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EDITORIAL

The article on protein supplementation trials could not be more timely for inclusion in the Wool Press this month as farmers will be watching their stock and hoping that spring grass growth comes on promptly to fill the food gap for pregnant ewes and cows. Along with forage cropping such strategic supplementations may be the way forward in future years. Peter Johnson's photograph of the lupin grains clearly illustrates that the feed is robust enough to be spread on the ground and not break down on initial contact will moisture. Andrew Pollard will report on some of the forage cropping work next month. Thanks to the farmers taking part in the trials there will be some interesting figures next year regarding feeding costs potential and economic return.

The article by Doug Martin about next season's meat export season is a must to read for suppliers. I have just returned from a visit to Sand Bay Abattoir where John and his team are hard at work undertaking alterations in preparation for the 2008 season. Some may say that the export season is still three months away but farmers need time to plan ahead. Note the conditions for shearing sheep before slaughtering and the figures in the article showing the throughput of beef is also noteworthy. Better quality beef is already resulting in increased sales volume.

Rodrigo Olave was in the Falklands recently and with DoA support he undertook a survey of the shelterbelts on both the West and the East. Those considering planting shelterbelts in the future need to read this interesting article. Rodrigo will be producing a full report when back in Northern Ireland on the benefits of shelterbelts for farmers.

The Agricultural Advisory Committee approved proposals to enable PIP funds to be used in future for soil and wool tests provided measurements comply with the guidelines. These changes are published for wider information and for farmers to consider incorporating test costs when next preparing plans.

Lastly there has been some discussion at the DoA about the merits of a spray coating that is now being evaluated in Australia that can help protect newly shorn sheep. Thanks to Charlene Rowland for providing an article on the subject for publication. The DOA is investigating the concept with the producer/owner of the technology to determine if trial quantities are potentially available for the Falkland Islands….more on this later, but it makes interesting reading for protection from severe weather off-shears. I don't think we would contemplate using the coating for sunburn protection as in Australia but I may be wrong!

Best wishes with the spring activities,

Phyl Rendell
Director of Minerals & Agriculture

FIMCO UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2007

By Doug Martin, Logistics Officer

Sheep

Livestock Planning sheets received to date indicate that total throughput in 2008 will be similar to that achieved in 2007. Please note the new pricing schedules already distributed for cattle and lamb. Some important changes are transport and shearing times.

Transport

With the expected arrival of the Concordia Bay in early 2008 there will obviously be some changes to transport. Hopefully the new service will solve many of the current issues, and will also assist in a faster movement of sheep from farm to Sand Bay, with direct shipments from West Falkland possible. This will overcome the weight loss encountered with transporting larger volumes of animals in an extended transport and holding system. As many factors surrounding the operation of the new ferry are only recently becoming known, there is a lot of work now required to prepare for the new system. The fundamental difference being, all animals will have to be carried inside livestock crates and trailers.

Shearing

FIMCo agreed to a trial involving shearing animals pre-slaughter at the plant last season. We were able to do this because of very low skins prices in the previous season, which resulted in the disposal of virtually all skins. The practicality of this was difficult, especially when the wool was longer. There was also concern over loss of wool product.

Whilst reasonably successful and many thanks to Paul Phillips for his initiative and co-operation, it has been decided not to shear in 2008. This is for several reasons:

1. Due to lack of facilities, shearing and skins preparation cannot be carried out at the same time - this caused a problem last season, when we had decided to shear, then the skins prices increased.
2. Lack of suitable facilities makes the operation difficult at Sand Bay.
3. If shearing is required, it is considered better that the farmers retain the wool.

In order to retain the flexibility of skins production, yet overcome the loss of wool, avoid the potential for carcase contamination when dressing the longer wooled sheep and for hygiene and animal welfare reasons (by transporting too soon following shearing), the following policy will apply to all sheep and ‘old season’ lambs being transported to FIMCo.

