

Western Division newsletter

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Produced for landholders in
the Western Division of NSW



All systems go at Shear Outback

by Kim Biggs, Museum Director, Shear Outback

Its been a busy year for the team at Shear Outback with a diverse program of events planned for the next twelve months. Two key events planned include the National Shearing & Woolhandling Championships and the 2007 Festival of the Blades.

On 6 and 7 October, Australasia's best shearers will converge on Hay when the National Shearing & Woolhandling Championships convene at Shear Outback. The competition will bring the elite of the Australian shearing industry to Hay for selection of the 2007 Australian Team. Come along and see the state teams fight it out with the current Australian and New Zealand Teams competing in the Trans Tasman Competition. Running concurrently with the National Championships, Shear Outback and Sports Shear Australia are facilitating an open competition allowing local and regional shearers to compete against state and national teams. Those seeking a bit of lighter entertainment can view the 'Shearable Arts' Competition and attend the Shearers' Swap Meet and Market.


Late 2006 will also see the national selection panel for induction to the Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame assessing nominations for induction. The Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame honours shearers whose skill, character and contribution to the shearing industry has been exceptional. Nominations for

induction need to be lodged with Shear Outback by August 30, 2006. Induction to the Hall of Fame will be celebrated at the 2007 Festival of the Blades in April next year.

Continued on page 2

**Registration
for open events
is invited!**

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ENTRY FORMS

In this issue ...

All systems go at Shear Outback

Darling Anabranch Project under way

Management changes at the Department of Natural Resources

At the 'cutting edge' – the Australian Rangeland Society 14th Biennial Conference

Identifying Trigger Points for stocking decisions in western NSW

Using the Southern Oscillation Index

Field day photos

WCMA funding opportunities available

Landholders pack Balranald Organic Livestock Conference

First Western Incentive Project completed

'Survivor' malleefowl style

Dingoes in captivity

Western CMA clarifies water role

Legal Roads Network Project

Letter to the editor and reply

by Sally Ware, Rangelands
Officer, NSW DPI, Hay

Congratulations to Rachel and Steve Strachan from Tulney Point Station at Wentworth who were the winners of the book prize for returning the Western Division Newsletter survey. Their prize is the lovely hardcover book titled *'People of Western NSW – Living Outback'*. Again thank you to those landholders who took the trouble to complete and return their survey to me at the Hay office. The valuable feedback collected from the surveys is still being compiled but by far the majority of the landholders want to receive the Newsletter by mail, not by electronic means. There were also some interesting comments regarding suggested changes to the Newsletter, with a page three farm girl one suggestion!

This July/August Newsletter commences with the story on the nation's best shearers and wool handlers making their way to the National Shearing and Woolhandling Championships to be held at Shear Outback in Hay on October 6 and 7. Other important events that are covered include the commencement of the \$28 million Darling Anabranch pipeline, the Rangeland Society's Conference in September and the commencement of the long awaited Legal Roads Network throughout the Western Division.

Finally, a reminder that advertising is now a part of the Newsletter. The rates are advertised on page 12 and all enquiries can be directed to me at the Hay office. Cheers for now!

'All systems go at Shear Outback' continued from page 1

Mid 2006 sees a new exhibition developed 'Baitlayers & Babbling Brooks – An Exhibition on Shearers' Cooks'. This exhibition explores the folklore, changing conditions and demands of the typical shearers' cook lifestyle from both a historical and contemporary aspect. In honour of our current exhibition development, the 2007 Festival of the Blades will focus on Shearers' Cooks. The festival includes an action-packed program of events; visitors can partake in the Shearers' Breakfast and Singlet Muster, hear a few yarns over lunch, take a Pastoral Heritage Tour, watch the cook off, come along to the Cut Out Dinner – all that lovely food!

Don't forget the annual Learner Shearer Training at Shear Outback. This is run in

conjunction with Riverina TAFE and is a great way for young shearers to gain skills and experience at an affordable price. The next learner course is tentatively scheduled for March 2007 and bookings are now being accepted.

There's always plenty to do throughout the year at Shear Outback – the annual program of activities includes Pastoral Heritage Tours, School Holidays Programs, a vibrant Temporary Exhibitions Program and Learner Shearer Training Program...

Further information can be obtained by contacting Shear Outback on (02) 6993 4000 or by email- info@shearoutback.com.au. Website: www.shearoutback.com.au



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NSW Government
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Darling Anabranh Project under way

by Bunty Driver, Media and Communications Coordinator,
Murray-Murrumbidgee Region, DNR, Deniliquin

Work on the \$28 million Darling-Anabranh pipeline is under way following the official launch of the construction stage by NSW Natural Resources Minister Ian Macdonald.

Minister Macdonald launched the multi-million dollar pipeline project at Fort Courage near Wentworth on Monday 29 of May.

This is the first major infrastructure project for the Murray-Darling Basin and will provide significant water savings, improved water supply to landholders and enhanced environmental outcomes.

The proposal is expected to save approximately 47,000 megalitres of water per year that may be returned to the Murray River, as part of the Living Murray Initiative.

Since the 1960s, on average approximately 50,000 ML has been released per annum from Lake Cawndilla and then ponded in 17 weir pools. Of this, less than 3,000 ML was used for irrigation, stock and domestic purposes, the balance being lost to evaporation, transmission losses and seepage.

Apart from these losses, the ponded water provided ideal breeding conditions for Blue-green algae and European Carp, and compounded waterlogging, rising groundwater and salinity issues. The ponded water did not provide favourable conditions for native fish, yabbies and some aquatic plant life.

Security of the stock and domestic supply was also subject to the availability of water in Lake Cawndilla, which has been dry since 2003.

