

meatup FORUM

Cooma, NSW

13 May 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

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

13 May 2026	
8:00am	Arrival and registrations, tea and coffee
Session 1	
9:00am	Event welcome, housekeeping and forum schedule – 10 minutes Elizabeth Thelander – Meat & Livestock Australia
9:10am	MLA welcome and update – 30 minutes Sarah Strachan – Meat & Livestock Australia
9:40am	Managing your feedbase on the Monaro – 40 minutes Jim Virgona – Graminus Consulting
10:20am	Introducing your peak industry bodies – 20 minutes Samuel Martin – Cattle Australia Corinne Dooley – Sheep Producers Australia
10:40am	Morning tea
Session 2	
11:10am	Managing acid soils – 40 minutes Dr Richard Hayes – DPIRD and John Jeffreys – Delegate Station Pastoral Co.
11:50am	From birth to breeding: Setting up highly productive cattle – 30 minutes Matt Petersen – Zoetis
12:20pm	Virtual farm tour – ‘Hillcrest’, Gunning – 35 minutes Jen Medway – Penrose Pastoral
12:55pm	Lunch
Session 3	
1:50pm	BredWell FedWell – Cattle – 45 minutes Jake Phillips – Phillips Livestock Solutions
2:40pm	Fertility of maidens – 45 minutes Gordon Refshauge – SheepMetriX
3:30pm	Afternoon tea
Session 4	
4:00pm	What 2026 holds for the market – an insightful look ahead – 25 minutes Stephen Bignell – Meat & Livestock Australia
4:25pm	Turning reproductive potential into reality – 40 minutes Jason Trompf – J.T. Agri-source Pty Ltd
Session 5	
5:05pm	Wrap-up Elizabeth Thelander Meat & Livestock Australia
5:15pm	Networking, canapes and drinks

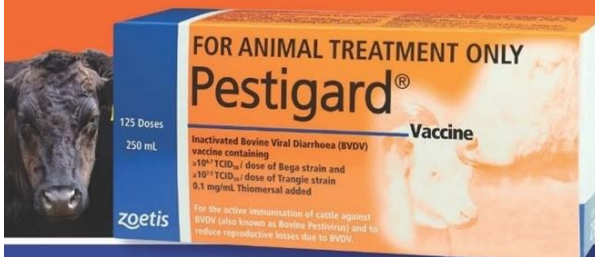


See how Australian vets and producers are **\$aving** business.

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 Southern 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

Cooma Multi Function Centre | 10 Boundary St, Cooma, NSW, 2630

Forum Coordinator Contact

Elizabeth Thelander

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Regional Working Group



Camilla Beck

Executive Officer

Tablelands Farming Systems

About Camilla

Camilla lives on a small property in Goulburn with her young family. Together with her husband, they lease land around Goulburn and own a farm at Laggan, running a sheep and cattle enterprise.

Camilla is the Executive Officer at Tablelands Farming Systems (TFS) and has been with the organisation since 2022. Prior to joining TFS, Camilla worked at Regional Development Australia Southern Inland for 4 years, as the Project and Communications Officer. In this role, Camilla worked closely with local community members and industry to help drive growth and development in the region. Camilla holds a Bachelor of Business with a Masters in Communication Management. Camilla also currently runs the Goulburn Young Farmers Network, established to bring local young farmers together and share knowledge.



John Jeffreys

Owner Operator

Delegate Station Pastoral Company

About John

John is a fifth-generation farmer on the Monaro.

He received his Bachelor of Agribusiness from the University of Sydney and now owns and operates Delegate Station Pastoral Company with brother, Will. Delegate Station primarily breeds and finishes prime lambs in addition to cropping. John volunteers for the Bombala Junior Rugby League and supports various community organisations.

John is also the Chair of the Monaro Farming Systems (MFS).



