

# Agriculture Digest



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# "NO ONE BEATS OUR TAG RETENTION"

This is our consistent feedback from our producers



## Enduro NLIS Combo 30 Tag

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## Innovative Livestock Identification with Enduro Tags.

**Dr John Steinfert testing tags.**



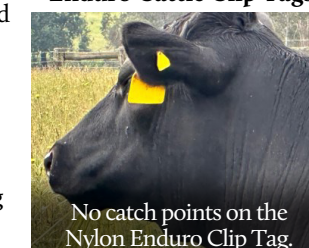
Dr John Steinfert, an innovator and veterinarian is working to improve the field performance of Livestock tags. John Steinfert worked in private practice in South Gippsland in Victoria for 20 years. It was in 1998 around the time when the MLA and NLIS were introducing electronic cattle tags for Livestock traceability... "I saw the electronic tags in dairy cattle and saw how tags are lost & I thought if we require national traceability then surely we would require other tag designs that would enhance lifetime traceability and long-term stock identification". So it was from this point, that John sent out to see if you could innovate a new tagging system for all livestock species with the aim of maximising long-term retention through design and durable plastics. Enduro Tags was founded in 2015 and our unique Cattle and Sheep management and NLIS Tags were manufactured & commercialised in Australia. Since that time, livestock producers seeking an improved tagging system are turning to Enduro Tags.

An efficient tagging system begins with the quality of the tags, encompassing material molding, design, and ease of application. Tagging livestock can be arduous, and a user-friendly applicator is essential. Additionally, tag losses are a significant concern, as lost tags mean lost identification and the tedious task of re-tagging animals. Enduro Tags addresses these issues with their innovative designs. We developed our Combo 30 Enduro NLIS cattle tag and management tags to maximise retention. We achieve significant retention rate through a combination of plastic material composition and the Tag design. The Nylon male tag is a double pin back tag and is highly durable and evidence shows highly functional in the field for 12 years. This ensures long-term retention with loss rates of 1% or less per annum according to our producer feedback. While the double prong tag system offered by Enduro Tags ensures excellent long term retention and visibility, it may not suit every farmer's needs. Traditional button tags have been with us for decades, but innovation often brings superior alternatives. John Steinfert at Enduro Tags is developing a new range of single prong tags featuring a unique design. Steinfert notes, "We proved this technology by providing over 15,000 of our special goat tags to a local Gippsland dairy goat herd, reducing their tag loss from

30% to 0.5% per annum, with no infected ears. That's a very significant outcome."

Our hardback Nylon Tags don't rely upon flexibility like the button tag types. Rather our tags are reasonably rigid plastic and have to be without catch points. Hence our unique design and patented 180° semi circular junction where the stem meets the main body of the tag, without an overhang. (refer to the photos). Overhang or lips are seen on sheep tags, where the stem and the main tag body meet. This provides a catch point and can cause tag losses and ear rips from tag losses from self-feeders, mesh gates or ringlock fencing.

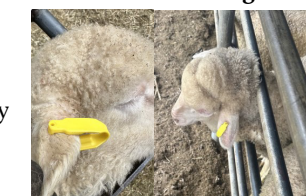
### Enduro Cattle Clip Tags



Our Enduro Clip Tags work via no catch points on the male tags and through 180° no overhang around the stem junction. If wire or obstacles connect with the male back tag, the tag itself just simply rotates and moves out of the way of the obstructing object. It's very simple now and easily proven by utilising and testing against mesh fencing. But took many years of research to fully develop the design.

"You will often see the male back tag facing towards the base of the ear in cattle in tag

### No Overhang



### Enduro eID Clip Tag for sheep and goats (Available mid 2025)

challenging environments such as scrub or forested country. This occurs from the tag shifting its pivotal position through rotation". Steinfert continues, "Our new emerging technology is different. It's not another 'button' type tag. We utilize our field-proven plastics, which provide a hard back tag without any catch points. Now that's hard to believe, I know".

Enduro Tags is adapting this technology for all livestock species, with plans to launch these products throughout 2025. The potential benefits for livestock producers are significant. Steinfert adds, "And best of all, these Clip Tags are easier to apply especially to cattle compared to button tags, because of the harder plastic and patented cutting edges. Making it a beneficial new product for livestock welfare, producers, Enduro Tags, and the local Australian economy." Enduro Tags continues to lead the way in innovative livestock identification, offering solutions that enhance efficiency, reliability, and overall ease of use for farmers.



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SIX ISSUE



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### Prolific Gene Delivers Scanning Success

Using prolific genetics is a 'game changer' for prime lamb producers, delivering scanning rates of up to 200 per cent at minimal cost, according to Dr Colin Earl. Based at Struan in South Australia, Dr Earl has developed two lines of sheep carrying the prolific gene, initially with the South Australian Research and Development Institute, and now under the Kerami Multimeat and Prolific Whites stud banner.

He said the Multimeat is designed for breeding prolific prime lamb mothers while the Prolific White is a shedding breed, which also contains the high fecundity gene. "Both Multimeat and Prolific White rams carry the Booroola multiple-birth gene and once passed into ewe progeny, the gene will increase the occurrence of twin and triplet births in those ewes," Dr Earl said. "All the research and on-farm trials we've done over the years demonstrate producers can achieve a 60pc increase in scanning rates and a 30pc increase in weaning rate just by making a change to rams carrying the prolific gene. "In one recent on-farm trial, Multimeat-cross composite ewes scanned 225pc and achieved a lamb marking rate of 173pc, compared with Coopworth composite ewes which scanned at 157pc and marked 131pc."

#### PROFIT DRIVERS

The development of prolific genetics was prompted by an analysis Dr Earl carried out in his early days of his research on the profitability of prime lamb production systems in Australia.

"The results highlighted the inherently low fecundity of sheep breeds in Australia," he said.

"The bottom line is that Australian sheep breeds don't conceive enough lambs and producers are forced to resort to supplementary feeding to increase mating weights and achieve higher scanning rates.

"In other parts of the world farmers have access to genotypes which are much more prolific.

"Analysis by myself and others shows that feeding to increase fecundity is not a particularly profitable, you do get extra production, but the costs of doing so outweigh the returns, unless lamb prices are high. "Prolific genetics consistently provide a 25 per cent increase in profitability just through being able to conceive extra lambs without the costs of feed supplementation."

#### MULTIMEAT TRAITS

During the past eight years, Dr Earl has focused on improving the wool quality of the Multimeat to provide producers with a more profitable first-cross ewe alternative.

"I've focused on reducing their wool down to 26 to 27 micron so that when a Multimeat ram is mated to Merino ewes, you can produce first-cross ewes with the gene for fecundity and 23 micron wool," Dr Earl said.

"We've had some of our clients getting 600 cents a kilogram for their crossbred wool as opposed to less than 200c/kg for a traditional first-cross fleece. "Other important commercial traits we have selected for include a worm egg count of less than -40, eye muscle depth of +1 and high growth rates."

