



Final report

Productivity & Profitability Webinar for Red Meat Producers

Project code: L.ADP.1901
Prepared by: Sandy McEachern
Holmes Sackett Pty Ltd
Date published: 10 August 2010

PUBLISHED BY
Meat and Livestock Australia Limited
PO Box 1961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Meat & Livestock Australia acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

This publication is published by Meat & Livestock Australia Limited ABN 39 081 678 364 (MLA). Care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication. However MLA cannot accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the information or opinions contained in the publication. You should make your own enquiries before making decisions concerning your interests. Reproduction in whole or in part of this publication is prohibited without prior written consent of MLA.

Abstract

This project was undertaken to provide online extension material to beef, sheep and goat producers.

The methodology was to deliver 30 webinars, of approximately 1 hour in length, using experts on relevant topics for beef, sheep and goat producers.

30 webinars were delivered with an average attendance of 123 producers per webinar. Registrations for the series have finished at a total of 2610, up from 1077 at the end of the previous webinar series (LMS 1702.). The satisfaction and value ratings are averaging 8.4 and 7.8 out of 10 respectively. These both exceed the minimum target of 7 out of 10 as set by the project objectives.

85% of attendees are saying that they would recommend the webinar series to another producer. 32% of attendees said they will make a practice change after listening to the webinars.

This project has shown that online extension programs do work for at least part of the beef, lamb and goat producer's population and that they are a cost-effective means of extension.

Executive summary

Background

The purpose of this project was to deliver practical and timely webinars in a cost-effective way to reach a wide audience of red meat producers (Cattle, Sheep and Goat) across Australia through an online platform. This allows access to a broader selection of presenters and gives flexibility to viewers as they can re-watch the webinars as many times as they require.

Objectives

Deliver 30 webinars with an overall satisfaction and value rating greater than 7 out of 10 across lamb, beef and goat production.

Methodology

Facilitate evening webinars designed to go for no more than one hour with an expert speaker presenting for 25 minutes on a topic, followed by questions from registered attendees.

Results/key findings

Satisfaction and value ratings were 8.4 and 7.8 out of ten respectively across the 30 webinars. The program finished with 2610 registered participants and an average attendance per webinar of 123. In financial terms this translates to a delivery cost of \$39.12 per attendee.

Benefits to industry

This project has delivered 30 webinars to red meat producers, increasing awareness of fundamental practices they can implement to increase productivity and profitability, as well as providing direction to participate in further MLA adoption opportunities.

Future research and recommendations

The webinar series is proving to be an effective and low-cost extension platform. It is recommended that this service be continued.

Table of contents

Abstract	2
Executive summary	3
1. Background	5
2. Objectives	5
3. Methodology	6
4. Results	6
5. Key findings.....	20
6. Conclusion and recommendations	20

1. Background

This webinar series followed on from the successful original Making More from Sheep (MMfS) webinar series L.MMS.1702 and L.MMS.1702 in 2017 and 2018. Given the popularity of that program which was solely focussed on sheep production this project was expanded to include beef and goat producers.

The purpose of the webinar series is to deliver practical information on topics that will encourage practice change on-farm, to assist livestock producers to lift productivity and profitability in the red meat industry.

Starting in 2019, it was run over an 18-month period with 30 webinars delivered targeting lamb, beef and goat producers.

2. Objectives

The project objectives for the Productivity & Profitability webinars for Red Meat Producers, as stated in the contract agreement, were as follows:

By 10th Aug 2020, the following will have been achieved:

1. 30 webinars delivered to Australian red meat producers delivering fundamental information to support practice change and increase productivity and profitability with an average satisfaction rating of 7/10 or above.
2. A phone survey of 100 MLA webinar participants that indicated they would implement a practice change from the 2017/2018 webinar series that:
 - a) Determines the level of practice change due to webinar attendance
 - b) Determines type of practice changes that are occurring and relate that to intended practice change
 - c) Find out why they have not implemented a practice change when they indicated they would.
 - d) Assesses attendance to other MLA activities, Its Ewe Time (LTEM), Breed Well Fed Well (BWWF), Farm 300, PGS, Business Edge, PDS, Making More from Sheep (MMfS), More Beef from Pastures (MBfP).
 - e) Canvasses what they would like covered in future webinars
3. Survey report compiled that:
 - a) Illustrates and interprets outcomes
 - b) Provides recommendations on current and future webinar program investment

3. Methodology

The methodology for the delivery of the webinars was to deliver 2 webinars per month, except for December and January, which the previous webinar series showed had lower attendance.

