

An on-farm trial found that a mob of spring drop ewes carrying twin lambs that were supplemented into lambing and then their offspring up to weaning produced considerably more meat compared to another mob that had no supplement.



Creep feeding and ewe supp. lifts lamb production

Trial outline

Duration: Total: 135 days
Ewe feeding: 40 days
Lamb creep feeding: 95 days

Quantity: 97 ewes in the supplement group and 99 ewes in the control group

Scanning: All ewes scanned with twins

Ewe age: 3 and 4 yo.

Lambing period: 1/8/14 to 4/9/14

Diet:
Supplement group:
Ewes: 300 grams/day of Barley
Lambs: 200 grams/day of Barley

Control group:
No supplement

Both groups:
continual access to pasture higher than 1200kg/DM

Results:

Lambs that were creep fed with Advantage Feeders averaged a weight of 27.0kg at weaning while the lambs in the control mob averaged only 22.4kg.

With an estimated lamb birth weight of 4kg, the creep fed mob grew 25% faster.

The weaning rates were substantially different. The supplement mob achieved 159% while the control group were at 139%.

Other benefits include:

- Lambs were imprinted with the knowledge to feed from feeders after weaning, reducing the occurrence of a weaning check.
- The ewe lambs from the creep feeding group have a much higher likelihood of reaching target mating weight.
- Lambs reach marketable weight earlier freeing up more are to run ewes.

About the trial operators

Mac and Jo Fraser operate Heatherlie Partnership where they run 6000 ewes that lamb in spring to best match stocking rates with pasture growth.

Twin lamb creep feeding and ewe supplement trial



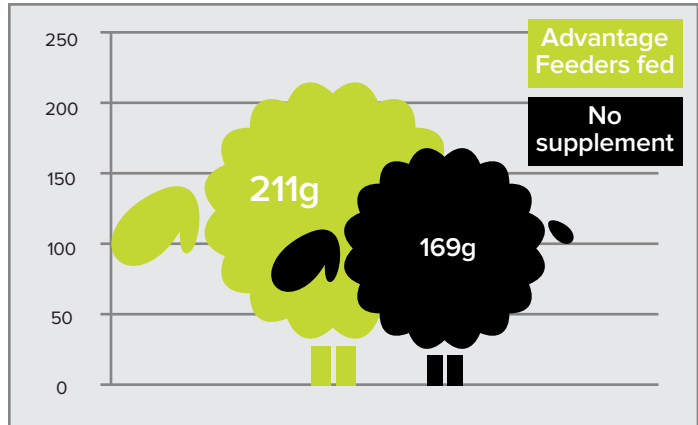
Total value less feeding expense/ewe

	Twin - control	Twin - creep fed
Ewe number	99	97
Lambs weaned	138	154
Weaning rate	139%	159%
Average birthdate	15/08/2014	15/08/2014
Estimated birth weight (kg)	4	4
Average weaning weight (kg)	22.4	27.0
Weaning date	2/12/2014	2/12/2014
Age at weaning (days)	109	109
Daily weight gain to weaning (g/day)	168.8	211.0
Weight of lambs/ewe (kg)	31.2	42.9
VALUE OF LAMB/EWE (\$2.80/kg)	\$87.43	\$120.02
Barley consumption (kg)	0	3870
Total cost of Barley (\$400/tonne)	\$0.00	\$1,548.00
Cost of Barley/ewe	\$0.00	\$15.96
Depreciation expense/ewe*	\$0.00	\$3.71
Filling cost/ewe**	\$0.00	\$1.24
TOTAL FEEDING EXPENSES/EWE	\$0.00	\$ 20.91
TOTAL VALUE LESS FEEDING EXPENSE/EWE	\$87.43	\$99.12

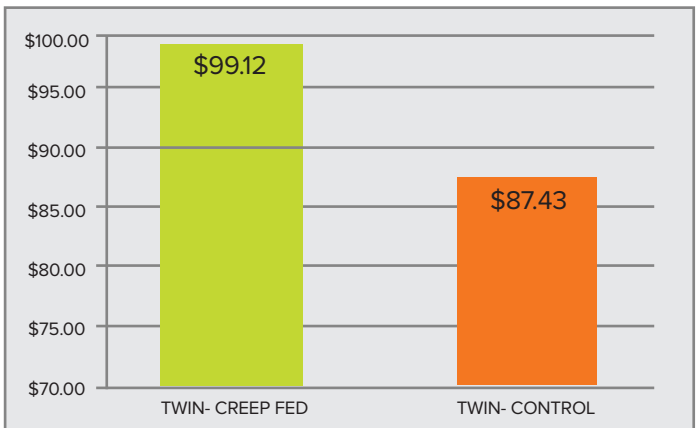
*This is calculated by multiplying the depreciation rate of 15% by the investment of a feeder (\$2,400) and dividing it by 97 ewes. This also assumes that the feeder is used only for this application throughout the year.

** The feeder was filled twice, taking one hour to fill both feeders each time at \$60/hour to fill.

Lamb daily weight gain (g)



Total value less feeding expense/ewe



Comments from the trial operators

On the 2/08/2014 we had an outbreak of Campylobacter confirmed and it was recommended to get them of the feeder, which we did.

On 16/08/2014 we decided to recommence the trial as the "Campy" had settled down after injecting mobs with antibiotics.

It has been a trying year but the trial has shown us the great benefit in creep feeding twin lambs.

We have also used the feeders to supplement ewes in autumn. Ewes that were on the feeders scanned at 147% while ewes without feeders scanned at 112%.