#### PROLIFIC SHEDDERS

Recognising the increased demand for shedding sheep, Dr Earl has worked hard to establish the Prolific White breed.

"I have developed the Prolific White for exactly the same reasons, to enable producers to have high scanning rates without the cost of feeding ewes to achieve those results," he said. "A lot of shedding breeds are marketed as being semi-prolific, but they just aren't, because there were no genotypes with high fecundity in Australia to develop high fecundity shedding sheep.

"Producers need those extra lambs at minimal cost, otherwise shifting to shedders is not any more profitable than running composites.

"It has taken a long time to get the wool off them while keeping the Booroola gene, after a 10 year selection process, I am just starting to market Prolific White rams now."

Rams are available through a private lease arrangement and have proven they are adaptable to a range of environments with the client base spread throughout SA, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania, and more recently rams have headed to Goondiwindi in Queensland.

They have also established a strong overseas market with Multimeat embryos sold to countries including China and Russia, as well as exporting live rams to Russia. Dr Earl works closely with his ram clients, providing a range of management and reproductive support and knowledge.

"It's important to follow the guidelines around the management of ewe condition score and multiple births," he said.

"These sheep are not for everyone, they are a high-performance breed and you need to know what you are doing with them. "The key is condition score, you don't want mature ewes any greater than 2.7 at mating, and they only need to be maintaining weight during mating." But he said ewe lambs and young ewes required closer monitoring.

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## What do human white blood cells and cattle tags have in common?



The answer lies in **Dr. Colin Cheng**, whose unique expertise is driving innovation in herd health management through Fofia Australia.

As an immunologist with 20 years of experience and the founder of StickyCell, Dr. Cheng has made groundbreaking discoveries about white blood cells. His research revealed that the motility and stickiness of these cells are key indicators of immune disorders like autoimmune diseases, infections, and cancer. To monitor this, Dr. Cheng's team developed the Leukocyte Adhesive Function Assay (LAFA), a test that measures white blood cell activity.

### But how does this connect with cattle tags?

Dr. Cheng has partnered with Fofia Australia, a company founded in 2018, to redefine how cattle tags are used. Fofia is already an international supplier of RFID and visual tags, distributing over a million tags to producers across Australia. However, Dr. Cheng says this is just the beginning.

One of Fofia's goals is to transform how cattle producers order tags, offering a faster turnaround. "Our slogan is 'A new way to order tags. Get your tags in days, not weeks,'" Dr. Cheng explained. He shared an example of a northern Queensland cattle producer who urgently needed tags ahead of a bushfire. Fofia quickly provided the necessary tags, enabling the safe relocation of the cattle.

Fofia's vision goes beyond fast delivery. Their new "smart tags" allow producers to track real-time data such as temperature, movement, and rumination, offering insights that can help diagnose health issues earlier and improve production efficiency. "Our smart tags are more affordable, meaning more producers can tag more animals," Dr. Cheng said. These tags generate vast amounts of data that can be used to monitor animal health, including feeding behavior and supplement intake.

Dr. Cheng's immunology background plays a pivotal role in this new venture. While continuing his work in human immunology, Dr. Cheng saw potential for the same technology to benefit livestock health. "Humans share a very similar immune system with farm animals, like cattle and sheep," he noted. This led him to explore ways to adapt his expertise to animal health management.

In the future, Dr. Cheng envisions producers and veterinarians using advanced diagnostics to monitor animal health in real time. Fofia plans to develop on-site testing products to revolutionize animal health management. Blood tests for cattle, similar to those used for human diagnostics, could identify immune system disorders or measure the effectiveness of treatments.

Fofia Australia sees this as the future of farm animal management, and Dr. Cheng believes these innovations could be available within a decade. With plans to introduce cattle blood testing, Fofia is poised to change how producers manage herd health, helping them make informed decisions and reduce unnecessary treatments.

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What started nearly a decade ago with a single animal has now grown into a powerhouse operation. The Arubial herd, spanning over five properties with 3,500 females, thrives on forward-thinking management combined with feedlot capabilities at Lillyvale, ensuring year-round premium nutrition.



Laird & Sonia Morgan



Arubial U102 was the top-price bull at the Marble High Sale for \$145,000

Our strategic focus on innovation, combined with traditional values, has helped us expand in the face of challenges. Now, as we prepare to release our next wave of bulls, we remain committed to delivering top-quality Wagyu sires that will enhance the future of beef production in Australia and abroad.

**Technology Enhancing Tradition**  
Arubial Wagyu aligns tradition with technology to deliver premium genetics. Our bulls, suitable for both Fullblood and crossbred markets, demonstrate strength in traits from fertility, marbling, and Breeder Feeder Index (BFI). Using cutting-edge breeding techniques such as AI, ET, and IVF, we remain at the forefront of Wagyu genetics. Tools like GrowSafe and Wagyu Feeder Check ensure precise tracking of feed efficiency and animal performance, while monthly carcass data collection validates the reliability of BREEDPLAN results. These data-backed bulls offer our clients a competitive edge, ensuring long-term profitability and herd improvement.



**Marble High Milestones**  
The 2024 Marble High Wagyu Sale was another success for Arubial Wagyu, held at the Burke and Wills Hotel in Toowoomba. Our top-priced bull and heifer attracted bids from across the country, underscoring Arubial as a trusted source of Australian Wagyu genetics. With bulls excelling in both Fullblood and F1 systems, the sale's results highlighted the strength of our breeding program and reinforced our position in the industry for premium, data-backed Wagyu genetics.

**Bringing Bulls Online**  
Arubial Wagyu continues to embrace technology with the release of 70 Wagyu bulls on our website in November. These next generation sires, the result of nearly a decade of meticulous research and breeding, embody a balance of genetics, performance, and reliability. The site will feature live BREEDPLAN data, allowing buyers to make informed decisions. By bringing our bulls online, Arubial aims to continue our transparent and accessible approach to Wagyu, offering breeders premium genetics at their fingertips. |



GrowSafe pens at Lillyvale

## The Rise of Wagyu Beef in Australia – A Gourmet Revolution

In the rolling pastures of Australia, where vast cattle farms have long been the backbone of rural life, a gourmet revolution is quietly unfolding. Wagyu beef—once the exclusive domain of Japan's refined culinary world—has taken root down under, becoming a staple for discerning chefs and food enthusiasts alike. The story of Wagyu beef in Australia is not just about a luxury product; it's a tale of tradition, innovation, and the melding of two cultures over a shared appreciation for quality meat.

**The Origins of Wagyu**  
Wagyu, literally translating to "Japanese cow," is renowned for its intense marbling, buttery tenderness, and rich umami flavor. In Japan, the rearing of Wagyu cattle follows age-old traditions with precise genetic breeding and pampering. Cattle are often raised with strict dietary regimens, sometimes even given massages or beer to enhance their tenderness and flavor. This focus on quality over quantity makes Wagyu beef one of the most expensive and sought-after meats in the world.

