Burra Sheep Technology Day
8 March 2016

HOW TO INCREASE LAMB SURVIVAL

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Pro Ag Consulting

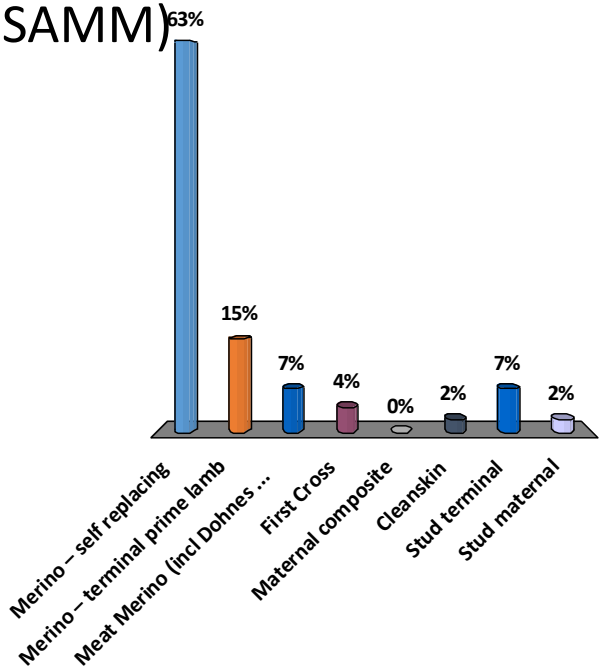

Focus on what you can control

Topics covered

- Causes of lamb loss
- Benefits of better ewe nutrition
- Mob size effect & mis-mothering
- Ewe condition score profile
- Impact of changing lamb survival rates
- Twin management
- Key survival strategies

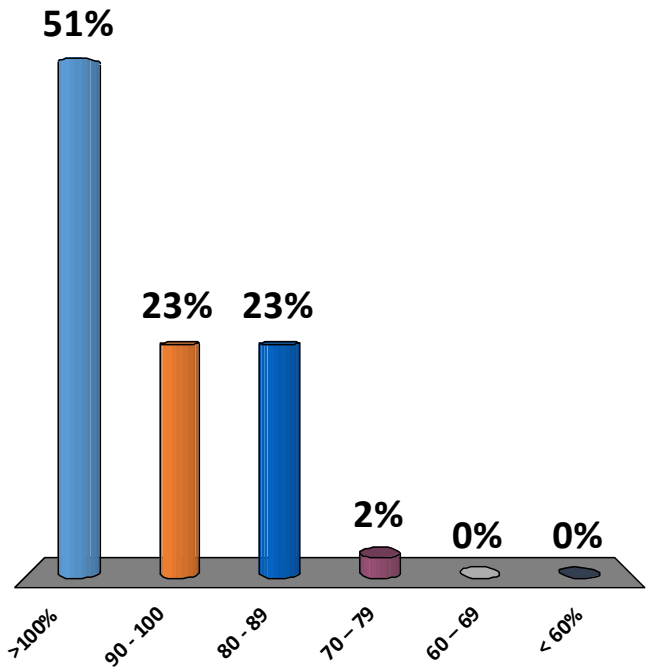
What **ewe type** do you predominantly run?

1. Merino – self replacing
2. Merino – terminal prime lamb
3. Meat Merino (incl Dohnes & SAMM)
4. First Cross
5. Maternal composite
6. Cleanskin
7. Stud terminal
8. Stud maternal



