

AN INITIATIVE OF
Making More From Sheep



Wean More Lambs

Colin Trengove



Member SA Livestock Consultants

EVENT PARTNERS:



EVENT SUPPORTERS:



Summary

Making More From Sheep



- Get the Enterprise / Management system right
 - then improve reproductive performance
- Know nutritional targets and Monitor
 - Pasture availability & Condition Score targets
- Allocate resources to twins & singles
- Most important decisions require management with minimal extra investment

Current Situation in Aust

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- National average 80% lambs weaned
- 1/3 lambs lost Joining – Weaning
- 90 – 95% weaners survive first 12 months
- Diminishing National flock

Profitable sheep farmers:

- Focus on profit drivers
 - Meat & wool per hectare
 - Not price premiums
- Optimise stocking rate & minimise supplementary feeding
- Match feed supply and feed demand
 - Time of Lambing



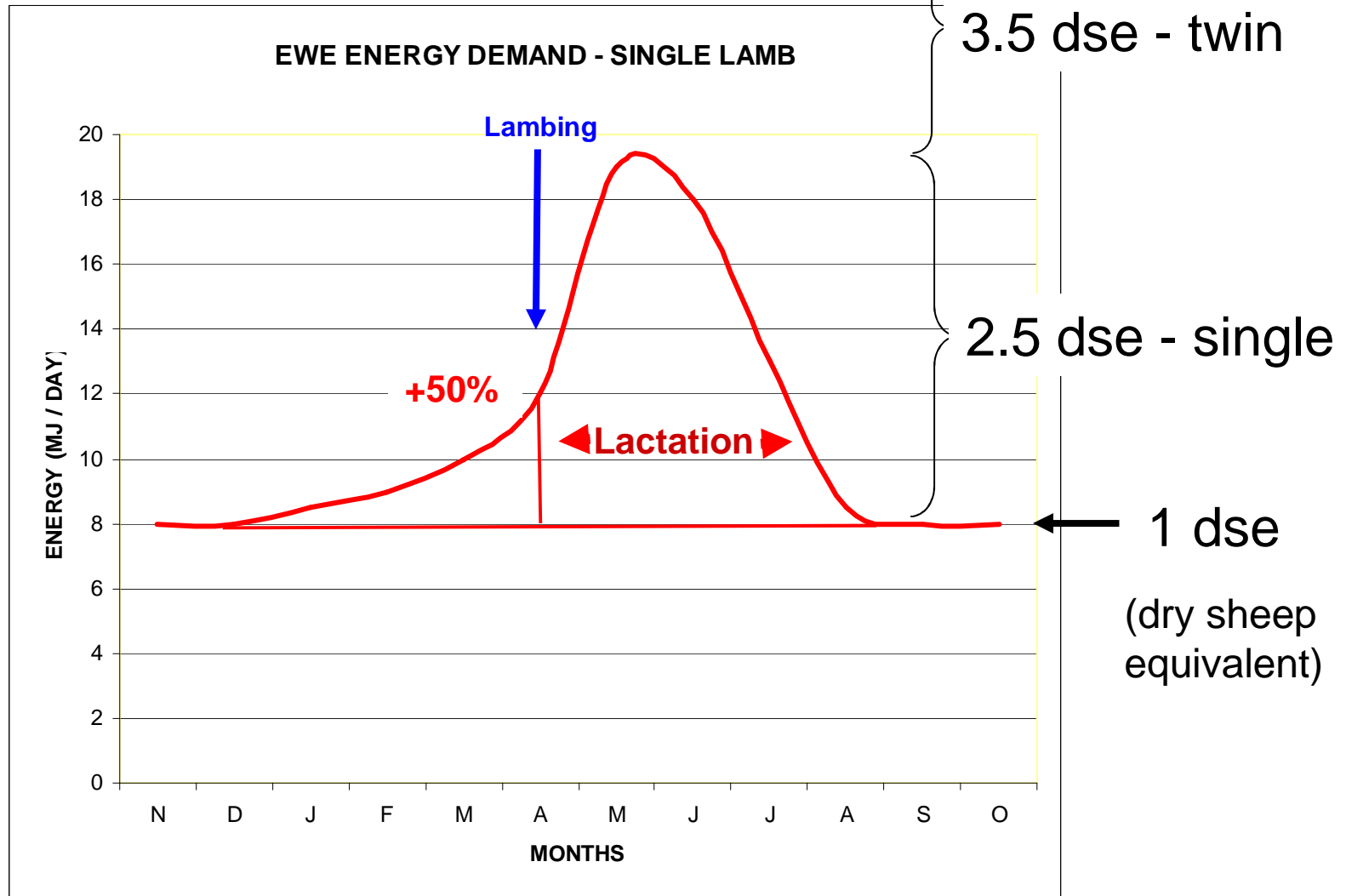
Time of Lambing

– main sheep enterprise?

- 1) February
- 2) March
- 3) April
- 4) May
- 5) June
- 6) July
- 7) August
- 8) September