Minimum of 14 days between shearing with cover combs and transporting
Minimum of 28 days between shearing with conventional combs and transporting
Maximum of 3 months wool (see note 1)

Notes:

1. It was generally agreed at Farmers Week that 3 months growth of wool is worth shearing, (this was also borne out during shearing at the plant) and this works in well with time that the longer wool generally becomes a problem at the plant. It is essential to maintain good communications with the Logistics Officer, so shearing can be carried out as appropriate before transporting.
2. It is planned that skins from new season lambs will be processed, but in the event

that this does not happen – farmers will be given the option of shearing prior to transporting (subject to the above parameters).

3. There are certain instances where FIMCo reserves the right to insist that any or all sheep / lambs are shorn prior to transporting – this is generally the case where there is severe dust contamination involved.

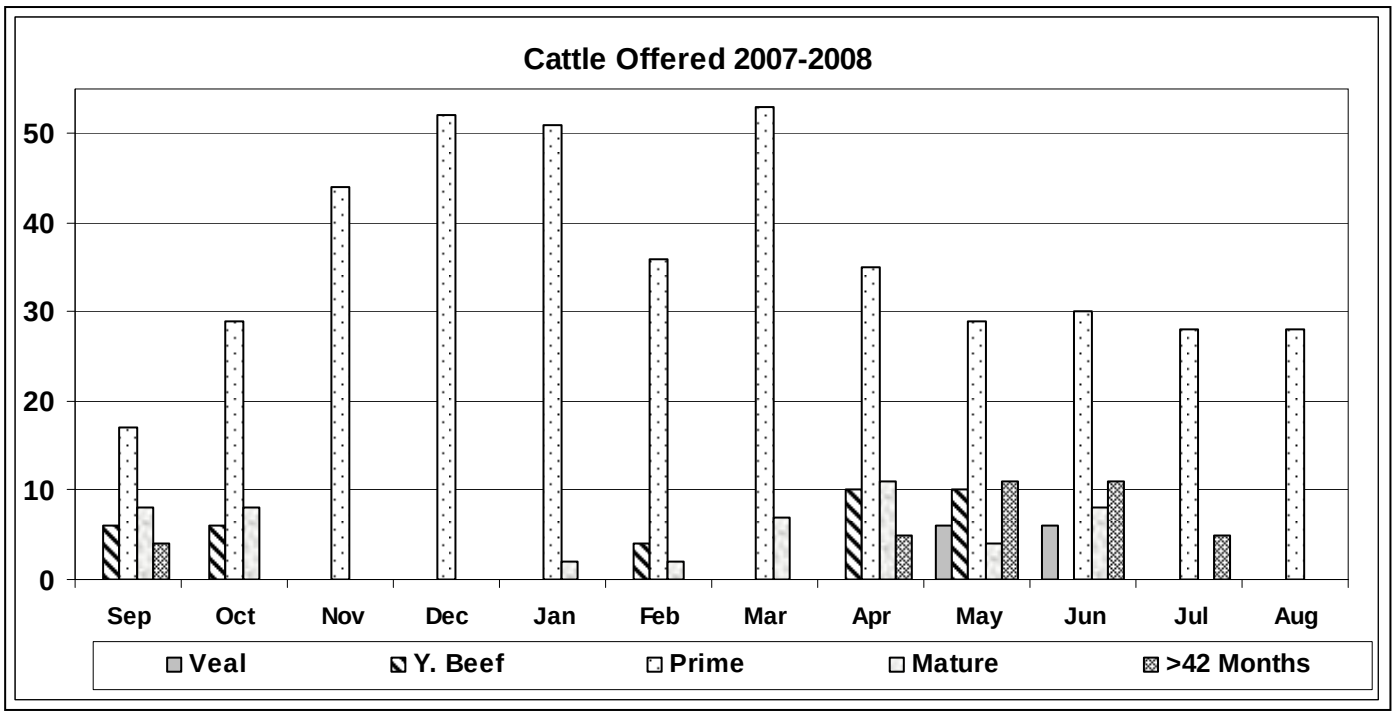
Cattle

Following more competitive retail and wholesale pricing by FIMCo, which is starting to show the desired effect of increased sales volume, (meaning that we can purchase more from farmers) the price schedules for cattle have slightly changed - more so for older and poor quality beef that is difficult to sell, and only slightly lower for good quality beef. The prices have remained highest for 'target' quality animals during the most difficult winter and spring months to maintain them in good condition

