

Augmented lucerne trial

Advantage Feeder, wheat-supplemented lambs on lucerne pasture achieved significantly higher weight gain compared to lambs on Lucerne pasture alone.



Lucerne supplement increases production

Results:

Stock offered wheat gained 350 grams/day of live weight – those without gained just 250grams/day of live weight.

An added benefit was that lambs were away quicker, consuming less fodder and allowing more lambs to be finished on the Lucerne pasture.

Trial outline

Duration:	approx. 50 days
Equipment:	2x NGF1800 in the supplement group
Quantity:	approx. 800 lambs in each group
Stock type:	weaned lambs
Feed amount:	100grams/head/day wheat

Comments from the trial operator

The high quality pasture has high protein levels but doesn't always allow stock to reach potential weight gains.

Adding grain and straw helps balance the diet by increasing carbohydrates and fibre.

I introduced the feeders to lambs and ewes in spring and it didn't take long for stock to get used to the system of getting barley from the feeders.

Lambs are naturally inquisitive, grain is like lollies to them.

A good number of sheep have had grain before, so it didn't take long for them to work out how to get it from the feeders.

The study was anything but scientific – It is only over one season with one mob, but the results are exciting.

I grow 30ha of barley to keep supplement costs low but the system should work with bought-in barley, as the returns are significant.

Supplementation trial



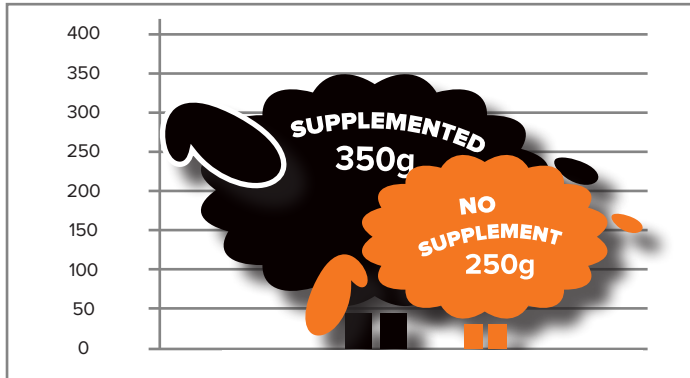
Added feeding expenses

Number of lambs	800
Feeding duration (days)	50
Average wheat consumption/day/head (kg)	0.1
Wheat cost (tonne)	\$400.00
Total wheat cost	\$ 1,600.00
Wheat cost/head	\$2.00
Labour**	\$120.00
Depreciation*	\$675.00
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$2,395.00
TOTAL EXPENSE/LAMB	\$2.99

* The depreciation rate is 15% and the investment of two feeders is \$4,500.

** The feeders were filled twice, taking one hour to fill both feeders each time.

Average live weight gain (grams/head/day)



Lamb income v expense



Added income

Number of lambs	800
Feeding duration (days)	50
Added growth rate/day/head (kg)	0.1
Value of live weight/kg	\$3.00
TOTAL INCOME***	\$12,000.00
TOTAL INCOME/LAMB	\$15.00
TOTAL PROFIT	\$9,605.00
TOTAL PROFIT/LAMB	\$12.01

*** This doesn't include the added potential to finish more lambs on the Lucerne because they are sold quicker with lower pasture consumption

About the trial operators

Bill and Sheila Wright operates a 390ha dry stock farm in Cave, 28km Northwest of Timaru, where he farms 850 breeding ewes, 250 hoggets, 130 bull calves, 130 R2 Bulls and grazes 500 dairy heifers. He also finishes 1500 lambs per year on 70 Ha of Lucerne.