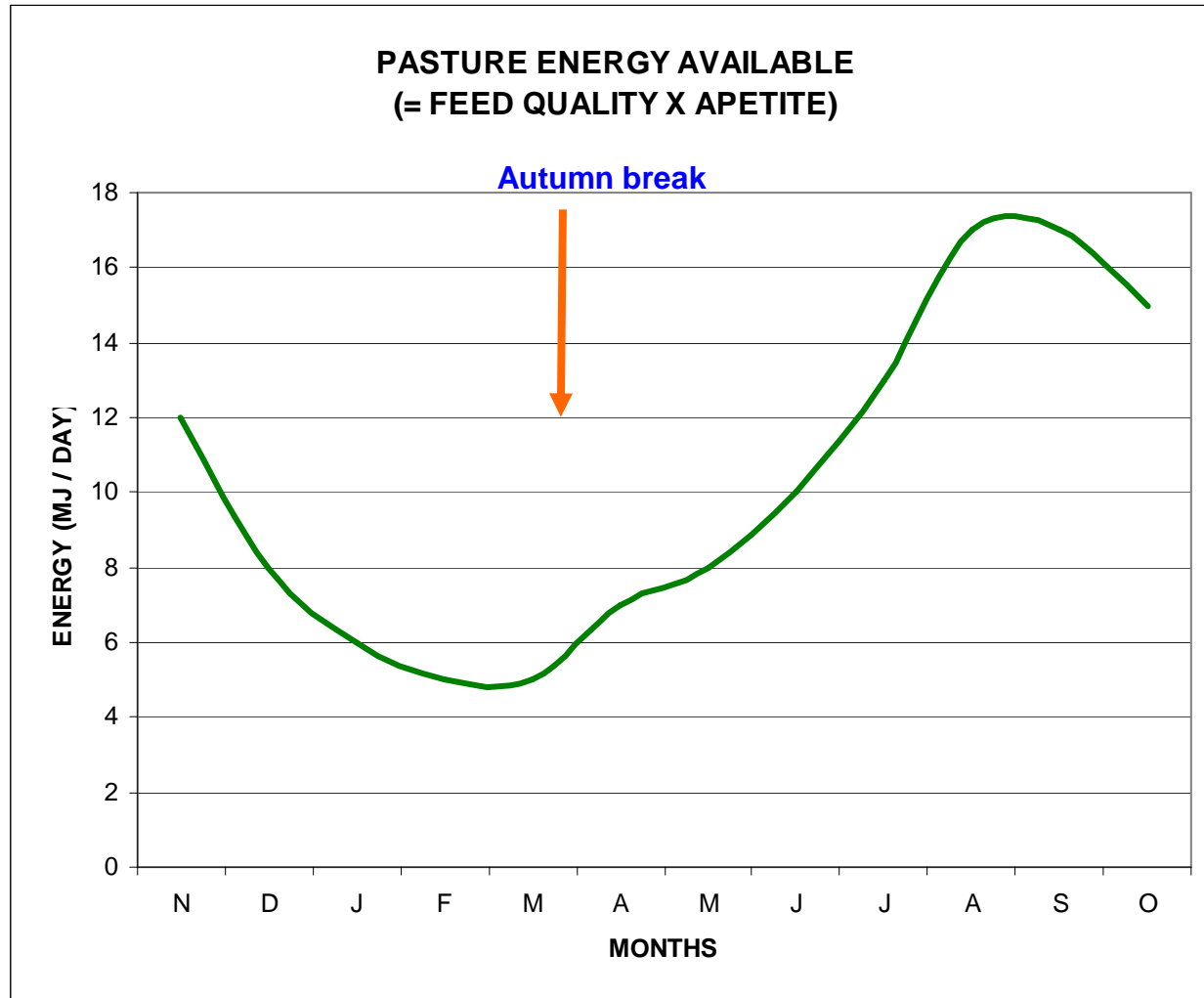
Ewe energy demand

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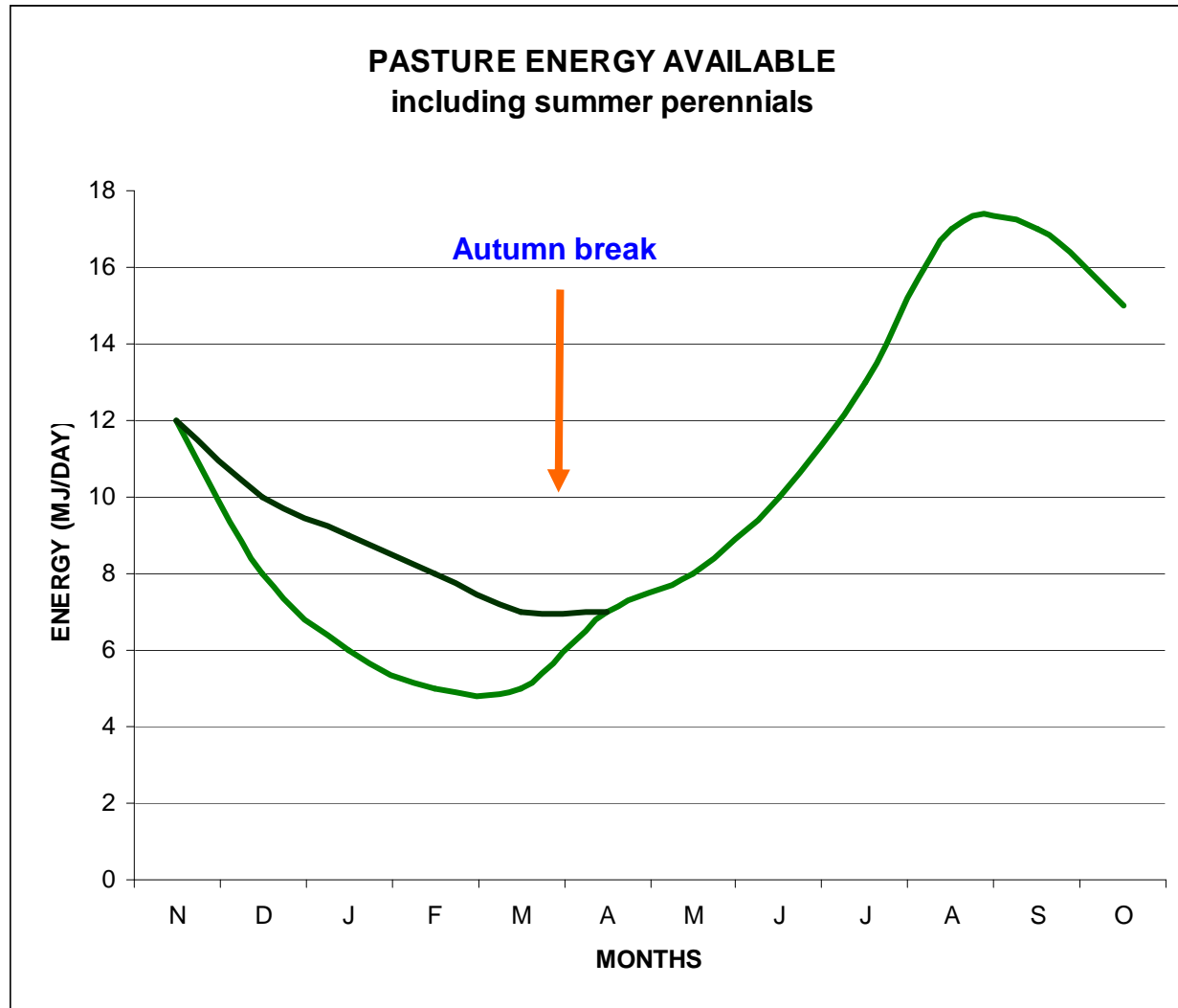
Pasture energy supply

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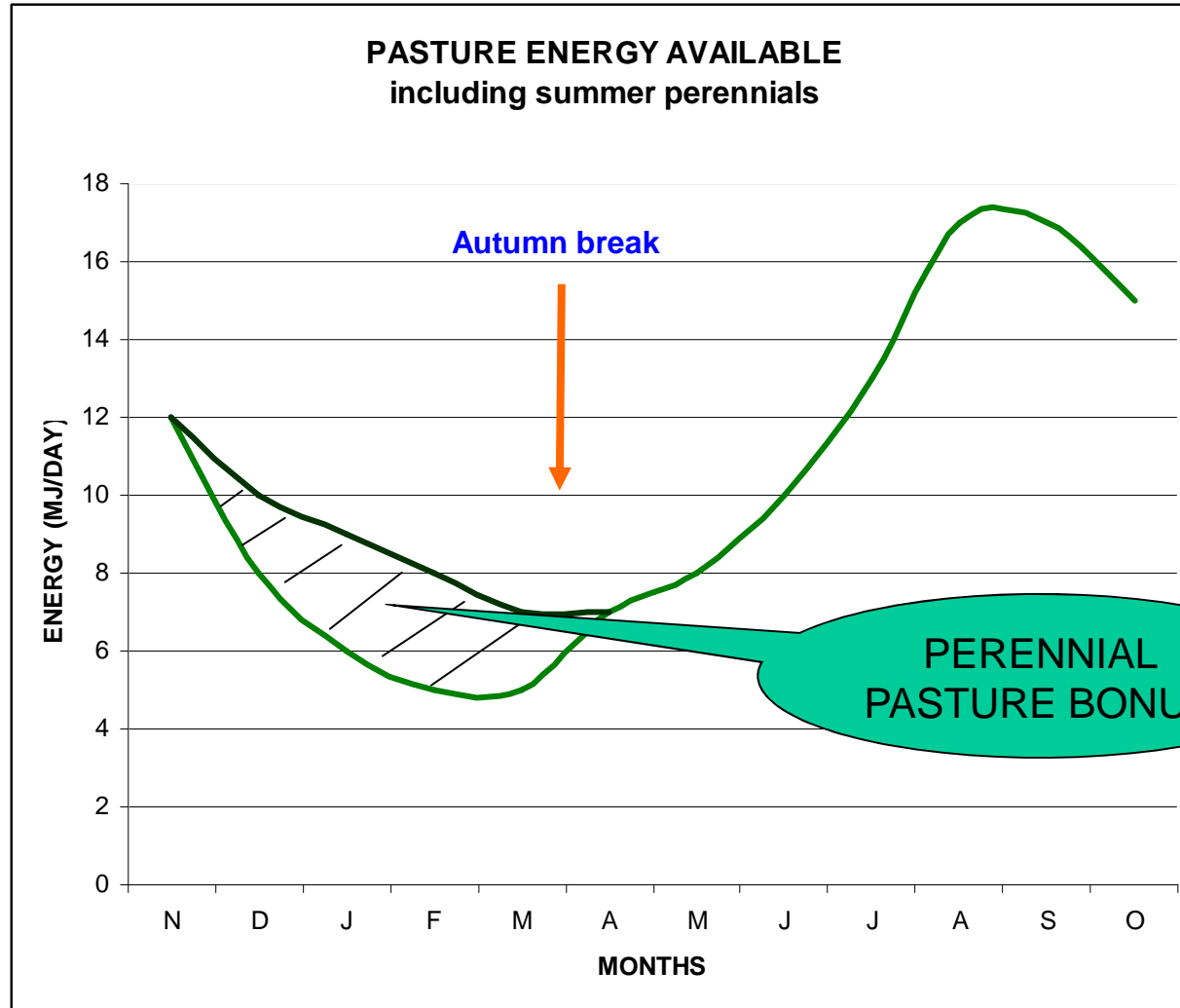
Pasture energy supply

