

The latest news from the Barossa Improved Grazing Group

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Natural Resources  
Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges



Natural Resources  
SA Murray-Darling Basin



# The BIGG Bulletin

November 2019

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## New BIGG funding to support farm decision-making





BIGG has recently been successful in gaining new funding from the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board for our soil moisture monitoring activities.

The key objective of the new project is to improve the knowledge and understanding of BIGG's weather monitoring station data so to assist with on farm decision-making. This will be achieved through:

- Redeveloping BIGG's weather monitoring station webpages (which display the soil moisture and climate data) to improve their presentation and making them mobile friendly
- Extension activities including a webinar on interpreting soil moisture and climate data, a workshop on 'Managing the Climate', and monthly reports on the soil moisture status of BIGG's four monitoring station paddocks (located at Flaxman Valley, Keyneton, Koonunga and Moculta)

The project will also fund the installation of wind direction sensors for BIGG's weather stations. Wind direction data can then be used to assist local farmers determine the timing of their spray and crop harvest operations.

The AMLR NRM Board has been an ongoing supporter of our soil moisture monitoring activities since we first installed BIGG's weather-monitoring stations and soil moisture probes back in 2013. BIGG will be assisted in the project by Peter Toome of TOIP Pty Ltd.

## BIGG Containment Ewe Project



With the depleting soil moisture many sheep producers are starting to think about containment feeding of ewes.


For those who haven't heard about the BIGG containment ewe project – it's an MLA Producer Demonstration site which will run for the next three years in the Barossa region.

The aim is to enable enterprises to maintain their stocking rate and increase production and paddock ground cover through the use of containment of ewes for a period of time during the autumn feed gap. The project will be run with three major demonstration sites where the performance of the containment area's will be monitored in terms of ewe reproduction rate, condition score, lamb marking percentage, fleece weight at shearing, property ground cover and food on offer.

We are also looking for 12 minor sites where we will benchmark feed costs, performance of ewes and feed on offer but they will be monitored to a lesser extent than the major sites.


A livestock consultant will be available to help facilitate a nutritional and activity plan for the containment lots. A cost benefit analysis and gross margin will be developed to determine the economic performance of the containment area and where the 'break even point' would be for each business over the 2 years.

We are still looking for 1 producer that would like to be involved as a major site and a few minor sites! Please give Deb a call if you're interested (0407 790 622).



## MANAGING STOCK IN CONTAINMENT AREAS

Presented by: **Hamish Dickson – AgriPartner Consulting**  
P: 0427 446 499 w: [www.agripartner.com.au](http://www.agripartner.com.au)



If you want more information on containment areas don't forget about our webinar covering set up, feeding and animal health

[>>WATCH WEBINAR](#)

### Increasing production using containment areas

This survey is a pre-survey for the MLA Producer Demonstration Site funded Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG) project which has recently commenced on the practice of containment feeding ewes over summer and autumn. The following questions are to gain an understanding of your current level of knowledge around containment feeding ewes and an indication of your current sheep management practices. This will help drive the direction of our project to make the actions meaningful to you and your business. It should only take 5 minutes to complete, thank you very much for your time and effort in completing this survey.

OK

Thanks very much for those who have completed the pre-survey – and to those that haven't you can find it here:

[>>CLICK FOR SURVEY](#)

## Free Soil Testing



Adelaide Mt Lofty Ranges NRM are offering free soil testing for producers within the area to help them manage and understand their soil conditions. This will also help to give a great overview of the soil conditions located across our area to provide further knowledge on the region.



We can even provide a soil corer to borrow.....so.....if you would like a soil test kit please click the button below (or email [Georgie](#))!

I'd like a free soil test kit!

## Save the Dates:



Keep and eye out for these upcoming BIGG events....details are being finalised!

- Tuesday 26th November- 8.00pm- Feeding Sheep in Summer- WEBINAR
- November/ December (Date TBA)- Gra\$\$ to Dollars COURSE- (8 sessions) covering pastures and livestock management
- BIGG 'Beyond 2020' Conference- Nuriootpa- Mid February 2020 TBA
- Ewe Containment Areas Bus Trip- 1st week of February 2020

## From the Inbox.....

- Fire Danger Index - with crop harvest just around the corner dont forget about harvesting when conditions are safe. To help with this, check out the 'Fire Danger Index' graph calculated from the data for each of BIGG's weather stations (just go to the [BIGG homepage](#), click on your relevant weather station and scroll down to the graph). The graph shows the level of fire risk in near real time and is updated every 15 minutes. Harvest conditions are considered

unsafe when the Fire Danger Index is >35.

- Eudunda Show Hogget Competition (10th November)- [Entries Open](#)
- Forcast4Profit Webinar Recording- Dale Grey (AgVic) & Peter Hayman (SARDI) [Watch](#)
- Contribute to the joing MLA and AWI Sheep Meat Survey [Link](#)
- Regenerative Farming on the Fleurieu- 10 November [More Info](#)

## Your BIGG Contacts

### Technical Facilitators:

[Georgie Keynes](#): 0409 287 261

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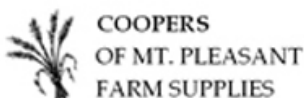
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