**Wagyu cattle breeds**—like the famous Japanese Black—produce beef that boasts a high level of intramuscular fat, which gives the meat its signature marbling. This fat melts at a low temperature, resulting in an extraordinary mouthfeel and a flavor profile that is both rich and nuanced. While Wagyu was traditionally limited to Japan, Australian producers have found their own way to cultivate and refine this special breed of cattle.

**The Birth of Australian Wagyu**  
The introduction of Wagyu cattle to Australia began in the early 1990s, when a small number of live cattle and genetic material were imported from Japan. At the time, the Australian beef industry was dominated by Angus, Hereford, and Brahman cattle, which thrive in the country's diverse climates. However, a handful of forward-thinking cattle breeders saw the potential in Wagyu. The challenge lay in adapting the Japanese breed to Australia's vastly different landscape while maintaining the exceptional quality for which it was known.

For many Australian farmers, rearing Wagyu cattle involved trial and error. They had to find the right balance between preserving traditional Japanese rearing methods and adapting to Australia's grass-fed pastures and hot, arid conditions. Yet, with time, Australian Wagyu farmers perfected their approach. They focused on a hybrid system that combined grain-feeding and grass-fed farming, ensuring the marbling that Wagyu is famous for, while also capitalizing on the lush, nutrient-rich environment Australia offers.

**The Australian Touch: Wagyu Down Under**  
Today, Australian Wagyu is not only thriving, but it's also considered some of the best in the world. Australia's unique farming methods, which blend Japanese traditions with local techniques, have led to a product that is distinctly Australian. The result is a beef that boasts the luxurious texture of Wagyu but with a unique, robust flavor profile influenced by the country's terroir.

Many Australian Wagyu producers also focus on sustainable and ethical farming practices. In contrast to Japan's more controlled, small-scale farms, Australia's vast open spaces allow cattle to roam freely. This not only improves the welfare of the animals but also imparts a grass-fed flavor to the meat that many purists appreciate. Moreover, Australia's reputation for strict biosecurity and clean, green farming practices has made it a top choice for international markets, particularly in Asia and the United States.

Australian Wagyu is now a prized export, and its success has sparked a global appreciation for the versatility of this breed. **From Farm to Table: Wagyu's Culinary Renaissance**  
In the kitchens of Australia's top restaurants, Wagyu beef has become a showstopper. Renowned chefs, from Sydney to Melbourne, have embraced Wagyu, finding new and creative ways to showcase its richness. From high-end steakhouses to fine dining establishments, Wagyu beef is often the star of the menu, presented in various forms—grilled, seared, or even raw as carpaccio.

Chefs praise Wagyu for its ability to elevate a dish with its melt-in-your-mouth tenderness and complex flavor. Whether served as a simple steak, a decadent burger, or even paired with delicate ingredients in gourmet fusion cuisine, Wagyu's versatility has inspired a culinary renaissance. But this beef isn't limited to five-star dining. The rise of Australian Wagyu has also made it more accessible to the everyday consumer, with supermarkets and specialty butchers offering cuts of Wagyu for home cooks eager to experiment.

**The Future of Australian Wagyu**  
As the Australian Wagyu industry continues to grow, it faces the challenge of maintaining the high standards that have earned it a global reputation. Many producers are now focusing on improving genetics, creating even better marbling, and ensuring sustainability in their farming practices. With increasing consumer demand for traceability and ethical sourcing, Australian Wagyu farmers are leading the charge in producing premium beef with a conscience. While Japan will always be the spiritual home of Wagyu, Australia's embrace of the breed has added a new chapter to its story. The country's vast landscapes, innovative farming techniques, and commitment to quality have turned it into a major player in the global Wagyu market. In doing so, Australia has transformed Wagyu beef from an exotic luxury to an everyday indulgence, available to both local gourmets and international connoisseurs.

**Conclusion**  
The rise of Wagyu beef in Australia is more than a culinary trend—it is a symbol of the country's ability to adapt and innovate. By blending the best of Japanese tradition with the unique qualities of Australian farming, Wagyu has found a new home in the southern hemisphere. As the world's appetite for premium beef continues to grow, Australia is well-positioned to be at the forefront of this gourmet revolution, offering its own take on one of the world's most luxurious meats. Whether you're a high-end chef or an adventurous home cook, Australian Wagyu promises an unparalleled taste of indulgence.



# Australian Wagyu Beef – Scaling New Heights in Sustainability and Global Markets

Two years ago, Australia's burgeoning Wagyu industry was making headlines, lauded for its perfect combination of Japanese tradition and Australian innovation. Since then, the Wagyu industry has grown exponentially, making waves not only in fine dining but also in how it addresses the global demand for ethically produced, sustainable, and traceable beef. With export numbers soaring and sustainability efforts ramping up, Australian Wagyu beef is now cementing its place as a global leader in the premium beef market.

**A Global Demand:** Australian Wagyu on the Rise  
The global demand for high-quality beef has surged in recent years, and Wagyu has been at the forefront of this trend. Australia, known for its biosecurity standards, expansive pastures, and stringent animal welfare practices, has increasingly become the world's go-to source for Wagyu beef outside of Japan.

According to industry reports, Australia has now become the largest producer of full-blood Wagyu cattle outside of Japan. Exports to countries like the United States, China, and parts of Southeast Asia have skyrocketed, with Australian Wagyu often commanding top dollar. In 2023 alone, Australian Wagyu beef exports grew by 30%, with the majority of the product heading to Asia's growing middle class, which is eager to indulge in luxury food products. Australian Wagyu's reputation for consistent quality and ethical production practices has helped solidify these new markets, and demand shows no sign of slowing.

Local butchers and supermarkets across Australia have also reported a rise in consumer demand. What was once reserved for the finest restaurants is now making its way into home kitchens, with more people opting for Wagyu to celebrate special occasions or try their hand at gourmet cooking. Specialty cuts, Wagyu burgers, and even Wagyu sausages are now widely available, making it accessible to a larger demographic of consumers.

**Sustainability at the Core of Australian Wagyu**  
One of the key areas of growth in the Australian Wagyu industry has been its focus on sustainability—a topic that is no longer just a buzzword but a critical factor in modern agriculture. As consumers become increasingly conscious of their environmental impact, Australian Wagyu producers have responded by adopting sustainable farming methods that reduce the carbon footprint of beef production.

In recent years, several leading Wagyu farms have incorporated regenerative farming practices, including rotational grazing and soil health initiatives that promote carbon sequestration. This involves moving cattle frequently to allow pastures to regenerate and using natural processes to enhance soil fertility. This method not only promotes biodiversity but also reduces methane emissions, a significant environmental concern associated with livestock farming.

Moreover, many Australian Wagyu farms have embraced technology to improve traceability and transparency. Through blockchain technology, consumers can now track their Wagyu beef from farm to table, ensuring that it has been produced ethically and sustainably. This move toward full transparency has resonated with global buyers, particularly in Asia and Europe, where consumers are increasingly demanding to know the origins of their food.