The project is the result of 4 years of intensive work initiated by the Darling



Keith Foster, Chair of the Anabranh Water Trust, and Minister Macdonald unveil the plaque that will be placed at the pump site on the Darling River.



Construction on the pipeline. Employees of Mitchell Australasia at work.

Anabranh Water Trust and later the Darling Anabranh Management Plan (DAMP) Steering Committee. Through extensive research and community consultation the Darling Anabranh Management Plan outlined a holistic management approach that recommended a piped stock and domestic supply and an environmental flow adaptive management regime.

The project has a total budget of approximately \$54 million and is listed on the Eligible Measures Register of the Living Murray.

Water will be pumped from the Darling and Murray Rivers and piped to provide a secure stock and domestic water supply for landholders along a 300 km stretch of the Great Darling Anabranh.

Receival tanks and off-takes will be constructed as the pipeline is installed, allowing for more efficient operation with the two main pump sites at Fort Courage on the Murray River and Polia on the Darling River.

Other features of the project include:

1. Establishing the Anabranh Private Irrigation District;
2. Forming of a new board known as Anabranh Water to administer and operate the infrastructure within the Private Irrigation District;
3. Establishing an Environmental flow committee for the Anabranh;
4. Improving water quality by removing instream structures, reducing ponding of water and increasing the flushing effect of environmental flows; and

5. An Indigenous employment strategy through the construction and monitoring process.

A Full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed to ensure that impacts both on the environment and on cultural heritage have been considered along with social and economic issues associated with the project.

Mitchell Australasia Pty Ltd was awarded the contract for the construction of the Darling Anabranh pipeline in March.

Management changes at the Department of Natural Resources

Changes to the management of the Department of Natural Resources announced 17 May 2006 will provide a more efficient, cost-effective service for NSW taxpayers while maintaining front-line staff, Director-General Dr Richard Sheldrake said.

The changes include removing seven regional director roles, streamlining management reporting arrangements, and offering voluntary redundancy packages to staff.

Dr Sheldrake said at this stage there were no plans to close offices.

He said the changes would not affect DNR's ability to provide first-class advice and assistance to clients and stakeholders and would see local Catchment Management Authorities playing a larger role.

'The CMAs were established so people living in the regions would be able to have their say about solutions to regional problems – this will help streamline that process as well,' Dr Sheldrake said.

'We want to provide the best possible service to people out there on the ground. I want to make it absolutely clear that redundancies will not be offered to staff if it will reduce our capacity to continue

delivering front-line services and technical know-how,' he said.

'The seven regional-directors will continue in their positions for some weeks while the new reporting and management structures are finalised and put into place. We are currently considering the best available options for ensuring regionally-based staff and communities continue to have a strong voice in decision-making.

'It is important to note that two of the five new Executive Directors will be based in rural NSW.'

The position of Western Lands Commissioner will continue, Dr Sheldrake said.

'The Western Lands Commissioner will continue to be responsible for the entire Western Division of NSW – despite reports to the contrary,' Dr Sheldrake said.

'With new streamlined reporting arrangements, the role will become even more specialised and more focussed on the Western Division,' he said.

Editor's note: Regional director positions such as those for the Far West Region (held by Geoff Wise), the Central West Region (held by Axel Tennie) and the Murray-Murrumbidgee Region (currently vacant) will be lost under the new structure.

At the 'Cutting Edge' – the Australian Rangeland Society 14th Biennial Conference September 2006

The Australian Rangeland Society is hosting its 14th Biennial Conference in Renmark, South Australia from 4–7 of September 2006. The conference is an official Australian event for the 'International Year of Deserts and Desertification', to be followed on the afternoon of 7 and 8 September by the Lake Eyre Basin Biennial Conference, titled 'LEB today and Tomorrow'.

Renmark is on the edge of the South Australian rangelands, however the topics to be covered over this historic week are at the heart of rangeland management. Renmark is a beautiful and diverse place, with pristine heavily wooded shrub land immediately to the north and irrigated vineyards and fruit blocks along the river; it's a meeting place of two different worlds, in the heart of the Murray Darling Basin.

The 'Cutting Edge' refers to the uniqueness of the South Australian rangelands that has maintained an almost intact ecosystem, which after over one hundred years of

industry continues to serve the region's biodiversity, our industries and our people.

There are however, new social and economic pressures on our people, cultures and industries and even the climate may be changing. But there is new technology available, so the 'Cutting Edge' is also about the new and innovative thinking that will help us adapt to changes over the next one hundred years.

Never before has the wider community been so interested in our rangelands, so what is it about the area that we really value, what is our Natural Edge? Important questions we must first answer for ourselves so we can share 'this edge' with the rest of Australia.

The design of the conference program is also 'Cutting Edge' with the main fabric being *People, Place and Possibilities*, with the threads or yarns being woven by presenters selected from over one hundred contributed papers. Panel sessions will maximise available time for a greater number of presenters with a panel of experts asking questions and drawing out key messages. Each day will conclude with a typically rangeland muster. At this time, delegates will be given an unexpected taste of the posters on display that they may want to explore later, in more detail.

The field tours on Wednesday will cover a range of country that covers from flood plain and water issues, to land that is managed for pastoralism and land that is managed for conservation. All tours will finish the day together for dinner at Banrock Station on the banks of the River Murray.

We have taken a bold step by combining the ARS Conference with the Lake Eyre Basin. In this way delegates will have the opportunity to attend both events and to share information and ideas of relevance that could be both broader or more in depth. It's also a great event to network with the extended 'rangeland family'. This is a great opportunity for land managers, scientists, policy makers and all interested people, don't miss out.

