study: Fisher family, 'Kilberoo' near Yantabulla

Mick and Michaela Fisher of 'Kilberoo', north-east of Wanaaring, will manage for conservation 14,185 hectares (142 km²) on their property.

Kilberoo is the largest conservation area of the six in the program and covers a wide range of land types.

It includes stony downs, escarpments, plains and frequently flooded Lignum and Cooba wattle watercourse country which is part of the unique Cuttaburra Basin. When flooded it provides habitat for numerous uncommon animals, including the threatened Freckled Duck as well as Brolgas and water fowl.

Mick Fisher says the program gives them the opportunity to balance the economic, social and conservation considerations of operating a property in far-western NSW.

Left: The Fisher Family of Kilberoo Station: Back: Mick, Joe and Michaela Fisher; Front: Jeremiah, Millicent and Mikey Fisher.

Above: The floodplain on Kilberoo provides breeding habitat for a number of bird species including the freckled duck and blue-billed duck, both of which are threatened species

'As we have a young family we have a vested interest in making the land as sustainable as we can. We think the EBC program is a great way to rejuvenate the land and protect it for future generations whilst being encouraged to do so'.

Mick has already witnessed improvements to the area since destocking three years ago.

'The area has experienced a fair bit of grazing pressure, but we've already seen an increase in groundcover and we hope that if we nurse it along over fifteen years it will go back to its original state.

'It's fragile country. We want to look after it,' Mr Fisher said.

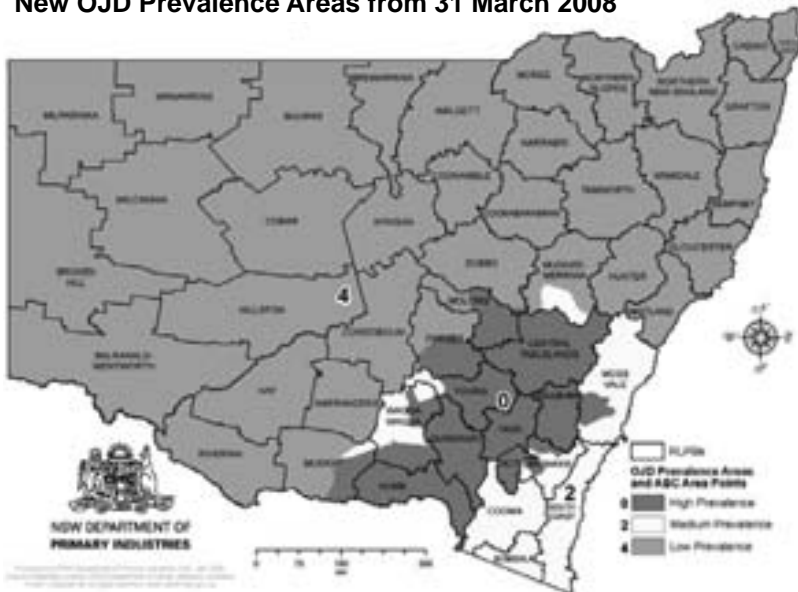
OJD – important changes to ABC Scheme from 31 March 2008

Important changes to the ABC (Assurance Based Credit) Scheme come into place on 31 March 2008. These changes will make buying and trading sheep while managing the risk of OJD much easier.

What are the changes?

New Prevalence Areas have been defined and revised points have been allocated. Most producers will find that they are in a new area

New OJD Prevalence Areas from 31 March 2008



Changes to points allocated for Prevalence Areas

Original Prevalence Area up to 30 March 2008	Old Points	Maximum estimated % of infected flocks within the Prevalence Area ¹	New Prevalence Area from 31 March 2008	New Points	Maximum estimated % of infected flocks within the Prevalence Area ¹
Very Low Prevalence	5	0.5	Low Prevalence ²	4	0.8
Low Prevalence	3	8	Medium Prevalence ²	2	12.5
Medium Prevalence	1	32	High Prevalence	0	>12.5
High Prevalence	0	>32			

¹ Maximum estimated % of infected flocks in the Prevalence Area is measured at the upper confidence limit.

² There will be two Prevalence Areas in Victoria. The shires of Mildura, West Wimmera, Glenelg, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Gannawarra, Yarriamback, Buloke and Swan Hill are now included in the Low Prevalence Area. The remainder of Victoria will become a Medium Prevalence Area.

with new points although the names of the Prevalence Areas have stayed the same. The map shows the new arrangements.