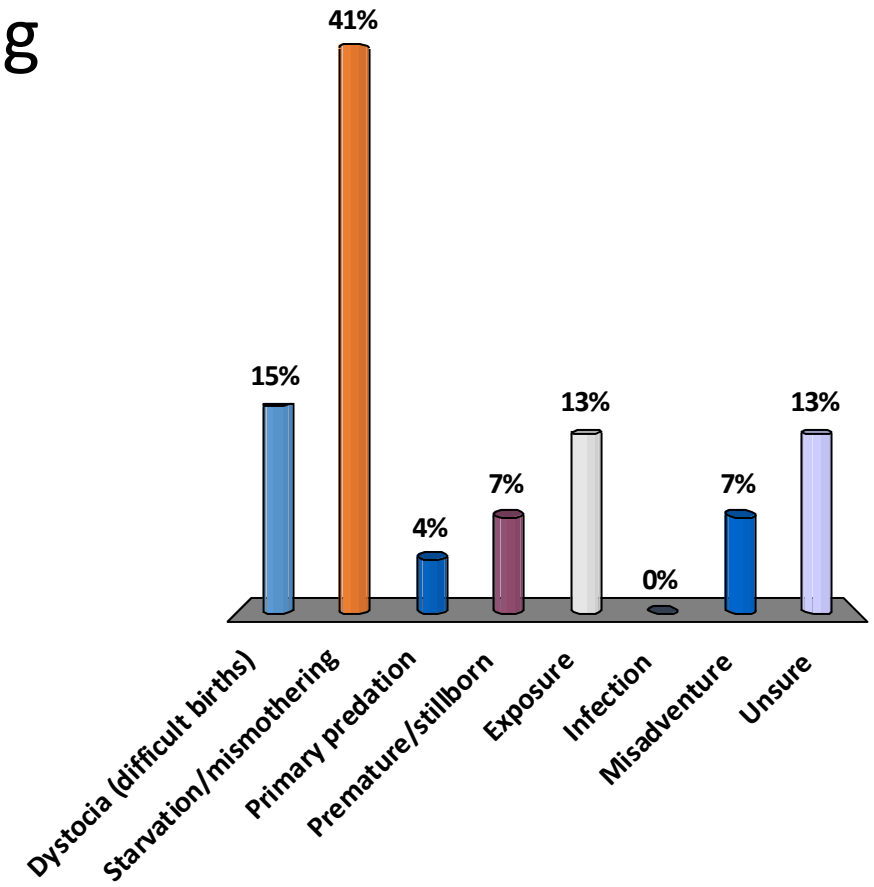
What is your average marking % (from ewes mated)?

1. >100%
2. 90 - 100
3. 80 - 89
4. 70 – 79
5. 60 – 69
6. < 60%

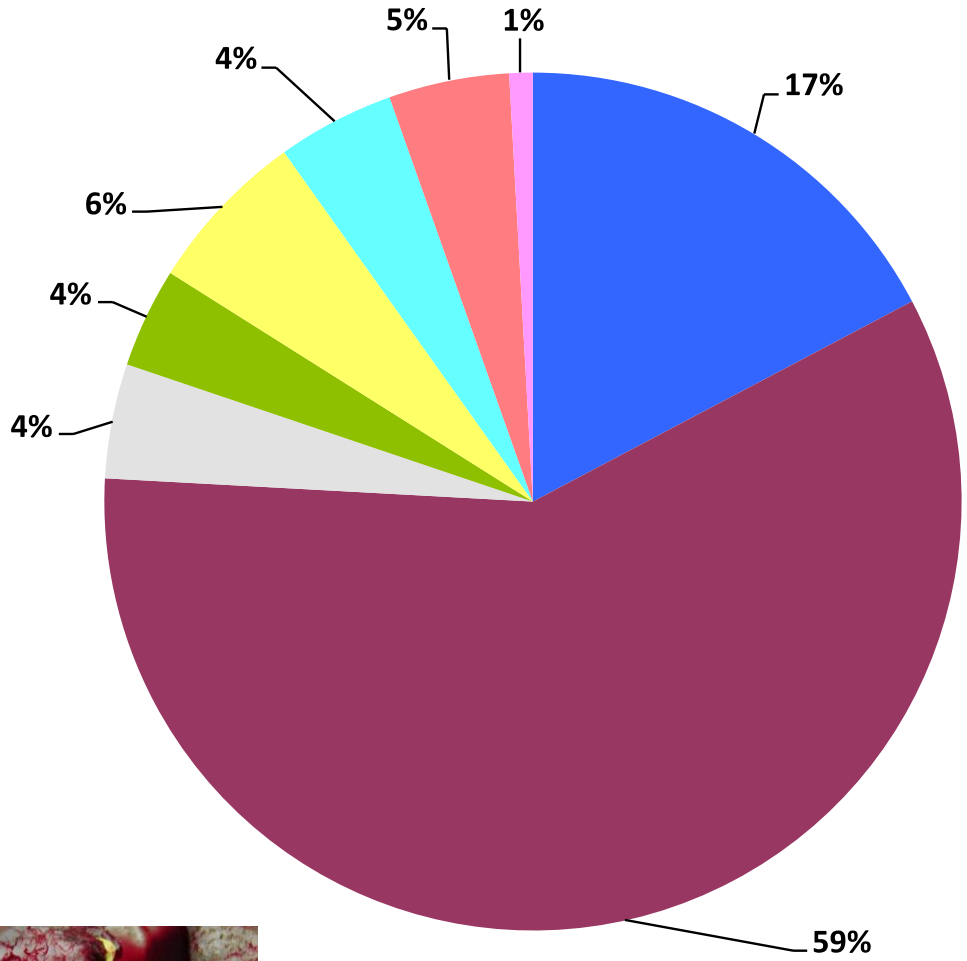


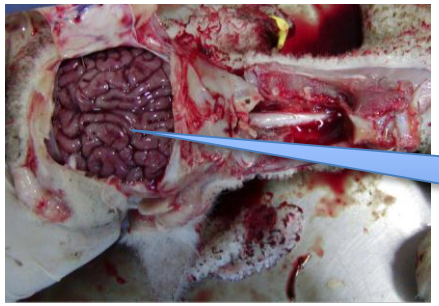
What do you think is your main cause of lamb loss?

