



*Making More From Sheep*

Introduction



A joint initiative of Australian Wool Innovation and Meat & Livestock Australia

## MODULES AT A GLANCE

### Business based modules

1

#### Plan for Success

Establish business objectives and plans

Calculate your cost of production per kg meat or wool

Compare your business performance against industry benchmarks

Quantify risks and develop a risk management plan

Assess enterprise changes and new technologies

2

#### Market Focused Wool Production

Know the features of your wool influencing demand and price

Use a customer focus to produce, harvest and prepare wool for sale

Maximise returns from your wool sales

3

#### Market Focused Lamb and Sheepmeat Production

Decide what product you can produce most profitably

Manage the production system to meet market specifications

Decide on the most profitable selling method

Respond to short and long term price and market signals

4

#### Capable and Confident Producers

Know who does what in the business

Develop more effective communication

Develop a sound business purpose

Build knowledge and skills in the business

Maintain a happy balance between work and family time

### Resource & Pasture based modules

5

#### Protect Your Farm's Natural Assets

Plan the vision for your business and grazing enterprise

Prepare an inventory of your farm's natural assets to achieve your vision

Devise and implement your action plan

Measure, manage and monitor your progress towards the vision for your grazing enterprise

6

#### Healthy Soils

Manage according to soil capability

Maintain groundcover to protect your soil and keep the soil 'bugs' healthy

Test soils for indicators of soil health

Implement solutions for problem soils

7

#### Grow More Pasture

Build and maintain soil fertility

Graze to keep the desirable species productive and dominant

Establish new pastures

8

#### Turn Pasture into Product

Know your feed supply

Know your animal demand

Match feed supply to animal demand and minimise risk

### Sheep Technology based modules

9

#### Gain from Genetics

Identify the key production traits that drive your sheep enterprise profit

Identify the genetic opportunities to improve key production traits

Select the best genetics for your business

10

#### Wean More Lambs

Ensure most ewes get in-lamb

Manage your ewes to improve lamb survival

Keep maximum numbers of lambs alive to weaning

Manage weaners for lifetime productivity

Prepare your ewes for next joining

11

#### Healthy and Contented Sheep

Maintain your sheep in appropriate body condition

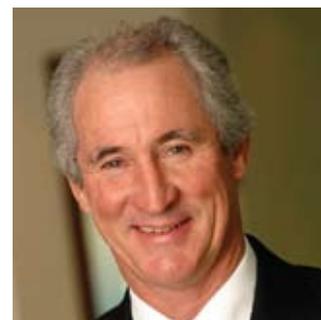
Implement a preventative health management program

Adopt on-farm biosecurity measures

Manage sporadic outbreaks of diseases

Meet all animal wellbeing requirements

## Foreword



**Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) have joined forces to develop *Making More From Sheep*, a best management practice package for Australian sheep producers.**

A long history of investment in research and development by the wool and sheepmeat industries means that much of the information, technologies and tools already exist which allow sheep producers to significantly increase productivity, profitability and sustainability – but the information is widely spread and often difficult to find.

The *Making More From Sheep* manual captures, in one handy reference, useful information about the ‘must dos’ of managing a successful sheep and/or wool enterprise, generated from years of research and on-farm experience.

Almost 250 leading sheep producers and technical experts helped develop the 11 linked modules in the manual, which cover subjects ranging from soils and pasture to wool and meat marketing, animal health, genetics and farm sustainability.

A major feature is a series of self-assessment and benchmarking tools to help sheep producers decide what to focus on first to maximise production and profitability. For readers who want to delve deeper into a particular subject or issue, there are useful links to websites and further references.

The *Making More From Sheep* manual is designed as a stand-alone reference but it is also being supported by forums, workshops and other producer learning activities coordinated by AWI and MLA in partnership with various organisations involved in delivery.