For more information check out the Australian Rangeland Society website www.austrangesoc.com.au



The Australian Rangeland Society 14th Biennial Conference, Renmark, South Australia, 4 –7 September 2006

A great event to network with the extended 'rangeland family', land managers, scientists, policy makers and all interested people, don't miss out.

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Editor's note: Old Man Saltbush Shrubland

Landholders closely following the debate on the proposal to list Old Man Saltbush shrubland as an endangered ecological community should view NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service's fact sheet on the topic at www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/saltbush_factsheet

The fact sheet outlines what is involved and what the implications are of such a determination.

Identifying Trigger Points for stocking decisions in western NSW

by Ron Hacker, Research Leader (Pastures and Rangelands) and
Yohannes Alemseged, Rangeland Research Officer, Trangie Agricultural Research Centre

In the March–April 2005 issue of the Western Division Newsletter, Paul Carberry introduced the concept of ‘trigger points’ – calendar dates based on analysis of historical pasture growth patterns that may prompt decisions about livestock sales or purchases. Identifying a trigger point is like having a ‘rule of thumb’ about how long you can afford to delay a decision to reduce stock numbers if the season is already looking poor, or what might be the best time to buy if the season is already looking promising. Making these sorts of decisions, particularly sale decisions, is always difficult, and more so when rainfall is not strongly seasonal as in western NSW.

There are times when other seasonal risk assessments e.g. those provided by the SOI Phase system (see the article by Paul Carberry in this issue) can be of considerable assistance but when these are not particularly useful having a ‘trigger point’ may be the best alternative.

We have now completed the project, funded by Land and Water Australia and Australian Wool Innovations Limited, aimed at developing better seasonal risk assessments for western NSW. As part of this project we have worked on developing pasture growth profiles for various locations throughout the region that would allow ‘trigger points’ to be identified.

These profiles are based on long-term (more than 100 years) daily pasture growth records provided by a simulation model called WinGRASP which has been calibrated for several general pasture types relevant to western NSW. The model can be run using long-

term daily meteorological data (rainfall, temperature, evaporation etc.) from any of the numerous stations for which these records have now been compiled.

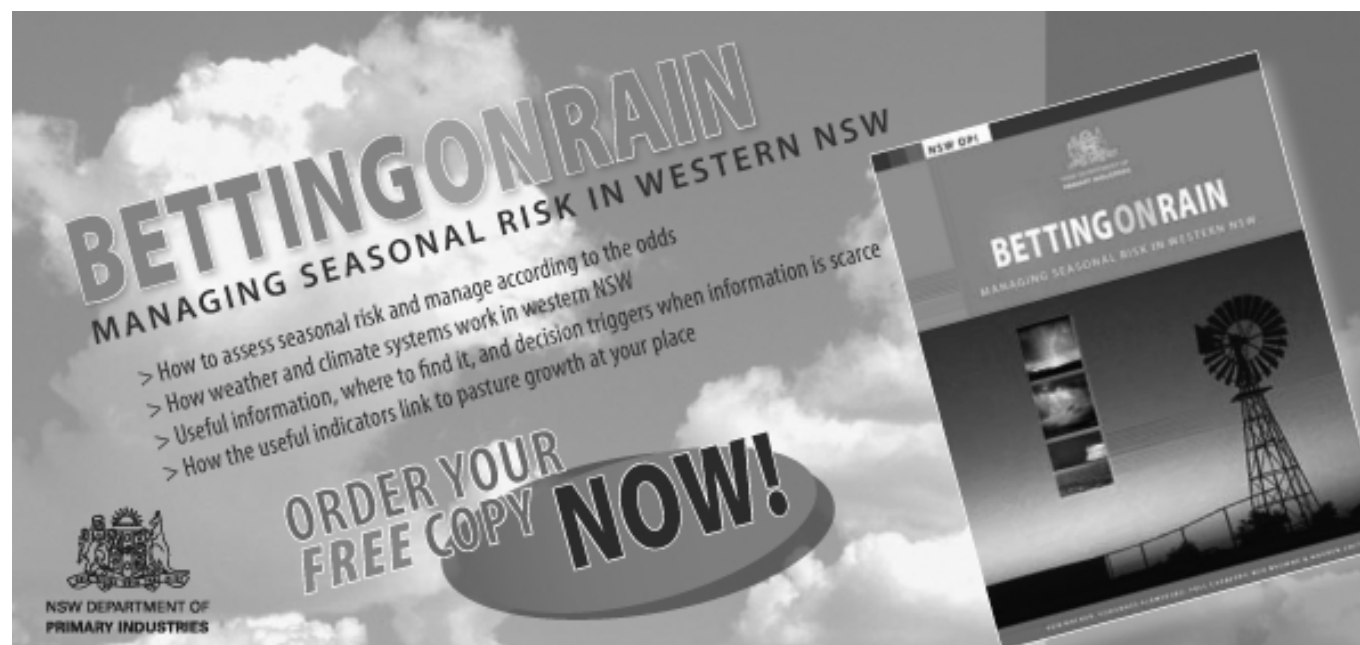
To identify ‘trigger points’ we first converted the daily pasture growth records to total growth figures for three monthly periods, starting at fortnightly intervals throughout the year i.e. for 3 month periods starting 1 January, 15 January, 29 January etc. in each year. We then summarised the three monthly data to produce either a

Growth potential index - which summarised the set of 3-month growth data for each starting date into a single figure, dates with higher growth potential having a higher index value

or

Critical percentiles – the amount of growth that defined the lowest 20%, 50% and 80% of the historical values.