1. Dystocia (difficult births)
2. Starvation/mismothering
3. Primary predation
4. Premature/stillborn
5. Exposure
6. Infection
7. Misadventure
8. Unsure



Sentinel Flock Project Perinatal Necropsy Results 2010 Lambing





Birth injury

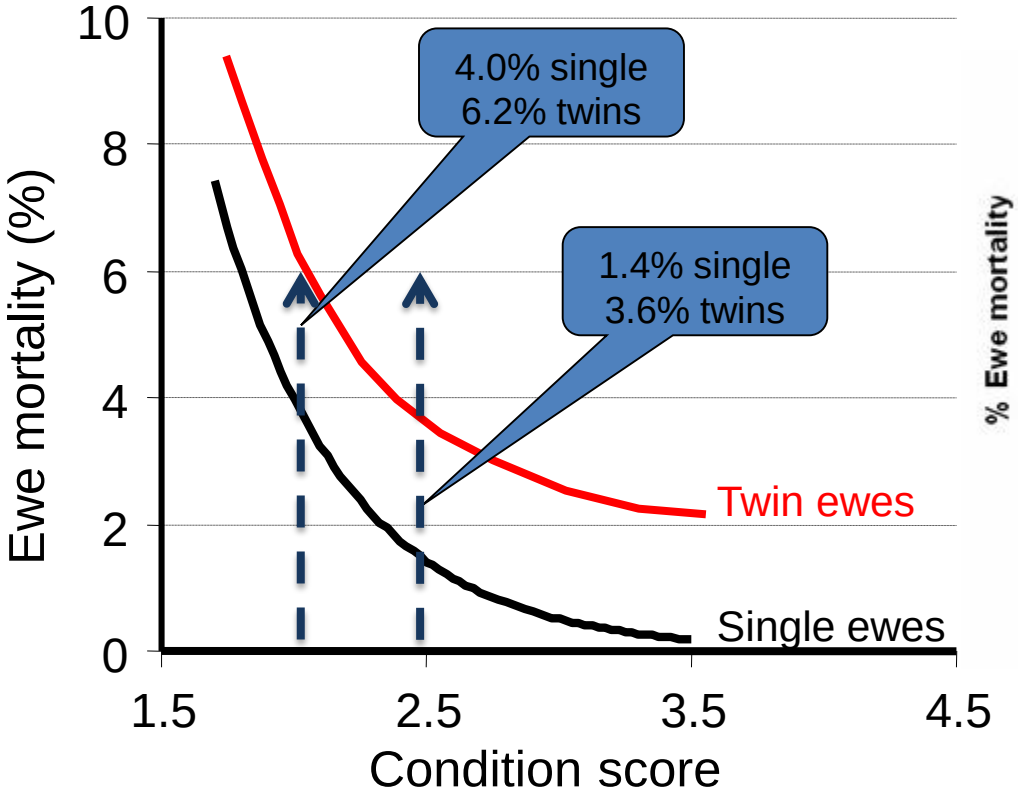
Improve lamb survival

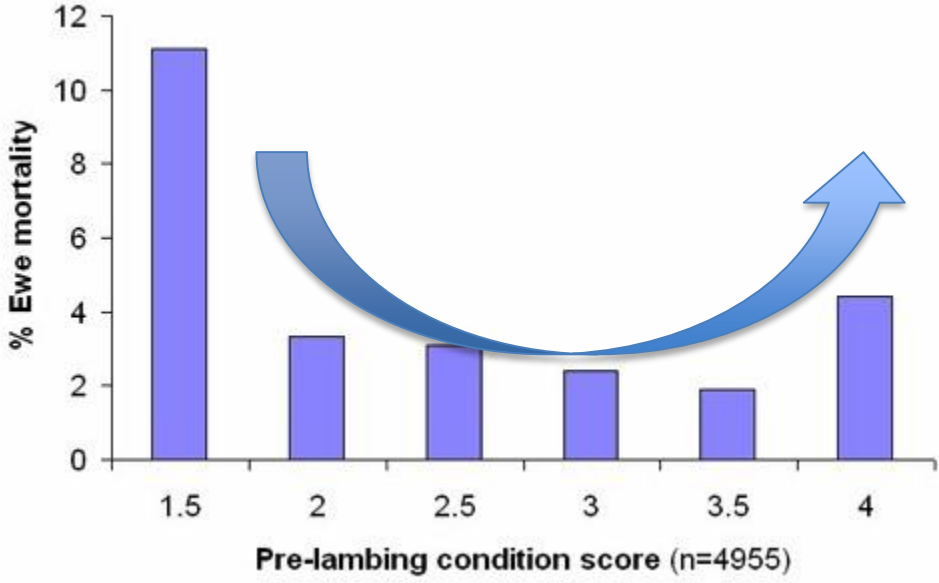
Feeding to improve lamb survival

Benefits of better ewe nutrition

- Improve ewe production
  - Wool production & quality
  - Fecundity & parity
- Reduce ewe mortality
  - ↓ lambing difficulties (dystocia)
  - ↓ risk of pregnancy toxaemia
- Optimise progeny production
  - ↑ lamb birth weights & survival
  - ↑ wool production & wool quality
- Save feed
  - Only feed those ewes that require it
  - Provide flexibility if season collapses

Dead ewes don’t have lambs!