We have produced this manual as part of our continuing efforts to deliver on-farm knowledge and technology to help sheep producers increase the long-term profitability and sustainability of sheep and wool production, and pave the way for a successful industry for the next generation.

Ian McLachlan AO  
Chairman

Australian Wool Innovation

Don Heatley  
Chairman

Meat & Livestock Australia

## How to make best use of this package

### Introduction

*Making More From Sheep* is designed to help sheep producers increase the productivity and profitability of their enterprises and the personal satisfaction of operating a successful farming business.

Sheep producers who decide to make use of this manual will discover ways to lift productivity and quickly identify any limitations in current management or farming practices.

The modules have been designed to pass the 3:30:3 test:

→ In 3 minutes you will be able to read the introduction, assess what is in the whole module and determine the extent to which it is applicable to your business.

→ In 30 minutes you will be able to read through one of the procedures in the module and acquire a basic understanding of what is required to put it into practice.

→ In 3 hours you will be able to try out the tools in one of the procedures, follow up on any further sources of information and start taking action.

### Where to start?

This manual is designed with total flexibility in mind. In a sense, it does not matter where you start as the manual is full of essential procedures and practical, useful tools. However, there are two main options for working out where to start, and how to most quickly incorporate some of the benefits into your business:

#### Option 1: Take the Quick Quiz

If you are not sure where to start or if you would like to be a bit more systematic about your approach to the manual as a whole, then take the Quick Quiz (page 4). This quiz will help you assess the areas of your business with the potential to benefit most from the manual. It will give you some idea of the scale of improvement that you can achieve for your business from each of the modules.

During the road testing of the draft package, most sheep producers found the quick quiz interesting, useful and a bit of fun, so give it a go.

#### Option 2: Modules at a Glance

Use the “Modules at a Glance” diagram on the inside cover to identify a module or procedure of interest, then go directly to that module or procedure. You might choose this option if there is a module that relates to an area in which you believe your business performs strongly, and you’d like to confirm that the contents do represent best practice. Alternatively, you may find a module that relates to an area where your business is not performing so well, and potentially big gains can be made. Or, there might simply be a module that you are curious about, which you can look at to see what sort of procedures and tools are included.

### Making More From Sheep Modules

This sheep producer’s manual contains 11 modules that address all of the important profit drivers in a sheep and wool enterprise. Each module contains critical ‘must do’ procedures, tools to get you started and signposts to further information and assistance. The full suite of modules and procedures is outlined in ‘Modules at a Glance’ on the inside cover of this booklet.

The modules are:

- 1 Plan for Success
- 2 Market Focused Wool Production
- 3 Market Focused Lamb and Sheepmeat Production
- 4 Capable and Confident Producers
- 5 Protect Your Farm’s Natural Assets
- 6 Healthy Soils
- 7 Grow More Pasture
- 8 Turn Pasture into Product
- 9 Gain from Genetics
- 10 Wean More Lambs
- 11 Healthy and Contented Sheep

### How was the manual developed?

This manual, jointly developed by Australian Wool Innovation and Meat & Livestock Australia, brings together all the relevant technology for running successful wool and sheepmeat enterprises.

Each module was devised by a team of technical experts and sheep producers regarded as industry leaders in that part of their business. The teams identified the critical procedures for each component of a sheep business and the tools needed to make a start on changing enterprise practices.

The manual was then road tested by sheep producers and public and private sector service providers in each State before reaching this final form.

