

Monday, 8 August 2011

Flystrike workshops to prepare sheep for Qld wet

Queensland sheep graziers will receive timely advice on tackling flystrike ahead of the wet season at an upcoming workshop to be held in Murrumbidgee

The summer rainfall period traditionally triggers the arrival of flies in their millions, which can pose a health risk for sheep.

The Flystrike Prevention Workshop will be conducted by the Sheep Cooperative Research Centre (Sheep CRC) and the SRS Group, with the support of the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and the Leading Sheep program.

The workshop will provide sheep producers with the tools to personalise a prevention program to suit the conditions on their properties, as well as the use of breeding and selection as a solution.

Host of the Murrumbidgee workshop, David Fysh, "Acacia Downs", said selecting rams to breed bare breach and plain bodied sheep that were not as susceptible to flystrike, was a significant factor in reducing the problem in his Merino flock.

"That strategy has been really successful for us and this is now our fourth year in a row without mulesing," Mr Fysh said.

"With the rising cost of labour and chemicals, breeding a sheep that is easier to manage and less susceptible to flystrike has been the most efficient strategy for our situation.

"Last year we had a record 48-inch rainfall (1200mm), but we didn't have a significant flystrike problem."

The workshop will also cover practices including wrinkle scoring, benchmarking flocks for flystrike susceptibility; monitoring of the fly population; shearing, crutching and breach modification; marking, clips and mulesing; and chemical treatments.

Speakers will include David Counsell, "Dunblane", Barcaldine; Allan Casey, Sheep Breeding Specialist, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Orange; Errol Brumpton, "Well Gully Merinos", Mitchell; and Ruth Milne, Sheep Extension Officer, DEEDI, Longreach.

Workshops are free to all sheep producers, and lunch and smoko will be provided.

- The Murrumbidgee workshop will be held on August 26. To register, contact Ruth Milne on (07) 4650 1225 or ruth.milne@deedi.qld.gov.au by Monday August 22.
- For more information on flystrike management, visit www.flyboss.org.