

Australian Wool
Innovation Limited



Final report

Making More from Sheep Website Maintenance Management Agreement

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Abstract

The Making More from Sheep website maintenance management agreement is a joint initiative of Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), to ensure the management and hosting of the Making More from Sheep website. The agreement ensured that the making more from sheep website remains a fundamental resource of information and the go to place to deliver productivity, profitability and sustainability of sheep businesses.

The consolidated information stored on the website has been a valuable source to other delivery programs throughout the sheep industry to build the knowledge and skills of producers / Advisors to deliver improvements in management and productivity.

The challenge of hosting the website was ensuring that all content remained cutting edge and up to date, all links to tools and resources remained linked and working and any issues were addressed quickly. A subcontractor was appointed to maintain the website and provided six monthly reviews of URL links and upload additional news and literature resources to the site as requested.

Executive summary

Background

A joint initiative of Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), the Making More From Sheep program key objective was to Provide Australian lamb and wool producers with a best practice package of information and management tools to assist them achieve profitable and sustainable sheep production. The delivery, communications, and coordination of the program came to end in December 2016 however the legacy product from the program is the Making More from Sheep online best practice package of information and tools for Australian sheep producers.

Making More from Sheep website captures the ‘must dos’ of managing a successful sheep enterprise, generated from years of research and on-farm experience. The website signposts users to further information sources for more detailed information.

Although joint funding for website maintenance ended in December 2016, the website content remained a fundamental underpinning resource for delivery programs relevant to the sheep industry e.g Profitable Grazing Systems, BredWell FedWell, Its Ewe Time and the new soil health e-learning module.

Objectives

This project was to maintain on going hosting and management of the Making More from Sheep website. This included the engagement of a subcontractor to ensure content remained up to date, website links remained active and any issues were addressed and fixed.

Methodology

The management agreement of this project was to perform six-monthly reviews of all URL links on the MMFS website, along with ad hoc repairs where broken links are reported, and additional news and literature resources added to the site as requested by MLA and/or AWI.

Results/key findings

The website remains essential source of information for sheep producers in Australia and around the world, with over 478,000 pages reviewed annually.

Benefits to industry

This project ensured that sheep industry R&D information, tools and resources remain consolidated, with the website continuing to be a fundamental underpinning resource for current delivery programs relevant to the sheep industry e.g Profitable Grazing Systems, BredWell FedWell, Its Ewe Time.

Future research and recommendations

To ensure the Making More from Sheep website remains the go-to-place for all sheep related information, there needs to be a clear and agreed strategy between MLA and AWI on the future of the MMFS website content and hosting.

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1. Background

Making More from Sheep is an online best practice package of information and tools for Australian sheep producers. A history of investment in research and development means that much of the information, technologies and tools exist that allow sheep and wool producers to significantly increase their productivity, profitability and sustainability. However, the information was widely spread and often difficult to find. The Making More from Sheep website captures the 'must dos' of managing a successful sheep enterprise, generated from years of research and on-farm experience. The website signposts users to further information sources for more detailed information.

A joint Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) / Meat & livestock Australia (MLA) funding for the Making More from Sheep program (delivery, website, communications, and coordination) ended in December 2017. However, MLA and AWI have invested heavily in the MMFS website to create a one-stop-shop for high quality, credible sheep business information based on the latest R&D.

This project has underpinned the adoption of projects such as Profitable Grazing Systems, Producer Demonstration Sites and forums such as Its Ewe Time. To deliver benefits to wider sheep industry on best management practices and sustainable sheep production.

2. Objectives

The project objectives for Making More from Sheep website maintenance management agreement, were as follows:

- Host and provide management of the MMFS website
- Provide 6 monthly reviews of website content (all URL links) to ensure content is kept up to date.
- Ad hoc repair of broken links on the MMFS website as reported.
- Add relevant sheep industry news and literature resources to the website, in collaboration with MLA and AWI.
- Provide proactive website management by networking with industry R&D leaders to identify new sheep management resources for integration / signposting from the site.
- Provide an annual status report including recommendations for additional resources

The project was varied in the 2020 to include the following additional objectives:

- Review and clean up old backend files in preparation for migration to a new hosting platform.
- Complete the initial migration of the MMFS website to its new platform.
- Establish an agreed funding model & hosting platform for the MMFS website and content beyond 2020.

3. Methodology

To ensure the Making More from Sheep website remains current and contains the most recent R&D outputs, AWI managed the website and its hosting. The content and website maintenance was outsourced to Jarrapool Project Management, while hosting was outsourced to the Lcubed.

To ensure that the resources are current and relevant, as the managing partner AWI engaged Jarrapool Project Management to perform six-monthly reviews of all URL links on the Making More from Sheep website, along with ad hoc repair where broken links were reported, and additional news and literature resources uploaded to the the site as requested.

A six-monthly status update report was implemented to monitor the following usage on the website:

- Source of visitors, did they use a search engine, referral or visited directly through the Making More from Sheep website.
- Top 5 pages viewed.
- Visits and page views per month.
- Geographic location of visitors accessing the website
- Browser and operating systems used.