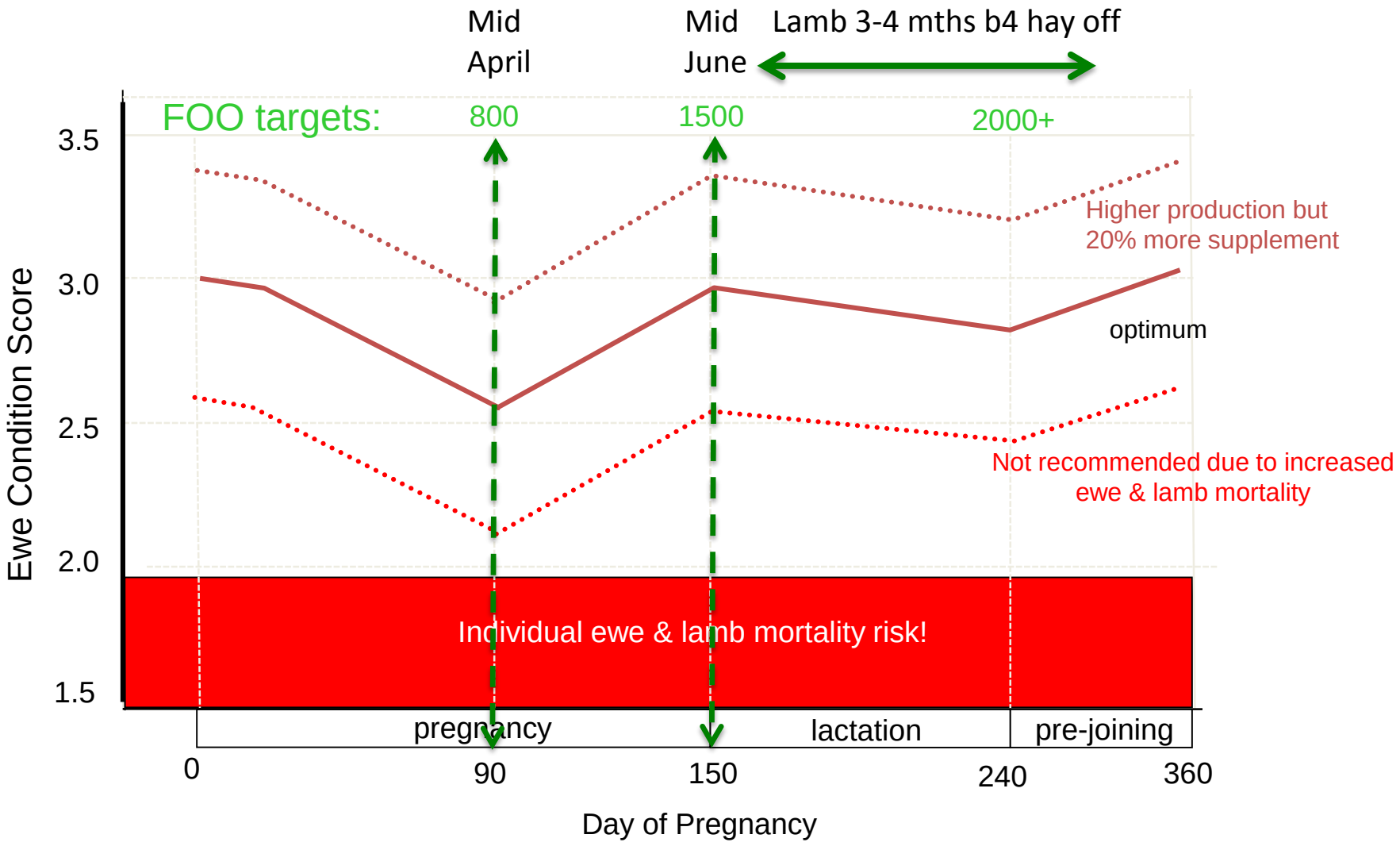




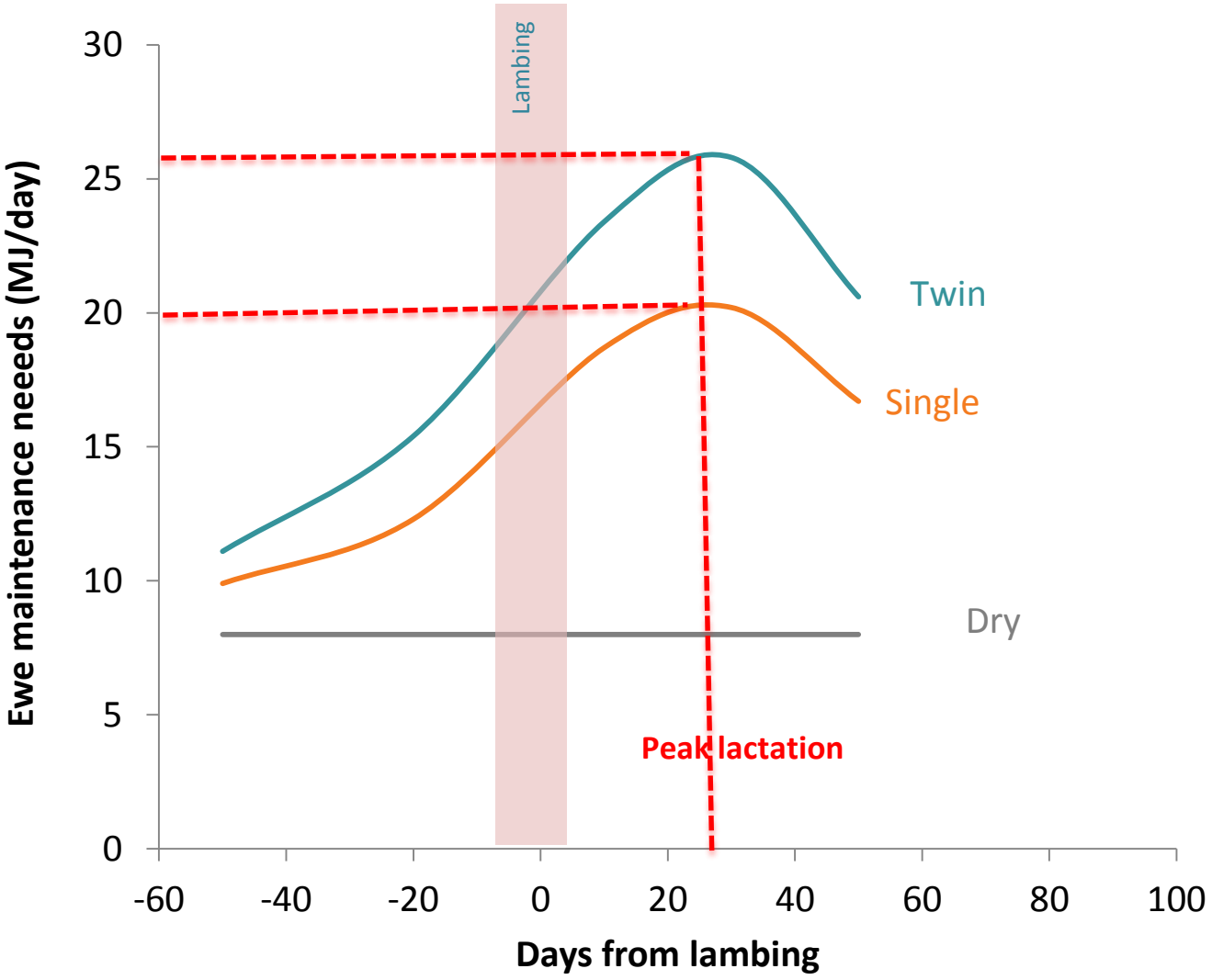
Match ewe condition to FOO

Merino Ewe Condition Score Profile

for June lambing with break of season by day 90



Should these sheep be in the same mob?



