

# THE WOOL PRESS

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Telephone +500 27355

Fax +500 27352

agrassistant@doa.gov.fk

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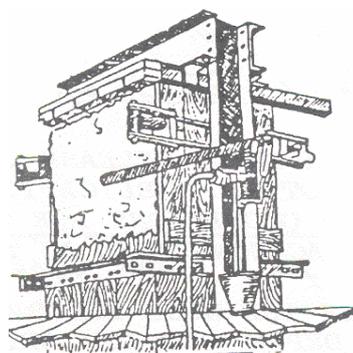
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*Edited By Tracy Evans*

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# EDITORIAL

Well – this is a bumper edition of the Wool Press; a whole 24 pages for you to enjoy. And in these very strange times and with winter heading our way you'll be glad to have something to keep you entertained over the next month. Actually, I say winter is on its way (and it is) but it hasn't felt like that recently has it? March was really very nice, and the good weather has continued into the beginning of April.

You can see from the index on the front page what this edition contains so I won't comment on every article. I'll just pick a few things that captured my attention. I'd better mention my veterinary colleagues otherwise I might get lynched – so please peruse their article on producing milk safely on farms. You probably won't learn anything new, but it does no harm to refresh your memory of what constitutes "best practice". Quite a bit has been happening down at Saladero but the main event has been the Ram Sale on March 21<sup>st</sup>. It was touch and go whether or not it would take place but it went ahead as scheduled and appears to have been a success. Thanks to everyone involved. Tom has put together an article about how the current Covid19 pandemic is affecting both the wool and meat markets around the world and you won't be surprised to learn that it is not good news. However, I would say hang in there because there is a chance that markets may well bounce back once the crisis has been dealt with. There are a couple of articles connected with the eradication of calafate in the Islands. This year's programme has been very successful, and our thanks must go to the two young New Zealand lads who worked so diligently and effectively. We'd be happy to see both of them again next year. Sally Poncet has some suggestions to help keep you busy over the long winter months – so what about getting out and planting a bit of tussac. All the ladies from the DoA attended the "day out" at Fitzroy Farm to meet up with female representatives of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentary delegation; the weather may have been miserable, but the get together was a complete success. Finally have a look at the latest information from the Falkland Islands wether trial – some interesting differences are already beginning to be revealed; the final analysis will appear next year.

In the meantime, stay fit and healthy and virus free.

Steve Pointing,  
Senior Veterinary Officer

PS Don't forget to complete Matt's survey on page 15.

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## DOG DOSING DATES FOR 2020/2021

Date	Drug
<del>Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020</del>	<del>Drontal</del>
<del>Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020</del>	<del>Droncit</del>
<del>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020</del>	<del>Droncit</del>
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	Droncit
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	Droncit
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Drontal
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2020	Droncit
Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2020	Droncit
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Droncit
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020	Droncit
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Drontal

*Regular weighing - it is important to keep a check on dog's weights to ensure correct dosage is being given.*

All dog owners are responsible for worming their own pets. Please remember to contact the Veterinary Office and confirm this has been done. After normal working hours, please leave a message or email.

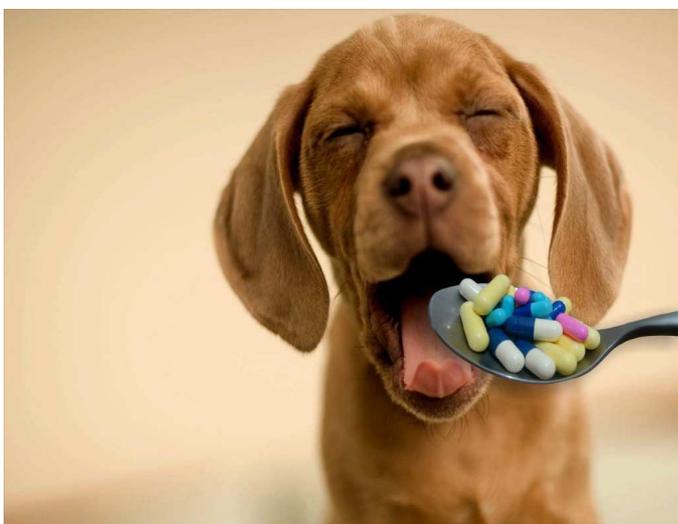
### The Falkland Islands Government

Department of Agriculture,

Veterinary Service,

Tel: (500) 27366 Facsimile: (500) 27352

E-mail: [sbowles@doa.gov.fk](mailto:sbowles@doa.gov.fk)



**SEEN ANYTHING  
STRANGE LATELY??**

**IF SO CONTACT THE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE ON  
27355**

**OR VETERINARY  
SERVICES ON 27366**

## **Milking Cows for Home Consumption and Supply During a Time of a Health Crisis.**

*By Zoe Fowler & Ross Milner*

We may find over the coming weeks and months that there is more demand for milk supplied from farms as supply chains of UHT may be variable.

