

Keeping you up to date with *EverGraze* developments

Welcome to the *EverGraze™ - More Livestock from Perennials* August e-newsletter issued to subscribers from our website. We welcome your feedback, contributions and comments.

EverGraze is using perennials in grazing systems with sheep and cattle to **increase profits by 50%** while simultaneously improving farm environments through improved water management, ground cover, biodiversity and soil health.

There are experimental sites in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, with a network of Supporting Sites evaluating new ideas on farms.

EverGraze is a Future Farm Industries CRC, MLA and AWI research and delivery partnership.

Read on for the latest news and results.

Proof Sites

Albury Wodonga Proof Site

Update on Chiltern Experiment

The Chiltern experiment had below average autumn rainfall. Cool temperatures are limiting pasture growth.

The ewes were allocated to the plots in late June based on fleece weight, condition score and pregnancy status (single or twins). The average food on offer was 1.4 t/ha.

The ewes were shorn in May with nine months wool. The average greasy fleece weight was 4.3 kg with an average fibre diameter of 19.6 micron. The average weights of the ewes are 51.8 kg with a condition score of 3.2.

Merino ewes were joined to terminal sires in February. A scan demonstrated 74 singles and 59 twins. Lambing on the plots commenced on 19th July.

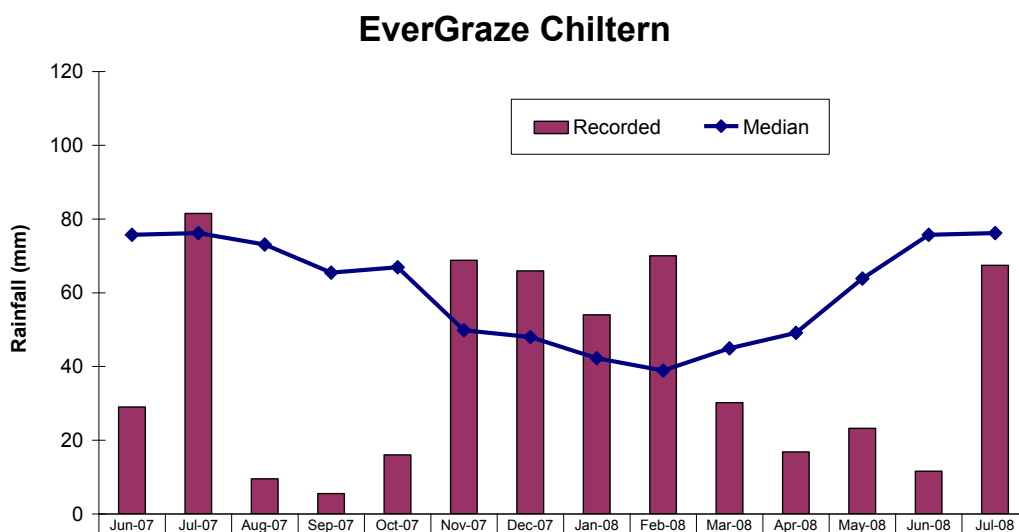


Fig. 1 Rainfall at the Chiltern Proof Site

For further information contact Meredith Mitchell, P: (02) 6030 4579 E: meredith.mitchell@dpi.vic.gov.au

The winter feed gap

All treatments have entered winter with high levels of food on offer (FOO), but as winter progressed and ewe demands increased closer to lambing (commencing mid August), green FOO has become limited (Fig. 2).

Annual species provide significant winter production, but late germination delivered a short fall in green FOO.

There have been marginally higher ewe weights (Fig. 3) and condition scores in the low intensity ('set stocking') grazing treatment, due to a greater ability for ewes to select quality forage.

