

MFS WETHER TRIAL WETHERS AT MID SIDE SAMPLING – 30TH SEPT 2014

MFS Soil Carbon Project – 2nd and final sampling of sites

The MFS project titled *“Monaro farm management strategies and their effects on soil carbon”* wraps up mid next year since its conception in 2012. The two sampling points in 2012 and now in 2014 will give a profile of soil carbon changes on 20 sites across the Monaro under four different management / pasture systems.

This data will add to Dr Susan Orgills (NSW DPI) current carbon baseline work to culminate in a data base of soil carbon measurement for over 50 sites on the Monaro spanning a timeline of 3 - 8 years.

With the help of highly sophisticated and validated modelling systems, this data can be extrapolated to give an indication of carbon stocks in Monaro soils over a much longer time frame.

The data will also be professionally and scientifically analysed to give an understanding of the management systems that

are proven to increase and/or store soil carbon as well as a long term economic cost benefit analysis of each system so producers can relate to the costs involved for increasing or storing soil carbon.

MFS hopes to hold a final Field Day in March 2015 to showcase the results and deliver up-to-date, timely information on the whole soil carbon debate including the latest scientific Industry messages from leading speakers and current Government policy.



MFS Newsletter



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Helen King (ANU) and Paula Charnock (NSW DPI) sampling an “old improved pasture” at Delegate Station, October 2014.



Past Events

Labour Efficiency Field Day - Bellevue

A strong turn-out of approximately 65 people attended our recent field day at the Bellevue shearing shed to learn more about the key ingredients of a labour efficient enterprise.

Sandy McEachern from Holmes & Sackett delivered the day with the help of sheep producer Richard Bell from Paling Yards.

The day focussed on topics such as how labour efficiency is calculated, what constitutes a labour unit (LU) and why is it important, labour efficiency benchmarks and their relationship to profit and income per labour unit versus costs per LU in the sheep industry.

Labour and related labour costs can typically make up approx. 50% of total enterprise costs.

Key Overall Labour Efficiency Benchmarks

- Wool Flocks – 7,500 DSE/LU
- Prime Lamb Flocks – 10,000 DSE/LU
- Beef Herds – 20,000 DSE/LU

Richard Bell discussed his enterprise and factors such as key infrastructure, plant and equipment, management calendars, and use of contractors.

The field day was funded through *Making More from Sheep* (a joint initiative between MLA and AWI) with funding support from SE LLS. Thanks very much to the Nimmitabel Lions Club who did the catering for the day.



Key Productivity Benchmarks

Operation	Industry benchmark
Shearing (full preparation)	75 fleeces/person/day
Crutching	55 sheep/person/hr
Jetting	400/person/hr
Drenching (sheep)	450/person/hr 2000/person/day
Weighing & drafting (sheep)	500 sheep/person/hr
Fencing Maintenance	2 days per 1000 DSE
Stock water Maintenance	0.75 days per 1000 DSE



For a copy of the presentation from this day please contact Nancy (nancy@msanda.com.au).



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RB SELLARS

MFS Benchmarking Group – 1st Session

30 (thirty) producers attended the first session of the MFS Benchmarking Group held at the Nimmitabel Community Centre on the 9th of October.

19 (nineteen) farm businesses have joined this group and submitted inputs for the 2013/2014 financial year. 5 (five) of the farm businesses are from the Tablelands Farming Systems Group (TFS).

The range in the group is reflected in the spread for the following comparisons;

Whole farm profit

	Top 5	Average
GM / ha	\$350	\$247
Total overhead expenses	\$155	\$149
Nett farm profit	\$195	\$98

Beef herds

	Top 5	Average
GM / ha	\$239	\$192
Overhead expenses/ha	\$106	\$128
Nett profit / ha	\$133	\$64

Wool flocks

	Top 5	Average
GM / ha	\$262	\$236
Overhead expenses/ha	\$100	\$141
Nett profit / ha	\$162	\$95
GM / DSE (\$/DSE)	\$43	\$33
Nett profit (\$/DSE)	\$26	\$13

Dual purpose

	Top 5	Average
GM / ha	\$424	\$259
Overhead expenses/ha	\$177	\$194
Nett profit / ha	\$247	\$66
GM / DSE (\$/DSE)	\$53	\$32
Nett profit (\$/DSE)	\$31	\$6

Prime lamb

	Average
GM / ha	\$390
Overhead expenses/ha	\$197
Nett profit / ha	\$192
GM / DSE (\$/DSE)	\$45
Nett profit (\$/DSE)	\$22

Sandy McEachern from Holmes & Sackett is delivering the series of workshops and mentoring the group. SE LLS has provided funding for the first three sessions and then it is hoped that the group will continue for the longer term on a self-funded basis.