You won't be surprised to know that actually there is a dusty old Dairy Produce Ordinance which came in to force in June 1938 – so it is not one of our more modern pieces of public health legislation.

Within this old legislation, which is still in force as there has been no real reason to repeal it, a 'dairy' is defined as 'any farm, house, cowshed, milkstore, milkshop or other place from which milk is supplied or in which milk is kept for the purpose of sale'. It goes on to say that every 'dairy' shall be registered yearly with the Department of Agriculture. Suffice to say this legislation was much more relevant in 1938 and with the closure of Beckside Dairy some time ago it is a relatively ignored piece of legislation. Realistically when and if it is reviewed the same pragmatic approach to 'small amounts produced on farm going direct to the final consumer' would be employed as for meat and only real commercial ventures would have to be designated like the abattoir.

However, the fact remains that this legislation is in force and if you are selling milk you do have a responsibility to ensure it is being produced in a safe and hygienic manner. Ross has summarised below the requirements of the Dairy Produce Ordinance and some of the justifications behind it – at this time it is important that vulnerable people do scald or pasteurize raw milk.

### **A Friendly Reminder to Farmers With Guidelines to Safe and Healthy Milk Production During The Covid-19 Virus Outbreak.**

The good news is that the Falkland Islands is one of the very few countries in the world free of bovine tuberculosis, but another important risk for farmers to be aware of, and why raw milk restrictions apply in many countries, is producing milk in an unhygienic manner runs

the risk of E Coli infection. The last thing any farmer or person consuming milk would want right now is to visit the KEMH or get sick with an E Coli infection. With this in mind I have come up with some guidelines for minimizing risk. I know that most farmers grew up in the dairy industry and this might all be a bit like teaching grandma to suck eggs but it is still a useful check list to see if anything needs tidying up, especially if at some stage demand outstrips supply of milk in Stanley and there is increased demand from traditional sources in camp.

**First of all, I would suggest that any one on the KEMH high risk list, as an extra safety precaution, either avoid drinking raw milk or pasteurize it first.**

A useful link on how to pasteurize milk on the farm or at home can be found here: <https://www.wikihow.com/Pasteurize-Milk>

For farmers producing milk, it is useful to know that milk in healthy udders has very little bacteria but milk can become contaminated with bacteria if proper hygienic handling is not undertaken.

Sources of contamination include:

- Milking utensils
- The milker
- The air
- The skin of the animal
- Inflamed udders

#### **1. Milk in as clean an environment as possible**

It is important to milk in as clean and as dust free environment as possible. Outdoors on a clean pasture would be better than a dusty shed if the cow is quiet enough!

If you are milking on a concrete floor ensure it is cleaned and disinfected after each milking.

Keep other livestock, poultry, and animals away from where cows are milked or milk is stored and take precautions against rodent and fly infestation. Any manure should be stored at least 30 feet away from where the

cows are milked (but I would suggest the further away the better, especially in the summer with flies) The pathway to the milking parlor should be clean and well drained. It is a good idea after milking for cows to be moved onto a clean pasture straight away rather than stand in a muddy yard. If cows can be kept moving and standing for half an hour after milking that reduces the risk considerably of mastitis from lying down when the milk teat canals are still relatively dilated

## **2. Ensure milking utensils are spotlessly clean**

Clean and disinfect all machinery and utensils immediately after use.

These should be stored in a clean environment, where it cannot be contaminated by dust.

The containers milk are stored or sold in should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to use.

Milk should be chilled as quickly as possible and stored in a clean fridge at between 2 and 4 degrees centigrade. At a low temperature of 3.3 degrees or below, raw milk should last between 7 and 10 days. It can also be frozen to last longer.

It would be a good idea to make a note the of date milk was produced on the container it is stored in.