## Modules – a quick guide

### Navigation

For easy navigation, each module is broken up into the following sections:

- Contents page
- What does this module do for you?
- Procedures – these are the ‘must dos’ for the module
- Tools – practical information to you help make and implement the decisions/actions in the procedures
- Signposts – to further sources of information and assistance

### Common icons that appear throughout the modules include:

#### Background information



A quick summary of what you need to know to get the most out of a procedure

#### AT A GLANCE



- Know how your business is performing against industry benchmarks
- Undertake sufficient monitoring and reporting to be able to effectively update your short, medium and long term objectives

Lists what you'll learn from a procedure

#### Signposts



Where to go for further information or assistance

#### Website link not working?



Go to the Making More From Sheep website:

**[www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au](http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au)**  
and follow the links to updated signposts

Where to go if a weblink is not working



## The Quick Quiz

### How it works

Each of the 11 modules in the manual has a separate table in the Quiz below. For each of the procedures in that module, simply place a number between 1 and 4 that you think best represents your current position. Choose the appropriate number as follows:

- 4 You are clearly at the forefront of the industry with this procedure and confident you are operating at best practice level
- 3 You are doing pretty well with this procedure and are confident that you compare well with industry performance
- 2 You are not too confident about this procedure and not sure how you might compare with general industry performance
- 1 You know that your business could improve a lot as far as this procedure is concerned.

The electronic version of the Quick Quiz works best as it can do the calculations and draw the graphs for you. It can be downloaded free from [www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au](http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au). However, if you prefer a paper based Quiz, then continue to follow the instructions below.

### Example of how to fill in the module tables

Module procedures		Your score
1	Procedure 1	2
2	Procedure 2	3
3	Procedure 3	1
4	Procedure 4	2
If you want to map out your overall business performance, then add up the numbers and multiply by 0.625, as shown, to give a corrected score for this module of 5		$8 \times 0.625$ $= 5$

Note: If you only want to use the Quick Quiz to compare between procedures within a module, or to compare between modules, then there is no need to calculate the total score.



### **Comparing between procedures within a module**

When you look at your scores for each procedure in each module table, you'll quickly get an idea of how your business might be performing in this area and which of the procedures might give you some big gains. In the example above, the sheep producer is confident about procedure 2, unsure about procedures 1 and 4, and pretty sure that the business could improve a lot as far as procedure 3 is concerned.

If, for any module, you are going well in all the procedures, this probably means that the opportunities to use that module to improve your business are limited. You might still want to check out the procedures, tools and signposts. However, it's likely that to make further improvements, you'll need to seek more detailed information or other forms of assistance. Each module contains many tips, information sources and web links to help you do this.

### **Comparing between modules**

Comparing between modules is just as easy as comparing between procedures within a module. Simply compare your total procedure scores to identify which module is likely to give you the quickest gains.

Personal choice and preference play a role because, while the Quick Quiz can help you identify business strengths and opportunities, it is important to make a start in areas where you have already been thinking about making improvements, or where you are confident you have the skills and knowledge to implement the particular procedures.

If you would like to use the Quick Quiz to assess and 'map' your overall business performance against the suite of procedures and modules, there is more information following the module assessment tables below. Mapping your overall business performance gives you a relatively easy way to track progress over time as you make more use of this manual.

## The Making More From Sheep Quick Quiz

Place a number against each procedure that indicates how you think your enterprise is performing

### Module 1 - Plan for Success

Module procedures		Your score
1.1	Establish business objectives and plans	
1.2	Calculate your cost of production per kg of meat or wool	
1.3	Compare your business performance against industry benchmarks	
1.4	Quantify risks and develop a risk management plan	
1.5	Assess enterprise change and new technologies	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.5		sum x 0.5 =

### Module 2 - Market Focused Wool Production

Module procedures		Your score
2.1	Know the features of your wool influencing demand and price	
2.2	Use a customer focus to produce, harvest and prepare wool for sale	
2.3	Maximise returns from your wool sales	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.83		sum x 0.83 =

### Module 3 - Market Focused Lamb and Sheepmeat production

Module procedures		Your score
3.1	Decide what product you can produce most profitably	
3.2	Manage the production system to meet market specifications	
3.3	Decide on the most profitable selling method	
3.4	Respond to short and long term price and market signals	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.625		sum x 0.625 =

