

2018 BREECH FLYSTRIKE RD&E TECHNICAL UPDATE

Moving to a Non- Mules Merino
Enterprise

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Moving to a Non Mules Enterprise – Case Study

- Findings of interviews with 40 Non Mules Merino enterprises with a diverse range of environments and sheep types



Moving to a Non Mules Enterprise – Case Study

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Plan for Success**
- 3. Think Beyond Mulesing**
- 4. Sheep Type**
- 5. Management Focus**
- 6. Financial Impact**
- 7. Check List**
- 8. 2017 Husbandry Practice Survey**

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 1. Introduction – Wool Sales

Bales Merino Wool						
Bales	CM	M	NM	M PR	Not Dec	TOTAL
2014-15	35,159	284,651	68,632	292,667	651,541	1,332,650
2015-16	33,916	253,114	71,617	323,943	534,190	1,216,780
2016-17	35,554	268,111	83,074	407,838	486,220	1,280,797
2017-18	31,389	263,785	97,489	477,232	428,070	1,297,695
% Bales	CM	M	NM	M PR	Not Dec	TOTAL
2014-15	2.6%	21%	5.2%	22%	49%	100%
2015-16	2.8%	21%	5.9%	27%	44%	100%
2016-17	2.8%	21%	6.5%	32%	38%	100%
2017-18	2.4%	20.3%	7.5%	36.8%	33.0%	100%



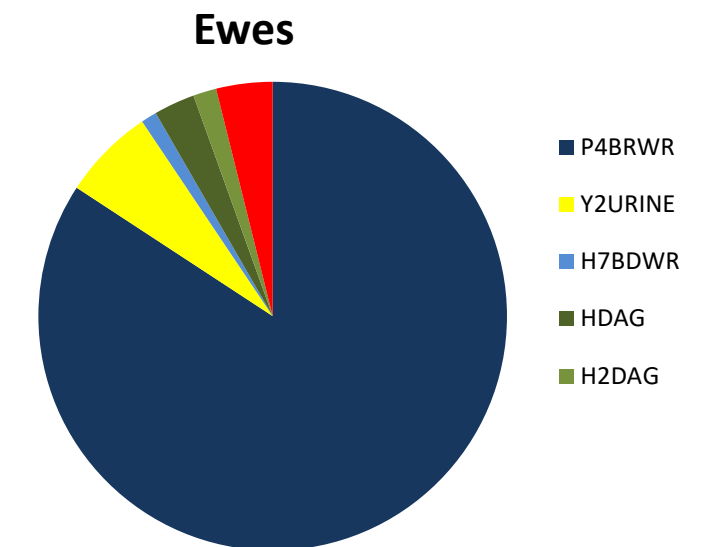
Source AWEX: Auction Sales

- Not Mulesed wool volumes; low but increasing
- However Australia is a major world exporter of NM wool
- Fly intro Aust 1890's, mulesing adoption slow but widespread
- Fly intro NZ 1980's, will cease Oct 2018, very different environment
- Key message is to declare; especially NM, CM and PR

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 2. Plan for Success

- Get a detailed plan, don't just stop, may take years
- Know your environment and sheep
- Rebalance ways of reducing strike risk
- All people need to be “on board”
- Still may need a leap of faith
- Some growers found it easier than they first thought

Variation in ewe breech strike dominated by breech wrinkle DPIRD WA



Moving to a NM Enterprise: 3. Think Beyond Mulesing

- Issue is about continuous improvement in animal welfare rather than mulesing – it is a journey not a destination,
 - It is about whole of life welfare, over a range of animal health risks
- More than tick a “NM” box
- Monitor and have evidence of improving lifetime welfare, then issues move to a bigger picture
- “Welfare” to “sustainability”, to “transparency” and “telling a story”

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 4. Sheep Type

- In hindsight some woolgrowers stopped mulesing too early
- Need low wrinkle, low dag, profitable flock first
- Shortage of low breech strike, profitable genetics, particularly in super fine type



Moving to a NM Enterprise: 4. Sheep Type

- From AWI “Breeding for Breech Strike” Flocks:
 - To have a similar risk of breech strike to mulesing, the following is needed
 - 2 score and less for Breech Wrinkle, Dags and Urine Stain
 - 3 score and less for Breech Cover
 - The lower the natural score the better, for both NM or M enterprises

- What do these phenotypic scores mean in Breeding Value terms?
 - Determined by your management & country & environment
 - Wrinkle ASBVs for NM enterprise without undue reliance on chemical?
ASBV varies between -0.3 to -1.0?

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 4. Sheep Type – Sires Where?