Making More From Sheep



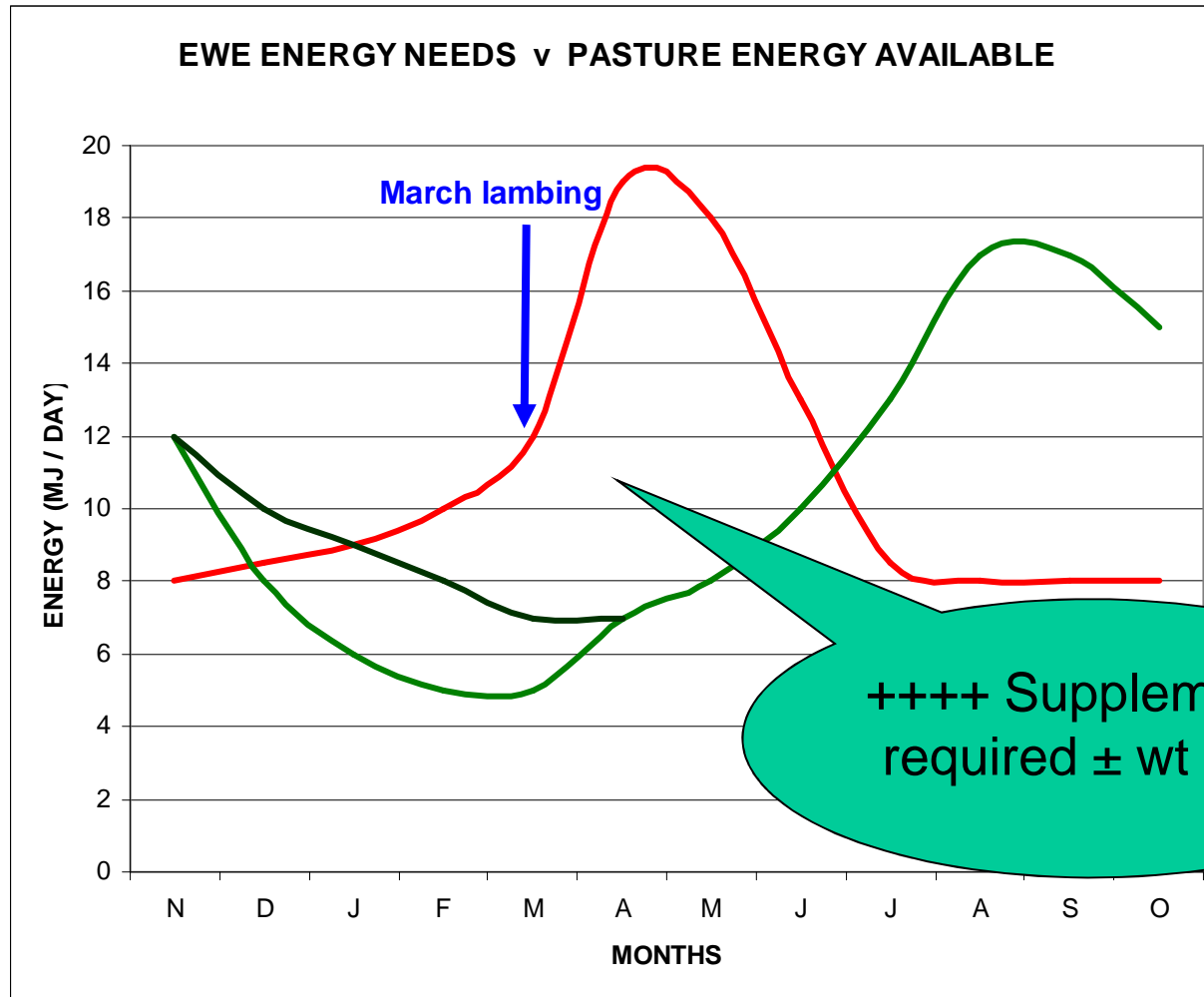
Pasture energy supply

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March Lambing

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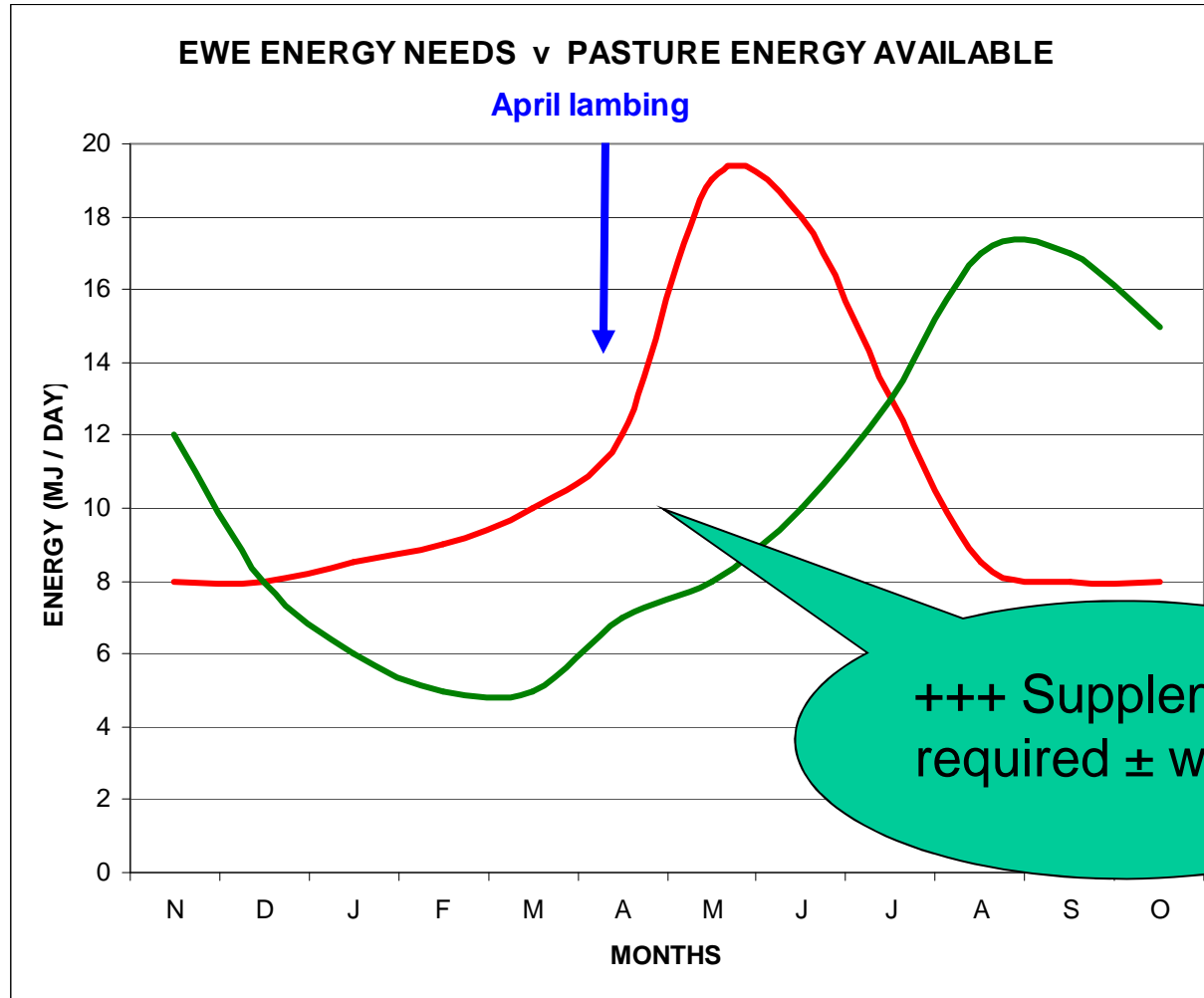