Work is ongoing in relation to EU accreditation for export of beef, although the economics of exporting beef requires thorough investigation. However, EU approval for beef exports may also provide some limited opportunities in the Falkland Is area. In order to provide some insight into the problems facing the beef industry the following figures are provided:

Total number of breeding cows (as at 31.5.07)	3591
Total others	2247
Sales and disposals (excluding culls)	851

288 cattle were processed by the plant at Sand Bay in the 12 months ending 30.6.07, therefore there is a large surplus. The quality of beef being processed has vastly improved over the past 2 years, however as you can see this is only a small proportion of beef cattle produced – and not all are in prime condition. The problem for farmers is compounded by the following information, compiled from figures taken from returned Planning Sheets.



HOGGET TRIAL SHEARING

The shearing of the hogget wether trial will be taking place on Tuesday 13th November at Goose Green. This will be open to anyone who wishes to attend and watch the hogget wethers being shorn as a team, with fleece values reported live on the day.

GOODBYE

By Nyree Heathman

Sian has bullied me into writing a final article for the Wool Press so here goes. I started with the Department of Agriculture in September 2001 working with Mandy McLeod in the Rural Development section. I soon became interested in the artificial reproduction work that was taking place though, mainly due to being one of Doug's slaves for the season, and finally moved into this field full time. I thoroughly enjoyed this aspect of my work within the DoA. It gave me the opportunity to work with some of the best (and some of the biggest characters) in the reproduction industry such as Willie Vivanco, Warren Nancarrow and Adrian Veitch from whom I learnt a great deal over the years. Useful snippets of knowledge like the fact that Adrian <u>can</u> read his paper and drive at 120km at the same time, and when you back his *brand new* ute into the trailer that some idiot parked behind you, don't expect him to not find out.

There are a few events that have occurred over the last 6 years that often come to mind – the day that Karen ended up dangling from the crush handle a foot off of the ground whilst doing battle with a cow determined to escape never ceases to make me laugh. There was also the day that Timmy and Mike Triggs got endlessly chased around the yards by a rather irate cow whilst trying to get some cattle onto the truck. Safe on the other side of the fence it was an hilarious spectacle that very quickly became far less amusing when I had to get in and help.

I think that the best though has to be the day at Cape Dolphin when Sam asked Frans if she could have a go at preg testing cattle. Up to her shoulder in cow she was merrily groping away when the animal in question decided to, shall we say, 'empty out'! The offending jet of brown liquid hit with amazing accuracy and Sam, who by now looked like she had been dipped in chocolate, was instantly banned from getting into the rover. After deciding that it really would be a bit harsh to strap her to the roof rack for the trip to town, she returned to Stanley, after being hosed off, in a set of clothes borrowed from Philip, with the window open just to be on the safe side!

What next? Contrary to popular rumour, I am not finishing work at the Department on the 21st September and departing the Islands on the next available flight for pastures new. I am in fact going rousying for a short while, and then once the tourist season kicks off I will be busy taking cruise ship passengers to visit the cute, cuddly little penguins and explaining that no, we did not put the stoneruns there ourselves, and despite the fact that yes, we are the last rover in a 12 vehicle convoy, we are not going to get lost and never be seen again getting from the MPA road to Bluff Cove Lagoon and back, so I will be around until the end of March 2008 anyway. After that who knows!

Anyway, enough from me for one day. Thanks to everyone at the Department and in the farming community for a thoroughly enjoyable 6 years. See you all in the Vic for a cider!!