Webinars have been delivered at 8pm mid-week and go for one hour consisting of a short 25 minutes presentation followed by questions from participants.

Topic selection for webinars were selected on issues that are likely to be facing producers due to seasonal challenges or activities in annual production cycle. The webinars provided steps for producers to immediately implement any practice change after viewing e.g. bloat management in cattle, preventing reproductive diseases in sheep. Other topics are not as sensitive to timing but have more strategic implications i.e. relative profitability of enterprises and their profit drivers, or market analysis information were produced as topical to industry and presented at any time.

Presenters were chosen on their expertise in relation to a selected topic and their ability to deliver clear, concise and informative messaging in their presentation, to deliver producers with the most up to date information.

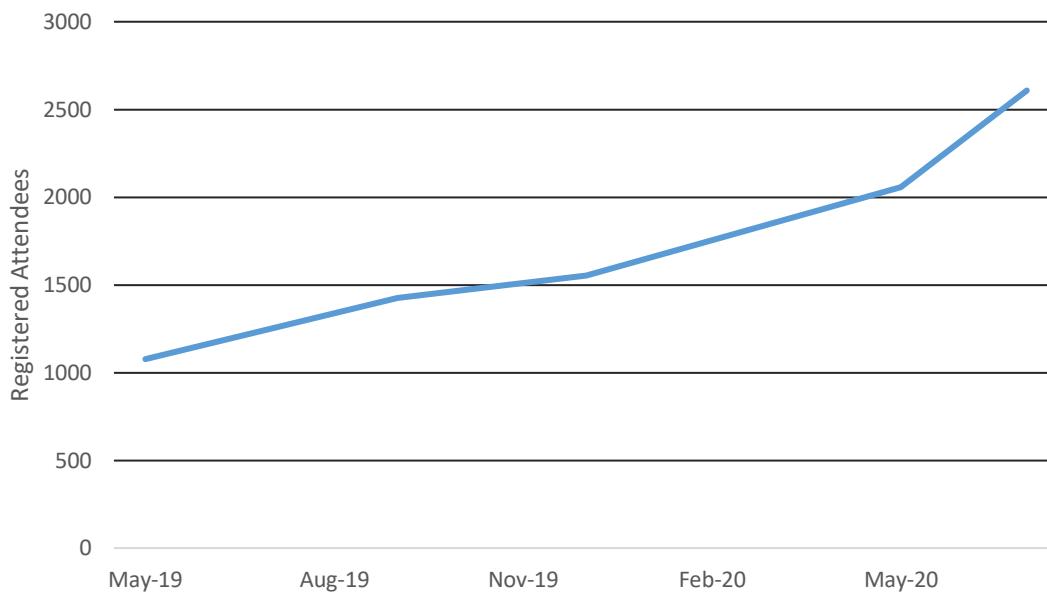
Each webinar is concluded by asking producers to fill out a survey and rate the webinar according to their satisfaction, the content value and whether they would recommend the webinar to others. The participants of each webinar are asked if they would consider making any practice changes after viewing the webinar.

All webinars are recorded and hosted on the MLA website for producers to watch at a suitable time for them.

A survey of participants was conducted from the previous webinar series (MMFS L.MMS.1702) to determine and understand what practice changes have been implemented. The survey also asked if producers had implemented practice change, did they have an improvement in productivity and profitability.

4. Results

This project has delivered 30 webinars to red meat producers (Sheep, Cattle and goats), increasing awareness of fundamental practices they can implement to increase productivity and profitability, as well as providing direction to participate in further MLA adoption opportunities. The program currently has 2610 producers registered to attend and receive notification of all webinars under this program. This is up from 1077 at the end of the previous webinar series L.MMS.1702 (Table 1.). Registrations picked up substantially from April to June of 2020, due to the COVID-19 situation and targeted topics relevant to conditions faced by producers at that time.

Figure 1: The number of registrants has grown significantly since this webinar series began

Since milestone 6, the average attendance has risen (from 89 to 123). This may reflect producers adjusting to online delivery of extension materials in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

A summary of monitoring and evaluation data captured from the surveys conducted after each webinar is provided in Table 2.

Some examples of the positive and negative qualitative feedback received on each webinar are captured in Table 3.

Table 2: Summary of evaluation information from thirty webinars delivered in the 2019/20 series.