**A Focus on Animal Welfare**  
Animal welfare has also become a cornerstone of the Australian Wagyu industry, as consumers are more invested than ever in the ethical treatment of livestock. Producers have ramped up efforts to ensure that Wagyu cattle are raised in environments that prioritize their health and well-being.

While traditional Japanese methods of pampering cattle—such as providing massages—may not be widely adopted in Australia, many farms take extra steps to ensure the comfort of their cattle. These measures include reducing stress during transportation, providing ample space for free-range grazing, and offering nutritionally optimized diets to promote the health of the animals. Some farms have even adopted technologies like automated monitoring systems to track the health and stress levels of their cattle in real time, allowing for better care and management.

## The Evolution of Wagyu Breeding and Genetics

The quest to improve the quality of Wagyu beef has also led Australian producers to focus on advanced genetics and breeding programs. While the industry initially relied on full-blood Wagyu genetics imported from Japan, Australian farmers have increasingly become leaders in breeding programs that aim to optimize marbling, tenderness, and flavor.

Selective breeding has allowed Australian producers to develop their own distinct lines of Wagyu cattle, many of which are known for producing beef that rivals—and in some cases surpasses—the quality of traditional Japanese Wagyu. Some producers have even crossbred Wagyu with Angus cattle, creating unique hybrids that offer the rich marbling of Wagyu with the robustness and larger cuts typical of Angus beef. These hybrids have become particularly popular in the United States and Australia, where the larger portion sizes are preferred by consumers.

This innovation in genetics is not only enhancing the flavor and quality of the meat but also improving the sustainability of the breed. By developing cattle that thrive in Australia's diverse environments, farmers are creating more resilient herds that require fewer resources to maintain, further reducing the environmental impact of Wagyu farming.

## The Challenges Ahead

Despite its rapid growth, the Australian Wagyu industry faces its share of challenges. Climate change remains a significant concern, particularly as droughts and extreme weather events continue to threaten cattle farming across the country. Water management and feed availability have become pressing issues, forcing producers to innovate even further to protect their herds and maintain production levels.

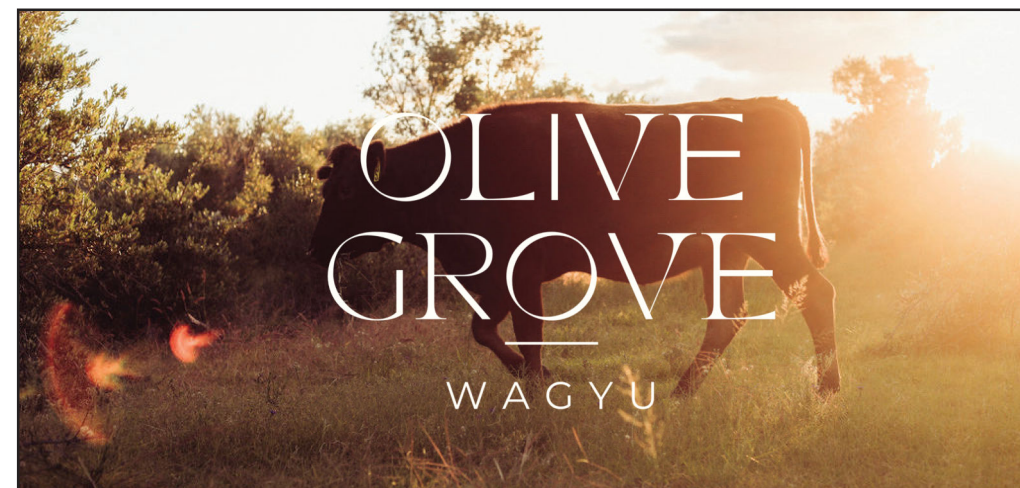
Additionally, the rise of alternative proteins, such as plant-based and lab-grown meat, poses a potential challenge to the global beef market. While Wagyu is seen as a luxury product and not directly competing with these alternatives, the shifting dietary habits of younger, more environmentally conscious consumers could impact demand in the coming decades. However, the premium positioning of Wagyu beef and its deep-rooted appeal among high-end consumers may protect it from the broader changes facing the meat industry.

## The Future of Australian Wagyu

Looking forward, the future of Australian Wagyu seems brighter than ever. The industry is poised to continue its expansion, not only in traditional markets like Asia and the U.S. but also in emerging markets where premium food products are gaining traction. Furthermore, with the increasing focus on sustainability, animal welfare, and transparency, Australian Wagyu is well-positioned to meet the demands of a new generation of conscious consumers.

The world's love affair with Wagyu beef shows no sign of waning, and Australia is leading the way in shaping what the future of this gourmet product looks like. With its rich history, commitment to innovation, and a strong focus on ethical farming, Australian Wagyu is more than just a premium product; it is a symbol of the evolving relationship between consumers, the environment, and the food they cherish.

*As the global appetite for Wagyu continues to grow, Australia stands ready to meet the challenge, offering a taste of luxury with a conscience.*



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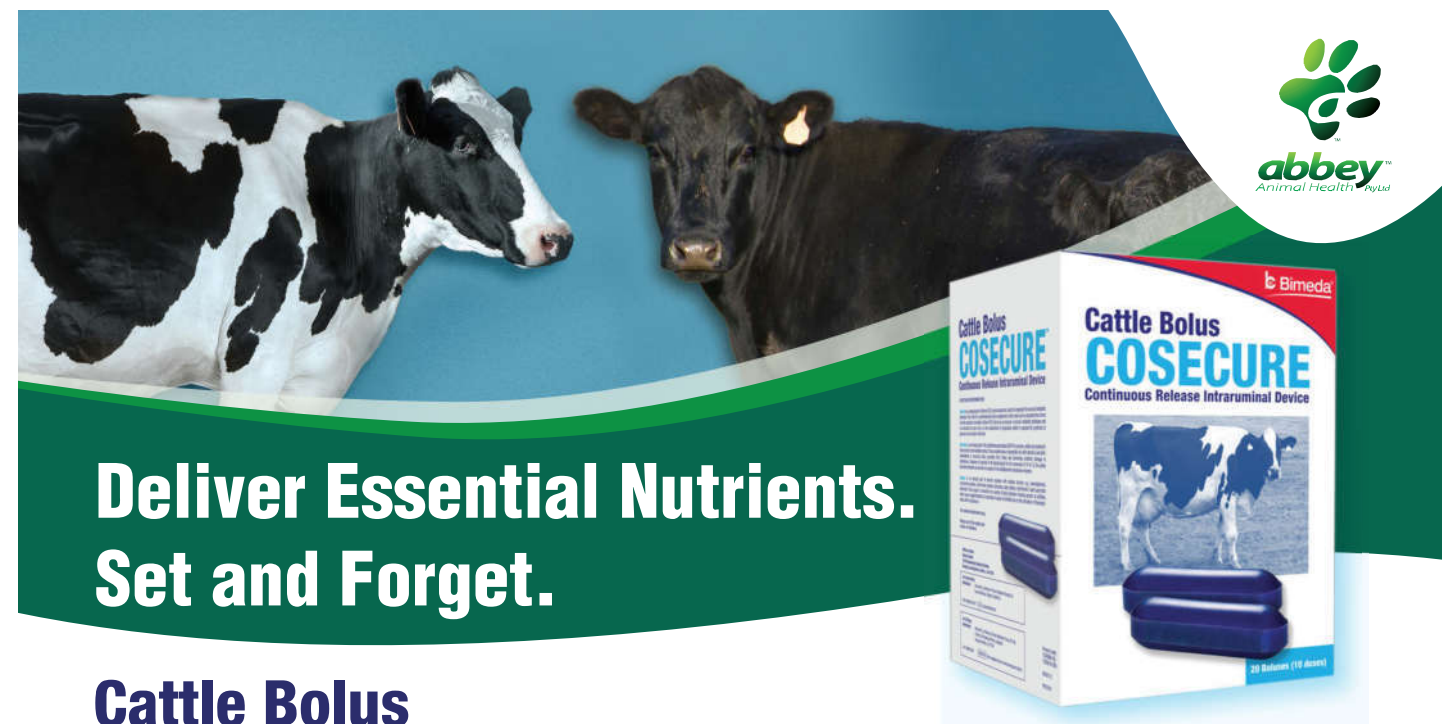
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<sup>1</sup> Cerone SJ, Sansinanea AS, Streitenberger SA, Garcia MC, Auza NJ. Cytochrome c oxidase, CuZn-superoxide dismutase, and ceruloplasmin activities in copper-deficient bovines. Biol Trace Elem Res. 2000 Mar;73(3):269-78. doi: 10.1385/BTER:73:3:269. PMID: 11049217.