LCubed continued to provide hosting services for the Making More from Sheep website until 2020, when they advise AWI that they would no longer be in a position to host the site and the platform the site was developed on would no longer be supported by Adobe. Therefore, won't be supported with any future Microsoft & browser updates as well as security protocols.

The project was varied in 2020 incorporating additional milestones for MLA & AWI to meet to discuss and develop a clear plan for ongoing hosting, migration to a new platform and ongoing maintenance & content updates for the site.

4. Results

4.1 Website Maintenance and Hosting

To ensure that the resources were current and relevant, AWI & MLA contracted Jarrapool Project Management to implement the following services to maintain the website:

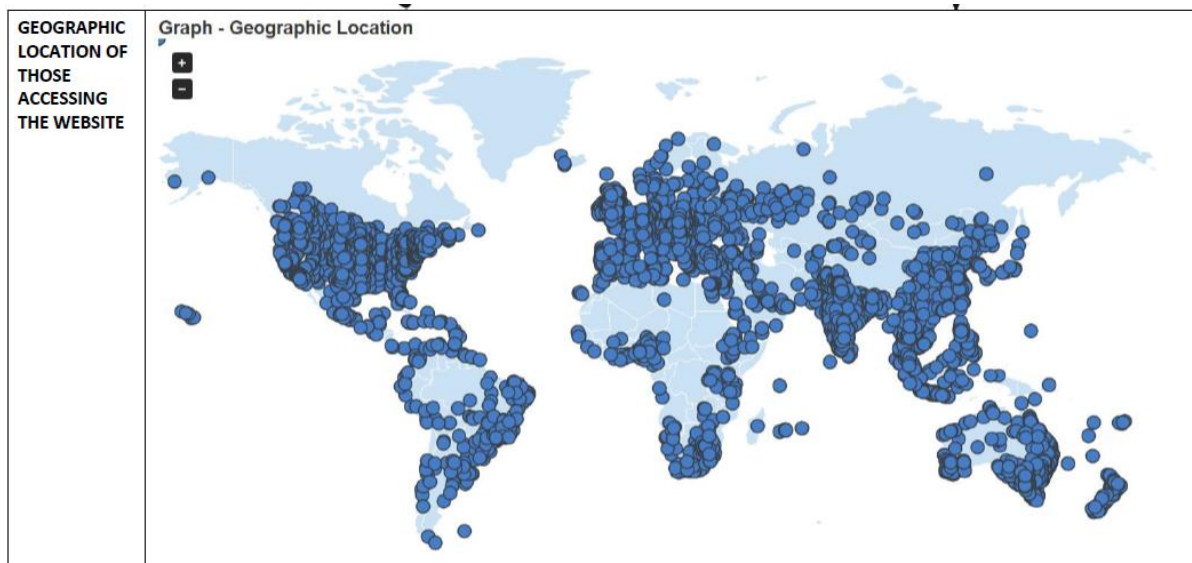
- Uploading of MMFS webinars, its ewe time presentations and all AWI wool and MLA sheep market intelligence reports to the MMFS website within 7 days of the newsletter being published.
- Check all MMFS website links and fix or repair where broken, or substitute with a new link or resource where applicable.
- Remove, alter or include additional text to enhance the context or readability of instructions on all MMFS website links.
- Perform ad hoc site changes as issues are reported.
- Source and add new signposts to the website.
- Actively contact industry experts to identify resources to add to the website.
- Assist AWI to collate the website content to be migrated onto the new website.

The website hosting was migrated from LCubed to AWI in April 2020 due to the closure of the LCubed platform due to the business catalyst (the program the website is developed in) is no longer being supported by Adobe. AWI and MLA agreed that AWI would host the website internally to reduced host and updating costs. The migration to AWI platform for hosting was achieved successfully, with minimal links disrupted during the process. Jarrapool Project Management did tidy up some old flyers and unused links in the migration process to AWI.

4.2 Website Usage Statistics

The following outlines the usage statistics collected from the Making More from Sheep website from May 2017 through to June 2020. The data was collected by Jarrapool Project Management.

Table 1: Geographic location of visitors accessing the website (January – June 2020 period)



This Picture demonstrates the value placed on the content of the Making More from Sheep website with visitors utilising this information from all over the world not just Australian based visitors.

Table 2: Summary of top 5 countries of visitors from May 2017 – June 2020

Country	2017/18		2018/19		19/20	
	Visits	Pageviews	Visits	Pageviews	Visits	Pageviews
Australia	204,067	265,567	249,120	305,059	178,152	227,200
United States	113,886	125,096	189,676	197,175	155,274	159,465
China	27,428	30,037	31,607	35,269	26,372	34,285
United Kingdom	26,420	27,557	17,991	19,190	7,459	8,467
Netherlands	6,975	7,147	23,027	23,163	4,179	11,147

In Table 2 above, the visitor numbers are indicating a downward trend of visits the website. The reduction in traffic in 2019/2020 is due to no activity in promotion and no updates to research content on the website. Back in June 2017- June 2018 the website was uploading webinars each month, so the traffic numbers were steadily increasing to view content that they could not watch

live. In August 2017 – April 2019 the 'Ewetime' forum content was being frequently uploaded and actively promoting and directing people to visit the Making More from Sheep website.