Webinar topic	Presenter	Delivery date	Attendance	Surveys	Satisfaction rating	Value rating	Recommend to others?	Plan for practise change?
Beef and Lamb Key Benchmarks	Sandy McEachern	8/5/2019	112	53	4.4	4.1	88%	30%
Checking your cows are at optimum condition score this winter	Paul Nilon	6/6/2019	71	31	4.2	4.2	87%	42%
The role of vaccination in prevention and control of pneumonia in sheep and cattle	Ben Linn	20/6/2019	85	46	4.2	3.7	80%	22%
The booming goat industry - an introductory overview	Trudy Atkinson	3/7/2019	90	43	4.1	3.3	72%	14%
Mob size vs lamb survival - what is the optimum	Amy Lockwood	17/7/2019	122	51	4.0	3.8	84%	29%
The Quest for a More Productive Meat Goat	Colin Ramsay	20/8/2019	82	32	4.4	4.3	91%	66%
Production and Financial Performance in Rangeland Goat Herds	John Francis	12/9/2019	33	16	4.1	3.4	63%	38%
What, When and Where? The use of Nitrogen in Pastures	Richard Eckard	19/9/2019	86	40	4.4	4.1	88%	43%
How? Nitrogen use in pastures	Richard Eckard	25/09/2019	72	28	4.4	4.2	93%	46%
Forecasting: The Australian Beef Market	Matt Dalglish	14/11/19	110	49	4.1	3.8	88%	41%

Webinar topic	Presenter	Delivery date	Attendance	Surveys	Satisfaction rating	Value rating	Recommend to others?	Plan for practise change?
African Swine Fever	Andrew Whitelaw	28/11/19	64	17	4.8	4.3	100%	24%
Heterosis in beef enterprises	Wayne Pitchford	3/12/2019	61	32	4.1	3.6	75%	13%
Heterosis in lamb enterprises	Neal Fogarty	5/12/2019	40	15	3.7	3.3	80%	0%
Prime lamb date	John Webb Ware	10/12/2019	60	23	4.0	3.9	87%	13%
Reducing kid loss in meat goats	Gordon Refshauge	18/2/2020	40	22	4.1	3.7	64%	35%
Infectious diseases causing abortion in sheep	Paul Nilon	25/2/2020	72	30	4.5	4.3	97%	27%
Reading the re-stocker market	Matt Dalgleish	12/3/2020	167	69	4.5	4.1	93%	19%
Feeding weaner cattle: production or maintenance	Ben Linn	19/3/2020	162	76	4.2	3.9	91%	38%
Drench resistance in cattle	John Webb-Ware	24/3/2020	96	37	4.4	4.4	92%	57%
A review of chemical manipulation in pastures, where are the costs and benefits	Sandy McEachern	2/4/2020	152	79	3.6	3.2	68%	25%
The impact of COVID-19 on the Australian red meat market	Matt Dalgleish	22/4/2020	226	116	4.3	4.1	91%	22%

Webinar topic	Presenter	Delivery date	Attendance	Surveys	Satisfaction rating	Value rating	Recommend to others?	Plan for practise change?
Your one-stop winter cleaning agronomy panel – its Q&A time!	Jim Virgona and Tim Prance	29/4/2020	140	44	3.6	3.5	73%	30%
The current status of drench resistance in worms – an update for sheep producers	Matt Playford	13/5/2020	125	68	4.3	4.3	91%	54%
Reproductive diseases in cattle - causes, impacts and management	Michael McGowan	21/5/2020	162	64	4.1	3.9	78%	31%
The effects of temperature on pasture production	Jim Virgona	3/6/2020	196	74	4.3	4.2	84%	16%
Managing bloat in cattle	Bruce Allworth	9/6/2020	268	125	4.3	4.1	89%	28%
The best age to wean prime lambs	Bruce Allworth	16/6/2020	297	154	4.6	4.2	95%	41%
Managing grass tetany	Paul Nilon	25/6/20	190	100	4.4	4.2	96%	38%
Managing calf scours	Alison Gunn	2/7/2020	141	69	4.4	4.2	93%	42%
Retaining older aged ewes	John Webb Ware	8/7/2020	180	74	4.1	3.8	84%	27%
Average YTD			123	56	4.2	3.9	85%	32%

Table 3: Summary of qualitative evaluation information from the thirty webinars delivered in the series.