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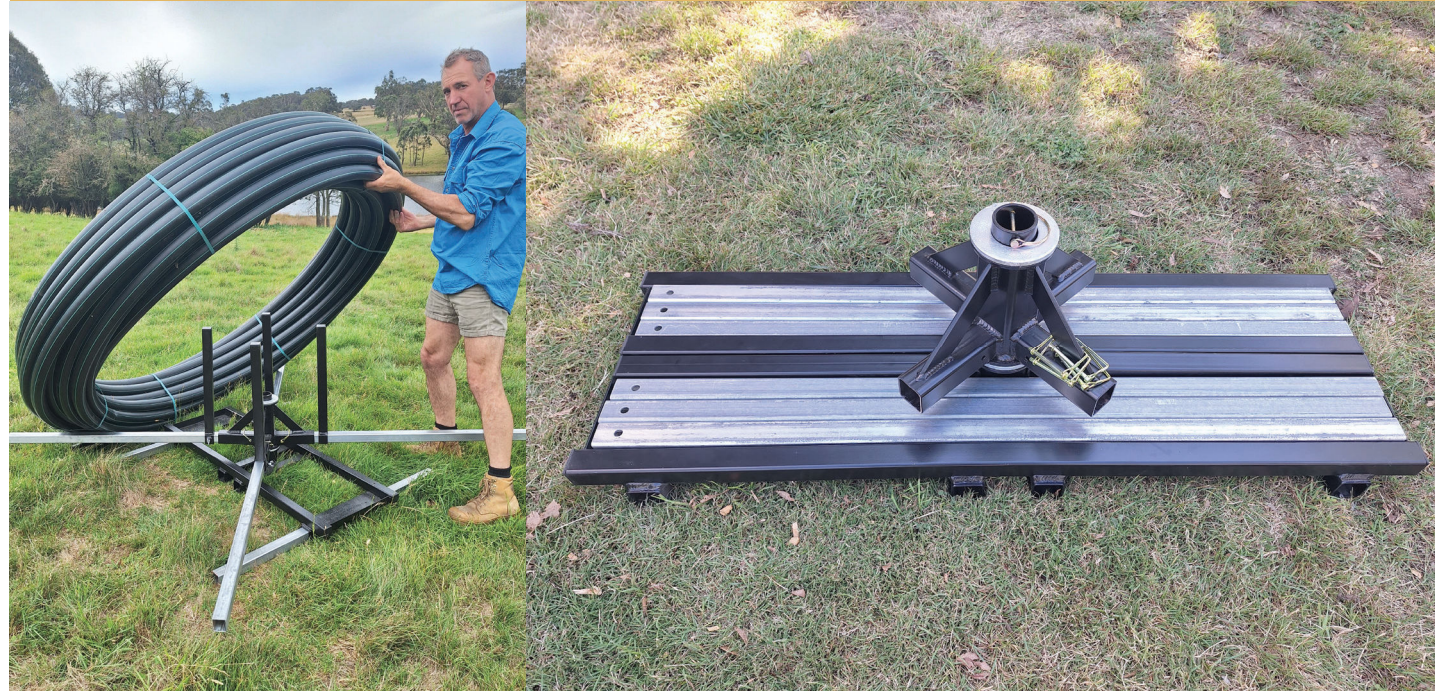


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# The Future of Australian Cotton Farming: Sustainability, Innovation, and Global Impact

*Australia has long been a powerhouse in cotton production, ranking as one of the top exporters globally. Cotton farming, especially in the vast and arid landscapes of New South Wales and Queensland, has significantly shaped the nation's agricultural economy. However, the industry faces mounting challenges and opportunities as it strives to maintain its position as a global leader in the face of environmental concerns, market demands, and technological innovations.*

## The Environmental Challenge

Cotton farming, by its nature, is water-intensive, and Australia's cotton industry is no stranger to this reality. The nation's unpredictable climate, which oscillates between droughts and floods, means that cotton farmers must adopt innovative water management practices. However, with water resources becoming increasingly scarce, concerns about the environmental impact of cotton farming are rising. Farmers must balance their needs with the sustainability of surrounding ecosystems. The industry's water footprint has been under intense scrutiny, particularly in regions where water resources are already stretched thin due to competing demands from cities, industries, and other agricultural sectors. Critics have raised concerns about the effects of cotton cultivation on local rivers and water tables, with some even calling for more stringent regulations on water use.

Yet, the industry has made significant strides in addressing these concerns. Australian cotton farmers have adopted cutting-edge irrigation systems like drip and sprinkler irrigation, which reduce water wastage. Additionally, many farmers have embraced water recycling technologies, allowing them to make the most of every drop of water available. These measures, along with an increased focus on soil health and the adoption of regenerative farming practices, show that the sector is evolving toward more sustainable practices.

