Advantage Feeders

CONTROLLED FEEDING REDUCES EWE SUPP. BY 30%
CREEP FEEDING INCREASES WEANING WEIGHT BY 4.02KG/HEAD

An on-farm trial found that a **mob of ewes, supplemented through Advantage Feeders compared to a trail fed mob, required 30% less supplement, had far better rumen performance, produced more lambs and finished with heavier ewes – all with less labour.**

The lambs, then creep fed, had higher growth rates enabling them to be sold earlier in the season achieving a higher price/kg.

1 X 3800 + 1 X CP2 PAID OFF IN JUST 103 DAYS

OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGHER PROFIT

- The creep feed lambs only ate an average of 35g/day for the first 14 days of the trial due to the restricted settings of the feeder. If the settings were ad-lib, the lambs could consume more, enabling an even earlier developed rumen than this trial and gain more weight.
- Recent Advantage Feeders trials have shown that the rumen efficiency gained by regular and small amounts of supplementation have led to decreased pasture consumption, allowing more stock/Ha to be run.
  There is an opportunity to expand on this trial by increasing the stocking rate of the Advantage Feeders mob by 10%.
- With ewes from the Advantage Feeders mob gaining 1.4kg over the trail fed mob, the supplement feeding amount could be reduced from 69% in this trial to 55%. This would save over $400 extra for a mob of 200 ewes.

RESULTS

Part 1: Ewe supplementation

- The ewes supplemented with Advantage Feeders consumed 30% less grain and ended up an average of 1.4kg/head heavier.
- There were 212 lambs in the Advantage Feeders mob compared to 200 in the trail fed mob – a 6% increase.

Part 2: Lamb creep feeding

- At the end of this period, the lambs that had been creep fed averaged 47.83kg/head while the lambs that had no supplement, the control group, averaged 43.81kg/head.

  The lambs were supplemented with an average of 14.06kg of barley, achieving a supplement feed conversion of 3.5:1.

Part 3: Lamb dispersal

- The creep fed lambs reached market weight earlier than the control group. The creep fed lambs averaged $140.33/head while the control group, averaged $130.25 – a $10.08/head difference.
- After weaning, the creep fed lambs only required 3644 grazing days on the farm while the control group required 9300.

Overall:

- The Advantage Feeders system and the use of one feeder increased net profit by $4,917.42

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TRIAL OUTLINE

PART 1: EWE SUPPLEMENTATION

Duration: 128 days

Quantity: 200 in each mob

Ewe age: 59% are 4yo. and 41% are 5 yo.

Scanning: All in lamb with at least 1 foetus

Maternal breed: Merino

Terminal breed: White Suffolk

Lambing period: 8/4/15 to 31/5/15

Feed type: Barley (12.0MJ/kg, 11.0% protein)

Feeding amounts:

Advantage Feeders group:

22/1/15 to 22/3/15 – 200 grams/day

23/3/15 to 31/5/15 – 400 grams/day

Trail feeding group (3 times/week):

22/1/15 to 22/3/15 – 300 grams/day

23/3/15 to 31/5/15 – 600 grams/day

Both groups:

Initial access to approx.

25Ha of pasture and then to approx.

25Ha of barley stubbles.

PART 2: LAMB SUPPLEMENTATION

Duration: 91 days

Quantity: 412

Starting age: 0-50 days (average of 30 days old)

Breed: 1st cross White Suffolk

Feed type: Barley (12.0MJ/kg, 11.0% protein)

Feeding amounts:

Advantage Feeders group:

1/6/15 to 31/8/15 – 150 grams/day

Lambs from trail feeding group:

No supplementation

PART 3: LAMB DISPERSAL

Sale dates: On right

Part 1 - Ewe supplementation: 24/1/15 to 31/5/15 (127 days)