Webinar topic	Presenter	Positive qualitative feedback	Negative qualitative feedback
Beef and Lamb Key Benchmarks	Sandy McEachern	Well presented, adequate information ie more is less, and the presenter focused on the facts, well summarized and facts reiterated.	More insight into data and how achieved
Checking your cows are at optimum condition score this winter	Paul Nilon	Approach was brilliant	For webinar, more visuals directly linked to written material may enhance understanding in the limited time of presentation.
The role of vaccination in prevention and control of pneumonia in sheep and cattle	Ben Linn	<p>This is a great way to educate people step at a time without overwhelming them with information with a day workshop. They can look at their own enterprise and make change if needed at pace they can manage with everything else they do.</p> <p>This is my first Webinar experience and won't be my last. A great tool to be able to learn stuff without inconveniencing families with young kids that may find it hard to get away to a workshop type environment. Just put kids to bed 10mins before webinar started so no int</p>	Information on the best treatments and available drugs for B.R.D. would have been helpful.

Webinar topic	Presenter	Positive qualitative feedback	Negative qualitative feedback
The booming goat industry - an introductory overview	Trudy Atkinson	Fantastic webinar, really informative and a great overview of the industry. Sound quality was really clear. Trudie was a very interesting presenter and obviously knew her stuff!	I feel that the MLA is missing a huge opportunity to harness the growing number of smaller farmers. Not always is large scale the "best" option for food production. Most webinars I tune into are focused on the big operations. The growing number of smaller farmers is a resource to be harnessed.
mob size vs lamb survival - what is the optimum	Amy Lockwood	This webinar was well presented. Amy did a great job. Clear, planned and great use of charts and examples. Well done. Loved it.	Engagement is increased if you can view the presenters.
The Quest for a More Productive Meat Goat	Colin Ramsay	Time and session were great and valuable	I believe a webinar such as this is a valuable tool for producers. You need to have some good positive take out messages and actions after attending a session like this. Unfortunately for me personally, I don't feel that this was the case.
Production and Financial Performance in Rangeland Goat Herds	John Francis	All very good.	Would be great to hear from a goat producer first-hand about their journey, challenges etc and how they have overcome them.
What, When and Where? The use of Nitrogen in Pastures	Richard Eckard	I joined a bit late, but Richard was an excellent presenter. Format was great, worked very well. Thanks.	Great presentation. It would be even more useful to have some examples from pasture growth curve from other regions (not only Victoria) like AS and WA.

Webinar topic	Presenter	Positive qualitative feedback	Negative qualitative feedback
How? Nitrogen use in pastures	Richard Eckard	Both of Richards webinars were brilliant great content well delivered	Really good 2-part webinar - would be great if you published a transcript of both - OK to watch them again but would like to be able to extract the highlights more easily
Forecasting: The Australian Beef Market	Matt Dagleish	Very good presentation tonight. Good to see MLA investing in topics that relate to real and practical needs of producers. i have been to too many events this year where research funded by MLA seemed to be more about benefitting the Universities than producers, and those who believe livestock production can be improved with an iPad.	audio quality was very poor in second part
African Swine Fever	Andrew Whitelaw	Keep doing what you are doing. The webinars are very educational. Tonight's was one of the best.	
Heterosis in beef enterprises	Wayne Pitchford	The speaker was high quality and gave a balanced view, which can be different than some of the bodies that set up these trials just to get the results that they want.	Was of the impression by the title that this was about heterosis in general and not breed specific
Heterosis in lamb enterprises	Neal Fogarty	The webinar concept and speaker Neal Fogarty were very good. I thought it could maybe be a little longer. I already knew a bit on the topic so it didn't have a huge impact on me. Thanks for running it, would love to see more sheep related webinars	more information about example breeds- perhaps explaining some of the research papers in depth a little
Prime lamb date	John Webb Ware	Keep doing what you're doing. They are good	interested to know results from different types of first X ewes

