

finalreport

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Production feeding of lambs Tip & Tool

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1 Background

Rural Solutions SA was contracted to produce a 8-12 page Tip & Tool for production feeding of lambs, encompassing findings and recommendations from the report “Best practice for production feeding of lambs: a review of the literature”, December 2006 written by San Jolly, Productive Nutrition.

This publication will provide an exacting base level of information that will assist the industry in its formative years, and may provide support or a baseline for the intended development of an industry code of practice

This publication will be a valuable resource for forums, workshops and field days

2 Project Objectives

- Thoroughly read and comprehend the “Literature review” and other identified documents
- Develop key messages for producers to successfully finish lambs
- Assist MLA in engaging the cooperation of San Jolly and Australian Lamb Finishers (ALF/SCA) in the process. Find an opportunity to physically consult with these stakeholders when they are gathering for Code of Practice development in early 2007.
- Develop a framework of key topic areas & messages and content overview. Identify the approximate % of each section in the publication.
- Seek feedback on the framework from stakeholders above.
- Develop the supplement content
- Identify and source a suite of appropriate high quality photos.
- Seek feedback on the draft
- Finalise publication
- Send to MLA for design & layout
- Review “pdf” of final publication.

3 Success in Achieving Objectives

3.1 Comprehend literature review and develop key messages and framework

After reading the literature review it was identified that there were a number of aspects of lamb finishing that require further research before best practice recommendations could be made. This lead to discussion about the type of publication to be produced, and if a tip&tool was the best option. It was decided to continue with a tip&tool but it would need to be clearly identified that the publication only covers aspects of lamb finishing that are backed by evidence in the literature review.

Consolidation on the type of publication to be produced led to delays in progress and therefore a revised project timeline was established, with the final content for the tip&tool to be ready for print by 10 April 2007.

To meet the requirements of distribution of the tip&tool at MLAs forums commencing at the end of March, it was decided a flyer promoting the publication would be developed with information on how to order a copy of the publication once released. Content and photos for the development of this flyer were provided to MLAs publishing unit for development.

Outcomes:

- Literature review was read and comprehended by Heidi Goers
- Key messages and a publication framework was developed, documented and reviewed by Blair Brice, Alex Ball, Bruce Hancock and San Jolly
- The content of the document was tightened to focus solely on reporting the evidence-backed findings from the literature review and identification of the areas recommended for further research
- Information flyer regarding the publication developed for distribution at MLA Prime Time Forums

3.2 Assist MLA in engaging San Jolly and ALF members

While it was originally specified that the Australian Lamb Finishers (ALF) were to be involved in the review of the framework and key messages a decision was made to defer the involvement of this industry group to later in the project.

Consequently during April, ALF were sent a copy of the final document (Tip & Tool) and Literature Review prior to print.

Outcomes:

- San Jolly was engaged to be involved in the project and was approached at various stages throughout the project to provide input and feedback.
- ALF were provided a PDF copy of the publication prior to print to keep them informed

3.3 Develop supplement content, seek feedback and finalise content

Content was developed in close consultation with San Jolly as she conducted the literature review forming the basis for the publication. Draft content was circulated to Bruce, Blair, Alex and San for input and feedback.

There were further delays experienced in the development of the publication due to delays in turnaround time for feedback and the need for additional review/feedback points during the process.

Outcomes:

- Draft content developed in consultation with San
- Draft content for the publication was circulated to San, Bruce , Blair and Alex for comment
- Feedback was considered and incorporated into the publication
- Content sent to MLA for layout

3.4 Review publication proof

The publication went through a number of name changes with the aim of trying to more clearly indicate to producers what the publication is about (i.e. outlining key findings coming out of the literature review rather than a complete guide to lamb finishing). The final name change was a result of concerns raised by MLA's Corporate Communications and Live Export (CCLE) group at which stage the title was "Production feeding of lambs – key findings from the literature". It was asked that the words "key findings from the literature" be removed from the title as it was perceived to confuse and distract producers. The final title agreed upon was "A producers guide to production feeding for lamb growth".

The CCLE also raised concerns regarding the section on further research which was perceived as not relevant and a distraction for producers and the section was removed from the publication.

Outcomes:

- Proof circulated for comment including an independent review by Rob Davidson (requested by MLA)
- Publication name changed to "A producers guide to production feeding for lamb growth"
- Feedback incorporated and publication content and layout finalised

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The final publication provides a producer friendly resource which communicates the key findings and recommendations from the literature review, with reference to the full report for those who are interested. It keeps producers up to date with the latest known (evidence based) information on intensive lamb finishing specifically relating to growth.

Realistic timeframes are essential. Publication development has a significant amount of downtime, particularly when feedback is required at multiple stages in the process and when turn around time is slow. The review and feedback process is essential in the development of a successful and creditable publication and adequate downtime needs to be budgeted for in timeframes.

A clear and common understanding of achievable and desired outcomes is needed at the start of the project. Initially the aim was to develop a tip&tool that would provide a complete guide to lamb finishing, however after reading the literature review it was identified that there are a number of aspects of lamb finishing that require further research before best practice recommendations can be made. Therefore a complete guide to lamb finishing, based on the literature review was never really a realistic outcome.

There were also discussions surrounding the naming of the publication, which was changed several times. The uncertainty and subsequent changes to the project led to extra work and time delays in the project.