Defining trigger points from these profiles is straightforward for the growth potential index as the highest and lowest values are easily identified (although for some locations the values for several dates may



be similar). Defining trigger points using critical percentiles has the advantage of providing an indication of the historical variability of pasture growth associated with each starting date – indicated by the difference between the 20th and 80th percentile values. This information may lead to some adjustment of the trigger points that would otherwise be identified from the 50th percentile values alone, or those identified from the growth potential index.

To define these profiles across western NSW we worked with a number of graziers who offered to assist by assessing profiles for their location produced by a number of possible alternatives (e.g. different combinations of model calibration and climate record). In a few cases, our co-operators thought that none of the alternatives provided was a good representation of their situation, and they modified the profiles accordingly. Most, however, were able to identify one of the alternatives as a reasonable fit to their experience. As a result, we were able to identify growth profiles for 27 locations across the region, 21 directly from model output and 6 by landholder modification of the output (Figure 1).

We also recorded the type of country on each property for which a growth profile

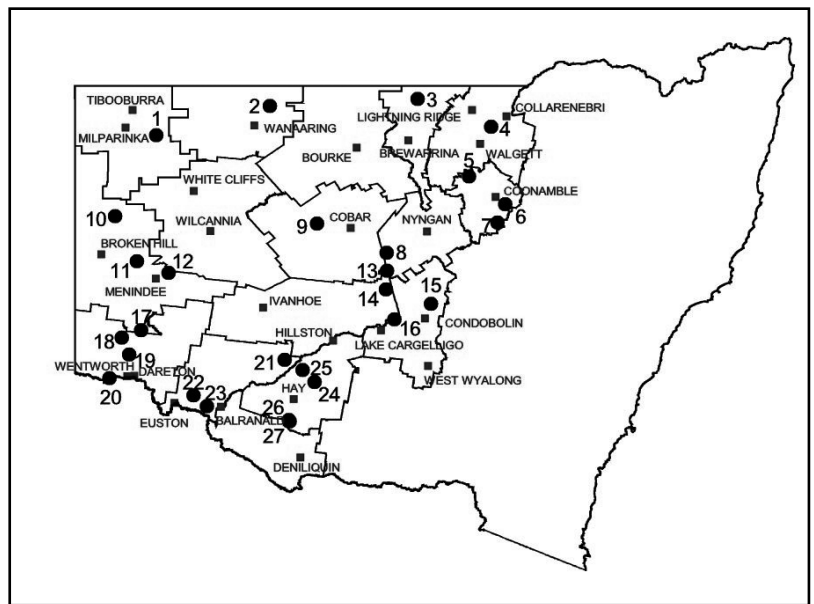


Figure 1. Location diagram showing the 27 centres for which pasture growth profiles have been defined.

was identified. Graziers on similar types of country in the same general area should now be able to identify trigger points for their own properties, provided they are satisfied that the profile presented is a reasonable representation of their particular situation. An illustration of trigger points and their interpretation is given in Figure 2.

This information has now been published in the booklet *'Betting on Rain - Managing Seasonal Risk in Western NSW'*. In addition to the growth profiles, the booklet draws together basic information on weather and climate systems and the use of the SOI Phase system, at appropriate times, to determine the prospects for future pasture growth (see the article by Paul Carberry in this issue). Copies may be obtained by contacting your local DPI office or Trangie Agricultural Research Centre (Tel. (02) 6880 8000).

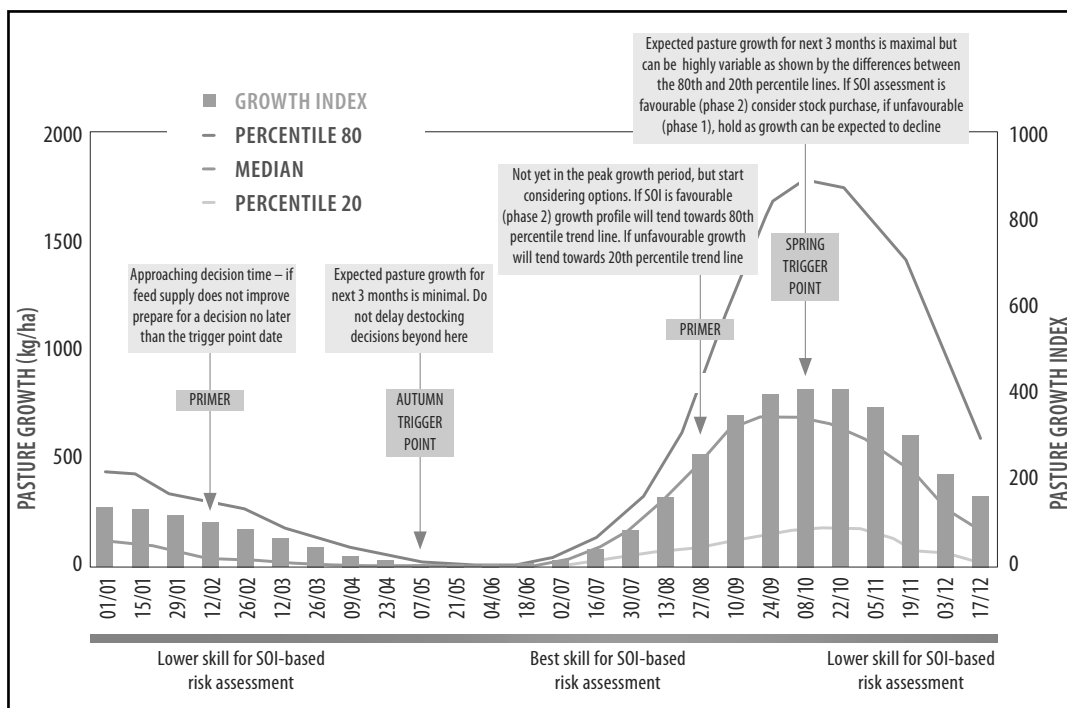


Figure 2. Example of how to use the growth potential index and critical percentile profiles to determine trigger points beyond which decisions that depend on future pasture growth should not be delayed. Note the 'primer' point, some time before the trigger point, when preparation for a decision and consideration of options should start.