Webinar topic	Presenter	Positive qualitative feedback	Negative qualitative feedback
Reducing kid loss in meat goats	Gordon Refshauge	Gordon's presentation contained a good overview of the importance and relevance of fertility to individual producers and the goat industry in general.	Big picture data is important and valued but more practical interpretation for hands on practical application is appreciated with these kinds of training.
Infectious diseases causing abortion in sheep	Paul Nilon	Paul spoke well and was able to field a wide range of questions	Earlier timing, as it is too late for most producers to start vaccinations now
Reading the re-stocker market	Matt Dalglish	This was an excellent webinar - as good as I've heard. Excellently presented by Matt and his responses to questions were very clear. Well done	When abbreviations or data wording that details are on screen
Feeding weaner cattle: production or maintenance	Ben Linn	very informative, I need to listen again as there were a lot of figures that I needed to think about	I thought the speaker a bit fast, would prefer slower talking giving more time to absorb. The sound seemed to be a little distorted, not sure my end or the address end, tried to fiddle around with volume etc. Would like a copy of the address to give time to consider and absorb.
Drench resistance in cattle	John Webb-Ware	This was a very informative seminar and backed some of the things I am already doing plus has made me look at changing some of my practices.	Tonight, the audio was lost at critical times and last night on the NLIS webinar the volume between the two different speakers was very annoying as I had to constantly keep adjusting the volume. Over-all really enjoying the webinars. Keep up the good work. THANKS.

Webinar topic	Presenter	Positive qualitative feedback	Negative qualitative feedback
A review of chemical manipulation in pastures, where are the costs and benefits	Sandy McEachern	Well-presented and easy to access	Sandy could have gone into more economic analysis as to the cost:benefit, I think there was only 1 slide with a \$ value on it. As the presentation stood it would have been better presented by an agronomist, if there was more detailed economic analysis, I would agree with using an economist.
The impact of COVID-19 on the Australian red meat market	Matt Dagleish	Great event loved the discussion and the option to ask questions. Good thinking and well planned. Thank you.	This webinar was OK; always ensure visuals are clear and easy to interpret in the time available.
Your one-stop winter cleaning agronomy panel – its Q&A time!	Jim Virgona and Tim Prance	Have all been excellent presentations with excellent consultants.	This seminar was difficult, not overly well presented and sound faded out often, especially at important times. hope the recording is better
The current status of drench resistance in worms – an update for sheep producers	Matt Playford	knowledgeable and concise speaker very good	Presentation format was a little slow waiting for graphics going around worm game board Q&A was brilliant could have had a conversation around grazing management rest and recovery
Reproductive diseases in cattle - causes, impacts and management	Michael McGowan	Enjoyed the extended question time - helped to flesh out the key points	Was ok, but presenter did not detail enough in presentation. Got more value out of the q and a time though.
The effects of temperature on pasture production	Jim Virgona	Great presenter tonight- profit and production focused with strong science to back any arguments. thanks	Maybe some references from the presentations for further reading if we want to

Webinar topic	Presenter	Positive qualitative feedback	Negative qualitative feedback
Managing bloat in cattle	Bruce Allworth	Excellent - enthusiastic speaker, lots of information and very clear about what is not known.	Seeing the Speaker would keep me more alert
The best age to wean prime lambs	Bruce Allworth	I haven't been to a weaning or productivity seminar in years and it was AMAZING to have a refresher. It's got me all excited about the next lot of lambs coming and how we can really get the all performing well.	Maybe if questions could be sent before webinar to allow time for speaker to research
Managing grass tetany	Paul Nilon	Paul's practical experience in his delivery combined with his humour made this an interesting seminar. He was very easy to listen to and he explained the subject well.	
Managing calf scours	Alison Gunn	Excellent presentation, knowledgeable, concise and experienced. A realistic approach to these issues.	Good but unfortunately some audio issues. I always have trouble finding copies of the presentations on MLA website. Could it be made easier to find somehow??
Retaining older aged ewes	John Webb Ware	I was planning to keep the productive ewes till old age and am better informed now about risks and benefits of doing so. Will know what health problems to look for and reasons for culling.	Some of the more detailed graphs required more explanation and time to digest

The top 5 webinars of the series are ranked by either attendance, satisfaction, value or the indication by producers that would implement a practice change are shown in Table 4.

Attendance reached an all-time high of 297 for the webinar on the ‘best age to wean prime lambs’ and this webinar also ranked second on the satisfaction scores but did not reach the top 5 to add value or implement on-farm practice change.

The highest satisfaction score was achieved on ‘The impacts of African Swine Fever on markets’, this webinar also ranked third on value but not in the top 5 for practice change or attendance.

The highest value score was for the series was on ‘Drench resistance in cattle’ but this webinar did not rank in the top 5 for attendance (96 participants) or satisfaction. This presentation ranked second on the number of producers that would implement a practice change on-farm.

The highest ranked webinar on producers intend to implement a practice change was for the webinar on the “ Quest for a more productive meat goat”. This webinar ranked second on the value score as well, did not rank highly on attendance (82 participants).