Ewes lambing/day and lamb survival

Expect 66% lambs born in first cycle (17d)

500 twin ewes → 19 lambing/day

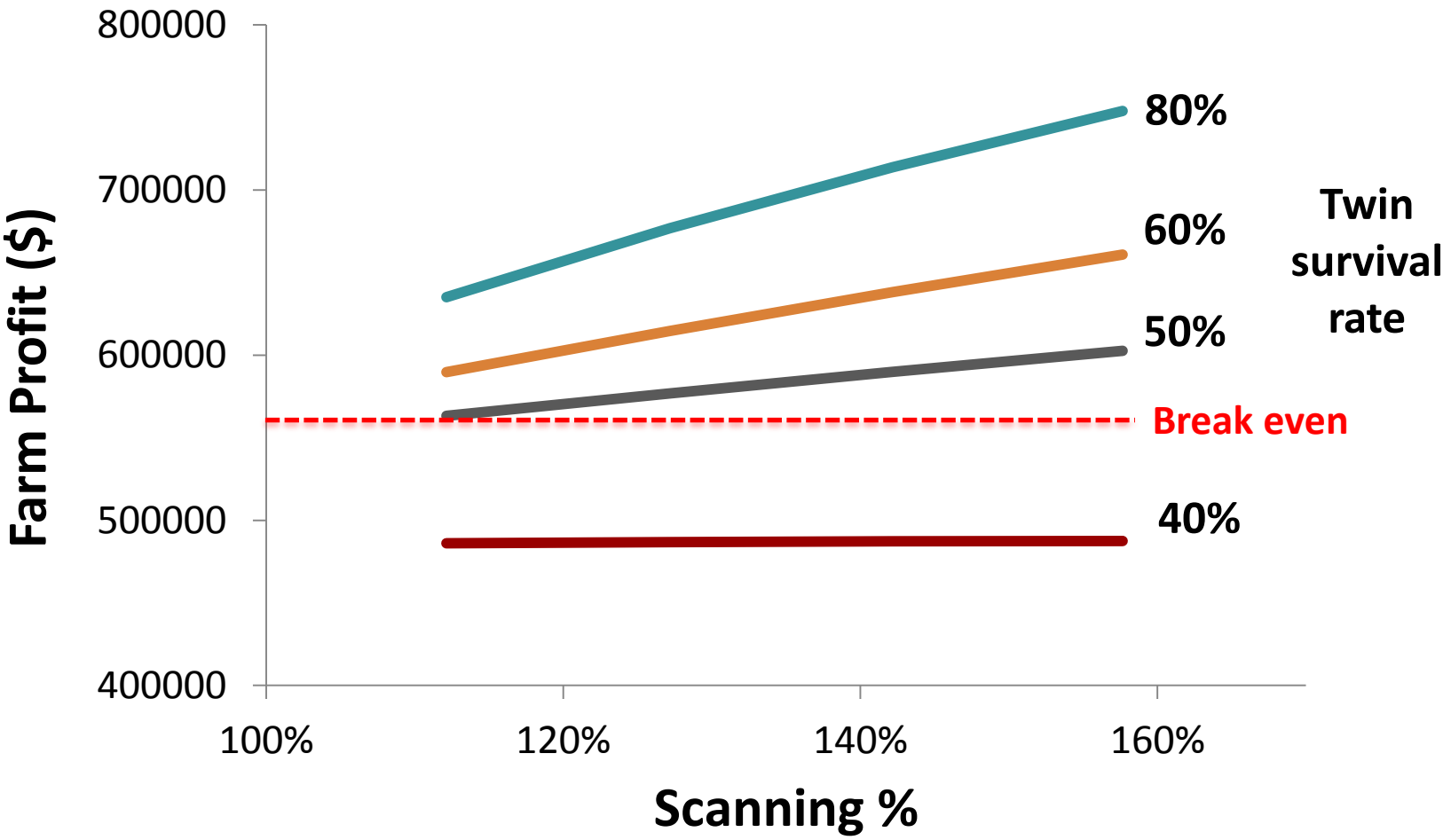
= 38 lambs/day

200 twin ewes → 8 lambing/day