	Advantage Feeders mob	Trail feeding mob
Ewe quantity	200	200
Barley consumed (kg)	7984	11514
Barley cost ($250/tonne)	$1,996.00	$2,878.50
Average daily pasture consumption of dry matter (kg)	1.5	1.5
Grazing days (ewe quantity x days)	25400	25400
Pasture consumption (kg)	38100	38100
Pasture cost ($0.10/kgDM)	$3,810.00	$3,810.00
No. of feeds/fills	4	55
Average feeding time (hours)	1	0.47
Total feeding time (hours)	4	25.85
Feeder moving, set up and adjustment time (hours)	5	0
Total time spent (hours)	9	25.85
Labour and vehicle cost/hour	$60.00	$60.00
Total labour and vehicle cost	$540.00	$1,551.00
Lambs marked	212	200
Lambing percentage	106%	100%
EXPENSES - Period 1	**$6,346.00**	**$8,239.50**

Lamb sale date and price table

Sale date	Price/kg	Average dressed weight	Skin value
Starting number			
31/08/2015	$6.20	22.4	$9.00
11/09/2015	$6.00	23.5	$9.00
29/09/2015	$5.40	21.0	$8.00
15/01/2016	$5.00	22.0	$6.00

*The shaded areas indicates estimates.

A key driver in the profitability of a prime lamb enterprise is the ability to get lambs to market early, before the annual flush of lambs hit. This trial showed lambs that were sold before 11/9/15, sold in the range of $147-$150. Lambs sold after that date at a significant discount. The Creep fed group had 150 lambs reach marketable weight in the peak price period while the control group only achieved 75 lambs.

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Part 2 - Lamb Creep Feeding: 1/6/15 to 31/8/15 (91 days)

	Advantage Feeders mob	Trail feeding mob
Lamb quantity	212	200
Barley consumed (kg)	2980	0
Barley cost ($250/tonne)	$745.00	$0
No. of feeds/fills	2	0
Average feeding time (hours)	1	0
Total feeding time (hours)	2	0
Feeder moving, set up and adjustment time (hours)	1	0
Total time spent (hours)	3	0
Labour and vehicle cost/hour	$60.00	$60.00
Total labour and vehicle cost	$180.00	$0
Average daily ewe pasture consumption of dry matter (kg)	1.5	1.5
Average daily lamb pasture consumption of dry matter (kg)	0.75	0.75
Ewe grazing days (ewe quantity x days)	18200	18200
Lamb grazing days (lamb quantity x days)	19292	18200
Pasture consumption (kg)	41769	40950
Pasture cost ($0.10/kgDM)	$4,176.90	$4,095.00
EXPENSES - Period 2	**$5,101.90**	**$4,095.00**

Part 3 - Lamb Dispersal

	Advantage Feeders mob	Trail feeding mob
Average daily ewe pasture consumption of dry matter (kg)	1.5	1.5
Average daily lamb pasture consumption of dry matter (kg)	1.2	1.2
Ewe grazing days until 30/09/15 (ewe quantity x days)	6000	6000
Lamb grazing days*	3644	9300
Pasture consumption	13372.8	20160
Pasture cost ($0.10/kgDM)	$1,337.28	$2,016.00
EXPENSES - Period 3	**$1,337.28**	**$2,016.00**

*See the Lamb sale date and price table for the calculation.

Expense and income table

	Advantage Feeders mob	Trail feeding mob
EXPENSES - Period 1	$6,346.00	$8,239.50
EXPENSES - Period 2	$5,101.90	$4,095.00
EXPENSES - Period 3	$1,337.28	$2,016.00
Depreciation*	$348.90	
TOTAL EXPENSES**	**$13,134.08**	**$14,350.50**
TOTAL LAMB INCOME***	**$29,750.00**	**$26,049.00**
NET PROFIT	**$16,615.92**	**$11,698.50**

* This is calculated by multiplying the depreciation rate of 15% by the investment of $2326 for one NGF3800 with Creep Panels.

