

Arginine for twin lamb survival

Producer case study: Waterloo, South Australia



“We found the RP-arginine trial quite simple to participate in, as we already had self feeders, and the Turretfield Research Centre staff kindly worked within our normal sheep program.”

Background

This is a mixed farming Merino property in the Barossa region, SA. This producer was enrolled in the trial after seeing the flyer that was distributed through a call-out. Described as a ‘dryish’ winter lambing period, the supplementation of pellets was valuable. At lambing, the feed-on-offer (FOO) was between 400 and 1,000kg green dry matter per hectare. The producers described this lambing period as favourable due to the mild lambing conditions, and suggested that the second replicate located in the ranges had much more shelter and seclusion, leading to more favourable lamb survival in this replicate. The largest paddock was mostly trees and shrubs with valleys, and therefore offered similar FOO overall. The smaller homestead paddocks for the first replicate were quite exposed. Like many producers in the region, as they came closer to marking, FOO was significantly reduced.

From the producer:

“The ewes took readily to the pellet system for arginine delivery via the lick feeders we already had, although there was a need to check the feeder cups daily due to saliva/ dust blockage. As we were checking the mobs daily anyway as we were lambing in the July/August period this wasn’t much of an issue.”

Figure 1: Lick feeder fitted with Tru Test eID reader system to monitor feeder visit frequency



Table 1: Enterprise information

Ewe details	Breed Merino	Age Mixed age	Number 347	
Joining details	Type Syndicate	Ram Merino age	Date 21/02/2024	Length 6 weeks
Lambing details	Ewes/paddock 100	Paddock size 1: 3ha 2: 5ha 3: 28ha 4: 6ha	Paddock features Good quality lambing paddocks. Rep 2 (Paddocks 3 and 4) had much more shelter	

Results

Overall, this producer saw no difference in lamb survival between the control and arginine supplemented ewes. At weaning, lambs from control treated ewes were on average 1kg heavier.

Table 2: Survival data

Marking	Ewes (n)	Lambs (n)	Lamb age (av)	Lamb wt (kg)	ADG (g/day)	Survival
Control	170	254	31 days	14		% 78
Arginine	178	276	31 days	13.5		% 78
Weaning	Ewes (n)	Lambs (n)		Lamb wt (kg)		Survival
Control	143	249	101 days	31	172	% 73
Arginine	153	274	101 days	30	156	% 79

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