## **3. Ensure the person milking cows is clean and carries out milking in a hygienic manner**

The person carrying out milking should be wearing clean waterproof overalls that can be washed and disinfected and kept clean. Access to a clean water supply is important while milking cows as well to maintain cleanliness and hygiene. Hands and milking equipment should be cleaned and disinfected prior to milking and between each cow milked to ensure no cross contamination and transmission of infection occurs between cows.

If a person is ill, especially if they have any flu like symptoms, they should not be milking cows or supplying milk to anyone else. It is an offence to do so under the Dairy produce ordinance

## **4. Maintain good health of your cow's udder.**

## **This involves prevention of mastitis, detection and rapid treatment of mastitis**

Prevention of mastitis can be achieved by milking in as clean a manner as possible, disinfecting milking equipment and hands between each cow milked, cleaning dirty and muddy udders prior to milking, post milk dipping and preventing cows lying down for 30 minutes after milking. Where cows are kept in a barn over winter for milking, lying down on a good clean bed significantly reduces the incidence of mastitis. Any cows that have mastitis or a history of mastitis should be milked last to prevent cross contamination.

Before milking, a small amount of milk should be examined from each quarter to check for signs of mastitis such as clots, blood, discoloration and smell. The California mastitis test using a plastic paddle with 4 cups to take a small sample of milk is a cheap and useful test for anyone milking on a regular basis and can give early warning of high cell counts.

The udder should be palpated for any unusual lumps, heat or swelling. Chapped and dry and sore teats may need Vaseline and/or an antiseptic ointment.

If mastitis develops a sample can be sent to the vets' office for further analysis prior to any treatment given. Tests can be carried out to identify the organism causing the mastitis which can give an idea of the likely cause of infection as well as the best treatment option for the organism responsible for causing infection. Even if only one house cow is used for milking, a small supply of mastitis tubes should be kept so that in an emergency any ailment can be treated promptly. Before more serious complications develop it is important to keep stripping out and emptying the affected quarter.

Mastitis is a very painful condition and pain relief such as injectable Metacam will help reduce pain and inflammation and cows tend to recover more quickly. Dry cow therapy can also be considered when drying a cow off to reduce the incidence of mastitis.

If anyone has any questions or suggestions please email me, Ross Milner at [rmilner@doa.gov.fk](mailto:rmilner@doa.gov.fk)

# Saladero News February – March

By Andrew Bendall & Mandy Ford. Photos by Mandy Ford & Mike Davis

Following Farm Manager Mandy's last report, she has provided another quick update.

Ewes have been shorn and have gained considerable weight and conditions and are looking good for mating which is now only 4 weeks away.

Shearling ewes have also been doing very well and will be mated this year in favour of culling some very old ewes and some whom consistently fail to rear a lamb.

Wethers in the wether trial have been shorn and a full trial report can be seen in this Wool Press publication.

I was invited to attend the BIMR Commonwealth Women's Parliamentary conference at Fitzroy. Attending with Michelle Amor we both went along on what turned out to be a wet and miserable day, but it didn't stop Gilberto Castro and Suzi Clarke putting on a brilliant day. They put on a shearing display where Michelle shored 2 sheep and I was her rousie and table hand. The ladies who attended had plenty of questions about the whole process and were very interested. Michelle then showed sheep work with a dog and we all stood in the rain and watched. Then we headed back to the asado hut for refreshments and plenty of lovely food. It was a very interesting day and hopefully good for the farming community that these important folk learned how important our work is.



## **By Sheep Advisor Andrew Bendall**

Three weeks after my arrival and the Falkland Islands was facing restrictions caused by something that was created far away and completely out of its control. Covid -19 potentially here, the Falkland Islands Government and community are taking precautions.

The Department of Agriculture's (DoA) National Stud Flock (NSF) Ram Sale 2020 at Saladero was due and after lengthy considerations it was deemed safe to continue and hold the sale along with rams presented by Hew Grierson of Blue Beach Farm.

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March saw the annual Ram Sale at Saladero take place, it was opened by Dr Andrea Clausen (Director of Natural Resources) under what could be only described as unprecedented conditions with the Covid 19 alerts and restrictions becoming increasingly stringent. We had active buyers across both Saladero and Blue Beach rams.

In line with social distancing guidelines, many protocols were put in place to create as safe as environment as possible. Firstly, only making it open to farmers who intended buying, to bring the expected crowd down to a gathering of less than forty people. Self-distancing was advised and openly discussed on the day. Hand sanitisers were available for everybody to use and in general best practice was adhered to by all.