SOIL TESTING AND SITE SELECTION GUIDELINES FOR CROPPING/PASTURE WORKS UTILISING PASTURE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (PIP) FUNDING

1. Purpose

1.1 To improve the establishment, yields and subsequent utilisation of forage crops and pastures via improved site selection and soil testing.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That all future first year PIP crops/pasture sites be scrutinised according to the criteria outlined in existing PIP planning plus those contained in this paper. As follows:-

- Farmer to initially identify potential sites based on DOA site selection guidelines (see attachment 1). Each sample must be accompanied with soil test application sheet (attachment 2).
- A soil sample for each potential site be collected with the sample made up of at least 5 sub-samples, collected according to DOA soil sampling guidelines (see attachment 3).
- Number of potential sites should be restricted to a maximum of 3 per proposed PIP site (in the first instance).
- Soil test to be carried out by the DOA for soil pH only, sites below pH 4.6 rejected immediately.
- There will not be any charge for testing these preliminary soil samples.
- Based on preliminary soil sample test results, those sites with a pH greater than 4.6 will be further investigated for suitability.
- DOA to visit farm and look at selected sites matching site selected to guidelines (see attachment 4). A more comprehensive soil test will be taken looking at soil pH, phosphorous, potassium and calcium. Initially a **maximum of 3 sites** may be sampled per intended crop/pasture PIP plan site. There will be a farm cost to the PIP of £10 per sample.
- Soil test to be reviewed and if acceptable the sites will be approved. The crop/pasture must be approved as per normal via annual PIP plans.

2.2 The site selection and soil testing should not be viewed solely on the basis of the initial crop. It should also take into account the long term sustainability and productivity of the final pasture.

3. Background

3.1 In 2006/07 approximately 200 ha of improved pasture and 450 ha of forage crops were sown utilising PIP funding.

3.2 In 2007/08, farm PIP plans have budgeted on approximately 950 ha of improved pasture and 450 ha of forage crops being sown.

3.3 This utilises a large proportion of PIP funding.

3.4 On many occasions crop/pasture failure is attributed to adverse seasonal conditions. Whilst this can be the case it is often exaggerated by poor site selection and the utilisation of low fertility acidic soils.

3.5 It is a fundamental concept that the majority of plant species require soils with a favourable pH (greater than 5.5). Acidic soils are more limiting in the majority of other nutrients, in particular phosphorous.

3.6 Various reports suggest that the average Falkland Islands soil has a soil pH of 4.6.

3.7 Changes will be implemented into the 2008/09 PIP planning requirements, on uncultivated ground. Other cases are to be dealt with on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Agricultural Advisor – Agronomy.

3.8 Farms that fail to meet primary or secondary soil testing/site selection requirements will be required to "keep looking" for suitable ground if cropping or pasture works are intended. The DOA is currently researching other opportunities for those farmers that cannot meet these requirements, for example: protein supplementation via lupins and managed grazing of native pastures.

ASSESSMENT OF SHELTERBELT RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

By Rodrigo Olave

Introduction

To enhance the agricultural sector the DoA (Department of Agriculture) and UKFIT (United Kingdom Falkland Islands Trust) in partnership with some private farms have established various trials as part of an on farm shelterbelt programme. This research programme has shown that lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) and Monterey cypress (*Cupresuss macrocarpa*) have a high tolerance to wind exposure and good potential for shelterbelt planting on farm sites due to the need to protect livestock and agricultural crops.

The main purpose of assessing tree growth in the Falkland Islands is to determine whether the species selected for shelterbelt planting have achieved a minimum performance to provide shelter. Such information could be used to improve the adoption potential of shelterbelts in the Falkland Islands to make a maximum impact on the whole farm system without covering large areas in trees.

Performance of a shelterbelt is estimated from tree growth, ground factors and meteorological conditions. These have been measured and the relationship between the characteristics of each shelterbelt trial and site factors will be examined. As to date Lodgepole pine has shown better results than other species tested, the relationship between their characteristics and site variables will be modelled to simulate the influence of trees on livestock production under the Falkland Islands environment. Additionally a cost benefit analysis of shelterbelts associated with pasture as a land use option will be conducted on the basis of the costs and returns that farmers face at present. This information will help towards the production of a flexible simulation guide to recommendations on designing shelterbelts for use in sheep rangeland production in the Falkland Islands.

All trees from 9 sites shown in Table 1 with different species were surveyed. In each site a variety of site variables were measured including topography, slope, elevation, tree height, survival and tree stem diameter.

Table 1. Shelterbelt trial sites in the Falkland Islands.