Using the Southern Oscillation Index

by Paul Carberry, Climate Advisory Officer, NSW DPI, Tamworth Agricultural Institute

The Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) is calculated from the air pressure at Darwin and at Tahiti. These are tropical locations and subject to monsoon type conditions in their 'wet season'. This influences the SOI numbers that result during that time.

As a consequence of this tropical weather influence, the SOI often goes through a period of rapid change when the monsoon draws to an end. This is most often in late autumn.

The six months or so after this change usually sees the SOI very steady and looking through historical records one can find some very useful relationships between the SOI and rainfall for the time when the SOI remains steady.

Unfortunately, users need to wait till the annual change at the end of each year's monsoon before the SOI settles into any useful pattern. For most of western NSW this is the end of May but you sometimes need to wait till the end of June before you know if it is really settled.

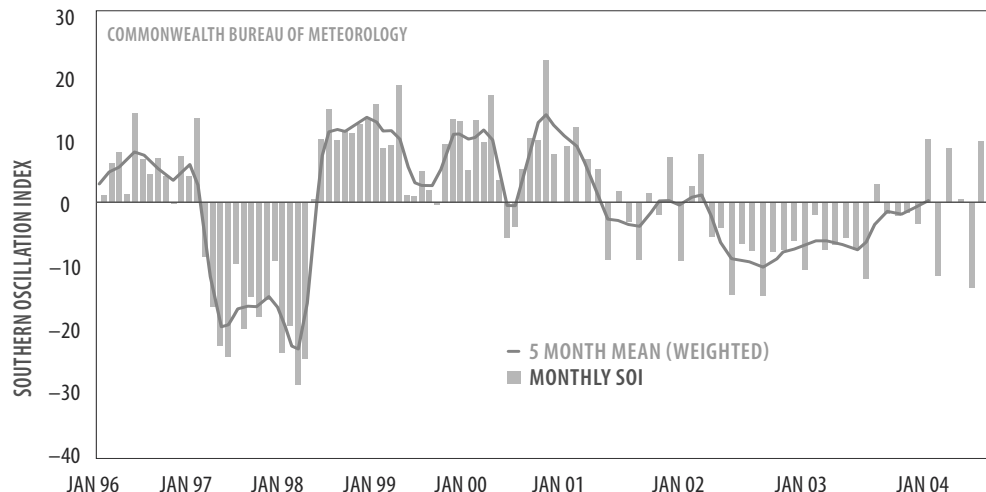
This autumn period is a time when managers want to make some important decisions and would like to use indicators of the potential for the coming season but the SOI is really no good for most places during autumn.

The relationship between May–June SOI and winter and spring rainfall can be very

useful and similarly June–July and July–August SOI can be strong pointers to the potential for spring rain so it can be a big contributor to management decisions later in the year.

This graph, from the recently released booklet *'Betting on Rain – Managing Seasonal Risk in Western NSW'*, shows how the SOI varies most years, with major changes in autumn before settling through winter. The booklet details how this pattern can be used. It goes further than just the rainfall relationship and uses modelled pasture growth, accounting for factors such as soil and pasture type, evaporation, runoff, temperature and average animal impacts to get a relationship between SOI, or more precisely its two-monthly pattern called the SOI Phase, and potential plant growth. This is the 'effective rainfall' result.

The booklet contains plant growth maps (expressed as the chances of exceeding median growth) for those months when the SOI Phase has a strong relationship with growth in western NSW. Considering these chances when making management decisions can put some real numbers on the risk of getting an adverse outcome, or define the potential for a beneficial outcome. Getting a good idea of what the odds are allows you to make truly informed choices.



The booklet also contains pasture growth potential profiles that can help define 'trigger points' to assist decision making at times when the SOI is not useful (see the article by Ron Hacker and Yohannes Alemseged in this issue). Copies of the booklet may be obtained by contacting your local DPI office or Trangie Agricultural Research Centre (Tel. (02) 6880 8000).

Field day photos



Homebush Field Day. L-R Rex Scott, Hatfield and Dan Dowling, Oxley



Sheep NLIS Field Day, Alma Stud, Booligal. Alma woolshed



Above: Sheep NLIS Field Day, Alma Stud, Booligal. Bill O'Halloran, NSW DPI outlining the requirements of the NLIS scheme

Below: Homebush Field Day. Afternoon gatekeepers Travis Linnet (beanie) and Danny Morgan (cap) standing in mud following 50 points of rain that fell on the day.



Above: Agfair stand at Broken Hill. L-R Peter Stinson MLA/Livecorp; Danny Byrnes, Drought Support Worker, DPI Hay; Geoff Woods, DPI Broken Hill

Below: Homebush Field Day. L-R Ian Evans, NSW DPI Deniliquin; Geoff Woods, NSW DPI Broken Hill; Grahame Morphett, Booligal



WCMA funding opportunities available

by Andrew Hull, Natural Resource Management Facilitator, Western CMA

Although the deadline for the Western CMA's 2006 Annual Major Funding Round has closed, people interested in improving natural resource management in their area should still contact the Western CMA.

Applications for funding through the Natural Resource Improvement program and the Native Vegetation Management Improvement program can be made at any time. They are assessed bimonthly and grants are awarded at the discretion of the Western CMA Board.