++++ Supplements required ± wt loss

↓
Pregnancy toxaemia

April Lambing

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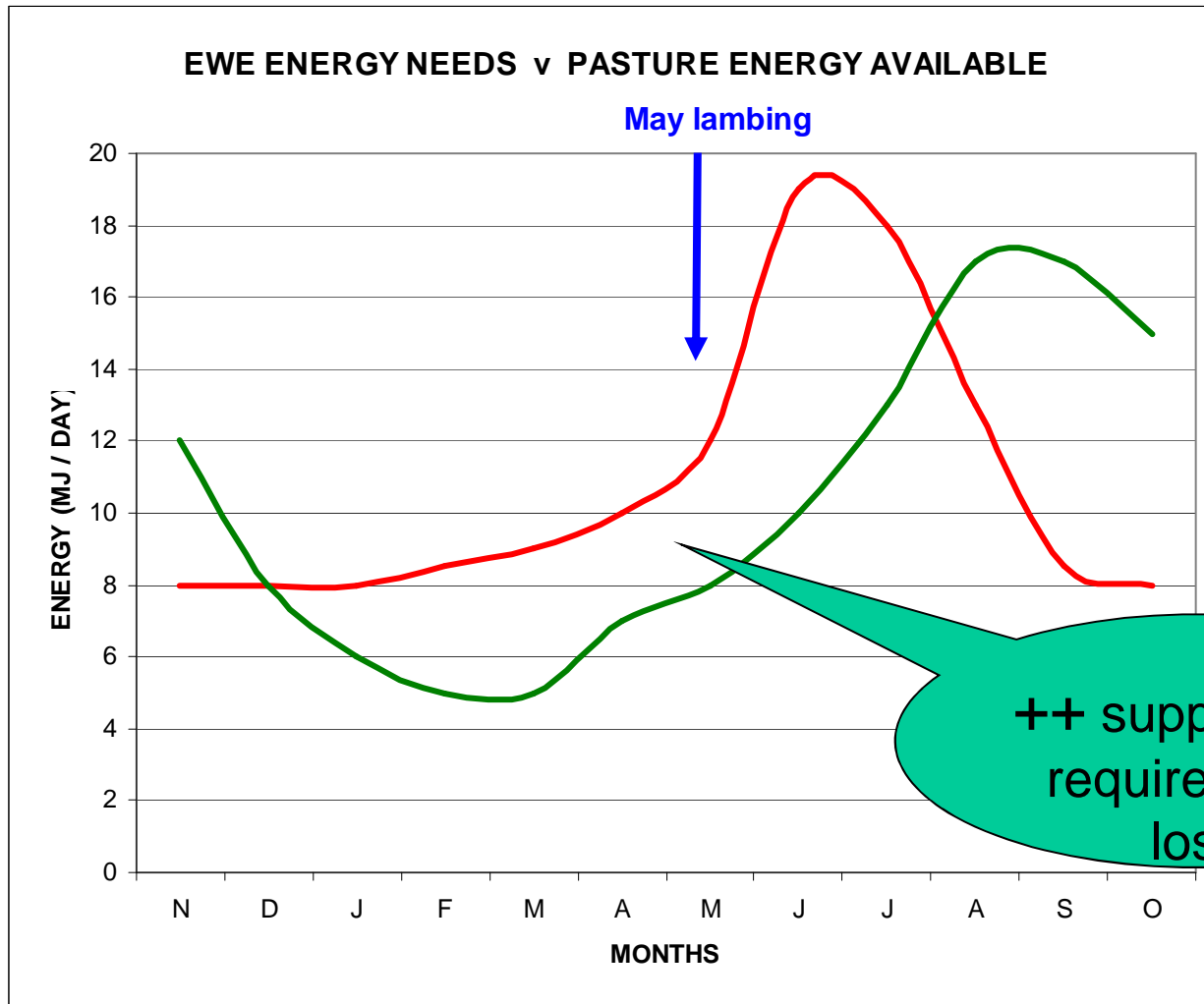
+++ Supplements required ± wt loss



Pregnancy toxaemia

May Lambing

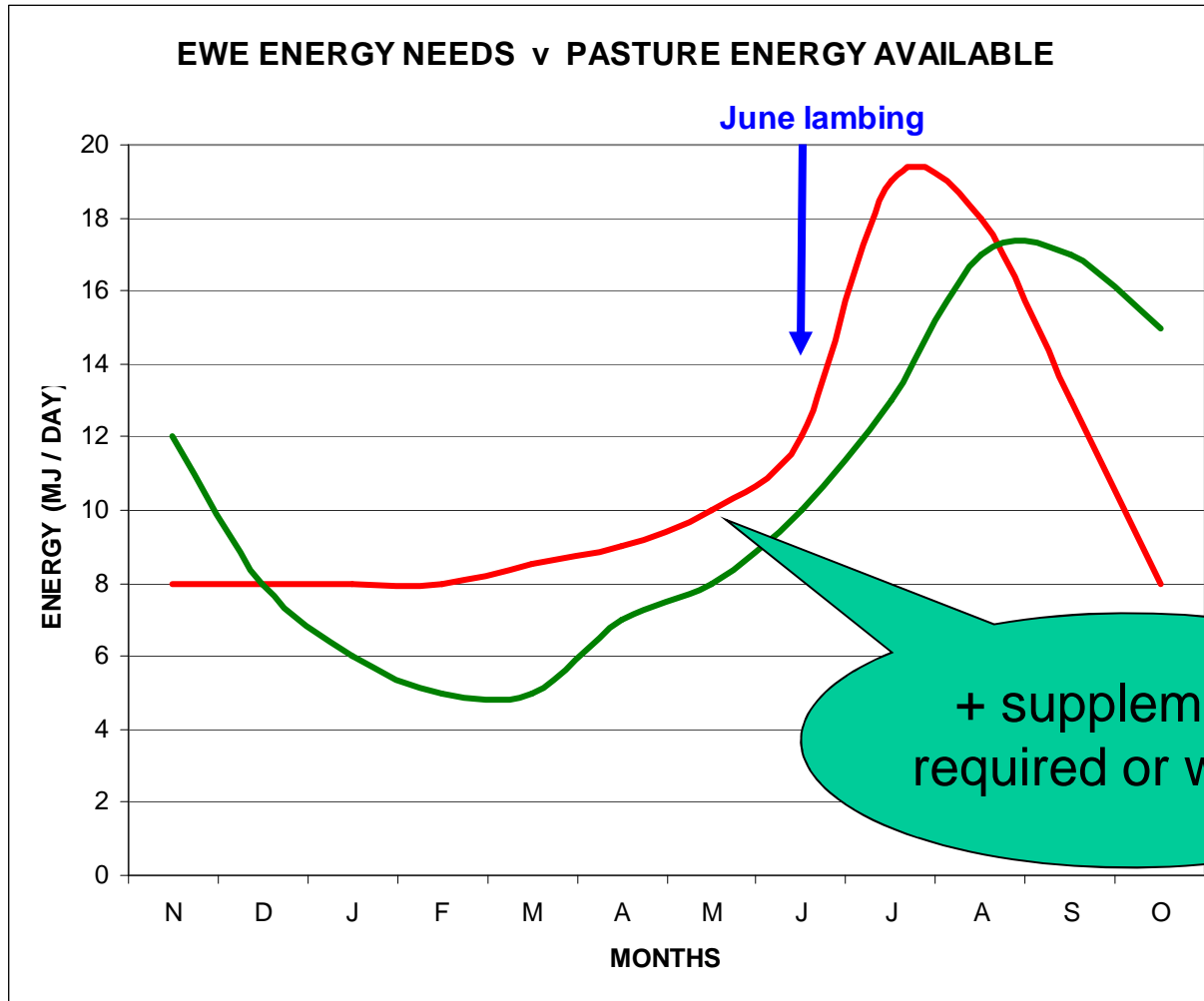
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++ supplements required ± wt loss

June Lambing

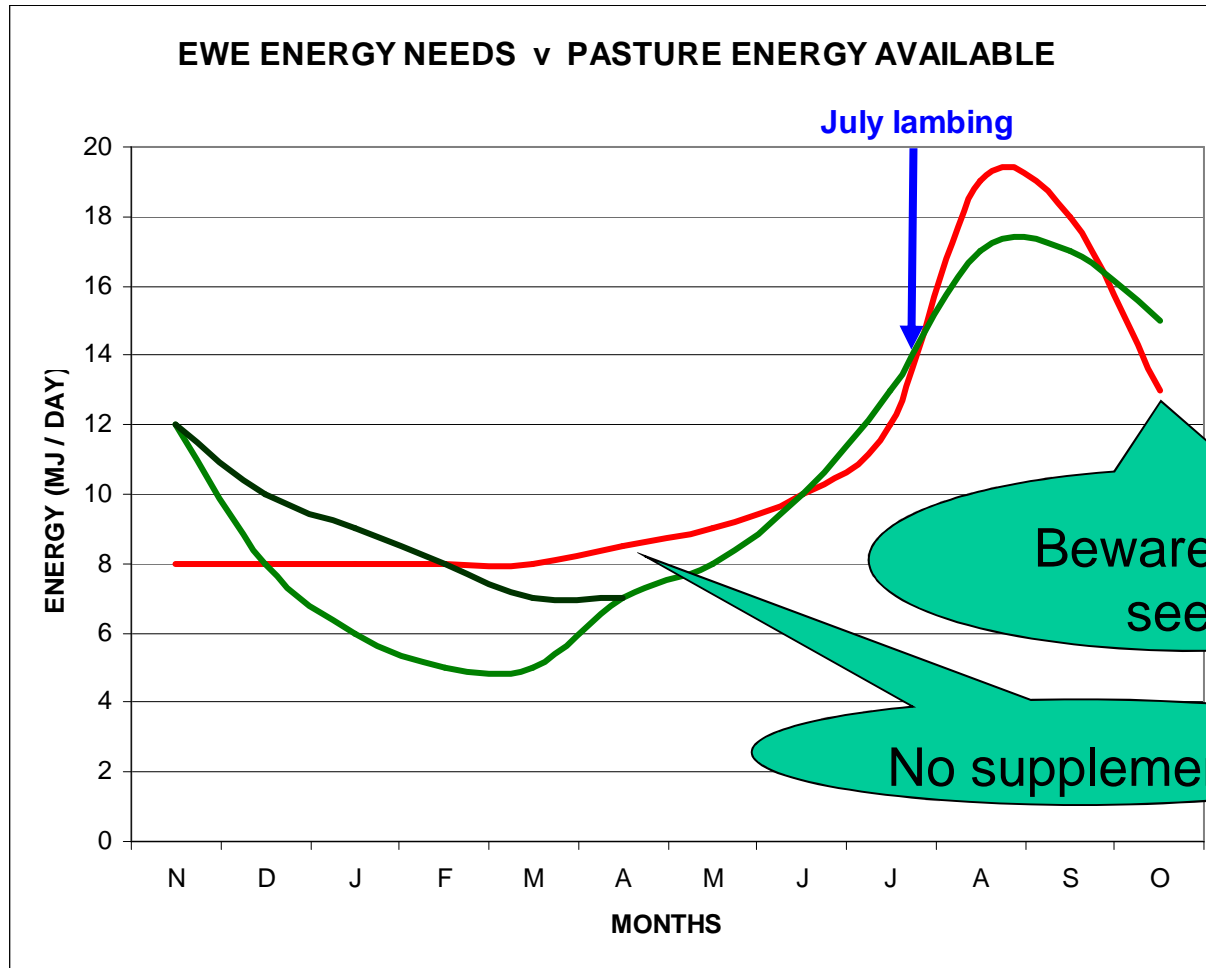
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+ supplements required or wt loss