The Rams were sold by "The Helmsman Auction" a silent auction where bids are simultaneously placed on the rams which you desire and keeps going until there are "no bids" for a two minutes session.

The rams were viewed by the buyers before the start of the auction and as well as all farmers over the Falkland Islands receiving a copy of the rams presented for sale, which tables their ID and there ASBV's (Australian Sheep Breeding Values) which in short is an estimated prediction of how good their progeny will be, going off both their



actual performance and that of all their progeny which are being recorded and bred from the parents and grandparents, both in the Falklands and overseas, predominantly Australia and New Zealand.

The NSF had a good result with a complete clearance of older rams which sold well, one of them realising the top price of the day, purchased by "Hope Cottage"



Two-thirds of the shearling rams sold on the day, most of which sold above the reserve price. Flock shearling rams predictably with fewer buyers did not get the same level of competition on them. These represented great buying for those farms that purchased them.

Blue Beach had a great clearance of all but one ram out of rams Hew Grierson put up.

Buyers who managed to get to the sale came from outer Islands and both East & West, so a big thank you to the effort you all made, it was greatly appreciated by all at the DoA. To the buyers who wanted to but couldn't there was the opportunity to purchase any unsold rams through a tender process. This was done with some urgency to get rams over to the West before further restrictions on the ferry timetable commenced. All rams put up for tender were sold throughout the Islands realising good prices.

To all the other people who would normally come along to the Saladero sale day, our apologies we had to take the precautionary response we did. Our overriding aim was to let the sale take place before further restrictions would have been put in place while still having public and staff safety as of paramount importance. We can only hope that before too long Island activities are back to normal.

The small numbers of clients were served some amazing hot food from Heather Smith and her team, some very tasty burgers were had and when the weather turned a little cooler, hot chips and squid appeared; these were topped off with some very delicious teaberry deserts.



Exceptionally fresh veggies were available from Glynis Newman from Goose Green and to be honest one of my highlights of the day. The flavour and freshness was amazing.

Weather was in general pretty good with just a few cool showers coming through during the auction but it fined up again for the loading out of rams which was run under military style precision by Saladero manager Mandy Ford.

So under the circumstances a successful day was held. Many thanks to all those who worked hard behind the scenes and on the day, to make it all happen.

Wider disruptions due to covid-19 at Saladero.

With the 2020 mating just around the corner, this year's Artificial Insemination (AI) program has had to be cancelled due to travel restrictions put in place around the Covid-19 pandemic. Michylla (Mic) Seal an Australian vet and sheep specialist who has been doing the Falklands AI since 2004 is naturally disappointed that the 2020 program is not going ahead. However Mic has been very proactive and has been communicating with the DoA and her other Falkland Island clients as things have escalated to no travel at all.

What a whirlwind start to my time here on the Falklands. Covid-19 aside both Rhonda & I have been made to feel very welcome having met a lot of very friendly people both in the Stanley Township and out amongst the camps. We are both naturally impressed with what you all have here, a truly treasured resource with so much going on but also so much potential.

Thanks to everyone and you'll all be hearing a lot more from me and what's happening at Saladero.

# **A Status Report on Wool and Meat Markets in Light of Covid-19 and Potential Impacts on Falkland Islands Supply Chain**

*By Tom McIntosh (Senior Agriculture Adviser, Vikki Berntsen (WoolCo), Robert Hall (Falkland Wool Growers) and Keith Heslop (Director of the Falkland Islands Development Corporation)*

The response to Covid-19 has changed wool markets, meat markets and the movement of people in a short period of time.

The biggest financial impact has been on the international wool market on both price and the buyer's willingness to purchase. I get an email regularly from Sheep Central in Australia and on the 20<sup>th</sup> March the online news site Sheep Central wrote:

*“MERINO wool prices fell by 110-139 cents a kilogram in Australia this week as the market was hit harder by global coronavirus COVID-19 economic impacts.*

*AWEX senior market analyst Lionel Plunkett said from the opening of sales in Melbourne on Tuesday it was immediately apparent that buyers had significantly reduced their limits.*

*“By the end of the first day the individual Micron Price Guides (MPGs) had fallen by 29 to 58 cents and the AWEX Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) fell by 19 cents.*

*“The losses continued into the second day, as buyers continually reduced their buying limits,” he said.*

*“As the Australian dollar fell to its lowest point in 17 years, the fall in the EMI when viewed in USD terms was more significant; it dropped by US181 cents, a reduction of over 18 percent,” Mr Plunkett said.*