Rebecca Kading

Executive Officer

Monaro Farming Systems (MFS)

About Rebecca

Rebecca has been an integral member of the MFS team for over six years. She began her career with the organisation in an administration role, progressed to Projects and Finance Officer, and became the Executive Officer in 2024. Her roles have allowed her to develop strong skills in project management and finance.

Living in Delegate on the Southern Monaro, Rebecca has deep ties to her community, rooted in her family's farming history. She volunteers as the treasurer of the Delegate R.S.L sub-Branch and is involved with various other local organisations.

As a mother of three young children, Rebecca balances her professional responsibilities and volunteer roles with family life.



Lisa Phillips

Producer

Monaro Farming Systems

About Lisa

After studying Ag Science at Sydney Uni, Lisa came home to help on the family farm at Jerangle for 6 months. 35 years later, she has now raised her family on that same farm.

She is a fierce advocate for young people (particularly women) pursuing careers in Agriculture and has been known to shout "Girl power!" in the paddocks.



Jo Powells

Senior Agriculture Advisor - Pastures

Southeast

Local Land Services

About Jo

Jo is a Senior Agriculture Advisor based on the Monaro. With a strong commitment to supporting landholders in regional communities to implement sensible and sustainable agricultural practices, Jo provides training and skill development for landholders across a range of agricultural programs including PROGRAZE and LANDSCAN and provides advice particularly focussing on soil and pasture management.

With over 20 years in agricultural research and extension, Jo has worked closely with landholders to help them better understand their natural resources and navigate challenges in an ever-changing industry. Based in the Snowy Mountains for most of her career, she also runs cattle and a few sheep with her partner, Patrick.



Dr Alison Southwell

CEO

Holbrook Landcare Network

About Alison

Dr Alison Southwell has been CEO of Holbrook Landcare Network (HLN) since 2021, following a 19-year career as an agricultural scientist and lecturer at Charles Sturt University.

She holds a PhD in native grassland ecophysiology, with expertise in pasture management, agricultural systems, extension and education.

HLN is a leading Landcare organisation in south-eastern NSW, delivering research, adoption and community programs supporting sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship.

Alison also co-manages a mixed farming and cropping contracting business, chairs SALRC (SNSW), and is a proud mother of two.

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.

MLA MEATUP FORUM – COOMA, NSW



Stephen Bignell

Manager – Market Information

About Stephen

Steve has run MLA's Market Information and National Livestock Reporting Service (NLRS) division for over five years.

He and his team look after the red meat sector's production, pricing and supply insights – monitoring and analysing market trends and forecasting livestock numbers and production.

Steven originally hails from a mixed farming enterprise in WA's Great Southern region.



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.



Stuart Bull

Project Manager – Southern Livestock Adoption

About Stuart

Stuart Bull is a Project Manager with the Southern Livestock Adoption program, where he leads and supports a diverse portfolio of small, medium, and large-scale adoption initiatives across all major agricultural enterprise systems in intensive southern production systems, including beef, sheep, pasture, and cropping.

His work focuses on coordinating projects that deliver practical, on-farm outcomes through strong stakeholder engagement and effective program delivery.

Originally from a family mixed cropping and livestock farm near Narrandera in the Riverina, Stuart brings a grounded understanding of production agriculture to his role, helping bridge the gap between research, extension, and on-farm decision-making. He works closely with producers and industry partners across regional Australia to improve outcomes for producers and advisors.



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



Sally Martin

Managing Director/Senior Consultant

SheepMetriX

About Sally

Growing up on the Monaro, livestock has always been my passion. I pursued an Ag Degree and postgrad studies specialising in Genetics and Animal Breeding and Project Management.

My career has taken a number of paths, working with NSW DPI for 20 years, before setting up my consultancy business, SheepMetriX, in 2011. Based in Young NSW, SheepMetriX supports sheep producers across Australia and internationally, with a focus on assisting clients to capture and utilise data to make informed decisions around breeding program design, genetic selection, reproduction performance and grazing management.

I have delivered extension and research initiatives, with a strong emphasis on translating science into practical, on-farm solutions in the sheep genetics space.