What do the changes mean for me?

You should check the map before you fill out a Sheep Health Statement to find out your new Prevalence Area and the appropriate ABC credit.

You can still get trading credits for vaccination, testing for OJD, for Abattoir Surveillance 700 and 200 tests and for the certification of low risk sheep; these all stay the same.

Why the ABC Scheme is changing from 31 March

Abattoir surveillance over the last two years has shown that the prevalence of OJD is increasing in some parts of Australia. Based on this information, stakeholders have agreed that the number of prevalence areas should be reduced from four to three with new boundaries that more closely relate to regional risk.

The points allocated to each of the new Prevalence Areas have also changed. These now more closely quantify the true risk that sheep from these areas represent.

For further information

Visit the new OJD website: www.ojd.com.au, or contact your nearest NSW DPI office, RLPB, district veterinarian, local animal health advisor or agent.

Local farming voices needed in Invasive Native Scrub research

A research program on Invasive Native Scrub (INS) is underway across the region from Nyngan to Cobar and locals are encouraged to get involved and give their two cents worth.

INS is the serious issue of thickening and encroaching native trees and scrub and is widespread across this part of NSW.

This phenomenon has been recorded for over 100 years in the district and can affect the environment and farming businesses through such things as loss of groundcover, increased soil erosion, reduced soil function, biodiversity, farm productivity and increased difficulty of feral animal control.

The overall research program is being coordinated by the Central West and Western Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs), with independent researchers running eight different projects.

The program has a strong focus on working with those affected by INS. One of the eight projects specifically looks at recording landholders' knowledge of managing INS. Researchers on all projects have been working closely with the community.

The research projects look at different elements of INS and will lead to a resource that landholders can use in managing INS on their properties, according to Program Coordinator, Jane Chrystal.

"Our focus is on listening to landholders about what does and doesn't work in managing INS, and how we can work with the community to come up with something relevant and practical," said Jane.

"We are listening and need landholders to tell us what works for them.

"Farmers working with INS are encouraged to contact us to lend their experiences and register their interest."



Information coming from the research program will also be used to help inform policy.

The CMAs are specifically looking for feedback on the following elements at the moment:

- examples of where INS management has and hasn't worked
- landholders with observations on INS's effect on erosion, soil function/health and biodiversity
- observations on using fire and short-term cropping to manage INS
- how people like to be updated of the program's progress and results
- what resources would be useful for landholders – case studies, workshops, field days, manuals, DVDs, discussion networks, etc.

Please call either Rod Campbell (Ph: 6881 3430, rodney.campbell@nsw.cma.gov.au) or Jane Chrystal (Ph: 6881 3413, jane.chrystal@cma.nsw.gov.au) to be involved.

CMA staff Rod Campbell and Jane Chrystal would like to hear from landholders managing INS on their properties.

Further information:
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Communications Officer,
Central West CMA
Phone: (02) 6881 3430 or
0447 430 160, Email: rodney.campbell@cma.nsw.gov.au

Western Lands Advisory Council

COMMUNIQUE 26th November 2007



Jenny McLellan AM
Chair, Western Lands
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P: (02) 6833 7576
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The eleventh meeting of the Western Lands Advisory Council was held at Cobar on 29th October 2007.

The members of the Advisory Council met in Cobar on the 29th of October 2007 and the following matters were discussed and dealt with.

The Review of the *Western Lands Act 1901* commenced on the 12th of July 2007 and the final report is to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament by the 12th of July 2008. As was announced earlier, this Review is not on the scale of the Kerin Review. The responses to the Review had to be with Mr Geoff Woods, Western Lands Commissioner, by the 30th of October 2007. The Advisory Council has submitted a response on the following matters:

- On amendments to titles reflecting the creation of any easements in the changes in the Legal Road Access and Easement provisions.
- Support changes to the *Western Lands Act 1901* to allow for urgent boundary fence disputes to be resolved. The Advisory Council is very disappointed and concerned at the delay and lack of response to the Legal Advice being sought in regard to the amendments required to the *Western Lands Act 1901* for boundary fencing matters so that landholders are aware of their legal requirements and their obligations are clearly defined.
- The Advisory Council supports the current membership of the Western Lands Advisory Council as it has a wide representation with various skills, knowledge and attributes.
- Supports the Term of Office of the Advisory Council members for up to three years to be in line with other Committees.