On the 27th March Sheep Central reported:

*“AUSTRALIAN Merino wool prices generally regained ground this week in the face of a less favourable exchange rate as competition between major exporters and Chinese buyers improved.*

*AWEX senior market analyst Lionel Plunkett said “after three weeks of consecutive losses the Australian wool market has steadied this week”.*

The first article explains the obvious that manufacturers in China had stopped some manufacturing and therefore buying, the second gives some hope for Australian producers and some mixed signals to the Falkland Islands. The falling of the Australian dollar means a fall in real prices for Falkland Island Farmers as we get less pence as our prices are linked to (follow) the AWEX price set in Australia.

These articles have not highlighted the plight of top makers and manufacturers in Europe and Uruguay. As in the Falkland Islands a stay at home policy is in place in Europe and Uruguay for non-essential workers or strict lockdowns have been put in place and manufacturing has either slowed or stopped. The South African and New Zealand wool auctions have stopped for now. Vikki Berntsen from WoolCo added her take on the increased demand from China in the last week of March is that the Chinese are managing risk of the Australian Market as it may be close to following New Zealand and South Africa and they are buying before this happens.

Robert Hall, Managing Director of Falkland Wool Growers summary of the situation at 27/03/20 was:

*“Until about 11th March, when the WHO raised Coronavirus to a Pandemic, our FWG wool sale volumes had been similar to recent seasons, albeit at this season's lower prices. Since then, the world's textile industry, like the rest of the world, has entered uncharted territory as a result of Covid-19.*

*The Australian government has issued essential services status to the wool industry*

*ensuring its ability to continue with the trade and movement of wool during the current crisis. However it is very clear that this situation could change in an instant. (Australian sales are largely to China which is a market the Falklands cannot access). The industry in New Zealand and South Africa has been shut down this week. Manufacturers across UK and Europe are closing and all mills in Italy and Spain have locked down. Fashion retailers have closed shops around the world.*

*Yesterday, I spoke to five processing mills that buy Falklands wool, one has already closed production, a second is closing on Monday initially for three weeks and the other three are sanguine and currently processing existing stocks whilst they can. None are currently buying wool; none are selling product.”*

*My advice (Robert Hall) to farmers is:*

- *Plan for the Worst*
- *Hope for the Best*
- *Conserve Cash*

Vikki Berntsen of WoolCo summary of the current situation is:

*“As a wool agent WoolCo has been communicating with the Falkland Islands Government that the wool industry was facing difficulties, and this has been clearly evident since December 2019. We had got to a point in early March of a balance between what buyers were happy to pay and what the wool producer was happy to accept. Some wool has been sold as a result, as well as the forward contracts. The global ‘working from home’ policies and city lock-down have a negative effect on the usual efficiency and response times of our buyers when releasing cash, which are impossible to determine at the moment. All this means that for the remainder of 2020 wool is likely to be hard to sell. Cash flow will be difficult for most farmers.”*

*My advice (Vikki Berntsen, WoolCo) to farmers is:*

- *Review bank balance, reserves, business plans.*
- *Contact your finance provider (Mortgage and overdraft often) to keep them informed and to discuss alternatives as there is currently little or no income at the moment.*

In relation to Falkland Islands Meat Company (FIMCo) Keith Heslop the Acting Managing Director of FIMCo and the managing Director of the Falkland Islands Development Corporation (FIDC) has given these insights into the present world red meat market and the current processing situation at FIMCo.

*“Following the departure of some of our seasonal team, production continues at FIMCo with the weekly activities split between slaughter and processing. Throughput is now around 1,500 - 2,000 animals per week including cattle, down from our full team production of around 3,500. Approximately 9,000 animals are expected before the season finishes.*

*On the sales front, we have been able to meet a spike in local demand but the drop in the export market is evident as schools, restaurants, hotels etc close across Europe. As we sell predominantly to distributors and end users, this has had an immediate impact on them as events are cancelled and orders postponed. Finding buyers for our April sales onwards will likely be very challenging although we do have the ability to hold stock in storage in the UK until the markets improve. This option comes with incremental costs, deferred revenues and timing uncertainty.*

*For the time being we continue with the production plan, despite having some of the team in self-isolation or working from home. We are watching European*

*Continued on Page 10*

*markets very closely and in daily contact with our UK network in order to try and mitigate risk. However, there will undoubtedly be a cashflow impact for FIMCo for the remainder of the year and a heightened threat of customer payment default which we need to take steps now to protect against.”*

In terms of specific support from the Falkland Islands Government and the Department of Agriculture (DoA), many farm businesses have filled out a survey on the impact of Covid-19 sent out by the Chamber of Commerce, and the Rural Business Association (RBA). There was a significant number of responses which are being collated. In the light of this survey and other information the Government is looking at different options to support business through this difficult financial time.