I currently serve on several industry boards and committees, including National Livestock Genetic Consortium Taskforce, Sheep Genetics Advisory Committee, Future Flock Advisory Panel, Precision Sheep Management Project, Measured Goat Project, NSW eID Implementation Reference Group, Peter Westblade Scholarship and Monaro Farming Systems group.

Notes

MLA welcome and update



Sarah Strachan

General Manager Research,
Development and Adoption
Meat & Livestock Australia

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

Session abstract

Australian red meat producers operate in an increasingly complex environment where profitability, productivity, sustainability and trust from the consumer must all move forward together.

This presentation provides an update on the investment Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is making in marketing and research, development and adoption (RD&A) to help southern NSW livestock producers capture demand, lift on-farm performance and build resilience for the long term.

Global demand for Australian beef and sheepmeat remains strong, with exports exceeding \$18 billion annually and access to more than 90 markets. While population growth is often cited as a driver of demand, MLA's market insights show that real opportunity lies with consumers who can 'afford to choose' red meat. Rising middle-income households, particularly in North America, North Asia and parts of South-East Asia, value eating quality, trust, nutrition and integrity. When surveying Australian consumers, health and nutrition, especially protein and iron, are the leading reasons people increase red meat consumption, while cost remains the primary reason for reducing intake. Trust in the red meat industry strongly correlates with higher consumption, reinforcing the importance of credible on-farm practices, transparency and community communications.

For southern NSW producers, MLA's RD&A investments are tightly aligned to regional priorities identified through the Southern Australian Livestock Research Council (SALRC) and continuous review of the operating environment with Peak Industry Bodies. Current and upcoming work includes solutions for pinkeye, bloat, parasite control, flystrike, foot health, African lovegrass management and improved diagnostics for nutrition and reproduction. New tools such as longer-acting pain relief, non-chemical parasite controls and crush-side diagnostics are aimed at improving animal welfare and productivity without adding complexity.

A feature of the presentation is genetics as a driver of productivity, market compliance and sustainability. MLA is accelerating multibreed genetic evaluation to allow fair comparison across breeds and faster genetic gain. Importantly, new methane breeding values show producers do not have to trade off productivity or eating quality to reduce emissions. There is opportunity to select animals that perform well across yield, marbling, tenderness and lower methane output. These tools directly support Australia's ambition to contribute to low emissions ambitions while maintaining profitability.

Whole-farm resilience is another key theme, with initiatives in southern Australia like 'More Beef from Pastures,' heifer optimisation projects and precision technologies such as virtual fencing that can help lift lifetime productivity and reduce inefficiencies.

Finally, the presentation highlights MLA's strong focus on adoption, embedding extension into R&D from day one through programs like EDGE Network, Producer Demonstration Sites and producer-led groups, so research translates into real outcomes on-farm. Together, these investments aim to ensure southern NSW producers are well positioned to remain profitable, trusted and competitive in a changing global market.

Key Messages

1. You can lift productivity and meet future market expectations at the same time. Producers do not need to choose between productivity, eating quality and lower emissions. MLA research shows there is wide variation between animals, meaning you can select cattle and sheep that perform well for growth, carcass traits and eating quality while also having lower methane emissions. New tools such as methane breeding values and multibreed genetic evaluation will allow more informed sire and replacement decisions across breeds.

2. Reproductive efficiency is a big profit lever in southern systems. Southern beef data shows lifetime productivity is strongly driven by early conception and re conception, yet only around half of heifers are currently achieving this consistently. Improvements in repro performance pay year after year and small improvements compound into big gains.

3. Trust and cost drive demand and on farm practices influence both. Consumers are increasingly motivated by health, nutrition and trust, while cost remains the main reason red meat consumption declines. MLA data shows higher trust in the red meat industry is directly linked to higher consumption. On-farm welfare practices, environmental stewardship and verified credentials help build that trust and protect demand.

Notes

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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.