Shelterbelt Trial Sites	**Location**
Saladero Farm	East Falkland
Estancia Farm	East Falkland
Fitzroy Britannia	East Falkland
Fitzroy Farm	East Falkland
Stanley	East Falkland
Shallow Harbour Farm	West Falkland
Port Howard Farm	West Falkland
Bold Cove Farm	West Falkland
Hill Cove	West Falkland

The health of the conifer trees were recorded based on the level of damage affecting their foliage and discolouring of the needle/leaf loss (Table 2).

Table 2. Classification of health of trees observed.

Classification based solely on needle/leaf loss	Classification based on needle/leaf loss and yellowing of needles/leaves		
	Degree of yellowing percentage of yellowed needles/leaves		
	0 to 25%	26 to 60%	61 to 100%
0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4

For each lodgepole pine/site, foliar analyses will be carried out. Lateral shoots from a group of trees distributed across the site were sampled and the P, K, Mg, Zn, Cu and M concentration in the samples will be assessed.

The samples will be analysed in an ISO accredited laboratory at AFBI (Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute).

Outputs

Develop a model to provide an estimate of potential performance of a shelterbelt in the Falkland Islands using simple inputs and providing an easily understood description of the development of trees.

Produce a Cost-Benefit analysis for a shelterbelt programme considering appropriate economic parameters and taking into account public funds and other private conditions.

Future research needs

Testing & Propagation of other species
Pasture growth, lamb survival and sheep loses after shearing in the lee of a shelterbelt.
Environmental effects in the landscape.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank UKFIT and DoA for funding and other supports. I would also like to express my appreciation to the following persons: Mrs. Phyl Rendell, Mr. Neil Judd, Mr. Tim Miller, Mr. Gordon Lennie, Mrs. Kay McCallum, Mrs. Cynthia Williams, Mr/s Ali & Marlene Marsh and to the staff of the Falkland Islands Department of Agriculture for making me welcome.

SPRAY-ON COAT LEAVES SHORN SHEEP HAPPY COME RAIN OR SHINE

From the Guardian Unlimited, provided by Charlene Rowland

Author: Barbara McMahon

Imagine being left outside in freezing weather without any clothes on or standing naked for hours under a fierce sun. It's not much fun for newly sheared sheep in Australia, some of whom die of hypothermia or heat stress within days of having their fleeces removed. Help may be at hand, however, after a chemist claimed yesterday to have developed a spray to protect delicate sheepskin from the harsh Australian elements. Henry King said his biodegradable lanolin-based spray acts like an invisible raincoat on shorn sheep and can also be used as a sunscreen.

Trials on livestock in New South Wales, a region badly hit this year with cold and wet weather, proved a success, he said. Certainly there will be a market: there are an estimated 120m sheep on the continent. "It's a bit like a woman putting on hairspray to protect her 'do'," he told ABC Radio. "We set up a portable spray unit and it forms a fine mist and the sheep run through it." He said wool growers in the Monaro region of NSW found that spraying sheep is less labour intensive than putting coats on the animals or keeping them in shelters for the critical two- to three-day period after shearing.

Australia's vast national flock is raised in conditions ranging from the hot and dry areas inland to the chilly highlands. Mr King said those in the business had called the invention the "best thing since sliced bread for the industry".

LUPIN FEEDING / PROTEIN SUPPLEMENTATION TRIAL UPDATE

By Peter Johnson

Trials got underway in mid August for the supplementary feeding of protein in the Falkland Islands. The final product chosen was narrow leaf lupins, sourced in Western Australia and delivered to Stanley in 50kg bags for £14.50 per bag or £290 per tonne. Lupins have the unique quality of being a high protein source (32%), palatable to livestock, weather resistant (they don't turn to porridge with rain or dew) and do not give cause for worry like with many other grains of being a cause of acidosis.

Reason for Supplementation

As numerous recent Wool Press articles and Farmers Week presentations have talked about, protein is a significant limiting factor in the diet of Falkland Islands sheep in August, September and October. Protein is important to keep the animal's rumen functioning so that it can process the pasture that the animal is eating more quickly than without the supplement.