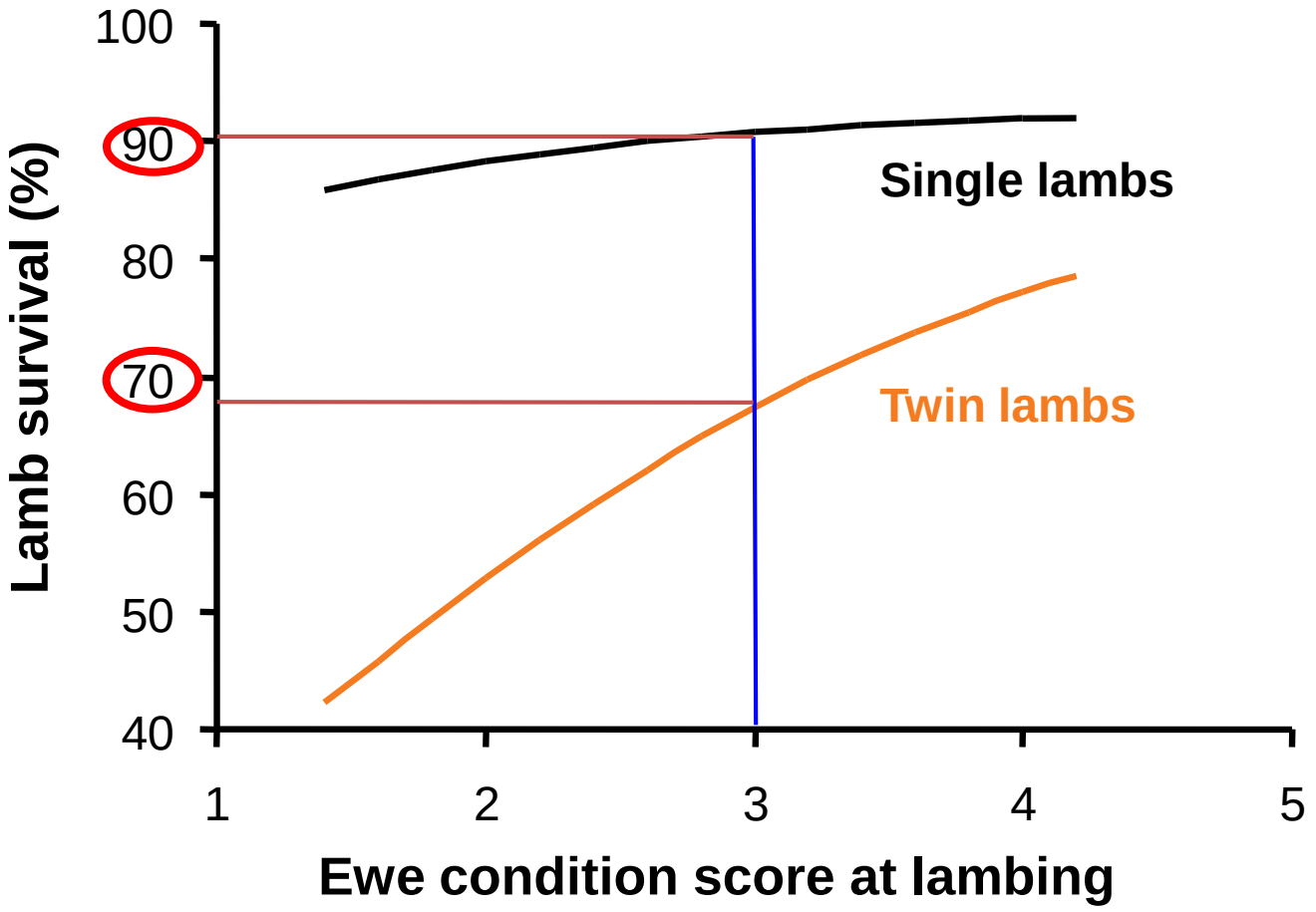
= 16 lambs/day

	Lambs/day (range)		Survival %
Singles	low	0-16	99.1
	med	17-32	94.3
	high	33-48	95.7
Twins	low	0-16	83.3
	med	17-32	80.0
	high	33-48	63.0

