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MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

meatup FORUM

Broken Hill, NSW

14 October 2026

Hear about the latest red meat R&D and adoption programs

Access tools and insights tailored to your business

Take next steps to grow your red meat enterprise

MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

About MLA

Meat & Livestock Australia Limited (MLA) delivers research, development and marketing services to Australia's cattle, sheep and goat producers. MLA has approximately 50,000 livestock producer members who have stakeholder entitlements in the company.



Program

14 October 2026		
8:00am	**Arrival and registrations, tea and coffee**	
Session 1		
9:00am	**Event welcome, housekeeping and Forum schedule** **Elizabeth Thelander** – Meat & Livestock Australia	
9:10am	**MLA welcome and update** **Sarah Strachan** – Meat & Livestock Australia	
9:45am	**Market Update** **Emiliano Diaz** – Meat & Livestock Australia	
10:15am	**Making serious sheep breeding decisions** **Gordon Refshauge** – SheepMetrix	
10:50am	**Morning tea**	
Session 2		
11:20am	**Animal health update** **Aden Macdougall** – Zoetis	
11:45am	**Succession planning – panel session** **James Hamilton** – Cultivate Advisory, **Amy and Nick Mannion** – Nundora Station, **Erin and Sam Beven** – Sturt's Meadows Station	
12:45pm	**Lunch**	
Session 3		
1:45pm	**Rangeland living skin project in focus** **Sarah McDonald** – Department of Primary Industries	
	Breakout sessions **Main room**	**Function room 2**
2:15pm	**Organic lamb – capturing value in premium markets** **Garry Hannigan –** Churinga Station, **Charlie Brandon –** Hewitt Foods, **Eloise Innes** – Hewitt Foods	**How we are building a profitable business: The hard chats we need to be having in Western NSW** **James McClure** – Netallie Station
2:45pm	**Improving tactical decision making – gaining skills for better rangeland management** **Callen Thompson** – AgSTAR Projects, **Christine Plummer** – Local Land Services, **Bree Wakefield** – Banoon Station	**Connecting visitors with agriculture at Mt Gipps Station Stay** **Sam Maiden –** Mt Gipps Station
3:15pm	**Afternoon tea**	
Session 4		
3:45pm	**Measured Goats project update** **Tom Granleese** – Department of Primary Industries and Research Development	
4:20pm	**Breeding the meat you want to eat – turning data into on-farm decisions** **Peter McGilchrist** – University of New England	
Session 5		
5:00pm	**Wrap-up** **Elizabeth Thelander** Meat & Livestock Australia	
5:05pm	**Networking, canapes and drinks**	


Vet
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See how Australian vets and producers are $aving business.
Pestivirus robs beef and dairy cattle producers blind. Hear from these vets and producers on why they use Pestigard to protect their business. Pestivirus is a national, insidious and underestimated disease that can be very costly if not managed properly.
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Welcome

MLA's MeatUp Forums are held throughout southern Australia to give you the latest in red meat R&D. They are developed by regional producer working groups that include members from the Far Western Australia Livestock Research Council, in collaboration with MLA staff.

MLA's MeatUp Forums have been developed to keep you informed about:

- what MLA can offer your red meat business,
- new and completed R&D that is relevant to your region and enterprise,
- the role and responsibilities of the livestock research councils,
- opportunities to get involved in regional R&D and priority-setting,
- practical tools and programs available to you,
- opportunities to enhance your productivity and profitability.

Today you will be presented with clear and practical ideas, information, and tools that you can take home and put into practice on-farm. We thank all presenters for their involvement in MeatUp and encourage you to make the most of your time with them today.

Thank you

MLA would like to thank our 2026 gold sponsor **Zoetis** for their ongoing support of producer awareness adoption events.

Event location

Broken Hill Civic Centre| 31 Chloride St, Broken Hill, NSW, 2880

Forum Coordinator

Elizabeth Thelander
Meat & Livestock Australia
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Regional Working Group



Trudie Atkinson

Technical Specialist Training Systems

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

About Trudie

Trudie Atkinson is a Technical Specialist (Grazing Systems) with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. She has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural research, development and extension across NSW and Queensland, including a decade as a Sheep and Wool Officer in western NSW.

Her work has focused on rangeland grazing systems, small ruminant production, and the practical application of research through producer-focused programs and partnerships.

Trudie has led and contributed to a range of flagship research and extension projects aimed at improving the productivity, resilience and sustainability of livestock enterprises. Her recent and current work includes *Measured Goats*, *Perennial Pastures Resilient Rangelands*, the *Goat Data Collation and Tracking*, and *Going Ahead with Goats*. She also coordinates the *PROGRAZE* and *Tactical Grazing Management* programs.



Ryan Hayward

North East Pastoral Community Landscape Officer

SA Arid Lands Landscape Board

About Ryan

Ryan Hayward is the North East Pastoral Community Landscape Officer for the SA Arid Lands Landscape Board based in Port Augusta.

Through this role, Ryan provides the link between community and local/regional landscape management decisions, activities, and events.

He is passionate about working with landholders and those within the North East District to manage pests, implement best practice land management and foster connections through community engagement activities including workshops, field days and education events to encourage behaviour change at a local level.

Ryan has enjoyed working with other passionate people on the Broken Hill Meatup Forum Working Group – learning more about cross border operations and regional issues.



Amy and Nick Mannion

Owner/Operators

Nundora Station

About Amy and Nick

Nick and Amy Mannion, together with their 5 children run Nundora Station – a family-owned property north of Broken Hill.

They are passionate about the operation of their sheep, cattle and goats and are continually trying to improve and learn new ways of making sure they are progressing with their profitability and running a successful and sustainable operation that can be left for their children.

They love the land they live on and feel very privileged to be a part of this event with Meat & Livestock Australia.