## Sustainability and the Path Ahead

Sustainability in cotton farming extends beyond water management. The industry is increasingly focusing on reducing its carbon footprint, improving soil health, and ensuring fair labor practices throughout the supply chain. As consumer demand for ethically sourced products rises, Australian cotton farmers are taking proactive steps to align with global sustainability trends. Australia's cotton growers are embracing innovative technologies to reduce the environmental impact of production. The industry has introduced automated harvesting equipment, precision agriculture tools, and cutting-edge biotech to enhance yields while reducing the need for chemicals. These technological advancements are helping Australian cotton remain competitive in the global market while minimizing the use of pesticides and fertilizers, which can be harmful to both the environment and farmworkers. Furthermore, there has been a growing movement toward organic cotton farming in Australia. Though still a small

part of the market, the trend toward organic cotton production aligns with a broader desire for more eco-friendly and socially responsible products. With international retailers and consumers increasingly demanding transparency in supply chains, Australian cotton growers have an opportunity to showcase their commitment to sustainability.

## Economic Impact and Global Trade

Despite its environmental challenges, Australian cotton farming remains a vital component of the nation's agricultural economy. Cotton production contributes billions of dollars to the Australian economy each year, with the majority of this output directed toward export markets. Australia exports over 80% of its cotton, with major markets including China, India, Indonesia, and Japan. The value of cotton farming extends beyond raw production figures. Cotton supports thousands of jobs in regional areas, from farm labor to transport, ginning, and manufacturing. As global demand for cotton continues to grow, Australian producers stand to benefit. However, this will require continued investment in technology, sustainability, and resilience. Yet, as global markets evolve, Australian cotton farmers face fierce competition from other countries, particularly in Asia and Africa, where labor costs are lower and climate conditions may be more favorable for year-round production. Australia must maintain its reputation for high-quality cotton and ensure its competitive advantage lies not only in yield but in innovation and sustainability.

## The Role of Policy and Advocacy

The future of Australian cotton farming also hinges on the role of policy and advocacy. As climate change and environmental challenges increasingly shape agricultural practices, the Australian government's support will be crucial. Investments in research and development, as well as robust policies that promote water conservation and sustainable practices, will help secure the long-term viability of the industry. Moreover, cotton farmers must continue to work together with environmental organizations, scientists, and consumers to promote best practices. By participating in programs that support sustainable agriculture, the industry can bolster its reputation and ensure that the cotton grown in Australia meets the highest environmental and ethical standards.

## Conclusion

Australian cotton farming stands at a crossroads. With its rich history and global standing, the industry must navigate a complex landscape of environmental, economic, and technological challenges. However, there is hope. By continuing to embrace sustainability, adopting new technologies, and ensuring that ethical practices guide every stage of the cotton production process, Australian cotton can maintain its place in the global market while safeguarding the natural resources that sustain it. The key to success lies not only in innovation and efficiency but in a shared commitment to ensuring that cotton farming remains a vital, sustainable, and economically sound industry for generations to come.



image by Clayton Malquist / unsplash





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Their journey into the steel shed industry has been built on years of hard work and dedication. Dean and Jacob's passion for creating durable and reliable steel buildings is evident in their attention to detail and commitment to excellence.

They take great pride in their work, personally overseeing each shed that leaves their workshop, ensuring that quality is at a high standard. Their reputation for producing robust and dependable buildings has contributed to their success.

Starting with humble beginnings, Dean and Jacob grew their business from the ground up, gradually expanding to meet the growing demand for quality steel sheds. Their dedication to delivering exceptional products and services has earned them a solid reputation in the industry. This success has allowed them to take on larger projects and become a trusted name in the steel shed market. Each step of their journey reflects their perseverance and their focus on creating the best possible products.

FFI Sheds specialises in custom steel buildings, such as machinery sheds, hay sheds, and fertiliser sheds.

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Looking ahead, Dean and Jacob aim to become Australia's leading provider of custom steel buildings. They are committed to upholding the highest standards of craftsmanship and customer service, ensuring their clients receive the best products and support. Their strong focus on communication throughout the entire process, from production to installation, is central to their business philosophy. Additionally, they offer comprehensive after-sales support, maintaining long-term relationships with clients. With their experience and dedication, Dean and Jacob are well on their way to becoming a dominant force in the Australian steel shed industry.

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## The Heartbeat of the Outback: Australia's Sheep and Wool Industry

### Introduction

Australia, a land renowned for its vast landscapes and rugged beauty, holds a gem often overlooked by the casual observer: its sheep and wool industry. For centuries, this industry has not only shaped the economic landscape of the country but also its cultural identity. From the windswept plains of New South Wales to the rolling hills of Victoria, sheep farming is more than just a livelihood; it is a way of life.

### Historical Context

The origins of the Australian sheep and wool industry date back to the late 18th century when the first merino sheep were introduced by John Macarthur. These hardy animals, known for their high-quality fleece, quickly adapted to the Australian climate. By the mid-19th century, the industry had blossomed, with wool becoming Australia's most significant export. The phrase "Australia rides on the sheep's back" captured the essence of the nation's reliance on this industry for its economic prosperity.

### Economic Impact

Today, the sheep and wool industry remains a cornerstone of the Australian economy. Australia is the world's largest producer of premium fine wool, accounting for about 25% of global wool production. The industry contributes billions to the national economy annually, with wool exports reaching markets across Europe, China, and the United States. Farmers and graziers, many of whom manage family-run operations passed down through generations, form the backbone of this sector. Their expertise and dedication ensure the production of high-quality wool, which is processed into luxurious fabrics used by top fashion brands worldwide. The Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), a not-for-profit organization, plays a crucial role in research and development, helping farmers improve wool quality and sheep health.

### Environmental and

### Technological Advances

In recent years, the industry has faced significant challenges, including climate change, drought, and fluctuating market prices. However, Australian wool growers have demonstrated resilience and innovation. Sustainable farming practices are now at the forefront, with many farmers adopting regenerative agriculture techniques to maintain soil health and biodiversity.

Technological advancements have also revolutionized the industry. Precision farming, which uses GPS and data analytics, allows farmers to monitor sheep health and pasture conditions more effectively. Genetic research has led to the breeding of sheep with finer, softer wool, meeting the ever-evolving demands of the global textile market.

### Cultural Significance

The sheep and wool industry is deeply woven into the fabric of Australian culture. Rural communities often revolve around sheep farming, with events such as shearing competitions and agricultural shows celebrating this heritage. The annual Australian Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo, Victoria, is a testament to the industry's cultural importance, drawing visitors from around the globe to witness the finest wool and sheep on display. For many Australians, the image of a sheep-dotted landscape under a vast, open sky is a symbol of national identity. The resilience and ingenuity of sheep farmers are admired and respected, reflecting broader Australian values of hard work and perseverance.

### Challenges and Future Prospects

Despite its rich history and significant contributions, the sheep and wool industry faces ongoing challenges. Climate variability, particularly prolonged droughts, poses a constant threat to sheep health and pasture viability. Market volatility and international competition also pressure Australian wool growers to continually adapt and innovate. However, the future remains promising. Continued investment in research and technology, coupled with a growing global demand for sustainable and high-quality textiles, positions Australia's wool industry for continued success. Organizations like AWI are instrumental in driving innovation and supporting farmers through these challenges, ensuring the industry's longevity.