Managing your feedbase on the Monaro



Jim Virgona

Director

Graminus Consulting

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

About Jim

Jim Virgona received a PhD in plant physiology from ANU then worked for NSW DPI as a research agronomist (pastures) before joining CSU (1999-2013) as a lecturer in agronomy. There he developed his interests in pasture management, grazing crops and evidence-based agriculture. He co-founded of Graminus Consulting and provides advisory, research and education services grazing industries.

Session abstract

This presentation will look at practical, well-tested ways of managing grazing systems on the Monaro. Instead of chasing broad or speculative ideas, it focuses on understanding the limits set by the environment and avoiding unnecessary complexity that doesn't pay off. Drawing on past experience, the talk makes the case that getting the basics right often brings the biggest gains. At its core, it's about keeping things simple, realistic, and suited to the landscape.

Notes

BulkUp is MLA's long term learning program helping red meat producers improve production efficiency, lift profitability and build more resilient farm businesses.

Participants will receive:

- A guided whole-farm systems approach
- Peer-to-peer support
- Business benchmarking
- Access to in-depth extension/adoption programs

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



Cattle Australia



Samuel Martin

Southern Extension Officer

Cattle Australia

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

About Samuel

Samuel Martin is the Southern Extension Officer with Cattle Australia. His background spans farming, stock and station agency, and corporate agriculture, alongside leadership roles in genetics and production systems.

Based in Walcha, New South Wales, he co-operates the Southcote Shorthorn Stud with his wife Jodie, combining seedstock breeding with large-scale trading operations.

Session abstract

- Cattle Australia (CA) is the national peak body for the grass-fed cattle industry, providing a visible, unified, and influential voice for producers.
- CA aims to create business value for Australia's cattle producers in areas where they cannot succeed by working alone and is committed to advocating to create a sustainable industry for future generations.
- Our purpose is to be a powerful advocate representing the interests of cattle producers and beef lovers everywhere.
- To achieve this, CA provides clear leadership and direction for the grass-fed cattle industry by:
 - developing and driving contemporary policy;
 - guiding research, development, and adoption (RD&A) and marketing investment; and
 - engaging on all matters important to the Australian cattle industry.
- We strive to work directly with grass-fed cattle producers to identify their greatest concerns, issues or priorities and advocate to governments, supply chains and other stakeholders for outcomes.
- Currently, CA's work is focused on four pillars:
 - Biosecurity and animal welfare
 - Levy investment accountability and Government advocacy
 - The environment and sustainability
 - Trade and market access
- CA is democratically structured so that every levy payer has the opportunity to be heard and to participate in CA decision making.
- CA is governed by a Board of seven democratically elected Directors.
- Our Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) comprises 15 directly elected grass-fed levy payers from 15 Sub-Regions, plus 7 SFO representatives, and a Chair and delivers direct line of consultation with grassroots producers.
- CA is supported by 10 paid staff, with policy officers overseeing the associated voluntary working groups comprised of various industry representatives.

- As the peak industry body, our purpose is to be a powerful voice representing grass-fed cattle producers, and your input is integral to that.
- We encourage all grass-fed beef producers, large and small, to become CA members so that we can represent you in ensuring the prosperity of the industry for current and future generations.

Next steps

- We encourage all grass-fed beef producers, large and small, to become CA members so that we can represent you in ensuring the prosperity of the industry for current and future generations.
- For more information, please head to www.cattleaustralia.com.au

Notes

Sheep Producers Australia



Corinne Dooley

Policy Director

Sheep Producers Australia

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

About Corinne

Growing up in Canberra, Corinne’s passion for agriculture was ignited through her family's mixed enterprise farms in the Southern Tablelands of NSW, where she developed a strong interest in the livestock sector.

Corinne has extensive experience advocating for Australian agriculture through her roles with the National Farmers’ Federation (10 years) and Cattle Council of Australia (6 years) across a wide range of policy areas with particular interest and expertise in Trade Policy.