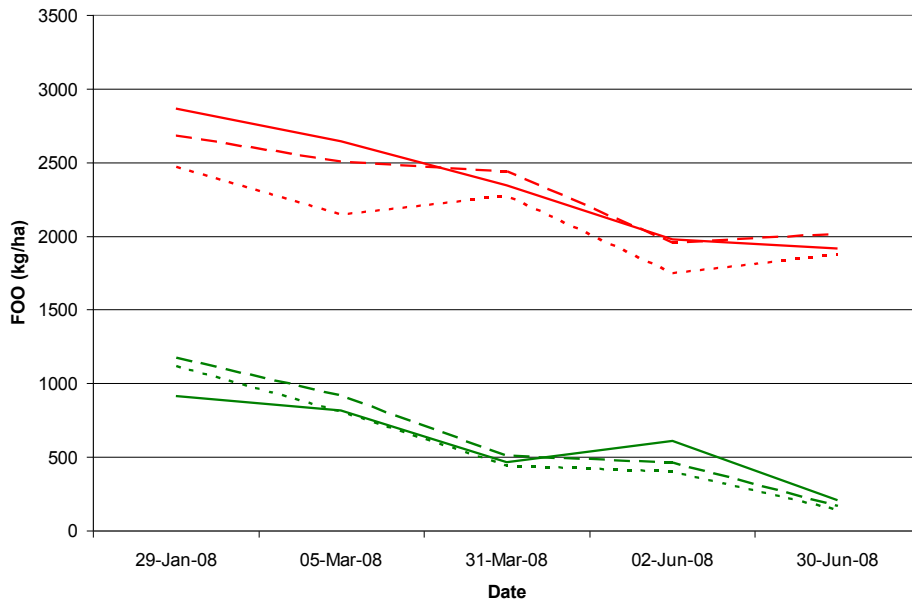


Fig. 2 Total (red) and green (green) FOO for high (solid lines), medium (broad dashed lines) and low (dotted lines) intensity grazing treatments.

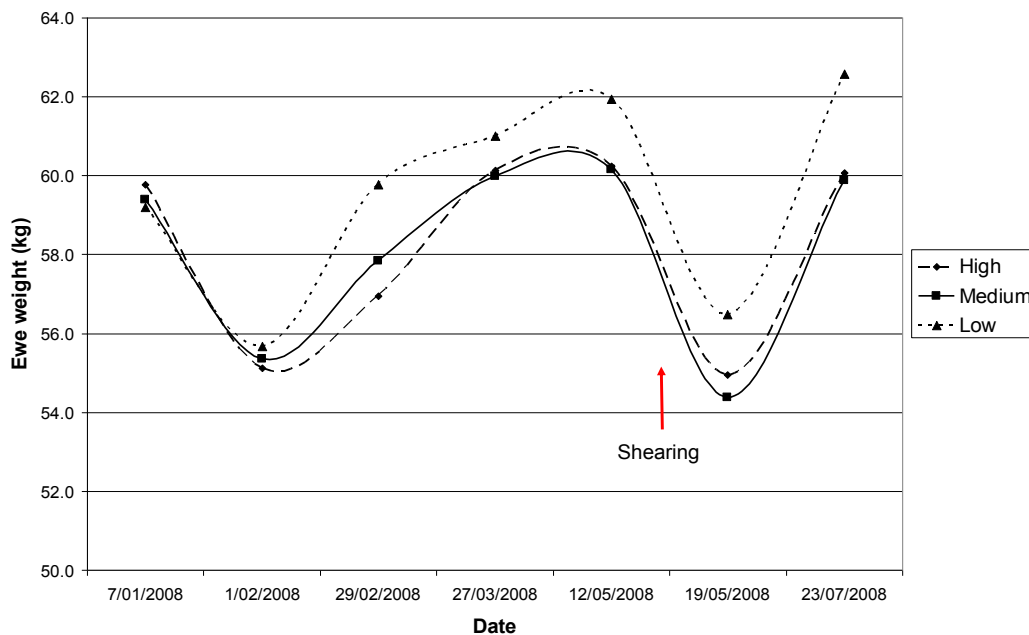


Fig. 3 Ewe weights in high (20 paddock), medium (4 paddock) and low (1 paddock) intensity grazing treatments. Shearing resulted in a sharp drop in body weight.

Tamworth Proof Site

Dry winter tells on pregnant ewes in northern NSW

Summer rains ended in mid-February before many producers were able to sow forage oats, which they traditionally rely on for winter-spring feed for lambing ewes. Although it has been very dry since then, crop stubbles and lucerne provided an adequate level of green feed from weaning to joining.

Ewe fat scores increased from 3.5 to 4.3. Ewes were able to maintain their fat scores from joining to mid pregnancy.