Some of the **feedback comments** from the first session included;

- *“Great day and we are pretty excited about it”*
- *“One of the things I got out of today was the discussion about what seems popular or getting publicity compared to where the real profit drivers are.”*
- *“Lots to take in, but I think the group could end up being incredibly beneficial.”*

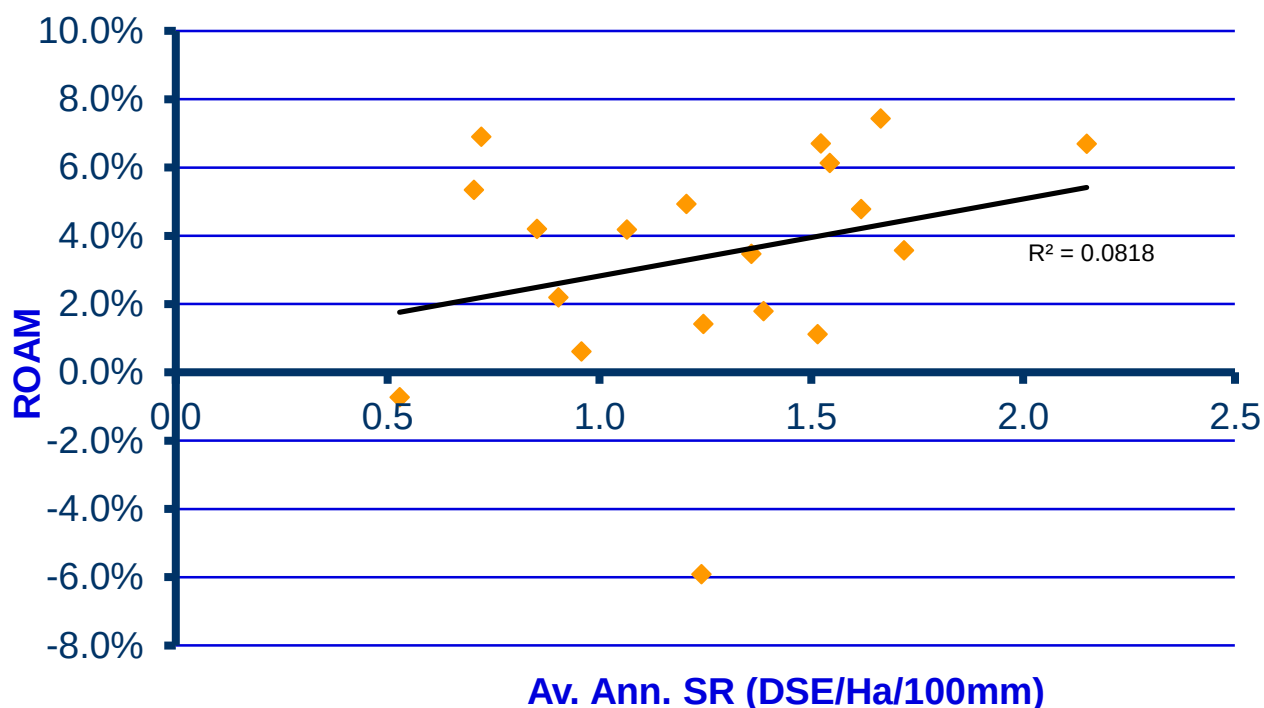
Future topics for discussion are expected to drill down into case study examples and discussions around enterprise figures for individual farm businesses. The group was asked to set the direction for the following sessions and some of the ideas to pursue include;

- Optimum flock structure in a wool enterprise.
- Exploring options to lower shearing costs in a wool enterprise.
- What do the top 5 wool producers (ranked by profit/ha/100mm) have in common and is it possible to “copy” them to become more profitable?
- Lowering cost of production for a cattle enterprise.
- Going through an example of how to calculate a return on investment, what sort of data needs to be gathered to enable this to be done properly.... some of the labour saving devices or farm equipment that makes life easier for the aged farm workforce.



