

# Less predators, more lambs

## Producer Case Study

Working collaboratively and collectively helps deal with the anxiety and stress around predation on livestock according to Mansfield producer Paul Diamond.

Paul is a third-generation producer on the family's Goughs Bay property "Pinnaroo", one of eight participating properties in the Meat and Livestock Australia's Less Predators More Lambs producer demonstration project coordinated by Agridome Consultancy.

Several years ago, the Pinnaroo superfine Merino flock was attacked by a wild dog, with losses of 60 scanned in-lamb ewes over six weeks valued at \$15,000.

Paul conceded the attacks had caused him mental anguish and further losses were averted by his neighbour killing the offending wild dog.

"It takes a huge mental toll - I've had issues also with domestic dogs so I've spoken out publicly to create awareness of how people think they can come up to their holiday homes and their dogs won't roam and ruin other people's livelihoods," Paul said.

"Another example was a weekend when I lost 30 lambs - I made sure the ranger went around Goughs Bay to do permit checks but again it could have been a dog from Melbourne up for the weekend.

"Awareness is the key and people understanding there are wild dogs along with dingoes in the bush, and it is something we have to deal with in this region."

Paul works collaboratively with his local professional wild dog controller on trapping, baiting, and shooting.

"Our property is undulating but open country with a pine plantation and bushland on the boundary, so we utilise all the tools for the most effective method of wild dog control," he said.

Paul is keen to share information on predator control.

He has co-developed a livestock management app called AirAgri and uses the FeralScan app as part of the Less Predators More Lambs project to map where baits are laid.

"We should be working collaboratively as an industry as the more data points we have, whether it is my neighbour telling me he saw a wild dog come over the hill towards our property or he trapped a dog last week, it means I know how to prepare my sheep or cattle pre-lambing and calving.

"You need to be transparent and open about what you do, not only as an individual but also as an enterprise and industry as we cannot grow without collaboratively discussing those variables and differences between each other.

"When I got into the sheep business five years ago, coming from a background of Angus cattle, I needed to learn, so jumped in on the programs, including Lifetime Ewe Management also with Agridome Consultancy, wool classing, a shearing course and Less Predators More Lambs, in fact anything I can do to learn more about the industry.

"I've always been under the presumption you can never learn too much about your enterprise."

Paul concedes he is a conservationist, studying a bachelor's degree in animal veterinary biosciences and completing his thesis on the mountain pygmy possum, which is under threat from predation and climate change.



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Farming regeneratively, he is keen to increase the productivity of the flock under Less Predators More Lambs while being sensitive to the environment.

“The lamb survival and marking percentages have been getting better given my education on how to perform feed budgets and prepare ewes for lambing, whether that be feed on offer, condition score, mob sizes and animals per hectare,” he said.

“Given I’m five years fresh into breeding sheep, the project has been a great co-lab of individuals in the group discussing formulas and datasets that can contribute to you becoming a better farmer.

“Everything in these courses is ideal for the betterment of the industry and being more productive.

“Being less than 90 per cent efficient in lambing and weaning percentages means you have too many animals not being productive.”

**For More Information, contact the PDS Facilitator:**

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