The current status of drench resistance in worms for sheep producers was the third highest ranked webinar on practice change and the two webinars on the use of nitrogen on pastures were ranked 4th and 5th.

The popularity of a webinar is hard to predict, and the satisfaction ratings largely depend on the presentation. The value and practice change ratings are mostly reliant on the webinar topic, if any ‘new or novel’ solutions have been developed to help producers manage an issue. The popularity of a webinar like managing bloat in cattle, has no new solutions for producers to manage the problem which delivers little practice change (28%) and only a moderate value rating (4.1).

Table 4: Top 5 webinars based on number of participants, value, satisfaction and practice change.

Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Attendance Participants	The best age to wean prime lambs 297	Managing bloat in cattle 268	The impact of COVID-19 on the Australian red meat market 226	The effects of temperature on pasture production 196	Managing grass tetany 190
Satisfaction Score	African Swine Fever 4.8	The best age to wean prime lambs (4.6) 4.6	Infectious diseases causing abortion in sheep (4.5) 4.5	Reading the re-stocker market (4.5) 4.5	Beef and Lamb Key Benchmarks (4.4) 4.4
Value Score	Drench resistance in cattle 4.4	The Quest for a More Productive Meat Goat 4.3	African Swine Fever 4.3	Infectious diseases causing abortion in sheep 4.3	The current status of drench resistance in worms – an update for sheep producers 4.3
Practice Change Score	The Quest for a More Productive Meat Goat 66%	Drench resistance in cattle 57%	The current status of drench resistance in worms – an update for sheep producers 54%	How? Nitrogen use in pastures 46%	What, When and Where? The use of Nitrogen in Pastures 43%

The results of the survey of past participants showed 62% of producers who said they would make a practice change have implemented on-farm change. Participants who indicated practice change only 50% said the practice change they made would have improved farm productivity and profitability. A further 25% said they did not know whether the change had improved farm profitability.

The areas where producers nominated practice changes are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Practice changes implemented as a result of the MMFS L.MMS.1702 webinar series.

Practice Change	Number of Time Mentioned
Improved Feeding	8
Change flock structure	1
Lambing date	2
Lambing management	3
Animal health	2
Change target market	1
Pasture management	6
Grazing management	1
Other	3
Not specified	8

The survey results also indicated that most participants that nominated a reason for not implementing a practice change after indicating they would, was the onset of dry conditions (drought). Thirteen (~30%) of survey participants had researched further information on topics from the webinar series. The source of the information was online material, information from a consultant and attending field day to increase their knowledge and skills. Twenty-three of the survey respondents had reviewed webinar content from the Making More from Sheep (MMFS) website and twenty-two of those found it beneficial to their business.

Table 6: The attendance to other MLA activities from the survey participants after attending one of the webinars presented in this series.

	Number of Survey Participants that have heard of this Program	Number of Survey Participants that participated this Program
Bredwell Fedwell	31	12
Profitable Grazing Systems	25	7
It's Ewe Time	23	5
Business Edge	21	4
Producer Demonstration Sites	22	3

The survey results found that Bredwell Fedwell had the highest number of participants that were aware of the program and largest number of people to attend one of the workshops from the survey respondents.

5. Key findings

- The average attendance for this webinars series was 123 per webinar. Registrations for the series are at a total of 2610.
- The satisfaction and value ratings are averaging 8.4 and 7.8 out of 10 respectively.
- An average of 85% of attendees are saying that they would recommend the webinar series to another producer.
- An average of 32% of attendees said they would make a practice change as a result of the webinar.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

The demand for these webinars is strong and growing. Topics, dates and times seem to influence live attendance, however outside the pre and post-Christmas period attendances were strong.

Survey of past participation reveals that webinars are leading to practice change and that producers consider that practice change is increasing farm profits.

Alternative daytime timeslots were tried but were unsuccessful and therefore it is concluded that the evening timeslots work best.

Some feedback which is not presenter specific that can be used in any future webinar series are;

- Being able to see the presenter would help with communication.
- The question time is often where substantial value is derived and therefore some additional time could be devoted to this, or alternatively have some sessions set up in the question and answer format entirely.

The number of downloads of the recorded webinars that are hosted on the MLA website is not available to Holmes Sackett.

The coordination and deliverer fees for the seminars have been delivered to the budget outlined in the contract, totalling \$144,360.

On a per participant basis this is a delivery cost of \$39.12 per participant or \$4812 per webinar.