



# The BIGG Bulletin

March 2020

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## Sheep Tech Group- Wednesday 25th

At this stage we still have the go ahead to run the Sheep Technology Group for next Wednesday. See the picture below for workshop details.

This will be delivered with biosecurity measures to ensure everyone's safety including hand washing and distancing in accordance with AWI Lifetime Ewe Group biosecurity protocols.

Please let Georgie know asap if you would like to be involved:

[georgie.keynes@biggroup.org.au](mailto:georgie.keynes@biggroup.org.au)/ 0409 287 261



## Barossa Sheep Technology Group

Wednesday 25th March 2020

Barossa Region- venue tba

### Program

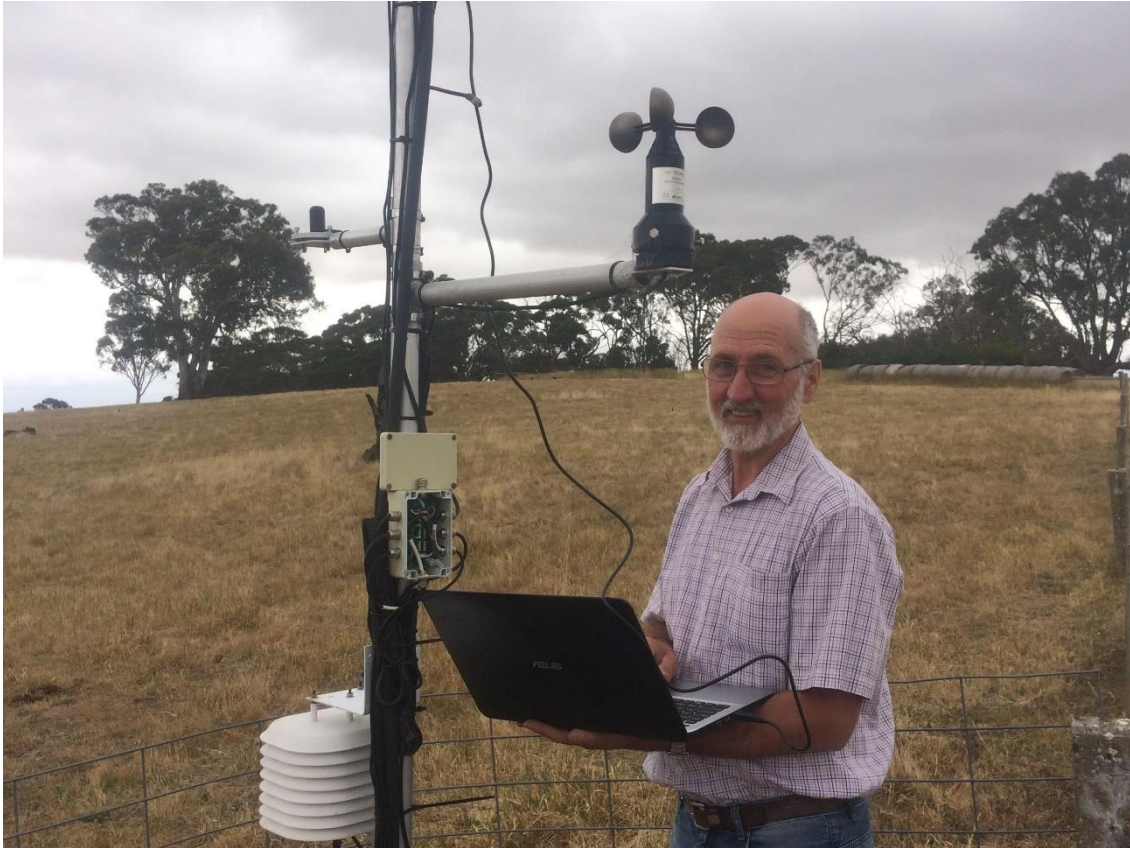
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 8.30am  | Welcome and Introduction  |
| 8.35am  | What are your livestock business goals?<br>What are the management decisions required to meet these?<br>What data do you need to assist with these decisions?   |
| 9.00    | Understanding the heritability of traits and how this effect your decisions- Michelle Cousins   |
| 9.30am  | How can you get the most out of your EID equipment? – Michelle Cousins <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Basic Excel files</li><li>ii. Uploading/downloading files</li><li>iii. Company software</li></ul> |
| 11.00am | Where to from here?<br>What other technologies would assist management decisions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Telemetry</li><li>ii. Remote monitoring</li><li>iii. Shed/yard design</li></ul>        |
| 11.30am | Finish  |