- Some growers started to breed their own rams due to the shortage of suitable sires
- Others started but realised that it is more complicated than first thought and went back to buying in rams
- 2017 AWI survey on animal husbandry practices:
 - 1,200 growers surveyed on their 2017 practices
 - 22% of growers mulesing, breed their own rams
 - 23% of growers not mulesing, breed their own rams
 - 40% of all growers with more than 2,000 ewes, breed their own rams

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 5. Management Focus

- Large variation in Management Practices between the 40 NM woolgrowers interviewed due to very diverse environments:
 - One grower did not crutch, drench or jet and shore 12 monthly
 - One grower crutched or sheared 5 times per year
 - One grower applied chemical protection 3 times per year

There are multiple recipes in NM enterprises; as there are with M enterprises

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 5. Management Focus

- Management approach depends on:
 - Business flexibility, ability to respond tactically due to other enterprises
 - Sheep type
 - High or low dag zone
 - High or low worm zone (use of long acting capsules)
 - Shearing frequency, access to shearers
 - Timing of crutching – dags on the skin?
 - Length of joining and lambing
 - Access to farm labour
 - Attitude to high use of chemical (fly and worm) and potential for resistance
 - Risk of floods, foot rot and family ill-health (ability to respond to fly outbreaks)



Moving to a NM Enterprise: 6. Financial Impact

- Intention was to complete detailed financial review of 5 NM businesses
- Quickly found too many complexities to present information in a simple calculator
 - Number and type of other enterprises
 - Sheep type
 - High or low dag zone, high or low worm zone
 - Time period to introduce multiple changes
 - Timing of lambing
 - Intensity and length of high fly risk season
 - Size of wool premiums
 - Variable re-stocker discounts, sheep class and region (Nil to 40%)
 - Attitude to business risk and increased use of chemicals
 - Attitude to change; also age, size of business

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 6. Financial Impact

- No woolgrower moved to NM for immediate financial gain:
 - Increased costs were generally \$2-3 per head or 50c/kg greasy
 - Large discounts in the re-stocker market has meant the reverse market signal to the wool supply chain signals was being received by woolgrowers in many regions,

- But there is a strong desire to make it profitable as soon as possible

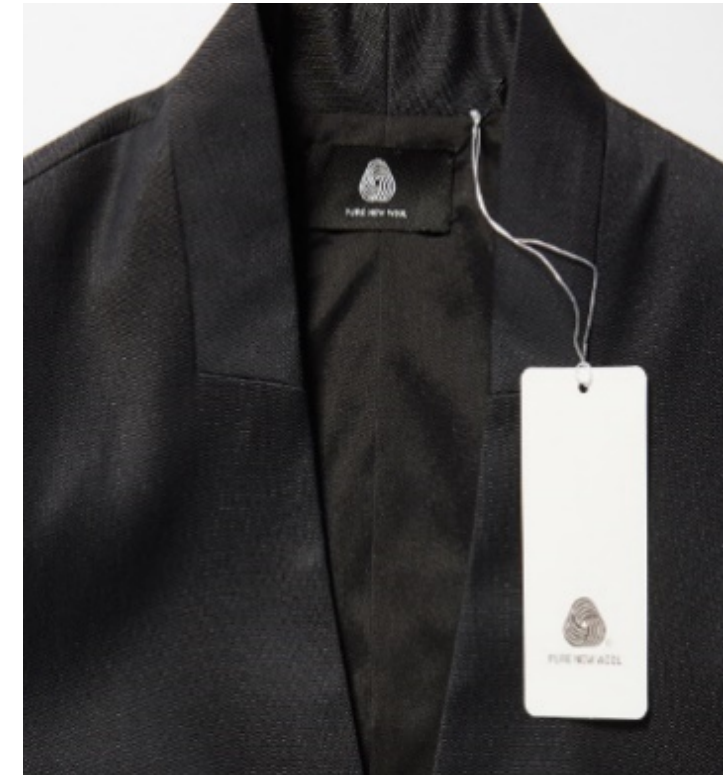


Moving to a NM Enterprise: 6. Financial Impact

- For most NM growers minimising (or avoiding) the re-stocker market discount was the primary financial focus once the risk of strike was addressed; how?
 - Retain and join “surplus” young and old ewes,
 - Find the right livestock agent
 - Actively seek out NM demand, direct sales
 - Draft off high wrinkle sheep and sell via abattoir
 - Reduce wrinkle rapidly in own flock
 - Change in CM definition has assisted, increasing demand for NM prime lamb dams

Moving to a NM Enterprise: 7. Check List

- Plan, know your environment and sheep
- All people in business on board
- Focus on continuous improvement to lifetime welfare
- Breed profitable sheep with low wrinkle, cover and dag
- Access to additional labour
- Right wool and livestock agents
- Minimise re-stocker discounts
- Review QA schemes available to maximise wool premiums
- Be determined to make it work



THANK YOU



Full NM case study available on AWI Website: www.wool.com/flystrikelatest





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