July Lambing

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Beware grass seeds

No supplements

What can you do?

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- **↑ conception rates**
 - Better ewe nutrition pre-joining
 - Improved genetics
 - Ram exam – ‘4T’s’
- **↑ lamb survival**
 - Targeted ewe nutrition during pregnancy
 - Monitor ewe condition & feed on offer (FOO)
 - Pregnancy scanning
- **↑ weaner survival**
 - Target post weaning growth rate
eg 1kg gain/mth



Source: SheepCRC & Kleeman et al



Teeth



Toes

29.06.2011



Testes



Tossle

What can you do?

Making More From Sheep



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ie 25kg + 1kg gain/mth



What can you do?

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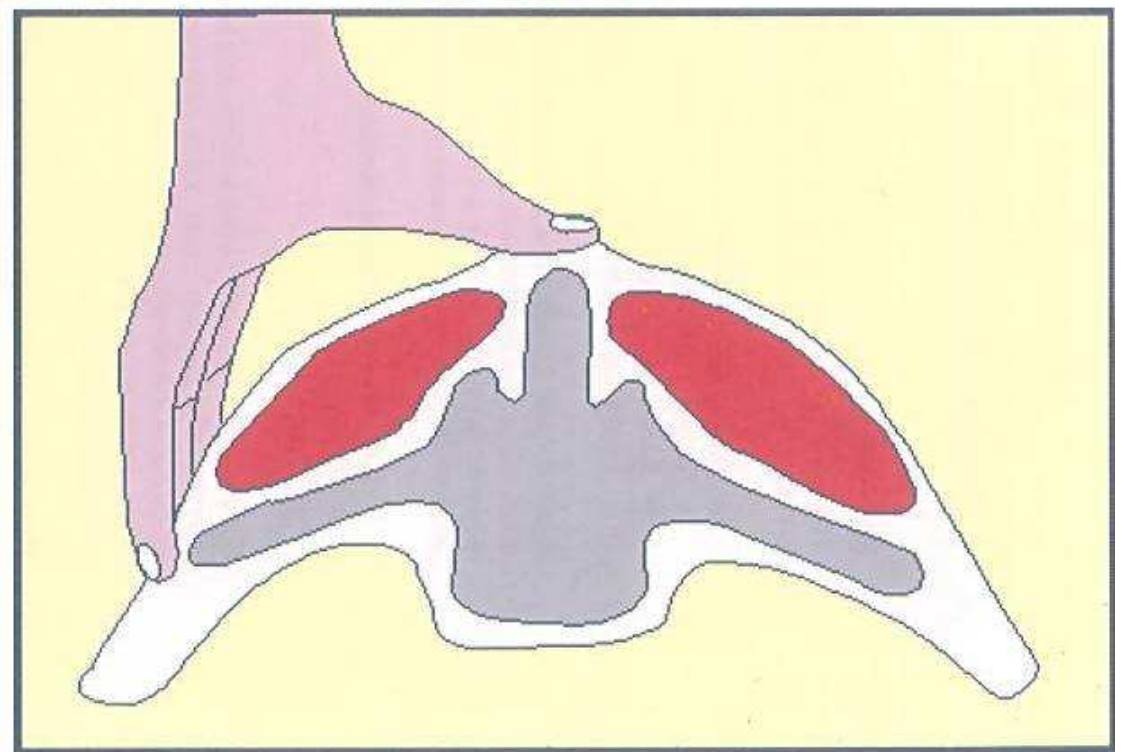
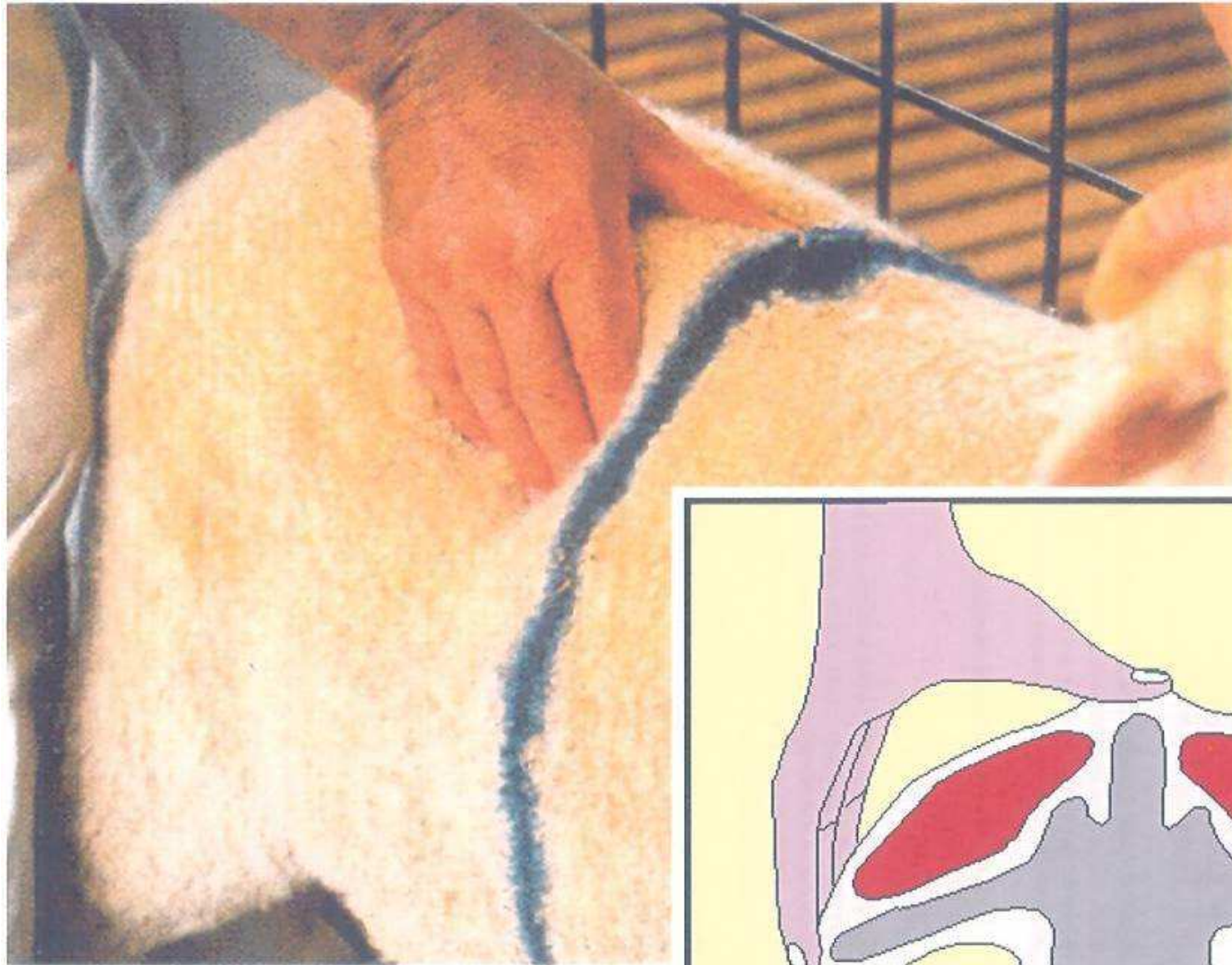
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Source: SheepCRC & Kleeman et al

To wean 10% more lambs on your farm, what will you do?