Kieran Smith

Sheep Technology and Production Advisor – Project Manager

For Flocks Sake

About Kieran

Kieran Smith is the Sheep Technology and Production Advisor and Project Manager at For Flocks Sake, a vet-based sheep consultancy business.

Kieran works closely with commercial producers and stud breeders to improve flock productivity, delivering on-farm advisory services, research and extension projects and assisting with adoption of sheep technologies.

Kieran holds a Bachelor of Rural Science and has built his career working with livestock businesses including several years working on sheep and cattle enterprises as well as livestock extension and advisory roles across Australia.

MLA Representatives



Sarah Strachan

General Manager Research, Development and Adoption

About Sarah

Sarah is the General Manager of Research, Development & Adoption (RD&A) at Meat & Livestock Australia.

MLA invests over $100m annually with research organisation and commercial partners in RD&A initiatives that support the ambitions of increasing the profitability and productivity of the livestock sector such as animal wellbeing, land and livestock productivity, environmental sustainability, value-based marketing and product development.

Sarah is motivated to ensure good research can be converted into adoption-ready services and resources for businesses along the entire supply chain.

Examples of Sarah's involvement in this approach is genetics research commercialised through BREEDPLAN and Sheep Genetics and eating quality research delivered through the Meat Standards Australia grading system where over half of all cattle processed annually are being MSA graded and exciting opportunities are emerging for the sheep industry.

Sarah has a Bachelor of Rural Science qualification from the University of New England and has worked with MLA for over 24 years.



Elizabeth Thelander

Project Manager– Producer Led Adoption

About Elizabeth

Elizabeth is the Project Manager – Producer Led Adoption at Meat & Livestock Australia, working within the Producer Adoption team. She manages the delivery of MeatUp forums across southern Australia and the Profitable Grazing Systems program nationally – supporting red meat producers to adopt proven practices that improve productivity and profitability.

Elizabeth has experience in agricultural extension, program delivery, stakeholder engagement, and adult learning. She also has a broad background in extension delivery across the red meat and dairy industries in Australia.

Elizabeth studied a Bachelor in Agricultural Business Management at Charles Sturt University and enjoys the practical, collaborative, and outcomes-focused approach to driving adoption and industry impact.



Emiliano Diaz

Senior Market Information Analyst

About Emiliano

Emiliano Diaz is a Senior Market Information Analyst at Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA0 – covering production, supply and market trends across the cattle, sheep and goat industries, as well as live exports and the goat market.

He is responsible for key MLA publications including the Global Goatmeat Snapshot, Cattle and Sheep Industry Projections and feedlot briefs.

A fourth-generation cattle producer from Uruguay, Emiliano holds a degree in Agriculture and a Master of Agribusiness from the University of Queensland.

His experience spans livestock and cropping systems in Uruguay and Australia, combining practical industry knowledge with domestic and global market insights.



Sally Leigo

Program Manager Adoption

About Sally

Sally is a nationally recognised leader in research adoption with more than 16 years' experience delivering beef research and extension across Northern Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, a Master of Rangeland Management, and is a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Program (Course 26). Her work has been acknowledged through multiple awards, including the National Landcare Award for Innovation in Agricultural Land Management and the NT Chief Minister's Medal.

As Program Manager for Adoption at Meat & Livestock Australia, Sally leads the strategy, investment and delivery of MLA's national adoption program, overseeing the program, a team of project managers, and more than 120 service providers. Her leadership ensures research is designed with adoption in mind and is utilised by producers to increase profitability and sustainability.

MLA's adoption investments continue to deliver strong, measurable outcomes, generating $81.6 million in net annual benefits in 2024–25 and engaging over 11,000 producers managing. These gains reflect the accelerated practice change and improved business performance achieved through the adoption pathways Sally has championed.

Sally remains committed to strengthening Australia's extension network and expanding producer engagement to meet the ambitions of the Red Meat 2030 plan.



Daniel Forwood

Project Manager – Sheep and Goat Productivity

About Daniel

Dr Daniel Forwood is an agricultural industry professional with experience in research management, government relations and agricultural policy. As Project Manager – Sheep and Goat Productivity at Meat & Livestock Australia, Dan manages Research, Development and Adoption needs and opportunities to improve the productivity and profitability of small ruminant production in Australia. Dan holds a PhD (Ruminant Nutrition) from The University of Queensland, where he earned the coveted title of 'the carrot guy' for his research converting discarded processing vegetables into ruminant feedstuffs. Previously, he has worked in ag-tech innovation, and as a Policy Advisor in agriculture at both state and national levels.



Madeleine Donkin

Events Coordinator

About Madeleine

With more than two decades of experience across events, communications, and business development, Madeleine has built a career delivering impactful stakeholder engagement and strategic growth initiatives.

She currently works as Event Coordinator at Meat & Livestock Australia, following a maternity leave contract as Communications Manager.

Madeleine has held senior leadership roles at Northcott Innovation and Northcott, driving national business development, innovation projects, and communication strategies.

Her background also includes key management positions at UnitingCare NSW.ACT, where she led communication and relationship development portfolios, including strategic fundraising.

Master of Ceremonies



James Hamilton

Succession Planning Facilitator

Cultivate Advisory

About James

James Hamilton is a man who wears two hats. He's a succession planning facilitator as well as a producer.

When not working on his farm near Narromine, he is working with families throughout Australia.

James combines his lived experience and knowledge when working with families to achieve an agreement which works for all family members. He creates the safe environment for all to be heard and understood.

His process and delivery style is designed to deliver a unifying experience for the families he works with.

Notes

MLA welcome and update

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Sarah Strachan

General Manager Research, Development and Adoption

Meat & Livestock Australia

Session abstract

Sarah Strachan, General Manager Research, Development & Adoption at Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) will provide an update on the latest MLA investments shaping the future of Australia's red meat sector.