Corinne has worked on many issues of national significance such as:

- Trade
- Natural Resource Management
- Climate Change
- Farm Business development
- Rural Affairs
- Livestock integrity systems
- Drought policy
- Livestock traceability and
- Telecommunications.

Corinne is also the main contact for the Sheep Producers Australia Policy Council.

Session abstract

Corinne Dooley will explore the role of the national sheepmeat advocacy body and how it is navigating some of the industry’s key opportunities and challenges. She will also outline major projects, including The Future Flock - Australia’s first combined sheepmeat and wool industry plan - and the supply chain-backed, nationally delivered Green Sheep Project.

Notes

Managing acid soils



Dr Richard Hayes

Research Agronomist

Department of Primary Industries
and Regional Development

Session Rating

Content:	/	10
Value:	/	10
Presenter:	/	10

About Richard

Dr Richard Hayes commenced at NSW Agriculture in 2000 in a project examining strategies to manage sodic soils of the Bland catchment.

His research since that time has delivered practical outcomes to industry and included evaluations of a range of annual and perennial pasture species, evaluation of perennial cropping systems and acid soil research.

He leads the current NSW DPIRD/MLA investment in acid soils research examining high performance pasture mixtures for acidic soils.



John Jeffreys

Owner Operator

Delegate Station Pastoral Company

Session abstract

Soil acidity is a major constraint to growth in many agricultural soils of NSW and beyond. Moreover, soil acidification is a natural process that is accelerated by production agriculture. Managing soil acidity is therefore fundamental to a sustainable, long-term production system.

Lime remains the most cost-effective product for ameliorating soil acidity. However, recent research has demonstrated that traditional management strategies have been inadequate to stem acidification, particularly of sub-surface soil layers. Two major contributing factors include inadequate soil sampling strategies to identify the extent of the problem, and liming rates that are generally too low to achieve the optimal soil pH.

This presentation details new recommendations for managing acidic soils. They include a more rigorous soil sampling regime that characterises the extent and stratification of soil acidity in the surface 20 cm of soil, sampled in 5 cm increments. New recommendations also include a higher pH target (~ pH_{Ca} 6.0) on soils where subsurface acidity exists to ensure amelioration of subsurface layers over time.

Key messages

- All agricultural production systems acidify soil
- Managing soil acidity requires appropriate soil sampling practices to characterise the extent and severity of soil acidity.
- Subsurface acidity can be managed over time by targeting a higher pH ($\sim \text{pH}_{\text{Ca}} 6.0$) in surface soil layers.

Notes

From birth to breeding: Setting up highly productive cattle

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



Dr Matt Petersen

Veterinary Operations Manager – Livestock
Zoetis

About Matt

Matt Petersen is a Veterinary Operations manager with Zoetis Australia, working closely with vets and producers across the cattle & sheep industries. He focuses on practical ways to lift herd performance through better parasite control, vaccination programs and reproductive management. Matt's work centres on turning known risks, like drench resistance and reproductive disease, into clear, actionable strategies that improve weight gain, fertility and overall productivity.

Session abstract

Productivity in beef systems is driven by a series of cumulative gains across the production cycle, with early-life management decisions having long-lasting impacts on growth, fertility and overall herd performance. This session focuses on two critical but often underappreciated drivers of productivity: parasite control and reproductive disease management.

Internal parasites remain a significant constraint on cattle performance, often operating as a “hidden” production cost. Subclinical burdens can reduce weight gain, delay time to market and compromise reproductive outcomes.

Effective drenching programs are not simply about product selection, but about timing, monitoring and resistance management. This session will highlight the economic impact of parasitism, the importance of faecal egg count monitoring, and practical strategies to maintain drench efficacy and slow resistance development.

Reproductive efficiency is another cornerstone of profitable beef production. Infectious reproductive diseases such as Pestivirus (BVDV) and Campylobacteriosis (Vibriosis) continue to contribute to pregnancy loss, reduced weaning rates and long-term herd inefficiency. Vaccination programs, when implemented correctly, provide a highly effective and predictable method of control. However, success depends on adherence to vaccination protocols, appropriate timing relative to joining, and integration with broader herd health strategies.