1. Keep my adult ewes one year longer
 2. Lamb at 1yr old instead of 2 yrs
 3. Lamb more than once a year
 4. Select/buy more fertile sheep
 5. Improve breeding ewe nutrition
 6. Increased stocking rate
(ewes/ha)
-



Lifetime Wool case studies

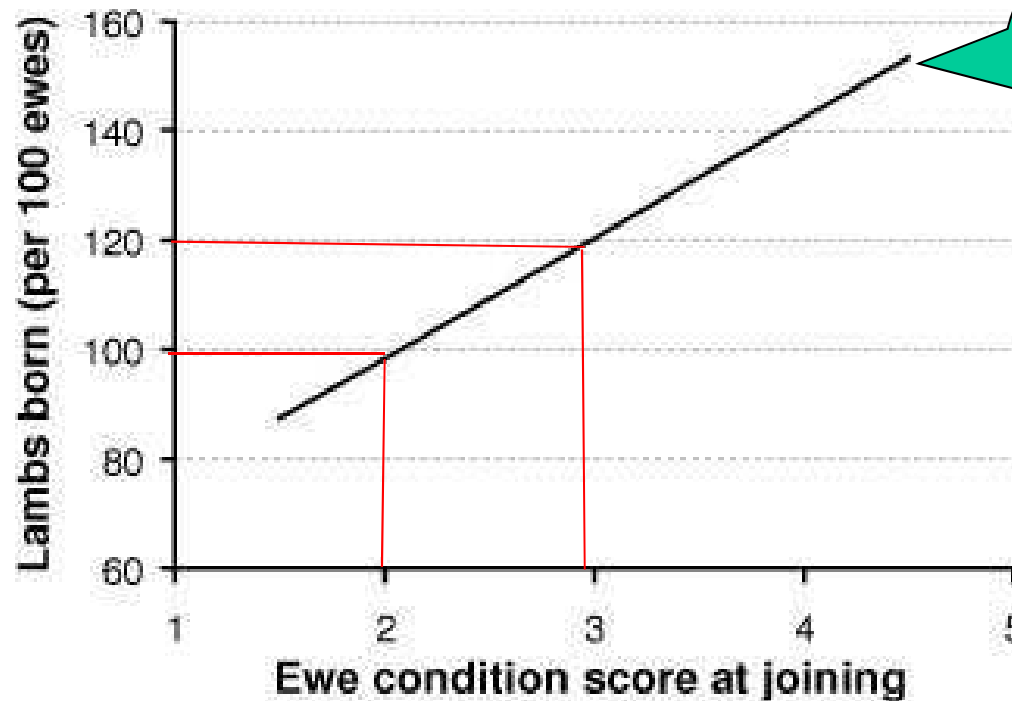
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Scanning % (lambs/100 ewes)	Low	High
Farm	CS 2 - 2.5	CS 3 - 3.5
Kendenup, WA	100	136 (+36)
Coleraine, VIC	90	118 (+28)
Launceston, TAS	100	128 (+28)
Brookton, WA	101	127 (+26)
Moora, WA	117	127 (+10)
Dandaragan, WA	117	124 (+7)

Source: www.lifetimewool.com.au

Ewe condition score at joining and number of lambs born



20 extra lambs born for +1CS

Lifetime reproductive performance

	Ewes ranked on lifetime reproduction rate			
	Lowest 25%	2 nd q'tile	3 rd q'tile	Highest 25%
Ewe fertility	55%	78%	88%	95%
Litter size	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.6
Lamb survival	47%	74%	83%	90%
Lambs weaned / ewe joined	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.4

Source: Chris Shands NSW I&I

Benefits of better ewe nutrition

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- Maintain ewe production
 - Wool production & quality
- Reduce ewe mortality
 - ↓ lambing difficulties (dystocia)
 - ↓ risk of pregnancy toxaemia
- Optimise progeny production
 - ↑ lamb birth weights & survival
 - ↑ wool production & wool quality
- Save feed
 - Only feed those ewes that require it
 - Provide flexibility if the season collapses



Flushing

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- Highly variable response (-ve to +50%)
- Quality green feed
 - for 3 weeks pre-joining