During the session, Sarah will explore the changing market and consumer landscape driving demand for Australian beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat, and what these trends mean for producers in western New South Wales. The presentation will provide insights into how MLA is investing levy funds to improve productivity, profitability and resilience across extensive grazing systems.

The presentation will highlight emerging research and adoption opportunities relevant to the western NSW region, including genetics, reproductive performance, digital livestock technologies, drought and climate resilience, feedbase productivity, animal health and welfare, and tools that help producers capture greater value from the supply chain. It will also showcase how MLA's investments are helping producers respond to future market requirements while maintaining efficient and profitable livestock businesses.

Practical take-home messages and information on programs, resources and opportunities available to help producers access the latest research and turn into on-farm impact will be included in the session.

Drawing on MLA's strategic focus of creating value, delivering impact and building industry capability, this presentation will also provide producers with a clear picture of how research, development and adoption investments are helping position western NSW enterprises for future success.

Key Messages

MLA is investing today to help producers meet tomorrow's challenges.
Learn how MLA's research, development and adoption investments are improving productivity, profitability and resilience across Australia's red meat sector, with practical applications for western NSW livestock enterprises.

Market trends are creating new opportunities and expectations for producers.
Gain insights into the changing consumer and market landscape driving demand for Australian beef, sheepmeat and goatmeat, and discover how producers can position their businesses to capture greater value from the supply chain.

Turning research into real on-farm impact.
Explore the latest opportunities in genetics, reproductive performance, digital technologies, feedbase management, animal health and climate resilience, and learn how to access MLA programs and resources that support profitable and sustainable livestock production.

Resources

Strategic Plan 2030 mla-2030-strategic-plan-web.pdf

International markets: International markets | Meat & Livestock Australia

North America Global Market Snapshot: north-america_2025-mla-mi-market-snapshot_120226.pdf

Responding to weather and climate variability: https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Environment-sustainability/climate-variability/climate/

Beef Hub: https://mbfp.mla.com.au/

Producer Demonstration Sites: Producer demonstration sites | Meat & Livestock Australia

Bulk-Up Initiative: BulkUp | Meat & Livestock Australia

MLA's elearning platform 'The Toolbox': - The Toolbox - MLA eLearning

Grazing land management: https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/grazing-land-management-hub/

Weed control: https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/feedbase-hub/weed-control/

Sustainability: https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/sustainability-page/

Dung beetles: https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Environment-sustainability/dung-beetles/

Legumes: https://www.mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/feedbase-hub/legumes-hub/

Notes

Relevant tools and resources

Market update trends and analysis

MLA's Market Information analysts examine and interpret developments in, and prospects for, the Australian domestic market, key export markets and major competitors, producing a wide range of publications.

MLA's 2024–25 *Producer Adoption Outcomes* Report

The 2024–25 Producer Adoption Outcomes Report outlines the depth and breadth of adoption projects and programs that Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) delivered for the 2024–25 financial year and how red meat producers benefited from their involvement in them.

MLA membership application

MLA membership is free to levy-paying producers of grass or grain fed cattle, sheep, lambs and/or goats. Benefits of membership include:

- participation and voting rights at the MLA Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- discounts for a range of MLA products and services, ordered via the myMLA catalogue
- invitations to local MLA events
- free subscription to MLA's regular member magazine *Feedback*
- free subscriptions to MLA suite of e-newsletters
- free access to up-to-date publications and information tools

MLA Producer Demonstration Sites

Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) are on-farm projects run by producer groups who want to validate the benefits of incorporating research findings into their businesses. MLA calls for preliminary applications for PDS projects that will help to improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of beef and sheep meat enterprises on an annual basis.

- **MLA Profitable Grazing Systems program**

  Profitable Grazing Systems is a group-based delivery program designed to deliver training and coaching over several months and up to a year to improve producer skills and knowledge. The aim is to achieve practice change on-farm in the areas of people, business, reproduction and genetics, value chain and feedbase.

- **MLA BredWell FedWell**

  BredWell FedWell is a practical, one-day workshop highlighting the key production benefits of superior genetics, plus feed management for improved reproductive performance and livestock productivity. New workshops are coming soon, follow the QR code to express interest.

- **MLA EDGE Network**

  EDGE Network workshops offer practical knowledge and skills on topics such as breeding and genetics, business management, nutrition, grazing and land management. Workshops range from one to three days.

- **BulkUp**

  BulkUp is MLA's long-term peer-supported learning program designed to help red meat producers improve production efficiency, lift profitability and build more resilient farm businesses. BulkUp addresses the national feedbase adoption initiative, referenced in the *'Drive profitable, productive and sustainable growth'* strategic priority in MLA's *Strategic Plan 2030.* It is being delivered under the Natural Capital and Land Productivity Focus 9 theme.

Market update

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Emiliano Diaz

Senior Market Information Analyst

Meat & Livestock Australia

Session Abstract

Australia's red meat industries are continuing to evolve. Livestock supply, productivity, seasonal conditions and global demand are all influencing the outlook for cattle, sheep and goats.

This session will examine the key supply trends shaping each of these sectors and what the latest projections suggest for livestock numbers, slaughter and production over the next three years. It will also explore how current herd and flock dynamics are evolving and where supply pressures may emerge.

Particular attention will be given to the goat industry, including factors influencing goat supply, production and market development.

The session will also take a global perspective, exploring the major forces shaping demand for Australian red meat. This includes changes in international production, livestock availability, consumer demand, trade flows and Australia's position within key export markets.

By bringing together domestic supply trends and the global market outlook, the session aims to provide producers with a clearer understanding of the factors likely to influence livestock markets over the coming years and the opportunities and challenges that may emerge across sectors.