The aim of the trial is to measure the response of both breeding ewes and young sheep to strategic supplementation of 100g to 200g of lupins per sheep per day for 7 to 10 weeks. There is no doubt that this will have a positive effect on the animals intake, growth and lamb development, but the trial will aim to quantify this positive effect, to see if the increase in production is worth the cost of the feed in the first place. The cost of feed for a ewe at 150g per head per day for 8 weeks is £2.43, so that is the sort of increase in production required to break even.

The Trials

After being widely advertised, the trials are being conducted at Port Howard, Elephant Beach Farm and Swan Inlet. FLH has both ewes and ewe hoggets that are being feed lupins and the DoA is assisting in their monitoring. Ewes from the National Stud Flock at Saladero are also being given a ration of lupins.

Some points of the trial so far –

- The trial sites are currently feeding lupins to about 4700 animals in total
- Mob sizes are 200, 270, 700, 774, 850, 900 and 1000 animals
- Animals are being fed every 1, 2 or 3 days
- The lupins are very palatable with animals going onto them quicker than pellets in some cases
- Some sites trained with pellets before going onto the lupins, while other sites went straight onto the lupins
- The lupins are being trailed out, straight into camp, just onto sheep tracks or greens so that they don't get lost in the grass bogs and the sheep can find them
- Not all sheep are eating – 15-25% may not eat the supplement as is the case with any feed given to sheep
- The mob comes running at the sight of the Rover at all trial sites. It is worth watching if you get the chance, to see hundreds of animals running at the Rover instead of away from - it is something that you need to see to believe.

Results
Preliminary results will be available as they come in later in the year and early parts of 2008. Responses measured will be animal live weight, animal wool weights, lambing percentage, lamb weight, weaning percentage, weaning weight, and ewe joining weight in winter 2008 to see if there are any long term carry-over effects.

A full report will be available in the middle of 2008 which will include a cost benefit analysis of supplementary feeding.

Until then, I am eager to chase up suppliers of high protein feed in South America to try and reduce the cost of the feed, as freight contributes about 60% of the cost to get the lupins to the Falkland Islands currently.

FAREWELL

By Deborah Davies

The time has come to say goodbye to you all, because my contract as temporary GIS Manager has finished. Our family will continue to live in the Falkland Islands until my husband's contract has ended, then we are returning to Tasmania to live and work.

I have enjoyed my tenure with the Department very much and would like to thank my colleagues for their kindness and encouragement. A big thank you, also, to the farming community for their guidance and support.

However, do not fear, Farm Mapping is continuing so that data, such as fencing details, can be collected and entered onto your farm maps. Remember that gps units are easy to use and can be borrowed from the department, if you need them.

Farm Mapping is important, so please contact Sian Ferguson at Department of Agriculture for assistance with any aspect of farm mapping or for more information on what is involved by contacting her on telephone 27355, fax 27352 or email *sferguson@doa.gov.fk*

ARTIFICIAL BREEDING PROGRAMME AND PIP FUNDING

1. Purpose

1.1 To promote best practice management on farms where PIP funding is used to purchase genetic material. To ensure return on FIG investment is maximised.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That farms utilising PIP funding for genetics have a realistic Breeding Plan in place with objective, quantifiable targets to reach.

2.2 That *Guidelines for Sheep Artificial Insemination* be implemented for the 2008/2009 PIP year.

2.3 That *Guidelines for Sheep Embryo Transfer* be implemented for the 2008/2009 PIP year.

2.4 That direct costs such as micron and yield testing be available through PIP funds for up to 200 ewes per 1000 breeding ewes on the farm. This would form a part of the overall genetic component of the PIP.

2.5 That the genetic component of the PIP be increased to £3,500 per 1000 breeding ewes to assist in covering these costs, without a reduction in the funds available for genetic material itself.

3. Background

3.1 PIP funding has been available for the last two years to purchase animal genetics as part of the Artificial Breeding Programme co-ordinated by the DOA. In this time, genetic progress has been made, and the quantification of this progress is currently part of a major review being conducted by the DOA.