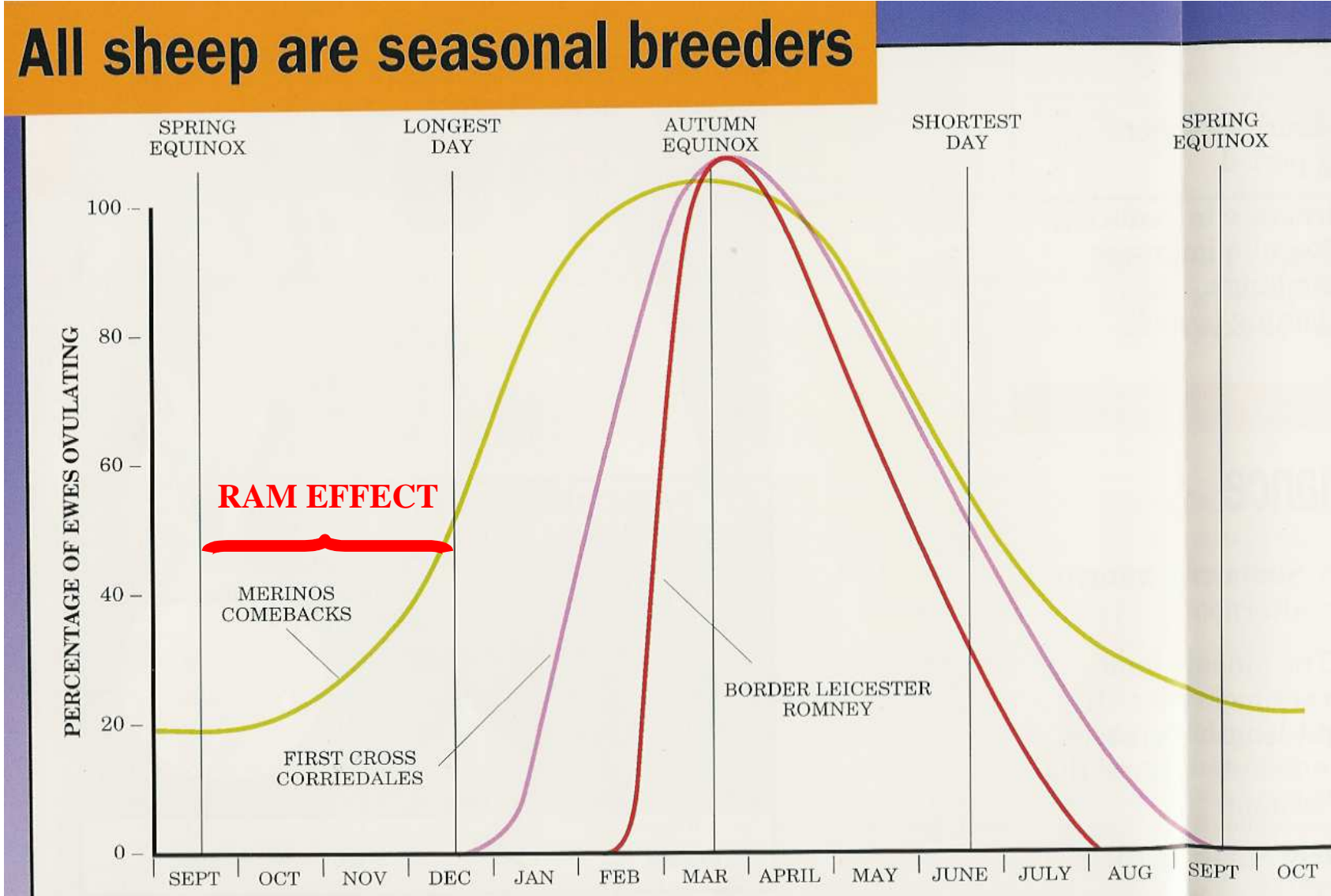
OR

- High protein (Lupins 0.5kg/day for 6 days)
- No benefit if $> CS 3$

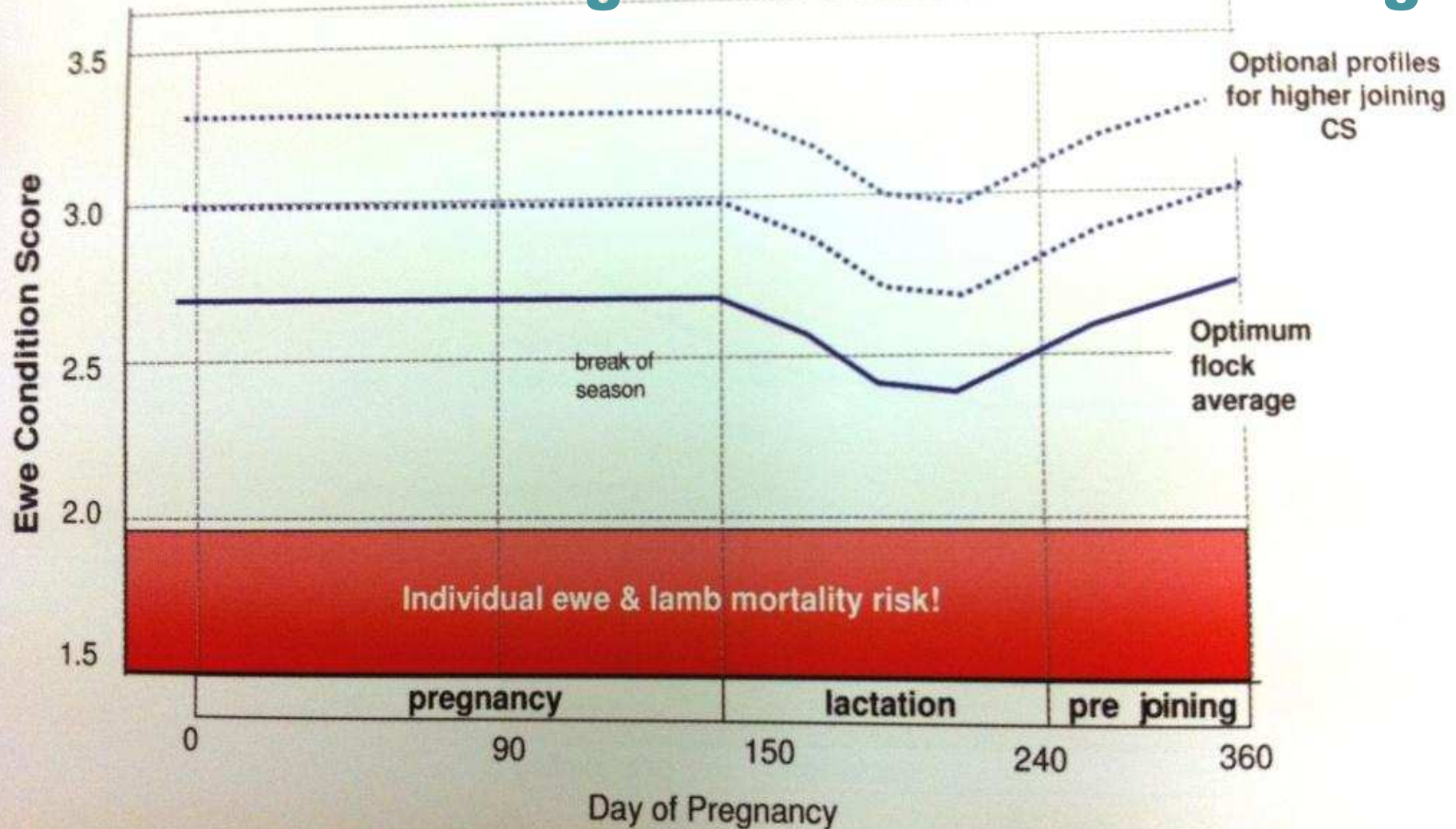


Teasing – the ram effect

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Nutrition – management starts at weaning



When does feeding pay?

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Management	Margin / 100 ewes	Return on investment
Maintain 1 kg LW at joining (= ~ 3 kg grain)	\$43.50	73%
Increase 1 kg LW at joining (= ~ 7 kg grain)	-\$24.50	-ve
Maintain 1 kg LW in pregnancy	\$23.50	42%
Increase 1 kg LW in pregnancy	-\$44.50	-ve

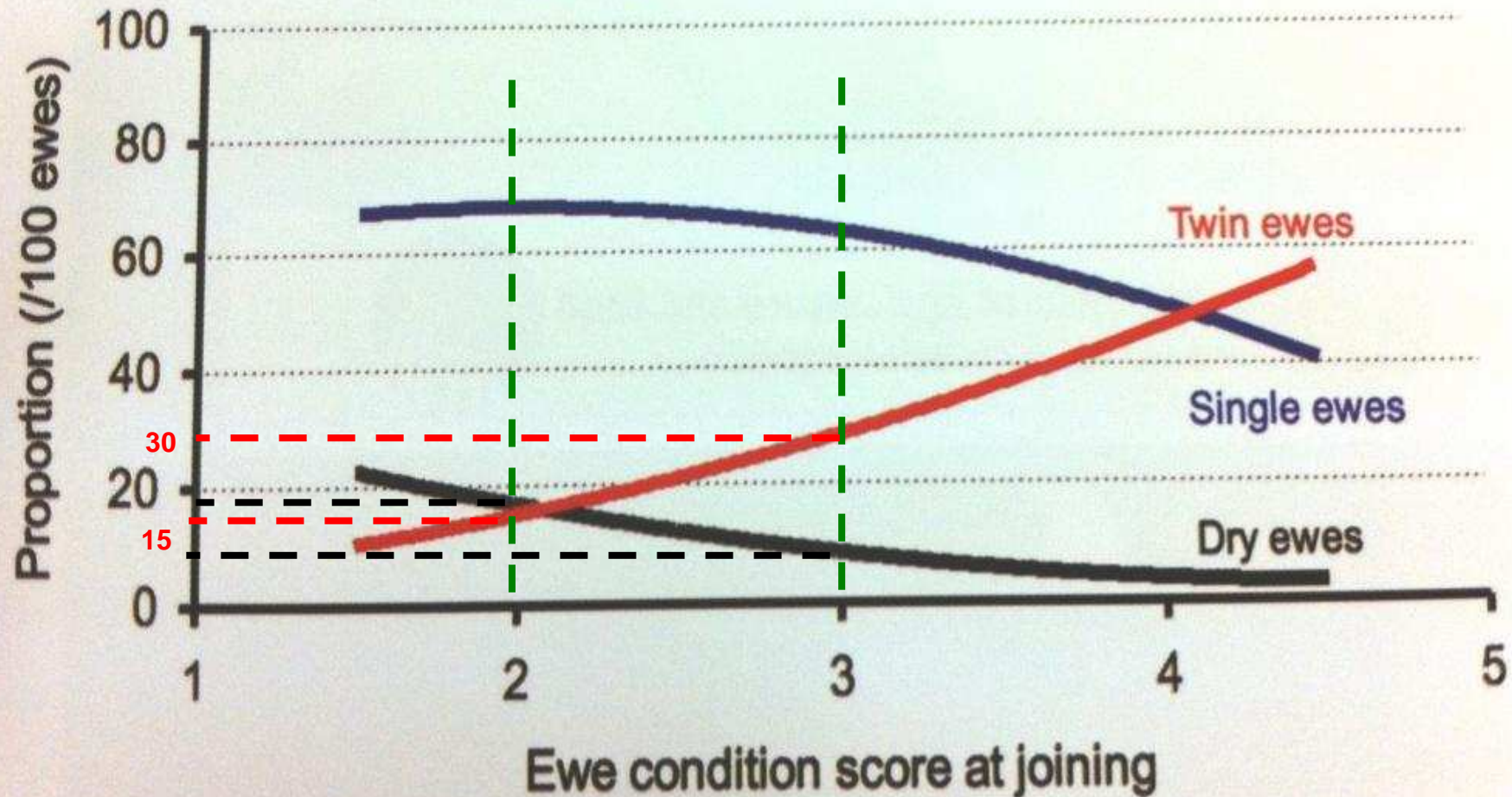
Source: Mackinnon Project

Ewe Condition Score at Joining

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Relationship between ewe condition score at joining and proportion of dry, single and twin ewes