Key messages

1. Supply outlook will shape market opportunities across all red meat sectors
2. The goat industry is a growing sector to watch
3. Global demand trends will be critical to future profitability

Notes

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BulkUp
PASTURE • PRODUCTION • PROFIT

Ready to take the guesswork out of farming?

BulkUp is MLA's long-term learning program for beef, sheep and goat producers who want to improve production efficiency and profitability through practical, measurable change.

Using a whole-farm systems approach, participants will receive:

- One-on-one coaching
- Peer-learning support
- Face-to-face access to MLA's extension/adoption programs
- Business benchmarking



To find out more or register your interest, visit: **mla.com.au/bulkup**

Making serious sheep breeding decisions

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Gordon Refshauge

Senior Consultant

SheepMetrix

About Gordon

Gordon Refshauge grew up in the NSW Southern Tablelands, has a small beef operation and is a landcarer.

He is a former NSW DPIRD Senior Research Scientist who spent 18 years in research, working in the fields of sheep and goat reproduction, nutrition, meat science, genetics and technology research.

He is now working with SheepMetriX and keen to help seedstock and commercial sheep and goat producers achieve faster genetic gain and higher levels of productivity and profit.

Session abstract

The value of sheepmeat is a motivator to change breeding focus toward non-Merino breeds, or within Merino, towards higher reproduction rates or carcase weights. There are many pathways to making greater profits but for self-replacing flocks, classing is where genetics and management combine to impact longer-term profitability.

Genetic tools such as Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) give you terrific insight into how your future flock will perform. Keeping track of rams with ASBVs using RamSelect software is a brilliant way to observe genetic change in your flock, for benchmarking the genetic merit of your rams, and finding sale rams aligned to your goals.

Underpinning genetic change is the breeding objective which you may have in your mind but which may not necessarily be written down in specific terms. How the flock's young ewes are classed relies on a breeding objective and rams must be purchased according to it. However, the proportion of females available for culling depends heavily on the flock weaning rate. While this seems just so simply obvious, Gordon will present information in his talk that looks at the proportion of ewes that are available for culling for any given weaning rate and what that means when we cull females for failing to conceive or failing to rear lambs, or both.

The rubber hits the road when we identify where genetic gain comes from, and how to maximise the performance of the ewe base through management decisions.

This presentation will touch on each of these elements aiming to answer practical questions such as retaining or selling older ewes, rebuilding after drought and the economics of running larger versus smaller-framed animals.

Combining genetics and productivity perspectives, the discussion will provide producers with insights to optimise breeding programs, improve performance and make informed decisions that balance efficiency, profitability and future flock productivity.

Notes

From birth to breeding:
Setting up highly productive cattle

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Aden Macdougall

Area Manager

Zoetis

About Aden

Aden is the Central NSW Livestock Area Manager for Zoetis.

Prior to Zoetis, he has worked in management and supply chain roles for beef businesses in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Session abstract

Aden will cover the following:

- Reproductive disease control in breeders (Pestivirus, 7-in-1, Vibriosis in bulls) and the fundamentals of effective vaccination.
- Respiratory disease in weaners — an often under-recognised constraint on farm and in feedlots, and how to manage it proactively.
- Parasite control — the hidden production impacts and the value of effective drenching programs.

Notes

Succession planning – panel session



James Hamilton

Succession Planning Facilitator

Cultivate Advisory

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Amy Mannion and Nick Mannion

Owner/Operators

Nundora Station



Sam and Erin Beven

Owner/Operators

Sturt's Meadows Station

About Sam and Erin

Sam is a fourth-generation pastoralist on Sturt's Meadows station, 85km North of Broken Hill New South Wales. Erin originally hails from Coffs Harbour, but moved to Broken Hill in 2015, where she met Sam in 2017 and they married in 2019.

They are running a mixed livestock grazing operation with approximately 3,000 Dorper ewes, 3,000 merino ewes, 500 breeding cattle and they also harvest anywhere from 2,000 to 8,000 rangeland goats each year, predominantly done with helicopters, motorbikes and dogs.

They have 4 lovely boys, Harvey (7), Duncan (5), Walter (3) and Russell (1).

Sam is also the current president of the Pastoralists Association of West Darling – a not-for-profit organisation that has been representing the interests of pastoralists in the western division since 1907.

Session abstract

1. Successful succession seldom happens without planning.
2. Families need to talk openly about individual needs so they can plan for the future.
3. Start discussions now to enable the use of 'time' to achieve more of the identified needs.

Next steps

1. Family members each complete a Needs Analysis.
2. Family members meet to discuss individual needs. Develop potential options for achieving as many of the needs as practically possible.

Notes

BredWell FedWell

MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

An introduction to

Breeding and feeding to maximise profit

BredWell FedWell is a practical, one day introductory workshop looking at how productivity and profitability can be improved with good breeding and feeding throughout the livestock production cycle with a specific focus on profit drivers.

- Develop a breeding plan for your livestock enterprise aligned to your profit drivers
- Identify sires and select animals that help you achieve your objectives
- Learn about feeding animals well to achieve your objectives and maximise your genetic investment

The workshops are hosted on-farm and facilitated by professional deliverers. Use the outcomes of the workshop to plan a genetics and nutrition regime suited to your environment and markets to boost profitability.

Informative
Presentations and discussions with deliverers and peers

Interactive
Practical and written activities hosted on-farm

Individualised
Learning outcomes you can apply in your own enterprise

Find out more visit:
mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell



New workshops are available for all sheep types, southern cattle and northern cattle production systems. Register your interest to participate, host or deliver:

mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell

Rangeland living skin project in focus

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Sarah McDonald

Research Scientist

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

About Sarah

Dr Sarah McDonald is a Research Scientist with the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Her research focuses on understanding the impacts of grazing and land management strategies in western NSW semi-arid rangelands, generating evidence to inform management decisions that improve biodiversity, land condition and productivity over the long term.