### Conclusion

The sheep and wool industry in Australia is a testament to the country's pioneering spirit and adaptability. From its historical roots to its modern-day advancements, this industry remains a vital part of the Australian economy and culture. As global markets evolve and environmental challenges persist, the resilience and innovation of Australia's wool growers will undoubtedly continue to lead the industry into a prosperous future. In the heart of the outback, where the landscape is vast and the sun sets in hues of gold, the legacy of the Australian sheep and wool industry endures, a proud symbol of a nation's heritage and ingenuity.



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### Targeted Nutrition Revolutionises Lamb Production

Targeted nutrition is playing a key role in enabling livestock producers to not only increase lambing percentages, but also maximise lamb growth weights and ewe health. Four Season Company's **Ewe & Lamb** supplement has been specifically formulated following extensive paddock trials to effectively deliver high-quality bypass protein meals and essential macro minerals to ewes before, during, and after lambing.

The already popular 20kg block is introduced to the ewe flock six to eight weeks prior to lambing, and fed at a rate of four blocks for every 100 ewes over about a 20 day period, depending on consumption. Producers are advised to continue supplementing **Ewe & Lamb** post-lambing, up to eight weeks either side of lambing, to ensure optimal health and growth.

Four Season market development manager Daniel Olsson said an animal's performance was intrinsically tied to the quality of the feed available and the ability of the animal to efficiently convert feed into milk, meat and fibre. "Where there were shortfalls in pasture quality, specifically formulated supplements are a cost-effective and relatively easy way of maximising production," Mr Olsson said. "**Ewe & Lamb** is designed and paddock tested to deliver heavier body weight and significantly increase colostrum levels, leading to healthier lambing weights and higher survival rates."

"The Four Seasons blocks also provide comprehensive support that enhances bone development, wool growth, and very importantly, reproductive health." Mr. Olsson said nutritional supplements were particularly important during pre and post-pregnancy periods.

"There is a lot of pressure on breeding animals and ewes need to have constant access to consistent, high-quality nutrition," Mr. Olsson said. "This is essential not just for single births but also for ewes capable of mothering twin lambs, helping them realize their full genetic potential and successfully raise their offspring to weaning."

He said even the lushest pastures could fall short of providing the necessary nutrients for optimal stock performance. "The demand for supplements is particularly seen in areas where there are significant phosphate deficiencies and or when grazing on low-quality forage, but even the lushest pasture may not be delivering the necessary nutrition required by breeding ewe."

"Investing in **Ewe & Lamb** is not just a nutritional choice, it's a strategic decision for economic success," Mr. Olsson said. "By ensuring ewes receive the best possible nutrition before and after lambing, producers can achieve healthier, heavier lambs and greater financial returns. **Ewe & Lamb** stands as an indispensable tool in modern lamb production, and has revolutionised how sheep flocks are being managed."



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# The Rising Innovation of Australian Deer Farming: A New Frontier in Agriculture

*Australia is known for its vast agricultural landscapes, where innovations and adaptability often define the success of its farmers. Among the lesser-known but rapidly growing sectors is deer farming, which has been steadily gaining attention for its unique potential. As the demand for venison and other deer-based products increases globally, Australian deer farming is becoming a key player in both domestic and international markets. With a focus on sustainability, ethical farming practices, and cutting-edge technology, Australian deer farmers are redefining what it means to be at the forefront of agricultural innovation.*

## The Growing Demand for Deer Products

The global demand for venison, deer velvet (used in traditional medicine), and antler products has been rising steadily, driven by an increasing appetite for alternative, lean meats, and natural health supplements. Venison is prized for its health benefits—low in fat and rich in protein, iron, and omega-3 fatty acids. As health-conscious consumers seek out cleaner, more sustainable protein sources, the Australian deer farming industry is poised to capitalize on this trend. Deer velvet, which is harvested from the growing antlers of farmed deer, is another high-value product with

significant global demand. Used in traditional medicine in countries such as China, South Korea, and New Zealand, deer velvet is believed to promote vitality and healing, fueling a niche but lucrative market. The global demand for these products has given rise to new opportunities for Australian farmers, who are stepping up to meet both domestic and international needs.

## Sustainable Practices: A Model for the Future

One of the key advantages of deer farming in Australia is its low environmental footprint compared to other forms of livestock farming. Deer are naturally well-suited to the country's harsh landscapes, requiring relatively low levels of water and feed. Unlike cattle, which can be resource-intensive and damaging to the land, deer are less likely to overgraze and cause soil degradation. Their grazing habits help maintain the health of pastures, making deer farming a more sustainable option for the environment. The natural behavior of deer also makes them less reliant on antibiotics and other veterinary interventions commonly used in traditional farming. Deer farming, when done responsibly, can have a minimal impact on the surrounding ecosystem, offering an environmentally friendly alternative to conventional livestock agriculture. This commitment to sustainability is a growing trend in Australian agriculture as farmers continue to seek ways to balance production with environmental stewardship.

## Technological Innovations in Deer Farming

While deer farming may have started as a niche industry, it has quickly embraced technological innovations that are transforming the sector. Australian farmers are increasingly integrating advanced technologies such as precision livestock farming, genetic selection, and automated systems into their operations. Precision livestock farming allows farmers to monitor the health, behavior, and growth of their deer in real time. By using GPS tracking, biometric sensors, and environmental data, farmers can ensure that their herds are well-managed, healthy, and thriving. This level of monitoring also allows for early detection of health issues, reducing the need for intensive treatments and ensuring that the deer are raised in optimal conditions. Genetic selection is another area where innovation is making waves in the Australian deer farming industry. Through selective breeding, farmers are producing deer with superior genetics that result in faster growth, better disease resistance, and higher-quality venison and velvet. This process ensures that Australian deer farms can meet increasing market demands while maintaining high standards of animal welfare and product quality. Furthermore, the integration of automated systems in feeding, milking, and other processes is helping farmers streamline operations, reduce labor costs, and increase overall productivity.

These technological advancements not only enhance efficiency but also contribute to the welfare of the animals, as they reduce stress and promote more natural living conditions.

## Ethical Considerations and Animal Welfare

As with any emerging industry, there are ethical considerations that come with the growth of deer farming. Ensuring that deer are treated humanely and ethically is a key concern for both consumers and producers. Australian deer farmers are increasingly mindful of these issues, focusing on raising animals in stress-free, natural environments that mimic their wild habitats as much as possible. Deer are generally less domesticated than other farm animals, which can make them more sensitive to human intervention. However, Australian farmers are adopting more ethical practices that align with animal welfare standards. The use of free-range systems, the reduction of stress factors, and the

implementation of natural grazing patterns are all part of the broader movement toward responsible and ethical deer farming in Australia. Farmers are also working with veterinary experts to ensure that their practices meet the highest standards of care.

The rising focus on animal welfare is reflected in the broader trend toward ethical sourcing and transparency in the food and agricultural sectors. As consumers demand more ethically produced food products, Australian deer farming is increasingly seen as an example of responsible farming.