3.2 The paper 'Use of PIP Funds to Purchase Live Rams in the Falkland Islands' that was presented to the AAC in April 2007 (appendix c) is a part of this process of identifying and continually working towards a realistic breeding objective.

3.3 There is strong scientific and practical evidence that objective measurement when linked with effective subjective sheep classing, increases the rate of gain towards any breeding objective. Recently published data on a large ewe flock (670 ewes) using such a system has shown a gain of 1.0kg of clean fleece weight, a reduction of 2.4 microns in fibre diameter and an increase of adult ewe average body weight of 1.5kg. This was done with correct application of a dual purpose breeding objective and objective measurement over a 10 year period in a closed flock situation.

3.4 There is scientific evidence from in the Falkland Islands and around the world that ewes weighing 40kg and above at joining have a greatly increased chance (from between 10% to 16% above ewes less than 40kg) of surviving winter and rearing a lamb through to weaning time.

3.5 An example for a complete ram team change of 30 rams for 1500 ewes produced by AI would be as follows –

1. The best 400 ewes visually selected by the farm.
2. The top 300 ewes decided after individual classing of the ewes which are individually tagged.
3. Fleece weights, body weights, yield and micron taken from those 300 ewes. (# **Note** – The DOA is currently negotiating with a wool laboratory in Uruguay to enable fleece testing to be carried out more cost effectively for farmers. More detail on this later).
4. The information is processed with an index that matches the farm's breeding objective.
5. The top 200 ewes are selected based on the results of the index, visual classing of the animals, and ensuring that they are all above 40kg.
6. These 200 ewes are artificially inseminated, resulting in 120 progeny (60% lambing).
7. The resulting 60 male progeny are individually tagged, and have their body weight, fleece weight, micron and yield tested at the first shearing.
8. This objective information is used in conjunction with visual classing to select the best 30 rams to complete the ram team change.

3.6 The ability to repeat this process for several years would allow extremely heavy selection to be placed on rams retained for breeding and also on ewes used in the breeding programme.

INCORPORATION OF FLEECE TESTING SERVICES INTO THE PIP SCHEME

1. Purpose

1.1 To report on the process and requirements for the testing of fleece samples for farms both within the PIP scheme and privately.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the process outlined in this report be adopted as the mode of operation for farmers seeking to utilise PIP funds for fleece testing as well as for private samples.

2.2 The number of fleece samples submitted for testing per farm within the PIP scheme is limited to 200 ewe samples plus 50 ram samples per 1000 breeding ewes (average of last three years).

2.3 Fleece samples be sent to the Uruguayan Wool Secretariat (or any other laboratory approved by the AAC) for testing if logistics and costs show sufficient benefit, otherwise samples will be tested in the DOA laboratory.

3. Background

3.1 In 2004 the DoA conducted a comprehensive review of laboratory services. The review determined that appropriate test charges for fleece testing services carried out in the DoA laboratory were as follows:-

Test batches of 650 or less

a)	Fibre diameter only	£3.00/sample
b)	Fibre diameter & yield	£5.00/sample

Test batches of 650 or more

c)	Fibre diameter only	£2.00/sample
d)	Fibre diameter & yield	£3.00/sample

3.2 Recently the DOA has investigated the logistics and cost effectiveness of having fleece samples from the Falkland Islands tested by external laboratories.

3.3 Discussions with the Uruguayan Wool Secretariat (SUL) have shown considerable promise. It is possible that a service will emerge that allows samples to be freighted to Montevideo and tested by SUL for fibre diameter and yield for approximately £1.50 per sample.

3.4 It is envisaged that fleece samples would be consolidated by the DOA and dispatched at approximately monthly intervals to SUL in Montevideo for testing.

3.5 Test results would be emailed back to the DOA in a standardised format for distribution to farmers.

3.6 Test costs would be automatically deducted from the farm PIP account by DoA.

3.7 The service would also be available for non PIP fleece testing, however costs incurred would be invoiced to the farm for payment.

3.8 Full PIP planning and approval processes remain in force, plus an upper limit of 200 ewe fleece samples per 1000 breeding ewes and 50 ram fleece samples per 1000 breeding ewes per year within the PIP scheme. Additional samples will be billed to the farm at prevailing rates.