\$444,000 is available through the Natural Resource Improvement Fund in 2006.

Projects aimed at meeting the Western Catchment's Management Targets will be

considered for funding. The Management Targets, which measure how well natural resources are being managed, relate to sustainable agriculture, native pasture recovery, pest management, riverine habitat, water quality and high value ecological communities. Successful projects will be funded at a 1:1 cost sharing ratio to a maximum of \$20,000.

\$889,000 is available through the Native Vegetation Management Improvement Fund in 2006. The Native Vegetation Management Improvement program will fund projects aimed at meeting the Western Catchment's six Management Targets, where the project is based on improving native vegetation management. Activities such as invasive native scrub control, riparian vegetation management, and improvement of native vegetation groundcover would be considered for funding through this program. Successful projects will be funded at a 1:2 cost sharing ratio, where the applicants contribute \$1 and the Western CMA contributes \$2).

I'm happy to report that there has been high level of interest in the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA)'s 2006 Annual Major Funding Round.

Each of our Western CMA offices has had a steady stream of enquiries and with applications closing today (May 31) we are confident that there will be as many if not more applications than were received last year.

\$3.1 million dollars is available in 2006 through the Annual Major Funding Round. As it is a competitive process, a technical board will now assess the applications and funding will be provided to fund those projects that best contribute towards our Management Targets.

Landholders pack Balranald Organic Livestock Conference

by Sally Ware, Rangelands Officer, NSW DPI, Hay

About 275 people, including around 200 landholders from most states of Australia, filled the Balranald District Ex-Servicemen's Club on June 5 to learn about producing organic livestock.

Organised by a group of interested landholders in conjunction with staff from the Balranald Shire Council, the Balranald Rural Lands Protection Board and the Department of State and Regional Development, speakers for the Conference included Tim Marshall, organic certification specialist; Simone Tully, CEO of OBE Beef; David Jones from MLA; Latarnie McDonald and Rod May from NASSA and David Hardwick from BFA.

An ongoing working party is expected to be formed from a group of producers that registered an interest at the Conference. The first meeting is to take place in Balranald on July 3 and from this meeting it is hoped a future strategy for a pastoral organic livestock group will be organised. Funding has also been pledged at both a State and Federal level for the proposed group.

Landholders who are interested in the workings of the group or who would like to become involved in future meetings should contact Hank van Apeldoorn at the Balranald Shire Council on (03) 5020 1300.

First Western Incentive Project completed

By Daryl Green, General Manager, Western CMA

When the Warden Family of 'Kigwigil' near Cumborah completed fencing of The Big Warrambool in April, it became the first of 62 projects funded through the Western Catchment Management Authority's (CMA) 2005 incentives program to be completed.

Jamie and Regina Warden used incentive funding to fence The Big Warrambool, which forms one boundary of 'Kigwigil', and all other warrambools on the property.

Installing 38 km of fencing in total means that 14 km of The Big Warrambool is protected from the impacts of grazing and 2,000 hectares will now be managed for improved vegetation cover and soil stability.

Warrambools are drainage depressions that are usually broad, flat areas that are prone to flooding and have quite fertile soil.

'Fencing around the warrambools will allow native vegetation to regenerate and, over time, will increase the diversity of plants and animals in the area,' said Mr Warden.

'They will also form improved natural water filtration systems that retain nutrients and sediments for better soil and water health.

'Now we've segregated the paddocks, we can manage them better by rotating stock and being able to spell paddocks.



Sam and Jamie Warden at the new fence protecting The Big Warrambool. Photo courtesy of Nick Cook, The Ridge News.

'We've also created vegetation corridors that protect the habitat and movement of birds and native animals,' he said.

In addition to the natural resource management benefits for the Warden's property, the extensive project has injected much-needed cash into the drought-affected area.

More than \$100,000 has been paid to the fencing contractor and local farm supply business, The Walgett Farm Centre, which has flow-on effects for the local community.

In the Western CMA's Incentive Funding Program for 2005 a total of \$2.2 million was committed in contracts to land managers.

A further \$4.4 million is available to Western Catchment residents in 2006.

The incentive program is provided through the NSW and Australian Governments and is part of a combined \$120 million commitment to the scheme over a three year period.

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'Survivor' malleefowl style

Zoo bred malleefowl survive release into the wild

by Jacki Roberts, DEC, Dubbo

Charles Sturt University, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Western Plains Zoo have completed the first stage of a cooperative project to monitor the survival and dispersion of captive-bred malleefowl into Nombinnie Nature Reserve 160 km south of Cobar. A total of 48 malleefowl were released, with 14 of the birds carrying small radio transmitters.

During November, December and January CSU honours student Chris Coombes and staff from CSU, WPZ and NPWS tracked the birds weekly and collected information on the survival rate, dispersion distances and vegetation preference.

Honours Student Chris Coombes said that the results were very encouraging for the ongoing survival of malleefowl in the area. Preliminary results show that of the 15 radio tracked malleefowl only one bird was killed by a fox and one died of an unknown cause.

Mr Coobes added that 'the combined radio tracking and GPS data has provided a very good picture of how the released malleefowl disperse. The data shows that many birds moved 7 to 10 km within a couple days of the release. Most then appeared to establish a range or at least a preferred area where they would stay for quite long periods.'

Senior Ranger Hugh McNee of the National Parks and Wildlife Service said, 'The data from the monitoring answered some important questions on the survival of the released malleefowl and gave us more insight on the potential threats to wild malleefowl in the Nature Reserve.