If you would like to speak to a member of staff from the DoA to assist at this unusual time we are all working from home unless they have essential tasks in the Biosecurity or Veterinarian section at the DoA. All of the Agricultural staff details are in the table below.

If you wish to discuss financial options please ring FIDC on 27211.

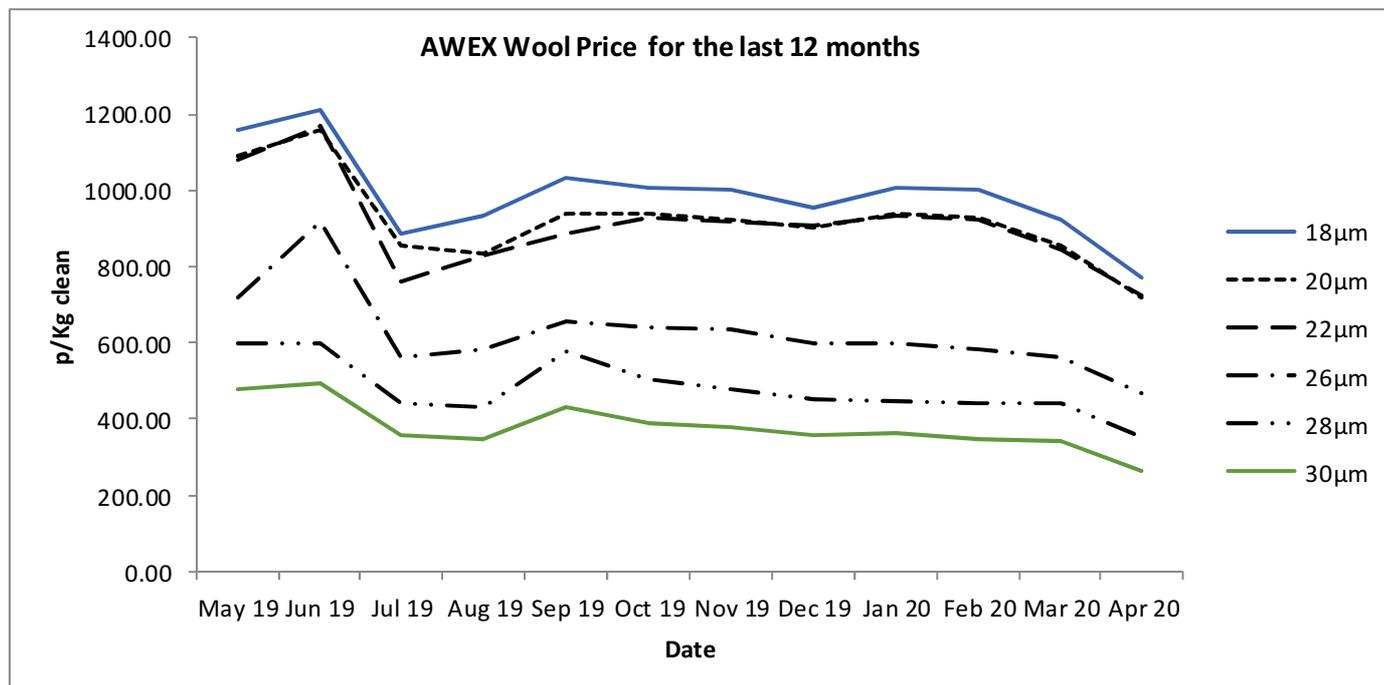
The Veterinary service can be reached at all times on 27366 or 55366 for queries and emergencies.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
Tom McIntosh	Senior Agricultural Adviser	53744	tmcintosh@doa.gov.fk
Katrina Stephenson	Office Manager PA	54330	kstephenson@doa.gov.fk
Andrew Bendall	Agricultural Advisor - Sheep Management	52609	abendall@doa.gov.fk
Matthew McNee	Agricultural Adviser - Agronomy	53847	mmcnee@doa.gov.fk
Lucy Ellis	Assistant Agricultural Adviser	22966 (Home)	lellis@doa.gov.fk
Mandy Ford	Saladero Farm Manager	52468	Saladero@doa.gov.fk
Gordon Lennie	Laboratory	53667	glennie@doa.gov.fk
Tracy Evans	Agricultural Assistant	54025	agrassistant@doa.gov.fk
Mike Davis	Biosecurity/Agricultural Assistant	55535	Biosecurity2@doa.gov.fk