Session abstract

To make informed decisions regarding adoption of management practices that improve landscape health, producers need evidence of the impact of management strategies and practices on soil, productivity, profitability and other environmental factors. Rangelands Living Skin was a five-year project linking farming families, scientists, education and extension agencies, commercial carbon companies and communications experts to evaluate cost-effective practices that focused on regenerating the NSW rangelands and supporting productive, profitable and sustainable businesses. The project aimed to create an evidence-base and build capacity for widespread adoption of practices that benefit soil, plants, animals and people – the living skin of the rangelands.

Establishment and monitoring demonstration trials of scald reclamation interventions including ripping, high intensity animal impact, water ponding and gypsum found beneficial soil and vegetation outcomes from all practices. At a property scale, planned grazing management (adapting stocking rates to carrying capacity, and strategically grazing and resting land) was demonstrated to significantly increase ground cover (by 2-7%) in NSW rangelands over the long term (>10 years), although results depended on location. Small scale trials on the use of foliar and solid biological stimulant products across four properties did not show benefit in pasture productivity and quality or soil biology.

Monitoring long term trends in fractional ground cover was used to identify trigger points to predict drought effect across 22 rangeland grazing properties. The trigger cover threshold ranged from 70% to 35%, depending on property, and the trigger month ranged from June to August during the growing season. These thresholds can be used to inform when cover is likely to fall below a threshold the following summer, enabling managers to adjust stock levels to reduce the risk of negative landscape and business outcomes in this time.

Assessment of soil organic carbon levels across seven properties revealed soil carbon levels were generally low, there was little correlation with pasture variables at paddock scale and there was considerable spatial variability across paddocks, even at short distances, which can create challenges in detecting small changes in soil carbon associated with management in this region. Methane emissions from livestock were the dominant form of greenhouse gas emissions in rangeland grazing businesses. Average emissions (over five years, 2018-2023) across the four properties

monitored ranged from 260 – 2233 t CO2-e per annum, with the number of livestock carried the primary driver of this difference.

Financial benchmarking of four core producer properties demonstrated it is possible to remain a profitable livestock business whilst simultaneously managing for environmental outcomes in NSW rangeland grazing systems. The four properties were profitable and competitive with top Australian producers involved in the Resource Consulting Services (RCS) ProfitProbe benchmarking program, whilst adopting and adapting management practices to regenerate their landscapes.

Overall, the project demonstrated the value of producer centric, collaborative research for achieving industry relevant outcomes and maximising engagement. Engaging producers is critical in maximising Research, Development and Evaluation (RD&E) and can be encouraged by ensuring a clear value proposition and outcomes of projects that are relevant to producer needs, valuing the time, knowledge and services provided by producers in the project team, supporting producer-led initiatives and ensuring 'local' support and research activities.

Key messages

1. Planned grazing management and targeted management interventions, including water ponding, deep ripping, gypsum and strategic, intensive animal impact can achieve measurable improvements in ground cover, plant diversity, plant biomass and reduced salinity in NSW rangelands. The significance and magnitude of this increase is dependent on property, land type and seasonal condition.
2. Remote sensing provides an accurate, cost-efficient method to monitor and benchmark ground cover and monitoring long-term trends in remotely-sensed cover can be used to identify trigger points to inform when cover is likely to fall below a threshold, enabling managers to adjust stock levels to reduce the risk of negative landscape and business outcomes in this time.
3. It is possible to remain a profitable livestock business whilst simultaneously managing for environmental outcomes in NSW rangeland grazing systems.
4. Producer centric, collaborative research is important for industry relevant outcomes and maximising engagement. The Rangelands Living Skin project highlighted the value of producer involvement in all aspects of project design and delivery, alongside a diverse team of stakeholders, and their role in promoting and communicating project findings to support wider adoption beyond the project. Engaging producers is critical in maximising the R, D &E and can be encouraged by ensuring a clear value proposition and outcomes of project that are relevant to producer needs, valuing the time, knowledge and services provided by producers in the project team, supporting producer-led initiatives and ensuring 'local' support and research activities.

Next steps

Final Report: https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/reports/2025/l.adp.2019---rangelands-living-skin---final-report

Soils for Life case studies: https://soilsforlife.org.au/rangelands-living-skin/

Notes

Organic lamb: Capturing value in premium markets

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Garry Hannigan

Owner/Operator

Churinga Station

About Garry

Garry is the third-generation owner of Churinga Station – a 50,000-hectare station located 130kms east of Broken Hill. Churinga Station has been in the family since 1951.

Churinga is a fully certified organic enterprise running all dorper ewes for organic lamb production.

Garry has spent many years working with a diverse cross section of the community and 12 years spent in the region as a professional wool classer. He has also spent several years contributing to various groups including Bestprac, NSW Farmers, Enterprise Based Conservation, Organic Producer Groups, Pastoralist Association of the West Darling, Nuffield Australia and Local Land Services.

Garry has significant experience working across the sheep, cattle and goat industries and has travelled extensively overseas with a Nuffield scholarship – and is a key guest speaker on organic lamb production across Australia.

Garry was also one of the pioneers of bringing African meat sheep breeds into western NSW and Australia.

He was an early establisher of Organic Certification for lamb in western NSW in 2000.

Garry was awarded a Nuffield Scholarship in 2005, sponsored by MLA, for extensive world travel to study organic lamb production and marketing in 2006.



Charlie Brandon

Southeast Asia Sales Manager

Hewitt Foods

About Charlie

Charlie is the Southeast Asia Sales Manager at Hewitt Foods, based in Brisbane, Australia.

Starting his career on Hewitt properties across Queensland and New South Wales gave Charlie firsthand experience across every stage of the red meat supply chain – from livestock production to processing, domestic and international markets.