'In release situations a level of mortality is anticipated particularly from predation by animals such as foxes. The fact that the predation rate was very low is encouraging and is further evidence that the broad scale fox baiting programs being undertaken by NPWS and

reserve neighbours is keeping fox numbers low, giving the released birds and any wild malleefowl a better chance of survival', Mr McNee said.

Charles Sturt University, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Western Plains Zoo hope to monitor a further release of malleefowl in October and commence a second project to monitor malleefowl nesting mounds to assess the impact of feral cats and other predators on hatching malleefowl chicks.

Dingoes in captivity

by Robyn Mann, Secretary, Wild Dog Destruction Board

It has recently come to the attention of the Wild Dog Destruction Board that there may be dingoes or half-bred dingoes kept as pets within the Western Division of New South Wales.

Under the *Wild Dog Destruction Act 1921*, any person who, without the written authority of the Board, has in the person's possession any dingo or half-bred dingo is guilty of an offence, and liable to conviction.

Within the entire Western Division, it is the legal duty of the owner or occupier of any land to destroy all dingoes, half-bred dingoes and wild dogs on their land. This includes freehold and leasehold land and urban or rural properties.

The Wild Dog Destruction Board remains committed to the control and eradication of all wild dogs and dingoes in the Western Division to ensure sheep and goat industries are maintained.

The Board does this, predominately, by maintaining a 600 kilometre dog-proof fence which runs along the north western New South Wales border with Queensland and South Australia. The Board appreciates the cooperation of all members of the Western Division in this matter.

Western Division Newsletter

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Full page \$500	Half page \$279
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18 cm x 5 cm \$135	10.5 cm x 8 cm \$126
6.8 cm x 10 cm \$109	6.8 cm x 5 cm \$61

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Contact: Sally Ware, NSW DPI, Hay
Ph: (02) 6993 1608 Email: sally.ware@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Western CMA clarifies water role

by Rory Treweeke, Chair of the Western CMA

I would like to clarify the role of the Western CMA in relation to river management in the Catchment.

While the Western CMA has funds available to improve water quality and riverine habitat, the responsibility for administering extractive access to water, water-sharing and flow management on the Barwon-Darling and other rivers throughout the Catchment rests with the Department of Natural Resources, not the Western CMA.

The Barwon-Darling Cap Management Strategy will be implemented by the NSW Department of Natural Resources from July 1, 2006 with an immediate review being carried out to capture more accurate data about extraction levels.

A Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon-Darling River will be drafted by the Department of Natural Resources.

The Western Catchment Management Authority has the responsibility for conducting public meetings along the river system to ensure members of the community have the opportunity to comment on the draft Water Sharing Plan.

In addition, a Macro Water Sharing Plan will be drafted by the Department of Natural Resources for the Intersecting Streams (the Bulloo, Moonie, Narran, Bokhara, Birrie, Culgoa, Warrego, Paroo rivers) and Yanda Creek.

Again, it will be the Western CMA's responsibility to ensure members of the public have the opportunity to provide their input on the draft plans

A key responsibility for the Western CMA is to ensure river management actions defined by these Water Sharing Plans meet water quality and quantity targets in the Western Catchment Plan.



Western CMA General Manager, Daryl Green and Chair, Rory Treweeke, photographed on the banks of the Darling River in Wilcannia.

The Western Catchment Action Plan is a ten year plan for improving and managing natural resources in the Catchment. It was produced with significant input from Western Catchment residents and has been submitted to the Minister for Natural Resources, Ian Macdonald, for his endorsement.

Legal Roads Network Project

by Rex Miller and Jason Brouff, Legal Roads Network Project Team, Department of Natural Resources, Far West Region, Dubbo

The Department of Natural Resources has commenced implementation of the Legal Road Network in the Western Division.

As many readers will be aware the majority of roads constructed and maintained by councils and the RTA across the Western Division have not formally been withdrawn from the leases through which they pass, nor do they have the legal status of roads.

The charter of the Legal Roads Network Project is to ensure these essential linkages used by the public are withdrawn from affected leases and dedicated as public roads. In addition properties that do not enjoy frontage to a public road will be provided access by the provision of a restricted easement.

The project is currently confirming existing property boundaries which will allow for the identification of those properties which do not have direct access to a Highway or Shire road.

The project team is also currently in discussions with the Department of Lands (Sydney) finalising some technical aspects of the creation of the public roads and the recording of any changes on affected titles

The project will include extensive negotiation with affected landholders as we move through the Western Division. A trial is currently being undertaken involving a small sample of landholders

Continued page 14

to test formats and processes to ensure appropriate levels of information and assistance are provided during implementation.

The identification of lands required for access will commence in the Unincorporated Area north of Broken Hill, however this will not begin until all our

processes and consultation formats have been tested and are considered workable.

This project is a significant undertaking by the Department and it is envisaged that its completion will take a number of years.

Updates on the project's progress will be provided in future editions of the Western Division Newsletter.

Letter to the Editor

MADAM: We read with dismay the article in the WDN No 110 on mulesing sheep and the requirement for contractors and others to be accredited.

How on earth will people be able to afford \$700 for a day's training and what sort of a trainer will that person be to extract seven thousand dollars from hard pressed people?

In the past, Departmental Officers did their duty to the industry in that they would come to properties to demonstrate the mulesing technique. What has happened to the growing bureaucracies, when no hands-on practical experienced people are about?

My other whinge relates to monitoring sites (for the) Rangeland Assessment Programme. Our site No 3120 was established in 1989 and monitored by Departmental staff every April or May until 2005 when contractors from inter-State did the job.

In 1996 a new Inspector declared that our very useful and life saving (for stock) plant known as cannon ball was undesirable. I protested to our Rangelands Officer some years ago and he endeavoured on our behalf to have the ruling reversed only to be told that it was on the computer and could not be changed. Surely some Senior Officer can have this put right.

