

Company: Colanya Grazing Company

1. Enterprise description and goals:

Colanya is 13515ha pebbly undulating mitchell grass country approximately 145km west of Longreach Qld. Colanya is purely a merino sheep operation running an average of 4000 breeding ewes and progeny, and 600 wethers. Started implementing SRS breeding into the flock in 2000, to improve fertility, wool cut, size and stop mulesing.

2. Labour efficiency and profitability

At Colanya we aim to improve infrastructure on the property each year for ease of management. Currently we do not employ anyone fulltime, occasionally getting contractors in to help when really busy.

Each year improvements are done to fences, there are 18 paddocks on Colanya and at present there are laneways to 15 paddocks this is a huge saving on labour requirements when working stock. The main innovation we have done is our feeding setup for feeding the sheep. The sheep are fed corn when lambing, the corn is stored in a bunker constructed by us holding approximately 100 tonnes. The corn is loaded by front-end loader tractor through a funnel onto a bin that sits on a landcruiser ute, this can all be done by one person. The corn runs out of the bin onto a motorised spreader mounted on the side of the ute enabling more stock access to the grain.

With ever increasing costs of production attempts are continually made to reduce labour requirements of the property. Such as all waters are fenced with reticulation systems to troughing to allow ease of maintenance and no stock bogging.

3. Production systems:

As breeding sheep, is our main objective the property has been developed into smaller paddocks with many waters in each paddock. Allowing ewes easy access to water, thus not having to walk far for a drink when lambing. All paddocks are interconnected with laneways. With the use of portable yards, we have access to five holding yards connected to laneways, allowing to have 5 seperate yards throughout the property for ease of lambmarking and stockhandling. The main sheep yards at the shearing shed has covered classing facilities, new loading ramp, weighing systems, full sprinkler system over yards, large undercover yard leading up to shearing shed (holding approximately 1000 undercover), modern shower dip for lice control, and access to mains power at yards.

We also have access to modern technology through satellite internet which we use for weather forecasting, internet banking, auction sales, market reports and accessing useful information for the property. We also use MYOB accounting software for property book keeping.

#### 4. Enterprise development:

The main marketing plan we are undertaking with the wool is to market our wool through "New Merino" in Adelaide which allows us to sell direct to processors. This allows us to give some degree of assurance that our wool is a good product and free of dark and medulated fibres. We will also be able to receive feedback about our wool.

We regularly attend field days, work shops and teleconferences to learn about latest developments in sheep production. One of the value-adding activities we have done this year is classing off the top 600 young wethers, on wool and carcass traits to be grown out for woolgrowers and mutton market.

Other enterprises we are involved in are agisting cattle for cash flow and my son has recently started a mobile crutching business which he leases off us.

A professional SRS sheep classer is engaged each year to class young ewes and advise on ram selection. The use of this outside information is proving invaluable in improving stock.

In 2003 we purchased hay baling equipment allowing us to be able to bale and store fodder.

#### 5. Environmental impacts and benefits:

Each year an eradication program is undertaken on woody weeds and noxious weeds. This allows us to keep the property clean of weeds. Roads are maintained each year to prevent erosion, banks are constructed across roads on undulating land to steady water flow when it rains. Stocking rates are kept to a sustainable level to maintain adequate groundcover, allowing rejuvenation of pastures after rain and reducing risk of erosion.

#### 6. Your farming life:

Colanya is solely a family run enterprise, our son works on the property when required and also does contracting off farm and runs a mobile crutching business. Our daughter is currently studying Livestock science at UNE in Armidale and works on the property on the holidays.

My wife and I make time each year to go travelling allowing us to have time away from the farm for a while.

We enjoy trying new ideas and developing the property.

#### 7. Your international study tour:

I think it would be interesting to travel to Argentina as they are trying hard to improve their sheep enterprises and are using a lot of Australian genetics. It would be interesting to see sheep in a completely different environment other than Australia.