More information contact Michael  
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## Soil Moisture Monitoring Project- lots on the go!



### Webpage revamp

The webpages that display the recorded data from BIGG's Flaxman Valley, Keyneton, Koonunga and Moculta weather stations have had a significant makeover. They are now more intuitive and also 'mobile friendly'. To access the new weather station homepage make sure you use the link:

<http://toip-server.net.au:8080/custdata/bigg/webapp/index.html>

If you have any feedback or queries about the webpage revamp please contact Brett.

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### **Upcoming workshop – ‘Managing the Local Climate’**

A BIGG workshop to help producers manage the upcoming season The workshop promises to be informative and timely as we head into the break (hopefully soon!).

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April (1.30-5.00pm)**

Mt McKenzie Hall

It will feature three key speakers:

- Darren Ray (ex Bureau of Meteorology): on what the regional climatic outlook for the upcoming season is
- Peter Toome: on what BIGG’s weather station data is saying about a changing climate and how producers might respond to it
- Luke Clark (farmer, Jamestown): on how Luke uses his weather station data to help manage his cropping and grazing enterprises.

Afternoon tea and refreshments provided. For catering purposes RSVP by Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April to Brett Nietschke 0432 804 390 or [brett.nietschke@biggroup.org.au](mailto:brett.nietschke@biggroup.org.au)

**RSVP for Workshop!**

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### **Webinar Recording**

For those of you that didn’t catch BIGG’s recent webinar on *Interpreting weather station data to assist farm decision-making*, it was recorded and can be viewed below.



The webinar was presented by Peter Toome of TOIP Pty Ltd and covered:

- The different sensors on BIGG's weather stations
- How BIGG's weather station data is presented in the revamped webpages
- How the data can be interpreted to assist decision-making

Of the participants that viewed the webinar 80% rated it 4/5 or better, so make sure you check it out!



**BIGG Webinar**

**Interpreting Weather Station Data  
to Assist Farm Decision-Making**

**BIGG**  
www.bigggroup.org.au

TOIP

Click on the image above or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGSBegRCvcs>

*The soil moisture monitoring and weather station project is supported by the AMLR NRM Board through funding from the NRM levy*

## Ewe Containment Areas Bus Trip



Forty-five farmers from across the Barossa, Mid North and Adelaide Hills attended the Barossa Improved Grazing Group (BIGG) Containment Ewe Tour on Wednesday 4th March at various locations around the Barossa Valley.

The event showcased how local producers in this area have set up containment ewe areas, as well as provided informative sessions on containment nutrition, condition scoring ewes and soil ground cover assessments.

Supported by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) as part of the containment ewe Producer Demonstration Site Project, as well as the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board, the event was an excellent opportunity for attendees to visit four different locations in an interactive and educational experience.

Deb Scammell, Talking Livestock Consultant who facilitated the event said the day was a great way to highlight some of the advantages and benefits of containment ewe management on location.

“We visited four different landowners over the course of the day, where we were able to see firsthand the benefits of containment ewe management,” she said. “The take home messages from the demonstration sites were that containing ewes reduces overgrazing, soil erosion and wind erosion, and allowed pregnant ewes to be fed a more efficient ration as they weren’t wasting energy walking around a dry paddock.”

Presenters and farmers spoke on different topics, including nutrition, effective management of ewes in containment and land management. Brian Hughes from PIRSA also spoke of the importance of soil ground cover in the paddock to prevent erosion and reduced growth when there was a break.