Today, Charlie works with customers and strategic partners across Southeast Asia to grow high claims lamb, beef, and pork programs, build enduring relationships, and maximise value throughout the supply chain and across the entire carcase.



Eloise Innes

Producer Extension Officer

Hewitt Foods

About Eloise

Eloise Innes works in producer engagement and livestock supply chain development with Hewitt Foods, supporting producers across its livestock supply network. Her role encompasses producer relationships, livestock assurance, compliance and market programs, with a focus on connecting on-farm practices with supply chain and market requirements.

Eloise has a diverse agricultural background spanning livestock operations, cropping, and agricultural communications. She holds degrees in Agribusiness and Agricultural Science and is passionate about practical, producer-focused approaches to assurance, market access and building stronger connections across the red meat supply chain.

Session abstract

This session will explore the opportunities and challenges shaping Australia's organic livestock supply chain, drawing on insights from Hewitt Foods' experience in domestic and international markets. Participants will gain an overview of key organic export and domestic markets, emerging consumer demand trends and the products and market segments presenting the greatest growth potential for organic producers.

The presentation will examine the realities of operating within an organic supply chain, including supply constraints, certification requirements, market access considerations, and the importance of maintaining product integrity from farm to customer. Attention will also be given to evolving end-consumer expectations, with growing demand for transparency, sustainability, animal welfare, and verified production practices influencing purchasing decisions.

A key focus will be the critical role of livestock traceability, assurance programs, and organic certification in building trust and maintaining access to premium markets. The session will also highlight how every link in the supply chain – from producer and processor through to retailer and consumer – contributes to delivering a credible organic product. By understanding market drivers, supply chain requirements and future opportunities, livestock producers will be better equipped to position their businesses to meet changing market demands and capture value within the growing organic sector.

Notes

How we are building a profitable business: the hard chats we need to be having in Western NSW

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



James McClure

Owner/Operator

Netallie Station

About James

James McClure is the owner/operator of McClure Forward Farming; Netallie Station, Wilcannia.

Session abstract

To build the business we truly want to work for, we must focus on building a strong cohesive team with clear goals and ambitions. To achieve this, you must work through the tough conversations.

True success requires prioritising financial literacy and embracing a mindset of being resourceful over relying on resources.

More wealth is being lost in the office, than from the paddock. Solid financial numeracy along with a skilled management team providing accountability, is the core driver of success.

Key messages

- Tough Conversations; How open dialogue will help navigate tricky generational transfers and why we should be highlighting the value of what we're producing in western NSW
- Strategic Growth: Addressing profitability and adapting your business model to thrive on your property.
- Know Your Numbers: KPI's, target financial ratios, livestock, DSE, grazing days on hand.

Notes

Improving tactical decision making – Gaining skills for better rangeland management

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Callen Thompson

Consultant

AgSTAR Projects

About Callen

Callen is a consulting partner with AgSTAR Projects. He is an extension specialist with a strong technical background in crop and pasture agronomy, beef production and feed base management.

With more than two decades of experience across private industry and government in NSW and the Northern Territory.

Callen is an accredited ProGraze™ and CarbonEDGE deliverer, experienced project manager and facilitator. He is the Coordinator of MLA's Profitable Grazing Systems program.

Callen and his wife Maria own and manage a beef cattle property at Coonabarabran in Central West NSW.



Christine Plummer

Senior Land Services Officer – Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator

Western Local Land Services

About Christine

Christine is a Senior Land Services Officer – Sustainable Agriculture Facilitator for Western Local Land Services and has worked in the New South Wales rangelands for the past four years.

She delivers agricultural advisory and extension services across a range of pasture, livestock and dryland cropping projects, supporting land managers throughout western NSW.

Christine holds a Bachelor of Animal and Veterinary Bioscience from the University of Sydney and has eight years' experience working in extensive grazing systems in southern Australia.



Bree Wakefield

Owner/Operator

Banoon Station

About Bree

Bree is the owner/operator of Banoon Station in Southern Far West NSW with her husband, Ryan.

They have a sheep and cropping enterprise with a focus on fat lamb production over owned and leased properties.

Situated in the Willandra Lakes Regions World Heritage Area, they aim to run a highly successful business alongside sustaining their land.

Session abstract

The Profitable Grazing Systems (PGS) package: Improving Tactical Decision Making (ITDM) aims to assist western NSW producers build the skills and confidence in making timely grazing and livestock management decisions in highly variable seasonal conditions. Delivered by Western Local Land Services with support from Meat & Livestock Australia, the program provides practical, paddock-based learning that supports producers to better understand the relationship between pasture condition, livestock performance and business outcomes. The program launched in 2021 and has since graduated four groups of producers from Packsaddle to Booligal.

Developed specifically for the NSW rangelands, ITDM is delivered through five training sessions over 12 to 18 months, allowing participants to apply concepts directly within their own grazing enterprises. The program focuses on practical skills including pasture monitoring, condition scoring livestock, feed budgeting, pasture species identification, understanding livestock nutritional requirements and recognising how grazing management influences plant growth and recovery. Producers also learn to identify key trigger points throughout the year to guide decisions around stocking rates, supplementary feeding and drought preparedness.

A key strength of the program is its non-prescriptive approach. Rather than promoting fixed grazing rotations or set management rules, ITDM combines tactical grazing management principles with local knowledge and experience. This enables producers to develop strategies suited to their own land types, enterprise mix and seasonal conditions. Through on-ground monitoring, group discussion and practical decision-making tools, participants gain confidence in adapting management practices to maximise available feed, maintain pasture condition and improve livestock performance.