USE OF PIP FUNDS TO PURCHASE LIVE RAMS IN THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper seeks to outline a funding framework for the DOA to utilise for farmers using PIP funding to purchase live rams.

1.2 Funding levels are based on the potential of the various breeds/purity levels to achieve gain on farms and also on costs associated with their generation. For some of the breeds funding levels have been benchmarked to average sale prices achieved for the breed at recent DOA sales.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the AAC approve the following funding maximums for farmers seeking to utilise Pasture Improvement Programme (PIP) funds to purchase live rams.

Breed or type	Maximum PIP Funding	Details/comments
Polwarth or Cormo	£75.00	Based on recent NSF Polwarth sale values achieved 2006 and 2007.
Polwarth or Cormo type ewes x Dohne/SAMM/MPM (50% new blood)	£75.00	Selected performance recorded (PR) rams (10- 50% ranking) from PR and potentially, non PR breeding flocks.
Polwarth or Cormo type ewes x Dohne/SAMM/MPM (50% new blood)	£150.00	Selected PR rams (10-50% ranking) from selected PR ewes and elite PR rams (imported AI or leading breed sire).
Polwarth or Cormo type ewes x Dohne/SAMM/MPM (50% new blood)	£200.00	Elite ranked rams (1-10% ranking). PR rams from elite PR genetic stock.
Polwarth or Cormo type ewes x Dohne/SAMM/MPM (75% new blood)	£200.00	Selected PR rams (1-50%) from elite PR ewes and elite PR rams.
“Pure” blood SAMM/MPM/Dohne	£300.00	Selected performance recorded rams (1-50%) from elite PR genetic stock.

Note: - 1. Performance recording (PR) should be based on a minimum of 20 animals of the same sex, breed and age located at the same farm.
2. Performance recording includes consideration of live weight (at 100, 180 and 365 days), fibre diameter, greasy and clean fleece weight plus subjectively assessed characteristics such as face cover, pigmentation and conformation. DOA agricultural advisors are available to assist “stud” breeders with animal ranking and performance recording of their stock.
3. Price maximums for other breed/combinations that emerge over time will be determined on a case by case basis by the SAA and added to the maximum funding table.

3. Background

3.1 PIP funds have been available for use by farmers for several years for the purchase of sheep genetics.

3.2 The funds have primarily been utilised to cover costs associated with AI & ET programmes but have also been utilised to purchase live rams at the DoA “Saladero” ram sale and on a small number of occasions, live rams from other farmers.

3.3 It is likely that the desire to utilise PIP funds to purchase live rams from other farmers will increase significantly over the next few years.

3.4 The intention of this paper is to establish a clear price framework for farmers wishing to use PIP funds to purchase live rams off farms other than the DoA.

3.5 It is clear that the price framework needs to recognise the ability of the genetic material to achieve improvement in profitability and productivity for farmers. The price framework must also address differences in quantity and demand for the various options.

STRANGE ANIMAL TAILS

Source: Ananova.com

A hedgehog is recovering after surviving a spin in a 40-degree washing machine cycle. The female creature was nicknamed Lucky by staff who have been caring for her at the Brent Lodge wildlife hospital, near Chichester, in West Sussex.

Hospital manager Penny Cooper said the hedgehog wandered into a private home and burrowed into a pile of washing that was then put into the machine.

Lucky is now being cared for by a hospital volunteer in Hampshire. Ms Cooper said she was undergoing rehabilitation care before being given a "soft release" back into the wild. "We monitored her at the hospital to make sure there was no chest infection and none of the water had gone into her lungs," she said.

"She didn't seem disorientated, she was fine, and very clean with no parasites or anything of that nature on her." She explained the hedgehog was brought to the hospital at the beginning of September with the kind of story she had never experienced before.

"This lady came in and said, 'I've got a hedgehog that's just been through an eco cycle in my washing machine'. "She'd left the back door open and this little hedgehog found a nice warm nest of clothing. "It was only when she took the washing out that she got some prickles going into her hand."