William Hurn from Angaston spoke of better lambing percentages and control over nutrition from managing ewes in containment.

“I have found lambing percentages have improved as a result of using containment and we now have better management of rations due to mob segregation,” he said. “Containment also provides an ideal quarantine opportunity where required.”

Georgie Keynes and Toby Rosenzweig from Keyneton currently manage 2,500 ewes in confinement. For them, ground cover is key.

“We aim to maintain (at all times if possible) around 1t/ha of ground cover as reserve for turning out stock prior to lambing,” Georgie said. “Barley is the main grain fed so we make sure we include salt and lime in their ration.”

Bruce and Paul Schutz from Point Pass currently run 1860 merino ewes and 400 wethers.

“We use a feed mixer for mixing a high roughage and barley mixed ration and this is put out into our own design feed bins in containment,” Paul said. “We have the option to move stock to different regions for finishing, so this is an advantage in maintaining balance in our overall farming enterprise.”

“We recommend using bio-start(ruminant) and nutri-mol to condition guts as an induction step to moving stock out of containment,” he said.

Kym Mosey from Bagot Well was the final producer the attendees visited on the day. He said feeding cereal hay in containment pens and then letting ewes out to consume grain in a separate pen has been the easiest way for him to feed large numbers of ewes.

“We have found proximity to feed source and yards was important when deciding where to put pens,” he said. “It was handy to have some other small paddocks with shelter to put sheep into if weather turns. We also have protected trees so that they continue to provide shade in pens.”

*This project is supported by MLA and the SA Murray Darling Basin NRM AgKnowledge Grant.*

## BIGG Conference







It seems like a very long time since the BIGG conference, but what a fantastic day we had! Across the whole day there was over 80 people who attended the afternoon and dinner session.

The presentations delivered across the day provided valuable information on land, livestock and people. All of the presentations are available on the [BIGG website](#):

- [Managing the Farm Ecosystem](#)— Ruth Sommerville, Rufous & Co

- [Soil Health](#)– Edward Scott, Soil & Land Co
- [BIGG Soil Moisture Monitoring](#)– Brett Nietschke, BIGG
- [Innovative Water Harvest and Storage Solutions](#)- Brian Hughes, PIRSA
- Young Guns- Samantha Neumann, [Nic Dawes](#), Dr Emily Buddle
- [Setting Livestock Goals using EID](#)– Michelle Cousins, Cousins Merino Services
- [EID in Livestock](#), James Ellis, Datamars
- [Ewe Containment Area Producer Panel](#)– Deb Scammell, BIGG
- [Best on Ground Performance](#)– Jenny Williams, Best on Ground

We also offer a huge thanks to all of the BIGG sponsors who provided valuable support for the day.

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**BIGG Membership**





Just a reminder about the BIGG Membership. There are fantastic benefits that you can receive:

- Free entry to the BIGG Annual Conference (value \$50)
- Free or discounted entry to all other BIGG pasture walks, field days and workshops (value \$25+)
- Receive the monthly e-newsletter for project updates, event notification and technical information
- Eligible to nominate for the BIGG Board and to vote at the AGM
- Eligible to nominate for the new BIGG travel bursary award

Each member category is entitled to all member benefits listed above:

- Full membership- \$100 for the first individual member
- Associate membership- \$50 for additional members involved in the farm business



- Full time student membership- \$20

[Visit our website for sign up form!](#)

## From the Inbox

- Agriwebb Virtual South East Field Day: TOMORROW Friday 20th [Sign Up Here](#)
- International Women Day MLA [Article](#)
- Next Gen Breakthrough Group- Rural Directions- [More information](#)- first session as a webinar
- National Farmers Federation FarmHub- connects Australian farmers to a range of helpful services and support- visit [FarmHub](#)
- On-farm water infrastructure rebate- 50% off water infrastructure- [View here](#)
- SA Livestock Consultants Update- 30 July Hahndorf [More details](#)

## Thanks to our Sponsors

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