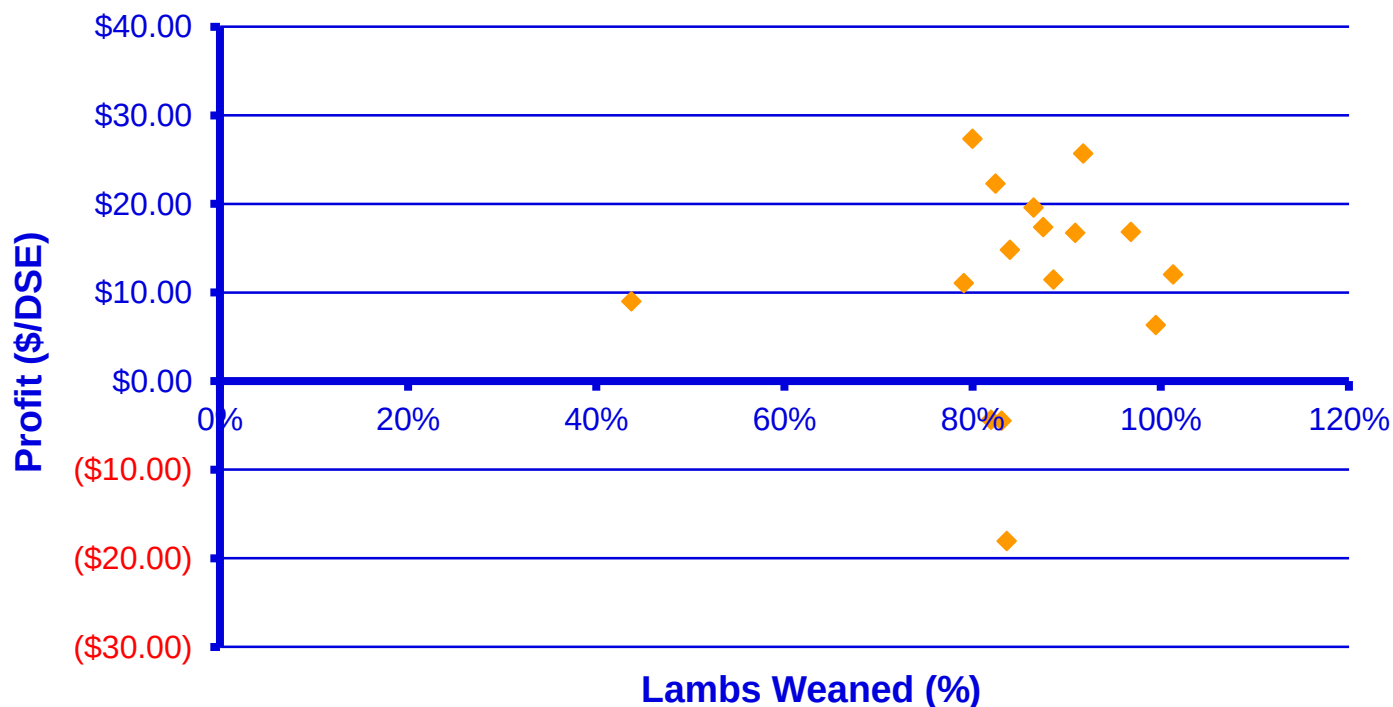
Some of the Results....

Whole Farm Stocking Rate (SR) comparisons (2013/2014)