### Module 4 - Capable and Confident Producers

Module procedures		Your score
4.1	Know who does what in the business	
4.2	Develop more effective communication	
4.3	Develop a sound business purpose	
4.4	Build knowledge and skills in the business	
4.5	Maintain a happy balance between work and family time	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.5		sum x 0.5 =

## Module 5 - Protect Your Farm's Natural Assets

Module procedures		Your score
5.1	Plan the vision for your business and grazing enterprise	
5.2	Prepare an inventory of your farm's natural assets to achieve your vision	
5.3	Devise and implement your action plan	
5.4	Measure, manage and monitor your progress towards the vision for your grazing enterprise	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.625		sum x 0.625 =

## Module 6 - Healthy Soils

Module procedures		Your score
6.1	Manage according to soil capability	
6.2	Maintain groundcover to protect your soil and keep the soil 'bugs' healthy	
6.3	Test soils for indicators of soil health	
6.4	Implement solutions for problem soils	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.625		sum x 0.625 =

## Module 7 - Grow More Pasture

Module procedures		Your score
7.1	Build and maintain soil fertility	
7.2	Graze to keep the desirable species productive and dominant	
7.3	Establish new pastures	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.83		sum x 0.83 =

## Module 8 - Turn Pasture into Product

Module procedures		Your score
8.1	Know your feed supply	
8.2	Know your animal demand	
8.3	Match feed supply to animal demand and minimise risk	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.83		sum x 0.83 =

## Module 9 - Gain from Genetics

Module procedures		Your score
9.1	Identify the key production traits that drive your sheep enterprise profit	
9.2	Identify the genetic opportunities to improve key production traits	
9.3	Select the best genetics for your business	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.83		sum x 0.83 =

## Module 10 - Wean More Lambs

Module procedures		Your score
10.1	Ensure most ewes get in-lamb	
10.2	Manage your ewes to improve lamb survival	
10.3	Keep maximum numbers of lambs alive to weaning	
10.4	Manage weaners for lifetime productivity	
10.5	Prepare your ewes for next joining.	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.5		sum x 0.5 =

## Module 11 - Healthy and Contented Sheep

Module procedures		Your score
11.1	Maintain your sheep in appropriate body condition	
11.2	Implement a preventative health management program	
11.3	Adopt on-farm biosecurity measures	
11.4	Manage sporadic outbreaks of diseases	
11.5	Meet all animal wellbeing requirements	
For a corrected score add your scores for each procedure and multiply by 0.5		sum x 0.5 =

### Assessing and mapping your whole-of-business performance

Now that you have completed the Quick Quiz, you can very simply assess and map your whole of business performance.

#### Step 1

If you didn't do this when filling in the module tables, you'll need to go back and calculate a corrected score for each module. Do this by adding up your scores for each procedure and multiplying the number you get by a conversion factor (either 0.5, 0.625 or 0.83). Record the 'corrected' score in the bottom right-hand column of each table. Review the worked example where the corrected score was 5.

[Note: We need to multiply by the conversion factor to get a score out of 10 so it's easy to map. The conversion factors differ because the number of procedures varies in the different modules.]