Alf Withers

Springwood Station, Via Wentworth NSW 2648.

25 May 2006

The Reply

DEAR ALF: As NSW DPI Sheep Ectoparasite Control Coordinator, and the person principally responsible for the coordination of mulesing training (and accreditation) in NSW, I am pleased to respond to your letter to the Editor of the Western Division Newsletter, dated 25 May, 2006.

I am sorry that you are dismayed with my article 'Mulesing training and accreditation in 2006' (WDN 110), however I would like to make a number of points:

1. The decision to require contractors and others who mules sheep to become accredited was made by industry NOT government. In November 2004 the 'Australian Wool and Sheep Industry Task Force' announced that, as well as stopping mulesing in 2010 and

increasing expenditure on research into alternatives, they would accredit people who performed the operation.

(The 'Australian Wool and Sheep Industry Task Force' draws its members from the major peak industry bodies including National Farmers Federation, WoolProducers, Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Limited, Australian Wool Services Limited, Federation of Australian Wool Organisations, Meat and Livestock Australia Limited, Sheepmeats Council of Australia, Live Exporters Council and Livecorp. The Australian Government participates as an observer.)

Note: Producers are represented through their state farmer organisations e.g. NSW Farmers Association, participation in the NFF; as well as their shareholding in AWI through their 2% wool levy, and other industry levies. Specifically, in '**a declaration of commitments made by the Australian Wool and Sheep Industry Taskforce in relation to animal welfare and the phasing out of mulesing**' which has been signed by Ian McLachlan (Chairman, Australian Wool Innovation Limited) and Robert Pietsch (National President, WoolProducers) point 4 states:

'A new Code of Practice and new Guidelines for mulesing are currently being finalised by the Australian Government and the Australian Wool Industry. Among other matters, they set out how the procedure should be conducted and require, for the first time ever, **that all personnel who are to perform the procedure be accredited** (my emphasis) by 31 December 2006'.

This deadline has now been extended to 31 December 2008 for owner operators.

2. Yes, \$700 is a lot of money. (Although in other industries this would not be considered expensive for 8+ hours of intensive training and assessment.) Two fully accredited mulesers provide the training. These are professional contractors out of industry. (The chief instructor for the Livestock Contractors Association (LCA) who is usually present, has mulesed in excess of 17 million sheep in his working career.) The course '51511 - Perform Mulesing Procedures on Sheep' is an accredited training course under the Australian Quality Training Framework, which also requires the presence of an accredited trainer to manage the training process.

Therefore you have three trainers present for each day's training, plus their travel expenses, meals and accommodation, etc.

This number of trainers is also required under Animal Welfare Legislation in NSW.

There was not room in my WDN article to also spell out the 20% discount available to NSW Farmers Association, Kondinin Group and LCA members. More than 70% of the participants at the recent training and accreditation days at Mossgiel were able to claim this discount, reducing the cost to \$560. Participants are advised of this discount as soon as they enquire about the training.

Still a lot of money I know – particularly in light of current wool prices and the recent run of bad seasons. Mulesing training and accreditation is run by a commercial organisation, the Kondinin Group, in conjunction with the LCA. (NSW DPI assists with coordination and has provided input into the training materials). Kondinin have to cover the wages of some of the best people in the industry, plus vehicle, meals and accommodation expenses. There is also the cost of operating the 1800 phone and fax lines and the



Mulesing accreditation workshop in progress at Strathavon, Mossgiel in May

personnel who staff the office on the end of these lines. Nobody is making any fortune from running this training !

3. Yes, in the past Departmental officers did visit properties and demonstrate mulesing. This was in the days when the operation was still being taken up by industry – mainly during the late 1950's and during 1960's and '70's. These men have retired and the 'baton' of 'practical expertise' was long ago passed to the major practitioners in the industry – the contractors.

In 1994 the Livestock Contractors Association, in conjunction with the (then) NSW Dept. of Agriculture, developed and wrote down a standard and assessment method for mulesing accreditation. Long before anyone in the wool industry had heard of PETA !

These professional practitioners have further developed the principles which the Department was promoting during the '70's and '80's, to the stage where the expertise in teaching and assessing mulesing now clearly rests with them.

Recognising that the sheep industry would be judged not just on the performance of their small group, the LCA made their training and accreditation standards and methods available to all in the sheep and wool industry in 2003 (prior to PETA's mulesing campaign !).

Some industry funds (AWI) were provided to assist with the development of training materials, principally the training manual.

Today, not one cent of industry funds is available to assist participants with the cost of training.

That is why this nationally accredited training course is available to industry at a commercial rate. There is NO government or industry assistance, or subsidy, available.

If you (or anyone) have any questions regarding mulesing training and accreditation please don't hesitate to contact me on the numbers below.

Good luck with your RAP site and the cannonball.

Ian Evans, Sheep & Wool Officer, Deniliquin.

Ph.: (03) 5881 9920 or 0427 102 287

If unclaimed please return to:
NSW Department of Primary Industries
PO Box 865, DUBBO NSW 2830

To the Landholder



Western Division newsletter

The WDN welcomes contributions

Issue No.		Deadline for articles	Editorial Office
113	Sep–Oct	1 August 2006	NSW DPI
114	Nov–Dec	1 October 2006	PO Box 393, Hay 2711
115	Jan–Feb	1 December 2006	Fax: (02) 6993 2177
116	Mar–Apr	1 February 2007	Phone: (02) 6993 1608
117	May–Jun	1 April 2007	Email: sally.ware@dpi.nsw.gov.au