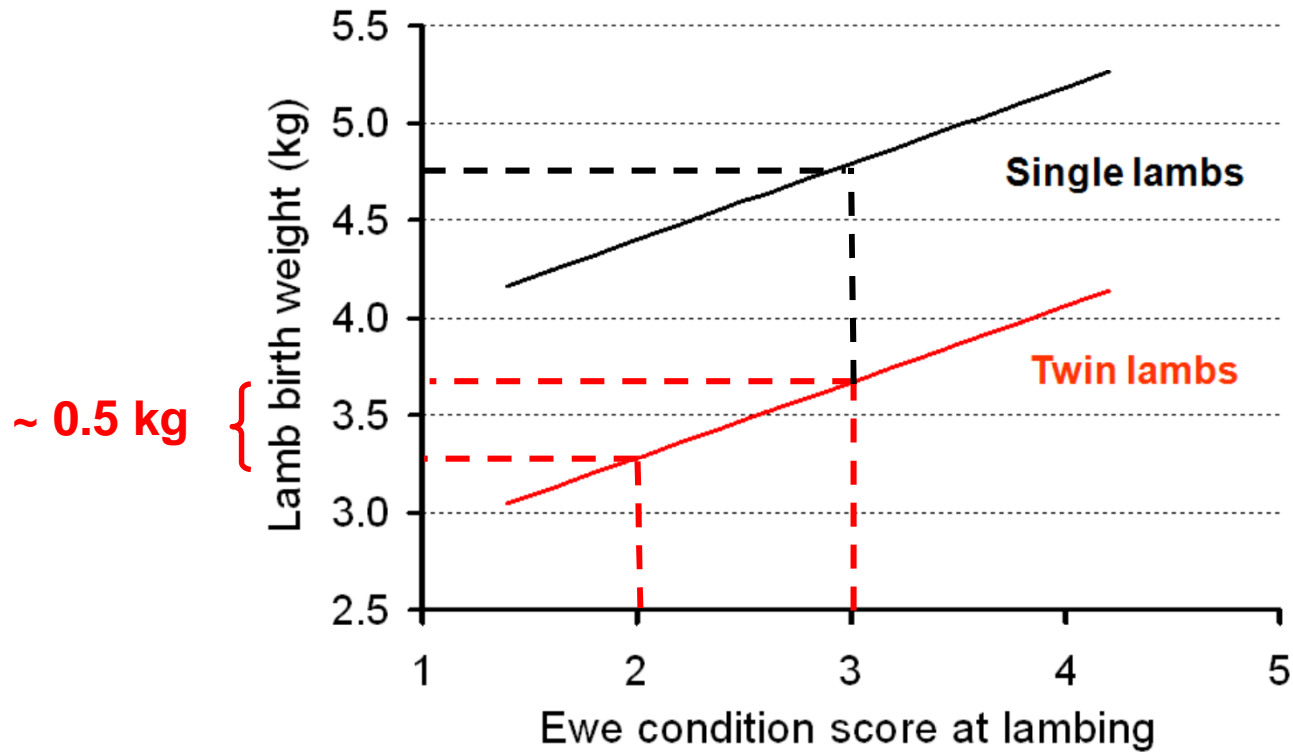
Ewe Condition Score & birth wt

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lifetimewool
more lambs, better wool, healthy ewes

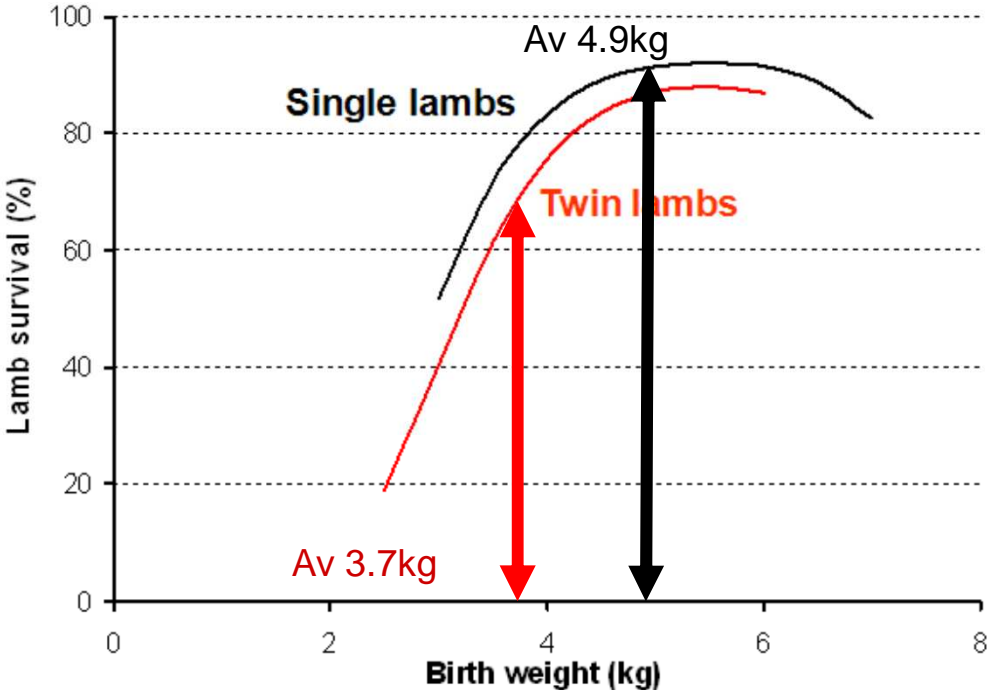
Ewes in better condition at lambing have heavier lambs



Optimum birth weight

lifetimewool
more lambs, better wool, healthy ewes

Lamb birth weight and survival



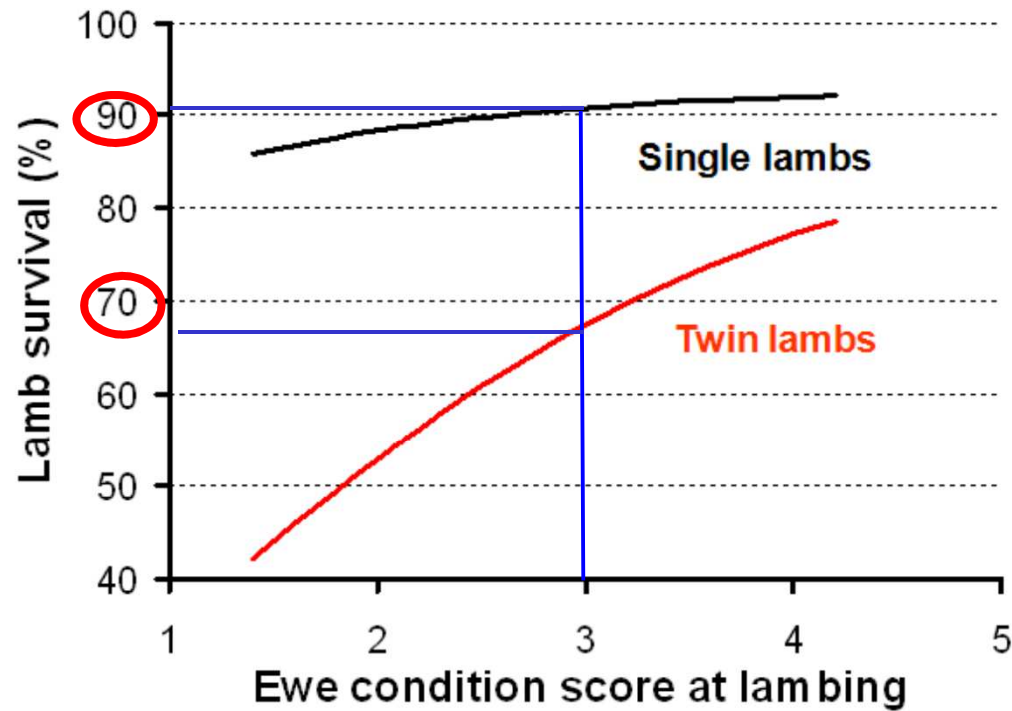
Ewe CS & Lamb survival

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Ewe condition score at lambing and lamb survival



Increasing lamb survival

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- Most losses due to starvation, mismothering, hypothermia
- Predation generally less than 10% of total
- Dystocia can be important
- Aim for
 - 90% survival of singles
 - 70% survival of twins

Managing twin lambing ewes

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- Allocate feed resources

- Mob size: < **250**

- Predation control



FOXOFF[®]
ECONOBAIT

- Shelter

- ↑ survival: Twins 8.5% & singles 3.5%
- Plantation - benefit extends 10 x the height
- Avoid high risk paddocks



After Lambing

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- Short lambing period (35 days) is essential for effective management
- Weaning time
 - 12-14 weeks for merinos ALWAYS
 - Crossbreds depends on allocation of feed resources
 - Early weaning locks in high conception rates next yr
- Weaner management
 - Prepare weaning paddocks
 - Merino weaners that grow over 1 kg/month survive



Sign Posts

Making More From Sheep



- Making More From Sheep
 - Module 10 Wean More Lambs
- High Performance Weaner Management
- Websites
 - MLA, Lifetimewool, Evergraze, AWI, SheepCRC

- Workshops
 - RIST & Sheep CRC



A program that works

- ↑ stocking rate by 15%
- ↓ ewe mortality from 4.5 to 2.5%
- ↑ weaning rate by 15%
- ↑ lambs produced / ha by 30%

Darren Gordon at RIST 03 55730943

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