- The Advisory Council supports Local Land Boards and has requested that the members of the Local Land Boards be appointed for the full five year term to ensure that there are adequate members and the Board can be activated whenever needed.

The Advisory Council was brought up to date with the Legal Road Network Project. In the latest update the future goals of the Project are:

- Continue the refinement of narratives on plan preparation in ArcGIS.
- Continue program of new plan preparations – letters for Plans 3 and 4 have been sent.
- Continue providing updates for Western Lands Advisory Council and Western Division Newsletter.

The Legal Road Network Project team has suggested an amendment to the *Western Lands Act 1901* to allow for the creation of easements without the consent of the burdened lessee. It was suggested that consultation with the burdened lessee be included in the Project Team's policies in relation to the creation of easements. There was also a suggestion to remove from Section 35S of the *Western Lands Act 1901*, the requirement to obtain the lessees and any mortgagees consent to the creation of an easement over a Western Lands Lease. There is concern that use would be made of the easement that contravenes the purpose of the easement (access to an adjoining property) and the benefiting lessee not communicating with the burdened lessee. The benefiting lessee of an easement should show basic consideration to the burdened lessee – at minimum, a phone call should be made if any works are to be undertaken.

The appointment/reappointment of the Western Lands Advisory Council is

Legal Road Network Project

The Legal Roads Network Project is continuing to make progress through the Unincorporated area with in excess of 600 kilometres of road now identified on lodged plans. Some of the newly completed sections include parts of the Corona Road, Sanpah Road, Border Downs Road and Mount Westwood Road.

Currently the project team is working on the Silver City Highway from Fowlers Gap up to the Queensland border and also up through the Hawkers Gate Road area. Landholders in these areas should have received or should soon be receiving paperwork outlining the process for our project and any action required. Landholders that use these roads as primary access and have not received any paperwork should contact us as soon as possible.

'WLAC Communique' continued from previous page

still with the Minister's Office for final assessment and to be signed off on.

The Advisory Council supports in principle the Unincorporated Area Draft Heritage Study for the following reasons:

- The Study will provide a register of existing heritage listed structures and assets and will provide information for the future maintenance or expansion to businesses and structures and may be used in applications for heritage funding.
- A heritage study provides a community's sense of identity listed structures and will enable the community's heritage assets to be better known, understood and appreciated.
- The Study will provide heritage tourism strategies especially as the Unincorporated Area has a number of significant attributes unique to the area.

The next meeting of the Western Lands Advisory Council is to be held on 26th and 27th February 2008 in Cobar.

Between now and July the focus of the project will be in completing the road network in the corner country of the Unincorporated area. This will include Cameron Corner Road, Hewart Downs Road, Toona Gate Road and Waka Road. Landholders within these areas should be aware that correspondence requiring their attention will be forthcoming in the near future.

The project team recently undertook a visit to LPINSW (Land Titles Office) in Sydney to finalise arrangement for an electronic lodgement facility for our project. This will allow future Deposited Plans for the Legal Road Network Project to be lodged electronically resulting in savings of both time and resources.

In March Rex Miller will be attending and addressing the Western Division Rural Lands Protection Boards conference being held in Tibooburra. The purpose of this presentation will be to outline the processes of the project and any implications for RLPBs within the Western Division as the project continues.

Officers from the Department of Lands will be attending AgFair this year to provide an update on our project and answer any questions from landholders and the general public. We would encourage anyone interested in the project to call into our stand and seek further information.

Landholders are reminded that to enable the project to progress to program it is imperative that responses to our requests for completion of application forms for the creation of easements and removal of access conditions is timely. If those applications are not forthcoming it may result in the opportunity for an easement to a landlocked property being missed. It will not be possible for the project to revisit these areas and any creation of easements in the future would be at the landholder's expense.

By Rex Miller & Jason Brouff
Legal Roads Network Project
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Southern Bell Frogs responding to environmental flows



‘This endangered frog was abundant in the area until recent years, but was in real danger of local extinction, so these water flows are critical to protect it.

‘The flow will also provide relief to other wetland dependent species, rejuvenate vegetation, and improve the health of the floodplain environment.’

Charles Sturt University (CSU) Scientist, Dr Skye Wassens is monitoring the response of the frogs at a number of wetlands between Maude and Balranald on the Lowbidgee Floodplain.

‘While the initial signs are encouraging, the small numbers located to date indicate a massive population decline over the past six years, most of which have been very dry.