By linking these skills with an understanding of pasture recovery and grazing impacts, producers are better equipped to manage climatic variability, make informed tactical decisions and balance production goals with maintaining or improving landscape condition. Through supporting practical, evidence-based management, ITDM aims to improve the profitability, productivity and sustainability of grazing enterprises across the western NSW rangelands.
This presentation will also feature a producer perspective from recently graduated participate, Bree Wakefield from Banoon Station. Bree will share her experience completing the ITDM program, providing practical insights into the application of grazing management principles from the program within a commercial rangeland grazing enterprise. This firsthand account will demonstrate how the ITDM supports producers to adapt management strategies to local conditions and business goals, while improving confidence in decision-making and long-term enterprise resilience.

Key messages

The Improving Tactical Decision Making program:

- Increases producer confidence and capacity to make timely, informed grazing and livestock management decisions.
- Improves the adoption of pasture monitoring, feed budgeting and livestock assessment.
- Strengthens pasture condition and livestock performance for improved business resilience in variable conditions.

Notes

Connecting visitors with agriculture at Mt Gipps Station Stay

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Sam Maiden

Owner/Operator

Mt Gipps Station

About Sam

Sam and Richard Maiden are first generation owner/operators of Mt Gipps Station Stay at Mt Gipps Station, near Broken Hill in Far West New South Wales. They run an organic sheep enterprise and welcome guests to the working property through its StationStay agritourism business.

They are passionate about helping visitors understand what happens on the land and why – connecting the farm experience with the people and decisions behind food production.

Mt Gipps Station was named 2026 Australian Organic Producer of the Year.

Session abstract

The Maiden's journey started 15 years ago with a bank loan, a ute, a motorbike and some fairly questionable-looking – but affordable – Damara sheep. For the first eight years, their focus was on paying back the bank, developing their bloodlines and achieving organic certification. Over time, they moved to Dorpers – a breed that suited their rangeland environment because of their hardiness, lower handling requirements and ability to support regular cashflow.

Seven years ago, they purchased neighbouring Mt Gipps Station, which came with a Station Stay that had been closed for some time. With plenty of curiosity and a willingness to have a go, they gradually reopened it and began welcoming visitors onto a working pastoral property.

For the Maidens, agritourism isn't about creating a polished version of station life. It's about sharing the real thing – the challenges, the everyday work and, importantly, the wins. Guests are genuinely interested in how they live, how they raise our livestock, why organic production matters to them and the practical decisions involved in producing food in a remote rangeland environment.

That connection has become an important part of Mt Gipps Station Stay. Visitors increasingly want more than a bed for the night; they want to understand the property and the people behind it. By sharing their story in simple, honest language, the Maidens help build a greater understanding of agriculture and where food comes from. And, of course, their Highland cattle have become part of that experience too – even though they really keep them just for fun!

This Q&A explores how the Maidens bring visitors into the story of Mt Gipps while continuing to operate their core organic sheep enterprise. They will talk about what has worked, what hasn't, and how tourism has become another income stream in a pastoral business that is naturally exposed to seasonal and climatic variability.

One of the key messages is that agritourism needs to fit the farm – not the other way around. As agritourism gains momentum, there can be pressure to jump on the latest opportunity or trend. Instead, producers need to consider

what genuinely suits their property, their people and their whole-of-farm business.

At the same time, you have to be prepared to test ideas and try new things. The Maidens Paddock to Plate experience is a good example. They gave it a go, learnt a lot and discovered that it was more challenging than expected. Does that mean they abandoned it? No. It means they looked at what worked, what didn't and what they need to change to make it more effective.

Ultimately, their experience is about being authentic, setting clear boundaries between tourism and farm operations, and making sure the visitor experience reflects what genuinely happens. They realised you don't need to manufacture a tourism story – there is already a great story happening every day on Australian farms and stations. Sometimes, you simply need to open the gate and share it.

1. Be authentic – your everyday farm story is the experience.
2. Visitors want to understand real station life: how livestock are raised, why you make the decisions you do, the challenges you face and the wins along the way. You don’t need to manufacture an experience; share what you genuinely do.
3. Agritourism needs to fit the farm, not the other way around.
4. Tourism should complement the core agricultural enterprise, provide income diversification and work within the realities of the property. Don’t simply follow the latest agritourism trend—work out what makes sense for your whole-of-farm business.
5. Have a go, test ideas and be prepared to adapt.
6. Not every idea will work perfectly the first time. New ideas can be challenging, but trying, learning and refining is part of building a resilient business. You don’t have to get it right the first time—you just have to be willing to learn and improve.

Key messages

1. Be authentic – your everyday farm story is the experience. Visitors want to understand real station life: how livestock are raised, why you make the decisions you do, the challenges you face and the wins along the way. You don’t need to manufacture an experience; share what you genuinely do.

2. Agritourism needs to fit the farm, not the other way around. Tourism should complement the core agricultural enterprise, provide income diversification and work within the realities of the property. Don’t simply follow the latest agritourism trend – work out what makes sense for your whole-of-farm business.

3. Have a go, test ideas and be prepared to adapt. Not every idea will work perfectly the first time. New ideas can be challenging, but trying, learning and refining is part of building a resilient business. You don’t have to get it right the first time – you just have to be willing to learn and improve.

Notes

Measured Goats Project update



Tom Granleese

Research Officer Quantitative Genetics

Department of Primary Industries
and Development

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10

About Tom

Tom is a Quantitative Geneticist, working with NSW DPIRD. Tom leads the Measured Goats project and is on a mission to unlock the genetic potential of Australia's goat population with modern genetic selection tools, driving productivity gains for producers.

Tom's strengths lie in the adoption of research and collaborative approaches to achieving research outcomes.

Tom is also well-known for making a significant difference in the rate of genetic progress in the Australian cattle and sheep industries.