Scanning x Twin survival



Higher condition at lambing improves twin survival



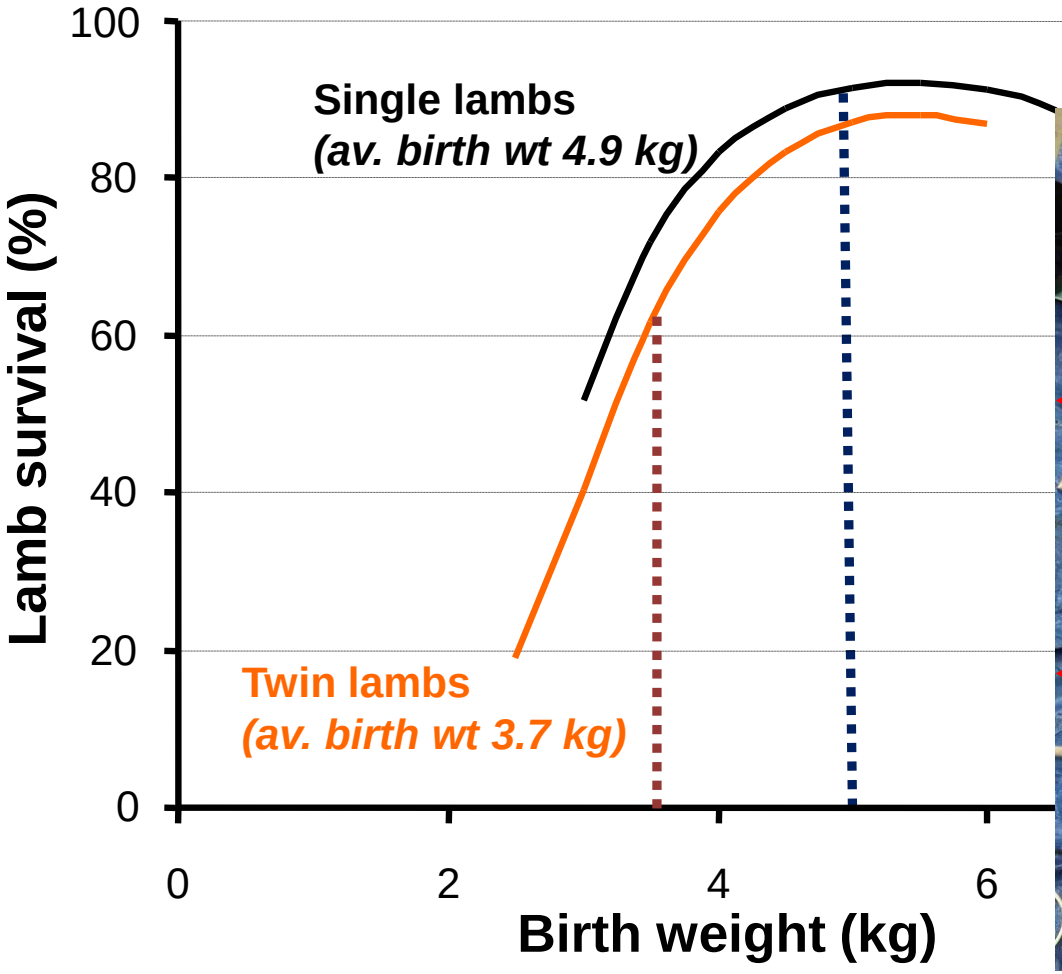
Impact of lamb survival rates on lambs marked from ewes scanned in lamb 125%

Survival rate	Ewe joined	Scanned dry	Scanned single	Marked single	Scanned twin	Marked twin	Total marked lambs	Overall lamb survival
Target rate 90% single 70% twin	100	9	57 ewes (57)	52 lambs	34 ewes (68)	48 lambs	100	80%
Common rate 80% single 50% twin	100	9	57 ewes (57)	46 lambs	34 ewes (68)	34 lambs	80	64%

Impact of lamb survival rates on lambs marked from ewes scanned in lamb 160%

Survival rate	Ewe joined	Scanned dry	Scanned single	Marked single	Scanned twin	Marked twin	Total marked lambs	Overall lamb survival
Target rate 95% single 85%twin	100	3	34 ewes (34)	32 lambs	63 ewes (126)	108 lambs	140	88%
Common rate 85% single 65% twin	100	3	34 ewes (34)	29 lambs	63 ewes (126)	81 lambs	110	69%

Lamb birth weight drives survival



Managing twin lambing ewes

- Strategic feeding twins only

- Mob size: < **200**
- Predation control

FOXOFF®
ECONOBAIT

- Shelter
  - ↑ survival: Twins 8.5% & singles 3.5%
  - Plantation - benefit extends 10 x the height
  - Avoid high risk paddocks
    - Southern slopes
    - Bare wind-swept

After Lambing

- Short lambing period (35 days) is essential for effective management

- Weaning time
  - 12-14 weeks for Merinos ALWAYS
  - Crossbreds depends on allocation of feed resources
  - Early weaning to ensure high conception rates next yr

- Weaner management
  - Prepare weaning paddocks
  - Merino wean @ 25kg +
    1 kg/month to survive

Summary of Outcomes

- 10% ⇧weaning → 10% ⇧ av GM/Ha or

  extra $5-$6 / ewe

- Lamb birth weight has biggest influence on survival in first 48 hrs
- Most losses due to starvation, mismothering, hypothermia

Key lamb survival strategies

- Manage FOO & ewe nutrition → CS targets
- Provide shelter to ↓ wind speed & chill factor
- Focus on twins/triplets to ↑ lamb survival %
- Restrict mob size to minimise mis-mothering
- Prevent dystocia by ewe nutrition & select sires with moderate lamb birth wt ASBVs
- Good nutrition to optimize animal health.

How will you increase your marking % ?

Sign Posts

- Making More From Sheep
  - Module 10 Wean More Lambs
- High Performance Weaner Management
- Lifetime Ewe Management
- Websites
  - MLA, Lifetimewool, Evergraze, AWI, SheepCRC
- Workshops
  - RIST & Sheep CRC