‘Successful recruitment of young frogs and their survival to breeding age is needed for the population to recover and this is not guaranteed unless key wetlands remain full for at least four months and are flooded regularly in future years,’ said Dr Wassens.

Staff from the Department of Environmental and Climate Change (DECC), State Water staff and the Lowbidgee landholders have all played a vital role in making sure that the environmental water has been delivered to the right habitats and has provided the maximum benefit for the Southern Bell Frogs.

DECC staff and Charles Sturt University researchers will continue to monitor the endangered Southern Bell Frog population.

The release will use water set aside for the environment, so it will not affect the water allocation for local irrigators or stock and domestic users.



NSW’s most significant Southern Bell Frog population is responding well to late 2007 environmental flows in the Lower Murrumbidgee floodplain and breeding behaviour has been recorded from nearly every site watered by the flows.

Department of Environment and Climate Change, Director-general, Lisa Corbyn said Lower Murrumbidgee wetlands will receive up to 8,000 megalitres of environmental water.

‘Almost 5,000 megalitres has been delivered to the Lowbidgee floodplain so far and the remaining 3,000 megalitres will flow into targeted wetlands on the floodplain over February to sustain the necessary habitat for Southern Bell Frog breeding,’ Ms Corbyn said.

‘The Southern Bell Frog needs a specific period of wetland inundation for successful breeding, so close monitoring and active management of these flows is essential to make sure that populations are able to increase.

Top: Skye Wassens and Russell Hampton looking for the Southern Bell Frog in Yanga National Park.

Below: The Southern Bell Frog. Photo: Dr Michael Mahoney

by Katie Ritchie, Public Affairs Officer, Dept of Environment and Climate Change



Equine influenza gone, Travelling Horse Statement stays



Although equine influenza (EI) has now been conquered in NSW, Travelling Horse Statements (THS) and event registrations will remain compulsory for some time.

NSW deputy chief veterinary officer, Ian Roth, said permits and testing were no longer required for any horse movements within NSW, but it was still necessary to record horse movements and contacts as a precautionary measure.

‘We are extremely confident the EI virus has burnt out in NSW, but just in case an undetected pocket of disease has evaded our widespread search, we need to ensure horse movements and contacts can be traced,’ Mr Roth said.

‘The only requirement throughout NSW is to give prior notice of movements and events. No approval is needed.

‘A THS must be carried on the journey when moving horses by vehicle or travelling to a horse event.

‘This requirement will continue at least until the end of June.

‘Horse events must be registered and the event number recorded on each THS before attending an event, so it is important for event organisers to register early.

‘The NSW Department of Primary Industries has stepped up the monitoring of events to ensure compliance with these requirements.

‘NSW Police will also continue stopping vehicles moving horses and checking for a THS.

‘Heavy penalties apply for failure to produce a valid THS.’

Travelling Horse Statements and event registrations can be lodged online at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza or by calling 1800 675 888.

Mr Roth said it was crucial people continued monitoring the health of their

horses and reporting sick horses, so swift action could be taken in the unlikely event an isolated pocket of infection remained.

‘We will continue testing sick horses and conducting random tests, especially in the current green zone where there was previously a high rate of infection,’ he said.

NSW equine influenza hotline: 1800 675 888. More information: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza

And a big wind came and blew it all away

by Sally Ware, NSW DPI Hay

2007 ended with a series of wild summer storms throughout the back country. Photographed here is what is left of the 100-year-old historic Tupra woolshed. Tupra is owned by Australian Wool Innovation Chairman Ian McLachlan and is situated west of Hay near Oxley. Manager David Rankin, overseer Edward Duncan and jackaroo Matthew Laracy were crutching cull rams in the shed at the time the storm started. Fortunately everybody escaped injury and the rams survived. The shearer’s quarters were completely destroyed in the same storm. Not far up the river, the McFarland family also lost their shearing shed.



Above: Extent of the destruction. Photo: Bob McKeon



Left: Remains of the wool room. Photo: Janelle Ward Photography

To the Landholder



Western Division newsletter

The editor of the WDN welcomes contributions

Issue No.		Deadline for articles	Send articles to:
122	May–Jun	1 April 2008	Sally Ware, NSW DPI
123	Jul–Aug	2 June 2008	PO Box 393, Hay 2711
124	Sep–Oct	1 August 2008	Fax: (02) 6993 2177
125	Nov–Feb	1 October 2008	Phone: (02) 6993 1608
126	Mar–Apr	6 February 2009	Email: sally.ware@dpi.nsw.gov.au