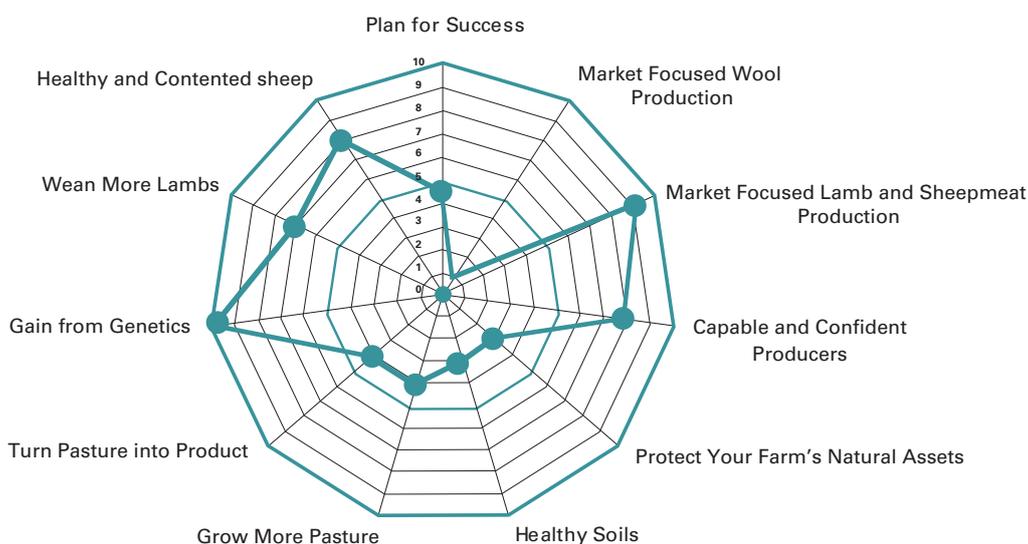
#### Step 2

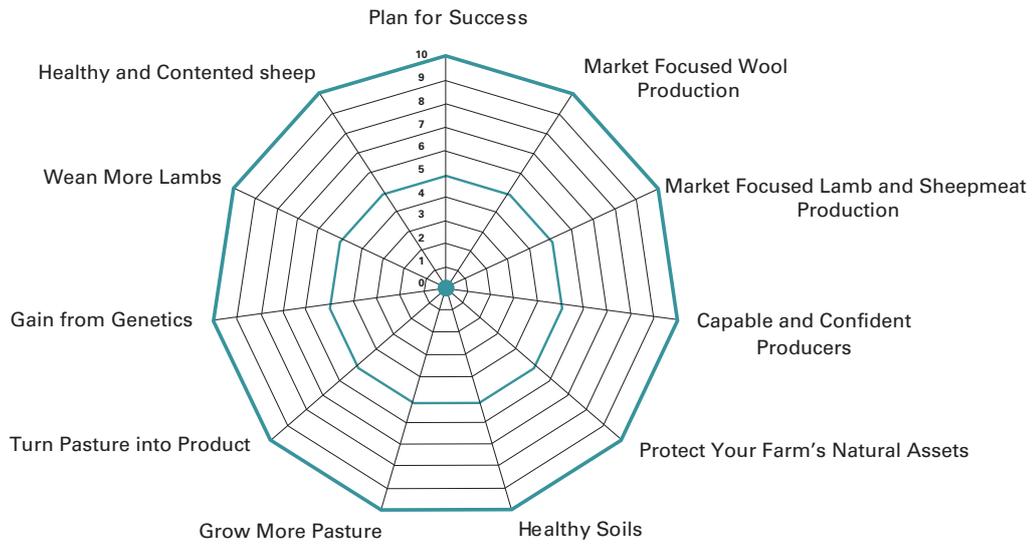
Plot your corrected score by drawing dots on the "self assessment template" (figure 3). Join the dots to give a 'map' that shows where you consider the strengths and weaknesses of your business lie. In the worked example in figure 2, the sheep producer has assessed the business to be quite strong (that is a score of 5 or above) in a total of five of the modules, and a little weaker (ie, scores below 5) in six of the modules. Looking at the worked example gives a picture of the sheep producers and their business. They are lamb producers (no focus on wool marketing) with a major focus on the genetics and performance of their animals. The soils and pasture side of the business is probably where some rapid and substantial progress could be made by using the procedures and tools in the manual.

#### Step 3

Repeat the Quick Quiz at a later time (say, after a year) so you can assess whole-of-business progress by comparing the maps. Spare maps are included for this purpose.

**Figure 2:** A worked example of how to complete the map of your whole-of-business performance.







For the most up-to-date Making More from Sheep information, including web signposts, products, publications and events, visit [www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au](http://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au)

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