Cost effective feeding in the new age

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A sustainable prime lamb industry

Must be profitable across all sectors

We must have:

More ewes on farms producing more quality lambs

Year-round supply of lambs

Supply of light through to heavy carcases

Heavy lambs not competing with ewes for feed

Profitable production requires cost effective feeding

An alternative production system

Profitable production from 1st X lambs

Compare Return After Costs (RAC) for:

July drop, spring sucker lambs (SSL) **vs**

September drop, carry over lambs (COL)

SSL System - Least risk system, but:

Terminal for industry as ewe lambs killed

Could disrupt year-round supply of lambs

Fewer heavy carcases for high value cuts

RAC $75, Try something different

Carry over lamb (COL) system

Grow-out E & W on stubbles + supplt's

Wethers Option 1: Sell trade lamb 1/3, RAC $78 **OR**

Option 2: Confine for 100 days from 1 March

Fed grain mix thru lick feeders + straw

28 kg carcase in June, RAC $104

Ewes: Confined & fed as for wethers, teased & fed lupins, mate @ 8 mths, scan - 70% preg. & 125% fetuses

30% dries, 28 kg carcase in June, RAC $98

70% PTIL RAC $128 - All ewes RAC $119

Difference between systems in RAC :

COL Option 1 wths & ewes vs SSL: $98.50 – 75 = **$23.50**

COL Option 2 wths & ewes vs SSL: $111.50 – 75 = **$36.50**

Key drivers for COL system

Feeding for 100 days in confinement:

Need cheap feeds and fed with minimal labour -

Lupins, Barley & Min/Vits in lick feeders + straw

Other cheap feeds on mixed farms:

Wheat 2nds – High CP, use less lupins & more straw

Alkalage – Whole cereal crop ammoniated with urea
Near complete feed & possibly fed in-situ

Need cheap feed if growth rate moderate

Key drivers for COL system cont'd

Mating ewe lambs in confinement:

Control of nutrition to grow ewes to 50 kg by 8 mths

Attain sexual maturity to mate in breeding season

Teased, fed lupins and mated in restricted area

Optimal social facilitation – sheep orgy

Lick feeders provide low-labour, control of nutrition

Above 75% mature Wt for autumn mating

Cereal grains with short, green feed

Short, green feed in cold, wet weather is:

Low in WSC & fibre, High in water, NPN & RDP

Result: Unbalanced rumen & ME used to excrete urea

Big problem for twin-bearing ewes & maidens

Action: Feed Oats & Barley grain + Mins thru lick feeder

Mix provides: Extra nutrients and a balanced rumen by:

Dry mix soaking-up water

Scratchy fibre restoring rumen environment

Starch providing fermentable carbohydrate

Converting ammonia into microbial protein

Less stress and worms + good colostrum

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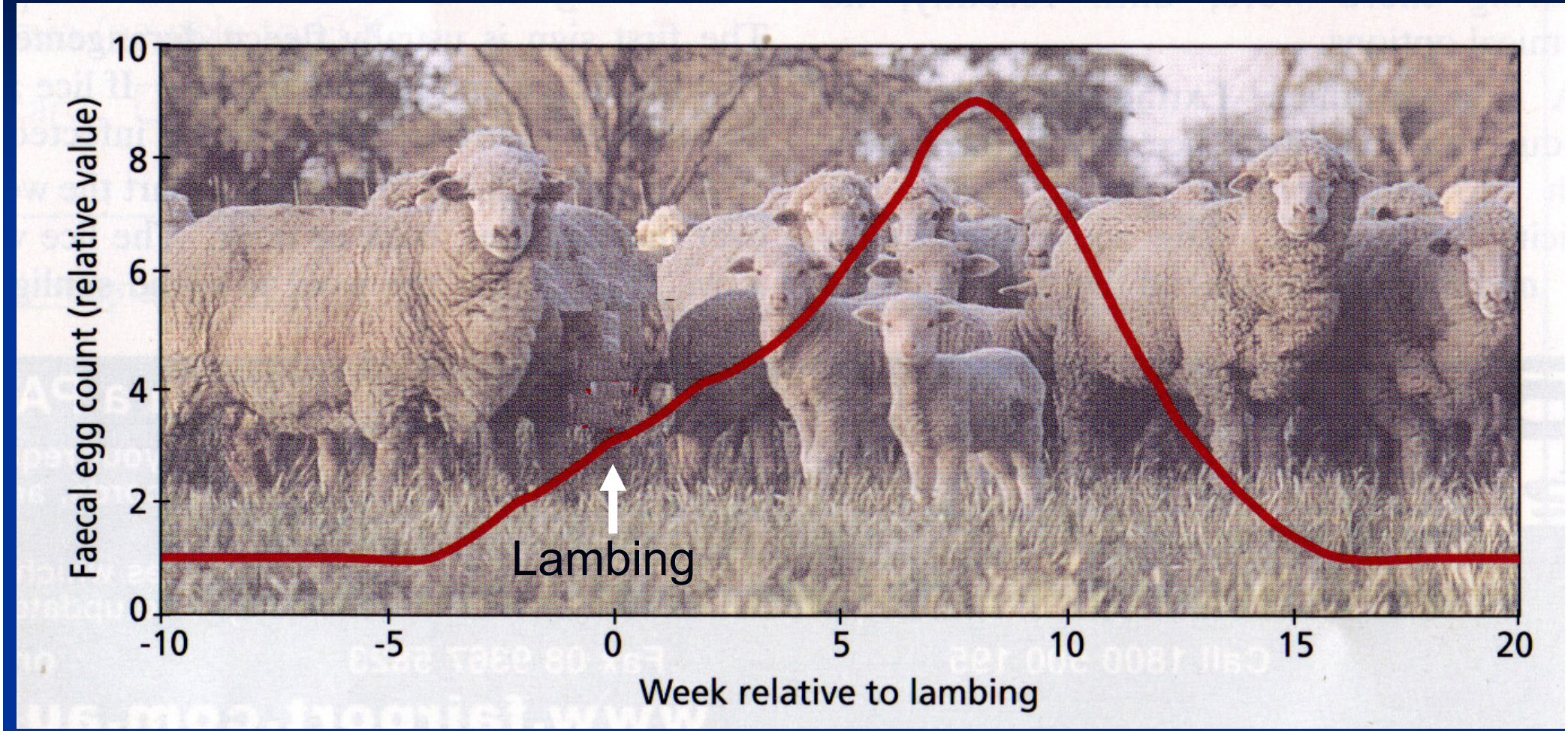
Worm FEC for ewes around and after lambing



Source : CSIRO Livestock Industries
Farming Ahead No 113 May 2001

Peri-Partum Relaxed Immunity (PPRI)

Hormone changes + big demand for ME & CP in late pregnancy and lactation lowers immunity:

Infective larvae establish so more worms in ewes, on pasture and consequently in the lambs

Twinners + their lambs on short feed most at risk

Lift MP & ME intake to stimulate the ewe's immune system

PPRI starts about the time twin-bearers need a nutritional boost to produce quality colostrum to lift survival of their lambs

A strategy:

Feed ewes so as to lift colostrum production & immunity to worms

Ewes and extra lambs, both with less worms