Green feed availability in winter has greatly declined and with a higher energy demand in late pregnancy (2-3 weeks pre-lambing). Ewe fat scores have declined to 2.8.

	Nov-07	Mar-08	May-08	Jul-08
	Weaning	Joining	Mid-pregnancy	Late-pregnancy
Fat score	3.5	4.3	4.3	2.8
Mean green herbage on offer (kg DM/ha)	800	1600	700	400
Pasture types	Crop stubble and lucerne		Crop fallow and native pastures	

Table 1. Fat score and feed on offer at Tamworth

For further information, contact Greg Lodge, P: (02) 6763 1176, E: greg.lodge@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Supporting Sites

Ararat Supporting Site

Demonstrating deferred grazing and fertiliser management

Deferred grazing is a technique that matches the time of grazing to an appropriate growth stage of pasture plants so that new plants can be achieved through natural reseeding and vegetative expansion.

To improve the density and ground cover provided by native perennials in hill country, the perennials need to be managed to allow seed heads to form, seed to mature and new plants to establish. Previous experimental work has shown that using deferred grazing has increased density by 60-80% within 2 years.

A Supporting Site on Ian and Susan McConachie's near Ararat is demonstrating deferred grazing concept on a bigger paddock scale site.

For further information, contact Ian & Susan McConachie, P:(03) 5354 4234; Zhongnan Nie or Reto Zollinger P: (03) 5573 0900.

Fig 4. Native grass seed heads at Ararat Supporting Site in February 2008.



Murrumbidgee Supporting Site

Murrumbidgee CMA EverGraze Merino Ovulation Project

The Murrumbidgee CMA currently has a series of Merino Ovulation demonstrations on Support Sites across the catchment. The Support Sites are located on six farms in the area from Yass to Galong.

The Wagga Proof Site results showed grazing lucerne and chicory pasture increased ovulation rates of up to 27% with synchronised ewes in 2007. The Support Sites are investigating if these results can be replicated to any degree under commercial farming conditions with unsynchronised ewes.

For more information contact Janelle Jenkins, P: (02) 6940 2944 E: janelle.jenkins@cma.nsw.gov.au .

New EverGraze Action fact sheets

EverGraze scientists are developing a series of fact sheets to provide information to producers and extension agents from EverGraze Proof and Supporting Sites.

There are now eight EverGraze Action fact sheets on the website;

- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Chicory on the East Coast
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Chicory in WA
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Perennial grass hedges provide shelter at lambing
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Lucerne
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using Kikuyu in WA
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Productive, persistent Perennial Ryegrass
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing and using summer active Tall Fescue
- ◆ **EverGraze Action** - Growing kikuyu for summer feed and soil cover



To download these EverGraze Actions, go to the EverGraze web site

www.evergraze.com.au Click on Information, Fact Sheets and the link to the required information.

Events not to be missed!

EverGraze Open Days

EverGraze - More Livestock from Perennials Proof and Supporting Sites will be open to the public during October and November.

Proof Site Open Days details and contacts for further information are;

Tamworth: Wednesday November 19th, Greg Lodge, greg.lodge@dpi.nsw.gov.au P: (02) 6763 1176

Orange: Wednesday October 15th, Warwick Badgery, warwick.badgery@dpi.nsw.gov.au P: (02) 6391 3814

Wagga Wagga: Friday October 3rd, Michael Friend, mfriender@csu.edu.au P: (02) 6933 2285

Albury Wodonga Tuesday November 25th, Meredith Mitchell, meredith.mitchell@dpi.vic.gov.au P: (02) 6030 4579

Hamilton: Wednesday November 12th, Ralph Behrendt, ralph.behrendt@dpi.vic.gov.au P: (03) 5573 0979

Albany: October date TBA, Paul Sanford, psanford@agric.wa.gov.au P: (08) 9892 8475

Open days will also be held at Supporting Sites during October and November. Check the rural press and the EverGraze website: www.evergraze.com.au for further details about the EverGraze Open Days.

IMPORTANT!!!

You may be missing out on the latest information & events as you have not provided us with your email address.

Due to printing costs, we only print every second newsletter. To update your details, please email geoff.saul@bigpond.com with 'update contacts' in the subject line. Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number so that we can correctly update our database.