## The Future of Australian Deer Farming

The future of Australian deer farming is bright, with immense growth potential in both domestic and international markets. As global demand for venison, deer velvet, and other related products continues to rise, Australian farmers are well-positioned to meet these needs. The country's unique climate, vast open spaces, and growing expertise

in deer management make it an ideal location for expanding this industry. Innovation will continue to play a crucial role in shaping the future of Australian deer farming. From adopting sustainable farming practices to leveraging cutting-edge technology, Australian deer farmers are embracing new methods that will not only increase productivity but also help meet the ethical and environmental challenges of modern agriculture. For the Australian agricultural sector, deer farming represents a promising opportunity—a chance to diversify production, create high-value products, and contribute to global sustainability goals. With its commitment to innovation, sustainability, and animal welfare, the Australian deer farming industry is carving out a future that promises both economic growth and environmental responsibility. In this new frontier, Australian deer farming is more than just a passing trend; it is the vanguard of agricultural innovation.



Photo by unsplash





Phil Giancono with his Duncan Drill fitted with RYAN NT retrofit double discs

#### The Duncan Drill with discs is a contractor's dream

Giancono said as a contractor, he used to have to go to everyone's places to have a look to see if the seeding job would be suitable for his tine machine.

"But now, with the discs, I didn't have to go to any jobs to check the land out; I just rocked up and did it and seeded with ease," he said.

"It chops through kike thatch easily.

"Compared to your cheaper Chinese seeders, it's night and day with the discs on the Duncan Drill.

"It still brings up a bit of rock, but not nothing compared to your tines.

"Another considerable saving that I noticed was fuel efficiency.

"When I sat down and worked it out, we probably saved about 30% in fuel compared to operating with a tine.

"So overall, we're pretty happy with the conversion. When asked how many acres he sowed and if he could get the seed in the ground faster than with tines, Giancono explained, "They did a total of around 700 and were up a gear".

"We covered a fair bit of land this year," he said.

"You're still limited to how fast it can go, but definitely a bit faster than your tine.

"You don't have as much soil throw with the discs compared to the tines on the Duncan Drill, and the fuel efficiency stood out with us.

"That was a big one."

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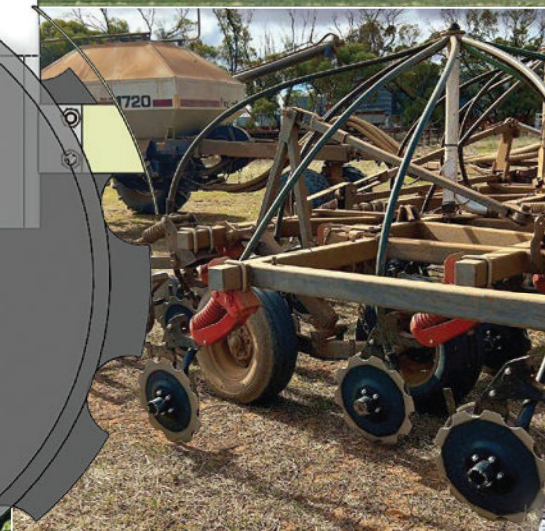
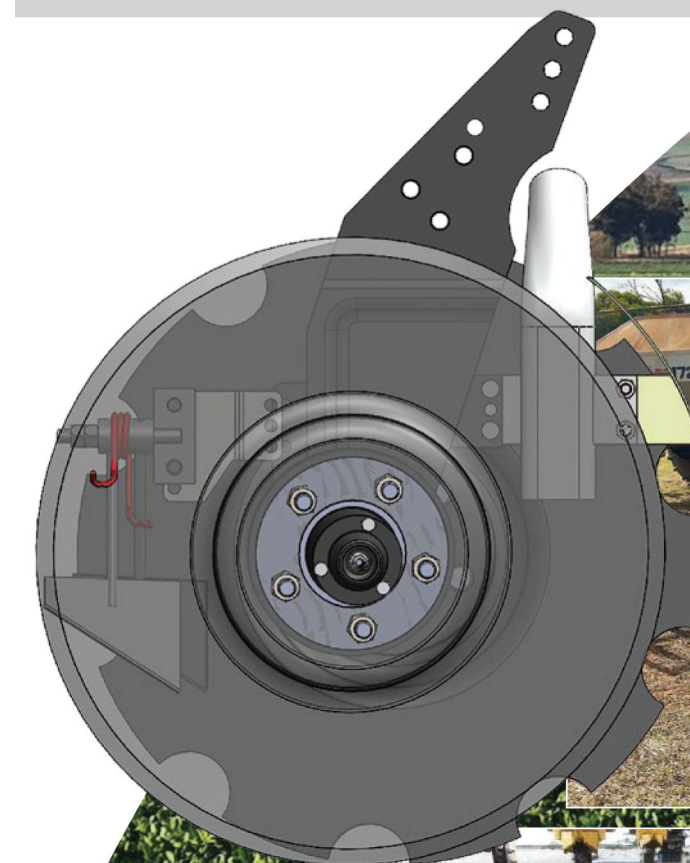


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Since it first opened 18 years ago, the Central West Livestock Exchange (CWLE) has grown to be one of the largest livestock selling centres in Australia and has become a leading selling centre for vendors and buyers in Victoria, NSW and Queensland.

CWLE has grown significantly since it opened its cattle yards in 2006, with the sheep yards being added in 2010 and pig yards added in 2012. In 2019 it significantly expanded its cattle yards to double its capacity to 148 pens.

According to the National Livestock Reporting Service 2023-24 Saleyards Survey CWLE was the second largest sheep selling centre in NSW and the third largest in Australia, with

1,302,432 sheep being yarded through. It was the eighth largest for cattle in NSW with 59,024 sold.

However, the first four months of the 2024-25 financial year have seen a surge in demand for sheep and cattle. Between July and October 2024, a staggering 721,437 sheep were sold at CWLE – an increase of 40% compared to the same period in 2023.

In the same period 30,099 cattle were sold – an increase of 32% since last year and the largest numbers since 2014. The high demand has also led to a surge in per head prices, with export lambs peaking at \$324 per head at the sheep sale

on 16 July 2024 – an increase of \$144 compared to the corresponding sale in July 2023 and well above the national heavy lamb average per head price of \$268 at the time.

According to Forbes Shire Council General Manager, Steve Loane, Forbes' central location on the Newell Highway, the major inland link between Victoria, NSW and Queensland, had attracted more vendors interstate.

"We have become a selling centre of choice for livestock vendors in Victoria, Queensland and across western NSW, and our central location makes it easy for them to access us," he said.

CWLE boasts state-of-the-art facilities including a truck wash, dog run, 24-hour showers and toilets, and a road train ramp that allows for side loading of animals into the yards.

Mr Loane said these factors had attracted more vendors to sell and buy livestock in Forbes. "Our resting paddocks and feeding services for livestock are particularly attractive for sellers travelling long distances as it allows them to transport their livestock here a few days before a sale and they know their animals will be looked after, giving them peace of mind and ensuring they don't have to rush here for a sale" he said.

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