The session will also cover the role of vaccination in protecting young and breeding cattle, reinforcing the importance of foundational animal health practices.

Overall, this presentation aims to provide practical recommendations that producers can implement immediately. By improving parasite control and strengthening reproductive disease programs, producers can unlock measurable gains in weight gain, fertility and overall herd productivity.

Key messages

- Effective parasite control programs deliver measurable production gains and require monitoring, correct timing, and resistance management – not just product choice.

- ## Notes

Virtual farm tour – ‘Hillcrest’, Gunning



Jen Medway

Owner Operator

Penrose Pastoral

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

About Jen

Jen is a fifth generation farmer from Gunning, NSW where she helps run a successful commercial merino sheep enterprise in partnership with her husband and three children. Jen sees a strong future for quality food and fibre production and is introducing new technologies and management practices to ensure they continue to grow their fine wool and first cross lamb operation.

She has over 20 years’ experience working in the agriculture industry and holds a Bachelor of Agricultural Economics (Hons) from the University of Sydney and a Diploma of Government. Now at the National Farmers’ Federation, she is General Manager of NFF’s partnerships, projects and events. While at the NFF, Jen previously ran a large Australian Government program focused on addressing gaps in regional telecommunications.

Jen is also a leader in industry and community roles, including as an active executive member on numerous industry and community-based boards and expert advisory groups. She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Australian Rural Leadership Program. Jen is also actively involved in ag-tech and is a technology and commercialisation advisor to agricultural startups.

In 2023, Jen was awarded the Lambition Award for Industry Leadership, was named Upper Lachlan Citizen of the Year in 2024 and was awarded the Local Woman of the Year for the Goulburn Electorate in 2026.

Notes

BredWell FedWell - Cattle



Jake Phillips

Managing Partner

Phillips Livestock Solutions

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

About Jason

Jake Phillips, Phillips Livestock Solutions, works across the beef supply chain helping producers align their genetics with market outcomes. Jake currently serves as the National Coordinator for Bredwell Fedwell, assisting ABRI to deliver the flagship program over the next 5 years.

In this session, Jake challenge the group on their bull selection techniques and strategy. Drawing on industry data and real-world experience, he will break down MLA's BredWell FedWell program into bite size chunks for producers to consider ahead of the full day workshops in their area.

This session is an introductory to BredWell FedWell and will include using live Angus bulls on display from Hazeldean Angus.

Session abstract

BredWell FedWell is a national extension program designed to help beef and sheep producers make more informed decisions around breeding and feeding, with the aim of improving whole-farm productivity and profitability.

At its core, the program brings together practical tools and industry knowledge to help producers better understand how genetics and nutrition interact on their own operation. It focuses on setting a clear breeding objective, selecting the right genetics to match target markets, and aligning feed supply and demand to support those decisions. Rather than being theoretical, BredWell FedWell is built around simple frameworks and hands-on activities that producers can take home and apply straight away.

A key part of the program is breaking down how traits such as fertility, growth, carcass weight and eating quality are influenced by both genetics and management. It also helps producers step back and ask an important question — who is paying for the livestock we produce — and then build a system that is aligned to that market.

At the MeatUp Forum in Cooma, Jake will be showcasing the breeding components of BredWell FedWell. This will focus on how to develop a practical breeding objective, how to use Estimated Breeding Values in a commercial setting, and how to apply selection pressure that actually drives change in a herd over time – with a live animal demonstration using Hazeldean Angus bulls

The aim is to keep it grounded and relevant — giving producers clear, practical steps they can use to tighten up their breeding program and ultimately produce livestock that better meet market specifications.