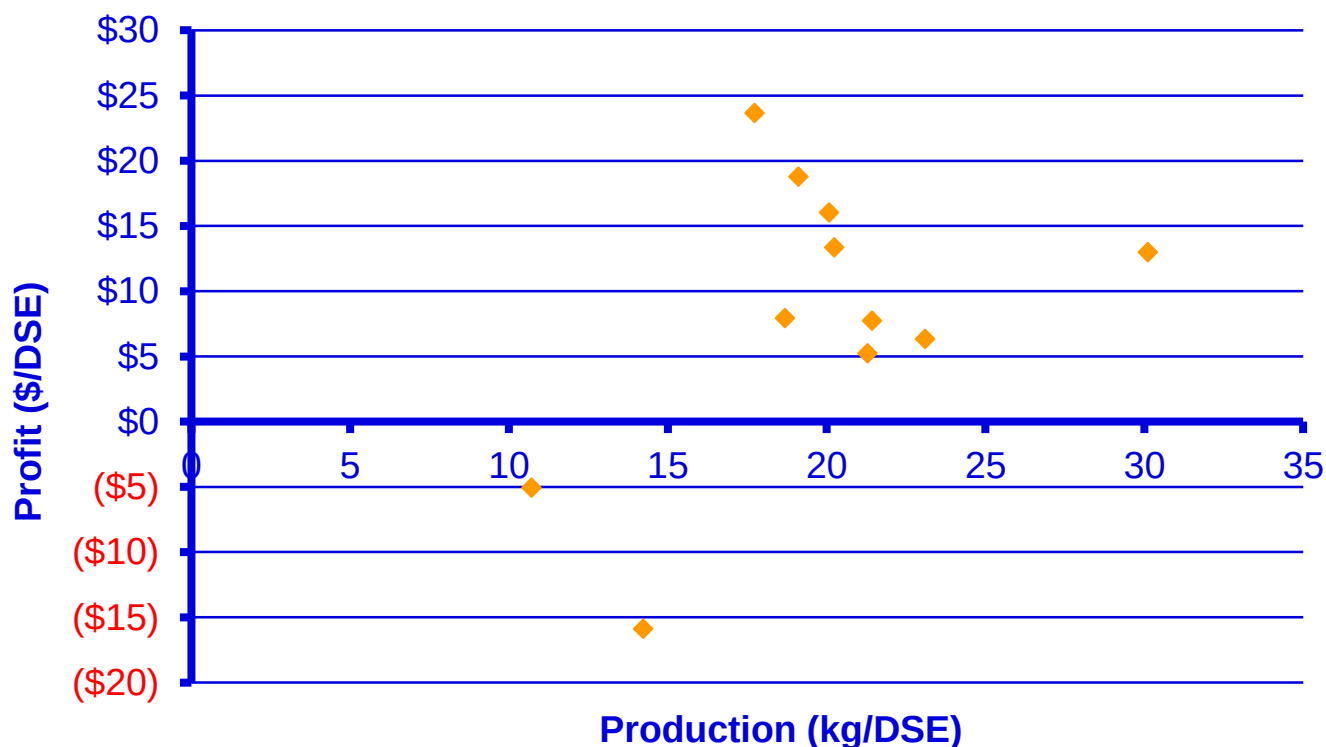
Return on assets managed (ROAM) was in line with the rest of the Holmes Sackett database but the DSE/Ha/100mm was significantly lower. Sandy said the sweet spot would normally lie around 2 DSE/Ha/100mm and for this group it was a weak correlation but appears to be 1.5-1.7.

Wool Comparisons (2013/2014)



Despite the industries current push to lift lambing percentage, this group (Southern Tablelands) mirrored the Holmes Sackett database with a random relationship between lambing % and profit/DSE in a wool flock.

Beef Comparisons (2013/2014)



Despite the lingering drought in the north putting pressure on cattle producers, this group (Southern Tablelands) was able to achieve excellent production and profitability.

Final Wether Trial Shearing

The final shearing of the wether trial took place at “Knockalong” on Tuesday the 21st of October with the mid-side sampling done on the 30th of September.

All teams reflected the excellent season experienced on the Monaro with the wethers presenting in top condition. Visually there was significant variation in the teams which was also obvious in the wool classing and weights. The change in market price for the finer wools certainly had an impact on the ranking of the teams as compared to the previous two years. Once carcass traits are estimated MFS will provide a comprehensive summary report of the teams based on the three years results which will include individual team results for all three shearing’s.

A big thank you once again to Rowan Wright and Mark Mills (manager) for his meticulous management of the sheep as well as Alan McGuffic for his overall coordination, Oli Cay who has helped at all shearing events and Denham Williams who has helped at several mid side sampling and shearing events. Thank you also to Phil Graham and Matt Lieschke

from NSW DPI. Phil Graham has been instrumental in providing technical advice and analysis and evaluation of the results throughout the trial. Thank you also to Kate Connolly and Cameron Johnson, our MFS trainees who helped out at the shearing. Last but certainly not least thanks very much to GLW who has sponsored the trial for the three years as well as provided staff, equipment and catering for all shearing events as well as the mid-side sampling.



Kate Connolly helps on the Board.

