



AUSTRALIAN SUPERFINE WOOL GROWERS' ASSOCIATION INC

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ASWGA Albury-Wodonga Region Report **March 2010**

A season of extremes is probably the best way to describe this summer on the Albury-Wodonga Region.

A very dry September spoilt some early cereal crops limiting the yield. However later sown cereals benefitted from good rain in early October but this also meant that some silage crops got too mature resulting in poor quality silage. A lot of triticale crops were frosted resulting in very poor yields. The October rain pushed out the rye grass late and finally resulted in quite good spring growth. Unfortunately it also was probably one of the worst barley grass seed years we have had.

The fairly hot January was nothing unusual but the following rains were very unusual - 4 inches in early February another 2 inches in late February followed by 4-5 inches in early March. All up about 10 inches of rain in 5 weeks!

We now have paddocks full of grass – some annual species but also lots of native grasses have responded really well to this unusual event. In our immediate area most water supplies for stock are full easing the burden of carting water which quite a lot of farmers have been doing for a couple of years.

I personally have ceased mulesing which in itself is quite challenging. Last season's

lambs were culled quite heavily to eliminate sheep, in particular breeding ewes, with breech wrinkle. Last season I bred and kept a drop of fairly plain breech rams and now they have gone back over my first unmulesed maidens. I await with anticipation the result of this joining.

This 2009 lambing in Aug-Sept resulted in a drop of 850 lambs. They were pushed fairly hard invitro and after birth so they tended to have quite bad breech wrinkle. This resulted in having to cull approximately 50% of the lambs which seems a pretty rash step but with the lamb market the way it is I have shorn the cull lambs and put them on oat feeders and at the moment all the grass they can eat. I expect to sell them in 2-3 months time.

I inspected the 200 wether lambs that I have left unshorn today (a week after the last 4 inches of rain) only to find that 10% had shoulder strike which is something that is not normally an issue. This coming year I will need to look for a breeder with the same intent as me to be able to source semen from a bare breech superfine ram.

I would expect most spring shorn wools to be fairly sound this year but having a bit of seed in pieces. We will need to get some real rewards for unmulesed wool this season because it is fairly expensive to produce.