Key messages

1. Establish an understanding of your current production and genetic base before aspiring to make change
2. Reflect on your herds performance on fertility, growth and carcass value as each will drive profitability at different rates
3. Using all available tools will lead to a more deliberate, balanced and successful breeding outcome

Next steps

Notes

An introduction to Breeding and feeding cattle to maximise profit

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



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



Cooma, NSW

Tuesday, 26 May 2026

When

8.30am for 9.00am–4.30pm

Where

Hazeldean Angus
1410 Maftra Rd
Cooma, NSW

Host

Hazeldean Angus

Deliverer

Alastair Rayner
RaynerAg

Registration

To register: scan the QR code
or visit mla.com.au/bwfw



Limited places - register to attend today:

mla.com.au/bredwellfedwell

Making maidens weight



Dr Gordon Refshauge

Senior Consultant

SheepMetriX

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

About Gordon

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

Reproduction is a cornerstone of a healthy, stable flock or herd. I am agnostic about your net reproduction rate (number of lambs weaned), but I am passionate about lifting inefficiency, wastage and welfare standards. Given high meat prices relative to wool, sustained over 25 years, there is great interest in achieving higher weaning rates. This means pregnancy scanning rate (the number of fetuses per ewe scanned) needs to be higher and must be higher than the number of lambs you wish to wean.

My talk focuses on pregnancy success, drawing on recent research on national pregnancy scanning rates. This work shows an average pregnancy rate of 76% from 15,322 mobs of sheep (7.44M ewes). I also use that massive dataset to present trends in scanning over time, such as the scanning for twins or the scanning of ewe lambs. Having established the average and range of pregnancy rates, my talk touches on some key things to focus on when aiming for better ewe fertility. Of these, recording pre-mating liveweight is a helpful guide to understanding the response your flock has across the liveweight range. I provide examples from two flocks of maiden ewes to demonstrate these effects, including overlaying the birth type of the maiden ewe herself on her reproduction rate (i.e. being born a single or a twin). Hint: twin-born maiden ewes have higher pregnancy rates and higher twinning rates (twinning rate is the proportion of pregnant ewes having twins), which together make for higher pregnancy scanning rates.

I'll wrap up my talk looking at some recent OptiWeigh data from the Southwest Slopes Merino Sire Evaluation.

Key messages

- Variation in pregnancy rates between mobs is enormous, suggestive of under nutrition of adult ewes.
- Lifting pre-mating liveweight in maidens increases pregnancy rate, twinning rate and scanning rate.
- Maiden Merino ewes born as a twin have higher odds of being pregnant, and higher odds of having a twin, when compared to a single-born maiden ewe of the same liveweight. If you class your maidens before mating, and want higher reproduction from them, draft them into singles and twins before mating – and EIDs are central to doing this efficiently.

Next steps

Undertake LTEM or BredWell FedWell courses to upskill yourself and your staff.

Develop an MLA-funded Producer Demonstration Site to understand steps towards adoption in your region.

Notes

An introduction to Breeding and feeding sheep to maximise profit

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Informative

Presentations and discussions with deliverers and peers



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Learning outcomes you can apply in your own enterprise



Bombala, NSW
Thursday, 18 June 2026

When
8.30 am for 9.00 am–4.30 pm

Where
'Greenlake'
950 Monaro HWY
Bombala, NSW, 2632

Host
Brad Yelds
Cobana Pastoral Company

Deliverer
Sally Martin
SheepMetriX

Registration
To register: scan the QR code
or visit mla.com.au/bwfw



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What 2026 holds for the market – an insightful look ahead



Stephen Bignell

Manager – Market Information

Meat & Livestock Australia

Session abstract

Steve will present on the supply, production and price forecasts for the Australian sheep and cattle market out to 2028.

He will also outline what are the key factors impacting the current export market, including the USA herd size and subsequent global protein shortage.

Steve will also outline what is happening in domestic livestock markets since the start of 2026, including the recently released producer intention survey results and feedlot data.

Key messages

- The sheep flock is heading towards its lowest level on record due to poor seasons.
- Low supply, that is supporting the current high sheep prices, is expected to persist.
- Cattle slaughter and production will reach 48-year highs in 2026.