** The expenses of shearing, the depreciation of the ewe value, lambing marking, injections, shepherding, etc. where not added into the expenses

*** No wool income was added into the income

Average value	Advantage Feeders mob				Trail feeding mob			
	Sold	Value	Left in stock	Grazing days before next sale date	Sold	Value	Left in stock	Grazing days before next sale date
			212				200	
$147.88	100	$14,788.00	112	1232	50	$7,394.00	150	1650
$150.00	50	$7,500.00	62	1116	25	$3,750.00	125	2250
$121.40	50	$6,070.00	12	1296	75	$9,105.00	50	5400
$116.00	12	$1,392.00	0	0	50	$5,800.00	0	0
	TOTAL lamb income	**$29,750.00**	**TOTAL grazing days**	**3644**	**TOTAL lamb income**	**$26,049.00**	**TOTAL grazing days**	**9300**
	Average Lamb value	**$140.33**			**Average Lamb value**	**$130.25**		

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COMMENTS FROM THE TRIAL OPERATOR:

The trial went smoothly with a great start to the Autumn break around Easter with 62mm of rain. There were regular moderate amounts of follow-up rain with above average winter rainfall and pasture growth.

Before the start of the trial, I was concerned about the potential of mismothering owing to using feeders through lambing – the weaning results proved this wasn't an issue.

The ewes appeared to have bonded well with the lambs before coming in to the feeder as they usually all left with their lambs at foot.

Both groups had very comparable areas of pasture and stubble conditions throughout the trial period and fox baiting was carried out pre lambing. Stock lime was given from December through until lambing.

The only other supplementary feed was three round bales to each group in late March. The condition score of all ewes at scanning was three. Post lambing, the feeder ewes maintained this score whilst the trail fed ewes dropped half a condition down to 2.5

The lambs were always at the feeder whenever I checked it. When the feeder was used for creep feeding, the slides were adjusted right open and the lambs just steadily picked away at it.

The creep feeder lambs had potentially better pasture on offer than trail fed mob. Both paddocks had super applied in March but one paddock seemed to have a better clover response.

There was definitely a learning curve for me with set up, positioning and fine tuning of rates in the beginning, but I feel confident I could reduce time taken to do this in the future.

Richard Leaver, Riverton, SA

OTHER RESULTS:

At the beginning of the trial (22/1/15), the Advantage Feeders mob had an average weight of 71.5kg and the trail fed mob was 70.8kg. At the completion of the trial (31/5/15), the Advantage Feeders mob had an average weight of 72.0kg and the trail fed mob was 69.9kg – a net gain of 1.4kg for the Advantage Feeders mob.

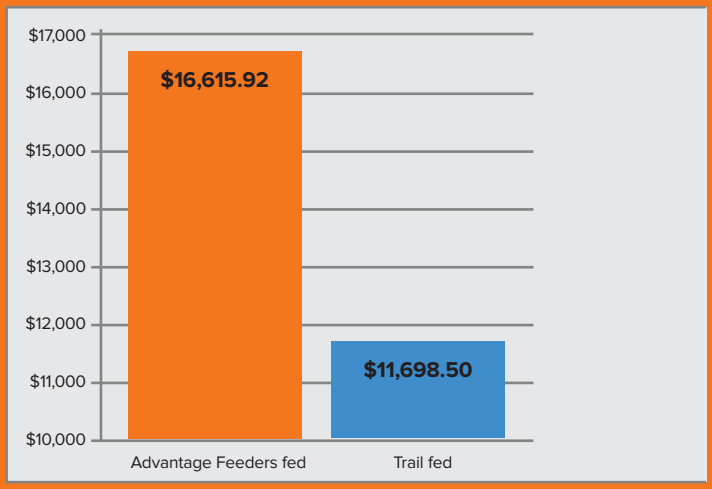
The net weight gain was achieved through a feed consumption of 11,514kg of barley for the trail fed mob and only 7,984kg by the Advantage Feeders mob.

The ewes from the trail feeding mob had 200 lambs at marking (3/6/15), whereas the Advantage Feeders mob achieved 212 lambs – 6% higher.

Other benefits:

- With a feed conversion of 6:1, the trail fed mob will need to be fed an additional 8.4kg of feed to lift their weight 1.4kg and bring them back to an equivalent weight to the Advantage Feeders mob. 8.4kg of a 16% protein pellet at $350/tonne amounts to $2.94/ewe.
- Supplement feeding coincides with the Autumn seeding program. Using Advantage Feeders reduces the labour required to supplement ewes when labour is in its highest demand.

NET PROFIT



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