Session abstract

Australia’s goatmeat industry is heavily reliant on the Rangeland goat, yet there has historically been little objective performance or genetic information available to help producers determine which animals and breeding systems are most profitable. The Measured Goats project is addressing this gap by benchmarking Rangeland, Boer and Kalahari genetics and their crosses under common management, while building the phenotypic and genomic information required for future genetic improvement. The project is collecting comprehensive measures of growth, reproduction, carcase, parasite resistance, structural and other commercially important traits across approximately 10,000 progeny.

Early results demonstrate that breed alone does not tell the whole story. Large variation exists between sires within both Rangeland and meat breeds. For post-weaning weight breeding values, some high-performing Rangeland bucks outperform lower-performing meat-breed bucks, while substantial within-breed differences translate into large potential differences in lifetime progeny carcase value. Similar overlap between breed groups is evident for eye muscle and fat traits, highlighting the opportunity to move from visual assessment and breed assumptions towards objective buck selection.

First-parity results from project born does demonstrate significant differences in mature size, reproductive performance and doe rearing ability. Rangeland does were substantially lighter than meat-breed does while achieving similar conception and greater doe rearing ability. When productivity was expressed relative to feed demand, the advantages of smaller, productive females became increasingly important. Early system modelling indicated that mating meat-breed sires to Rangeland does produced the highest post-weaning carcase value per DSE joined, combining the lower maintenance requirements and rearing ability of the Rangeland female with the additional growth of terminal sires. However, considerable variation within breeds means further cohorts are required before optimal production systems can be conclusively defined.

For producers, these findings identify two complementary opportunities. Genetic improvement allows better bucks to be selected for the traits that drive enterprise profitability, while breeding-system design allows maternal efficiency and terminal growth to be combined to maximise kilograms of saleable product per hectare. Existing KIDPLAN breeding values already provide a practical tool for selecting performance-recorded meat bucks, while the Measured Goats project is developing the information required to extend objective selection into Rangeland populations. Ultimately, profitable goat production is not simply about producing the heaviest individual animal. It is about identifying the genetics and breeding systems that produce the greatest value from the available grazing resource.

Notes

Breeding the meat you want to eat: Turning data into on-farm decisions

Session Rating		
Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10



Peter McGilchrist

Professor in Meat Science

University of New England

About Peter

Peter grew up on a beef cattle property in the North-West of NSW and is a passionate educator. He is Professor of Meat Science at the University of New England and president of the Australian ICMJ association.

His research revolves around ensuring global consumer satisfaction of Australian red meat covering all aspects of red meat supply-chains focusing on critical control points which affect the eating quality of meat from genetics to on-farm management, processing, tech-to-measure meat traits through to the consumer.

Session abstract

Today's beef, sheep and goat industries are under increasing pressure to deliver greater value from every animal, with consumers expecting consistently high-quality eating experiences while processors seek more efficient and predictable supply. This presentation will explore practical, research-backed opportunities producers can use to improve carcase value and position their enterprises for future market demands.

A key focus will be on the value created from segregating lambs for quality rather than simply weight and fatness. The new MSA model for lambs and hoggets will help capture premiums in quality-driven markets. We'll discuss where current value is being left on the table and how smarter segregation should become the norm for improving returns. We will also examine how genetics can drive eating quality, highlighting emerging opportunities to select for tenderness, marbling and overall consumer satisfaction alongside traditional production traits in a balanced way. Breeding program decisions made today will be still impacting in 10 years! The aim is to produce animals that not only grow efficiently but also meet the expectations of premium domestic and export markets – and plenty of them to meet demand.

New research into goatmeat quality, an area attracting growing commercial interest as demand for goatmeat continues to expand, will also be discussed. We'll discuss emerging insights into carcase attributes, tenderness, marbling and dressing % from cohorts 1 and 2 of the 'Measured Goats' project. This will uncover possible opportunities for value creation in the goatmeat industry and where future research is likely to influence industry practice.

Another practical topic will be the impact of time off feed on carcase weight. Recent findings show that increased feed withdrawal before slaughter can decrease carcase weight, generating important implications for transport planning, marketing decisions and overall profitability. Understanding these weight losses allows producers to better manage the balance between logistics, animal welfare and financial outcomes.

Drawing on current Australian meat science research, this session will connect genetics, nutrition, handling and processing with the characteristics consumers ultimately experience on the plate. Whether you're producing prime lambs, rangeland goats or breeding stock, the presentation aims to provide practical insights that can be applied on-farm to increase carcase value, improve market outcomes and strengthen the future competitiveness of Australia's sheep and goat industries.

Key messages

- Segregation of sheepmeat on quality rather than just weight and fatness will be more the norm in 10 years to extract greater value for the animals we already produce. The genetic decisions you make today will still be having an impact in 10 years on your flock or mob so what meat quality traits are in your breeding objective?
- The variation in carcass and meat quality traits within a goat breed is up to 100 times greater than the variation between breeds. It is important to get the right animal into your mob using KidPlan, not just the right breed. Cross breeding can also generate huge benefit for carcass and meat quality traits.
- Reduced time off feed before slaughter has huge benefits for carcass weight and system efficiency across beef, lamb and goat industries. Small reductions in time off feed, at home or at the abattoir, produces large gains in carcass weight making producers more income and generating efficiency for processors too.

Next steps

www.sheepgenetics.org.au/resources/kidplan

www.sheepgenetics.org.au/resources/lambplan

www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/reports/2025/b.flt.1022---effect-of-short-duration-lairage-on-ante-mortem-inspection-carcass-characteristics-and-microbiological-status-of-feedlot-cattle-during-winter-conditions

Notes

My take-home messages and actions

Reflect on the presentations delivered at the MeatUp Forum. For those of relevance to you, note the session title, your key messages, and actions you can take to implement ideas.

Session	Action – things I could do to implement ideas

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