Next steps

After this talk today make sure you stay across all the latest markets and supply data on MLA's trends and analysis, and price and markets page: www.mla.com.au/Prices-markets/

Notes

Turning reproductive potential into reality



Dr Jason Trompf

Director

J.T. Agri-source Pty Ltd

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

About Jason

Jason Trompf from Lambs Alive has been working as Agricultural Consultant for over 25 years.

Jason has a strong background in understanding the drivers and motivators of producers and designing programs that support and enable practice change.

Programs Jason has had significant input into the design, delivery and evaluation of include the Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) and Bred Well Fed Well (BWWF). Each of these programs has engaged over 5,000 producers and are widely recognized for the industry leading impact they have had on changing attitude and practice, as well as lifting productivity, profitability and resilience.

Jason also founded the innovative Lambs Alive program that coaches many sheep businesses. He also manages his family's 1,600 composite ewe and 1600 Angus and Shorthorn cow enterprise. These self-replacing high productivity enterprises provide Jason with a strong practical background and a constant reality check of the challenges that producers face on a day-to-day basis.

Session abstract

Consistently achieving above district average weaning rates per hectare is not something that occurs by chance but instead by design – driven by a productive pasture system, modern genotypes and proactive management that allocates resources (feed, animal health and labour) to the class of stock that warrants it most. Market signals can often create confusion for which stock class that is, however, proactive management of breeding ewe nutrition and condition throughout the reproduction cycle is critical for improving scanning rates, lamb survival rates and lamb growth rates – the aggregate of which gives rise to kg of lamb weaned per ewe or more importantly kg lamb weaned per hectare. The latter also being heavily influenced by the productivity of the feed base (quantity and quality) and the timing of lambing to most effectively utilise feed grown.

Astute resource managers make sure the desire to chase extra return from last year's crop of lambs doesn't trade-off focus on the next crop – typically the longer the saleable progeny are retained, the longer the trade-off for resources allocated to replacements and breeders.

A critical tool in resource allocation is pregnancy scanning ewes for empty, single and twin (0, 1, 2), following which there two distinct phases – late pregnancy management and paddock allocation for lambing. Scanning itself delivers little benefit, the gold is in the differential management post-scanning so that multiple bearing ewes lamb in one-third to a half a condition score heavier than singles. This lifts ewe survival and helps optimise lamb birthweights for singles and twins.

In a high chill environment like Cooma, about 70% of lamb's likelihood to survive is governed by its birthweight. A

low birthweight lamb has a similar surface area to lose and expel heat but has less body tissue, in particular thermogenic fat, to metabolise to keep itself warm and get up, survive and thrive. Setting up the ewe for lambing means she has adequate energy for the birth process and an early onset of colostrum and milk production leading to improved lamb survival. There is also a genetic component to this and selection for genes with high 'ewe rearing ability' (ERA) is a worthwhile inclusion in today's breeding objectives.

Finally, paddock allocation for lambing is a critical driver of success – based on feed available, shelter/aspect, and in particular paddock size/mob size. Smaller mobs at lambing improve lamb survival, however, the response varies significantly between single, twin and triples and also by ewe age.

Key messages

From mid-pregnancy feed resources should be allocated so that multiple bearers lamb at least one-third of a condition score higher than singles.

Key drivers of lamb survival are:

- birth weight
- body composition
- shelter
- privacy and
- bonding.

Lamb survival is driven by attention to detail, skill development and tailoring solutions with your sheep in your environment.

Next steps

- More lambs from ewe lambs – (follow follow the Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) progress and outcomes through the project sites on the PDS search tool: www.mla.com.au/extesnion-training-and-tools/search-pds) or watch a recording of the webinar).
- Improving the survival of triplet dams and their lambs – register the webinar on MLA website (14 May 2026)
- Lifetime Maternals – review management guidelines on MLA website
- Attend a BredWell FedWell

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

Forum Coordinator Contact

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MLA MEATUP FORUM – COOMA, NSW