

MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2020

## Trangie shows off long-life Merino project

Drought recovery, improved flock reproduction, new strategies to address blowfly chemical resistance and sheep classing are on the agenda for the Macquarie Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project field day at the Trangie Agricultural Research Centre on Wednesday March 4.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) development officer, Kathryn Egerton-Warburton, said the field day will give producers the first opportunity to inspect the full complement of ewes at the MLP Macquarie site.

“MLP is exploring relationships between selection at an early age and lifetime ewe performance,” Dr Egerton-Warburton said.

“The project uses raw data, enhanced breeding values and visual classing to select young sheep as we explore new ways to better predict superior lifetime performance.

“We aim to ensure the best data and strategies are used to make robust decisions about retaining animals which will either return the most profit or cost less to manage and are the most productive over their lifetime.”

The impact of selecting for wool, live-weight growth, reproduction, welfare and carcass traits on lifetime Merino ewe productivity are being measured and evaluated.

Now three years into the 10-year MLP research program, standard sire evaluation assessments have been completed for both drops of ewes, the two-year old ewes have completed their first joining and three-year old ewes have had their second joining.

Producers will hear Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) executive officer Ben Swain deliver the latest update from the MLP project update and get the latest information about integrated pest management strategies (IPM) to address chemical resistance in blowflies from NSW DPI molecular immunologist, Dr Narelle Sales.

Field day workshops will cover sheep classing and visual scoring, NSW DPI's Drought and Supplementary Feed Calculator and how to achieve improved reproduction outcomes.

Former NSW DPI Livestock Systems technical specialist, Phil Graham, will provide insights and practical examples of how producers can work towards livestock recovery after drought, with an emphasis on production and the financial implications of selected strategies.

NSW DPI livestock research officer, Jess Richards, will explore opportunities to use collected flock breeding, performance and management data to deliver the most value to producers.

One of five national MLP sites, the MLP Macquarie site at Trangie is managed by NSW DPI as part of a \$12 million co-investment by Australian Wool Innovation, AMSEA, Merino stud breeders, NSW DPI and other site hosts.

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