

Ewe scanning and management checklist

Image: AWI

Mob name _____

Rams in date

Date rams go into the paddock with ewes

Rams out date

Recommended joining length is 35 days

Scanning date

80–90 days after rams in

Lambing date

150 days after rams in

Marking date

2–8 weeks after lambing

Weaning date

14 weeks after lambing

| Days from rams in | Activity | Action | Comment | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------|
| Day -30 (30 days pre-joining) | Check ewes are Fit to Join | Review body condition score (CS) and use Fit to Join ewe assessment | Assess ewe CS against your breed targets and review feed budgets for next 30 days. Determine if ewes are Fit to Join to improve ewe and lamb survival. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 0–35 (Joining) | Confirm scanning date | Call to book in your scanner on the day you put your rams in with the ewes and discuss your sheep type, likelihood of singles, twins and triplets (based on prior experience) and best date for scanning | Based on industry recommended five-week joining, scanning should be conducted approximately 80–90 days after the rams go in with the ewes for the best accuracy. The scanning date may be earlier if you're scanning for triplets. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Ensure adequate labour is available | You will need labour to muster and bring ewes to the yards and keep ewes up to the scanning box on the day of scanning. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 50–90 | Pre-scanning preparation – in the month before | Ensure the scanner can get good skin contact | Check that ewes are clean of burrs and mud prior to scanning. Poor contact will impact accuracy and slow down the scanner. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Ensure sheep yards are in good condition | Ensure facilities are in working order so scanning equipment can be integrated into yards and ewes can be drafted based on their pregnancy status. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Days from rams in | Activity | Action | Comment | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| Day 80–90 | Pre-scanning preparation – the day before | Ensure ewes are held off feed and water for a minimum of six hours prior to scanning | Reducing gut fill will improve accuracy of scanning. Ensure ewes have access to shade and shelter during this time off feed. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Confirm labour availability | Depending on the individual set up, up to 3,000 ewes may be scanned in a day. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Post-scanning ewe management | Determine CS of ewes whilst in the yards post-scanning | This is an ideal opportunity to review ewe condition as their nutritional requirements start to increase. Target ewe CS and review nutritional management in the lead up to lambing. It is important to manage according to CS and pregnancy scanning status. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Mob preparation and differential management | Identify and allocate lambing paddocks based on pregnancy scanning results | Consider the availability and quality of feed and shelter. As well as past paddock performance data (if you have it), then you can give the paddock that perform best for lamb survival to multiple-bearing ewes. Make a plan for when you will move ewes into their lambing paddocks. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Day 90–150 | Manage ewes based on reproductive status | Make decision about scanned empty ewes | All empty ewes should be placed on a maintenance ration. Permanently identify scanned empty ewes. Management decisions need to be made for empty ewes. Management factors may have impacted on conception for ewes scanned empty the first time, which can be taken into consideration when deciding if these animals will be sold or retained. Ewes scanned empty more than once should be removed from the breeding flock. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Differentially manage nutrition based on pregnancy status | From scanning, separate mobs based on scanning results. Complete feed budgeting to ensure ewes will meet target CS at lambing and allocate paddocks accordingly. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Supplementary feed to help meet requirements | Feed needs for different management groups – use MMFS Tool 11.1 Energy and protein requirements of sheep. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The industry recommendation of scanning 80–90 days from rams in is based on the industry recommendation of a 35 day (five week) joining period and consolidated feedback from advisors, veterinarians and pregnancy scanners across Australia. You should speak with your pregnancy scanner to work out the timing that best suits your operation to get the optimal result for your property.

Management of sheep in the first 100 days of life is vital, and there are many industry resources to assist you in optimising this period of your sheep's life.



Scan the QR code for more information and resources