Table3: Summary of total visits to the Making More from Sheep website per year

	Visits	Pages views
2017/2018	480,179	577,094
2018/2019	525,113	597,334
2019/2020	429,624	532,001

In table 3 above, it is indicating that traffic to the website has seen a reduction in visitor numbers in the 2019/2020 period, but overall the numbers are very healthy for a website that has not received any promotion or updates to content or tools. The number of pages viewed each year is very consistent over the project period.

Table 4: Summary of Top 5 pages that viewed (January – June 2020 period below)

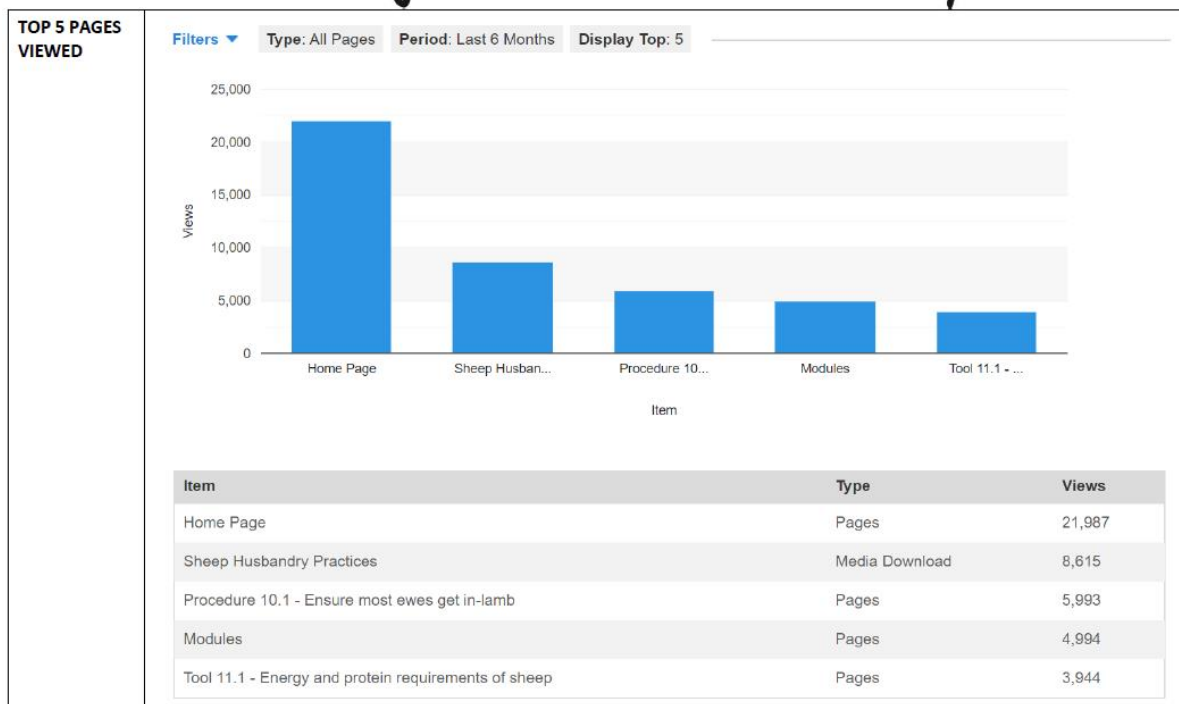


Table 4 above is indicating that over the project period these 5 pages were viewed consistently by visitors over the other content in the website. The only time these top 5 pages viewed changed was in 2018 when the webinar series was being uploaded to the website.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Summary

The Making More from Sheep website is averaging 478,000-page views annually, the website usage is very constant, even with a reduction in numbers in the last 12months. Even though the information supplied on the website is directed at Australian conditions it's an amazing result to receive so much interest from overseas visitors consistently over the project period. The spread of

participants visiting the site indicates that the website has achieved its goal of a consolidated source of quality, credible sheep R&D information and procedure-based sheep information.

The migration of the website into AWI from LCubed has flagged a timely review of the website content, signposting and potential upgrades for the program into its next phase of collaboration between AWI and MLA.

5.2 Recommendations

The website needs a clear and agreed strategy between MLA and AWI on the future of the website moving into the next phase of funding. The above statistics are indicating that the website is fundamental to the success of sheep industry into the future.

To ensure the Making More from Sheep website remains current and the to go-to-place for the most recent, high quality and procedure-based sheep information, AWI and MLA have agreed on the following steps in the next phase of the website:

- A content review of the modules to update any new research, tools, hyperlinks and resources currently on the website. The update will provide any gaps or opportunities for additional content or modules to be added.
- One opportunity has been identified to add a new module around traceability. Potential other opportunities could be containment feeding or feed lotting lambs.
- The website requires an upgrade to the graphics on the user interface, an update to homepages tabs names and direct visitors to open straight into the “How to” page.
- Explore updating tools and resources to simplify the use and understanding for producers/advisors.