Yearly Averages Summary

2014

Ranked By Average Wool Value

Rank	Team	Entrant	No. of Wethers	Greasy Wool Wt.	Micron	Schlum. Yield	Clean Wool Wt.	Fleece Clean Price	Body Wt.	Wool Value
1	1	Grogansworth	15	6.6	18.5	76.3	5.0	1241	55.3	\$60.00
2	16	Woodstock	15	7.2	19.7	72.3	5.1	1202	52.9	\$59.93
3	11	Greendale	15	6.5	17.2	72.7	4.6	1315	48.6	\$59.01
4	14	Dungaree Pastoral Co	15	6.6	17.3	71.4	4.6	1307	58.1	\$58.79
5	20	Coolringdon	15	6.7	18.3	73.5	4.8	1249	53.4	\$58.67
6	17	Werralong	14	6.8	18.8	72.6	4.8	1232	55.8	\$58.14
7	26	Buckley	15	6.7	18.1	71.6	4.7	1271	52.0	\$57.88
8	7	Gaerloch	15	6.5	18.2	73.1	4.6	1275	48.3	\$57.28
9	12	Bellvue	15	6.2	17.7	74.8	4.6	1287	51.8	\$56.88
10	25	Curry Flat	15	6.4	18.4	73.3	4.6	1265	60.7	\$56.72
11	18	Muniong	13	6.4	18.2	73.0	4.6	1261	49.1	\$56.23
12	28	Grogansworth	15	6.1	18.7	77.4	4.6	1230	56.9	\$55.48
13	21	Mayfield Partnership	12	6.0	17.2	73.3	4.4	1316	50.0	\$55.33
14	2	Cunningham Plains	15	6.4	17.9	71.2	4.5	1274	53.8	\$55.30
15	29	Tallawong Pastoral Co	15	5.8	16.7	74.6	4.2	1356	55.6	\$55.29
16	13	Pineleigh	14	6.1	17.6	72.9	4.4	1291	52.7	\$55.05
17	19	Athlone	14	6.7	18.6	68.9	4.5	1241	48.6	\$55.01
18	27	Culley	14	6.5	20.7	73.8	4.8	1170	53.6	\$54.80
19	15	Jerangle	15	6.1	17.1	69.4	4.2	1318	46.1	\$53.34
20	4	Bertangles	13	5.9	17.6	73.6	4.3	1283	55.5	\$53.14
21	6	Anunka	14	5.6	17.1	74.6	4.1	1308	57.2	\$51.81
22	22	Merambego	14	5.8	17.3	72.9	4.1	1297	54.3	\$51.75
23	10	Sherwood	14	5.8	19.0	75.1	4.2	1220	62.5	\$50.48
24	24	Old Springfield	14	5.4	18.5	74.0	4.0	1241	59.3	\$47.90
Averages:			14.4	6.3	18.1	73.2	4.5	1269	60.1	\$55.59



Whats Coming Up?

The **2014 Soil Club** session with Richard Simpson will take place on **Tues the 2nd of December**. Venue and times to be confirmed.

Soil samples have been bulked and sent to Incitec for analysis. MFS may also use this opportunity to give a presentation of the wether trial results (tbc).

A Farm Automation Technology Workshop will take place on **Wed. the 5th of November** at the Cooma RSL. Topics include maximising internet connectivity at home and in the paddock, automation technologies, setting up farm wide communications and much more.

Negotiations are continuing for a second **MFS wether trial to commence in 2015**. It is expected this will

take place in the Bungarby/Bobundra region on “Caringo”. MFS will be asking for expressions of interest soon to submit a team for this trial.

Advertising has begun for the **2015 traineeship program**. This year has been very successful with two terrific trainees on-board Kate Connolly (Bombala) and Cameron Johnson (Cooma). Both trainees have thoroughly enjoyed the year and are currently busy mainly with lamb marking. Kate is going on to University at Charles Sturt to undertake an Agricultural Science Degree and Cameron is considering a local apprenticeship.

If you are interested in using the trainee for 2015 please contact Nancy Spolaric. The trainees are employed by an external provider and are charged out at a flat rate of approx. \$25 ph.

BOARD TURNOVER

MFS would like to again thank **Chris Blencowe** for his time and expertise given to the MFS Board over the previous three years. We welcome **Jono Forrest** to the Board to replace Chris and look forward to the contribution his experience and expertise will make to the MFS leadership.

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