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StayDry Pre Drop™ increases lambing percentages in extreme cold

Running a high elevation property near Cooma in NSW, one of the key challenges for farmer Simon King is dealing with cold weather at lambing time for his 1500 merino ewes.

Lambing takes place in the last week of August and through September on 'Muniong'. While the property can receive snow at that time of the year, Simon times lambing then for a number of reasons.

"We want to get lambs on the ground and lamb marking done before there's much of a fly issue, or problems with grass-seed heading into summer. It means we're weaning those lambs around January, when hopefully at this elevation we've still got some green feed," he explains.

The challenge then becomes how to manage the cold weather and limited feed at that time of the year.

"Survival rates for lambing are a major profit driver, giving you more surplus stock to sell and enables you to put more selection pressure on your flock to enable improvement," he explains.

"We identified a number of ewes that were consistently lambing but then losing those lambs, and so being able to identify those ewes has been a huge factor."

"Just those first few hours at birth are critical to lamb survivability, especially with the climatic constraints we have at this altitude of snow and wind-chill, and the feed requirements."



Over a six-week lambing period, the two mobs supplemented with StayDry Pre Drop showed an increase in lamb survivability of 19% and 23%.

Grow team member and Simon King

“Our main management strategies are to meet energy requirements through supplementary feeding, making sure that we give ewes every opportunity to get that lamb out and up, and being fed with a tummy full of colostrum.”

In 2017 Simon was asked by a Grow Livestock Agronomist to trial StayDry Pre Drop, a nutritional lick powder supplement designed to reduce birth difficulties in maidens, optimise immune system function and improve colostrum quality, all of which combines to increase survival and growth rates in offspring.



“It just proved to me the worth of setting everything up with the StayDry Pre Drop loading product, making sure all those vitamins and minerals were there to produce the colostrum.”

The trial included about 400 ewes and was set up to keep as many factors as possible consistent, with all the ewes fed the same rate of supplementary feed. One group was established as a control without any StayDry Pre Drop supplement and the other groups were set up with StayDry Pre Drop supplement. The production measure was the difference in lamb survival from scanning to marking.

The dose rate of StayDry Pre Drop was 300 grams per head fed out over a period of 30 days leading up to lambing.

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“We found that StayDry Pre Drop produced an enormously significant increase in lamb survivability within those groups,” Simon says.

“I was surprised, it just proved to me the worth of setting everything up with the StayDry Pre Drop loading product, making sure all those vitamins and minerals were there to produce the colostrum, to get those ewes to lamb quickly, but also get the lambs up and into that first drink of milk, that obviously aided lamb survivability in cold conditions.”

Simon says the equation is very simple for his business - extra lambs transfer directly to extra profit, and in that regard, the StayDry Pre Drop on-farm trial was a success.

“To give 300 grams of StayDry Pre Drop costs around \$1.70 per head and to put a figure of \$30 on a new born lamb, you would only need roughly five and a half extra lambs per 100 ewes to get a return on investment,” he says.

Being a fixed dose loading product, Simon reports he also found StayDry Pre Drop easy to use, as he knew exactly how much he had to supply to the ewes in the period leading up to lambing.

The final piece in the puzzle for Simon has been developing a relationship with the Grow Livestock Agronomist, who has helped with background knowledge and ongoing support.

“I find it critical to be able to work with the Grow Livestock Agronomist as part of a complete programme, it's critical having someone that understands our production system and making sure that the nutritional products are right, particularly in such a challenging environment,” he says.

“We'll certainly use the product again this year and will continue to work with the Grow Livestock Agronomist to measure our lamb survivability improvements over time and transfer that into profit,” he says.



For more information call **1800 678 368** or visit **www.growsolutions.com.au**

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