# Market Price Trends for Wool (Using AWEX Data)

By Tom McIntosh

The AWEX Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) for the last twelve months had a drop of 38% for 20µm and 22 µm, 49% for 26 µm, 42% for 28µm and a drop of 46% for 30 µm.



Over the last eighteen-years wool (p/Kg clean) was low until 2011 and peaked in January 2019 for most wool types.



The percentage of bales passed in or receiving no bids in Australia on Tuesday 31st March were 31.8% to 50.9%. Other wool markets such as New Zealand and South Africa are currently closed.

# Conclusion of the 2019/2020 Calafate Season

By Tracy Evans (Agricultural Assistant) & Matt McNee (Agronomy Adviser)

## SEASON WRAP-UP

The Calafate Control Program this season (2019/2020) was undertaken by Indigena a New Zealand based company. Michael Lavery and Ben Wotherspoon arrived in the Falkland Islands on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019. They had a couple of days in Stanley having meetings at the Department of Agriculture (DoA).

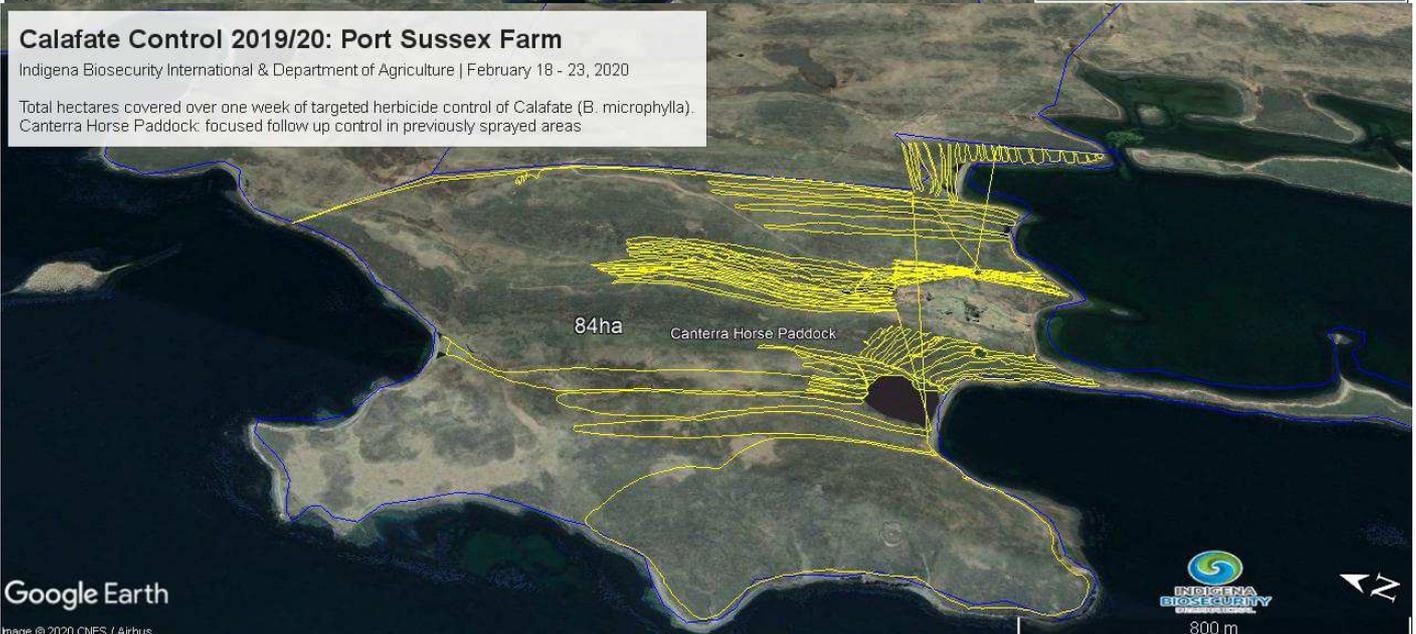
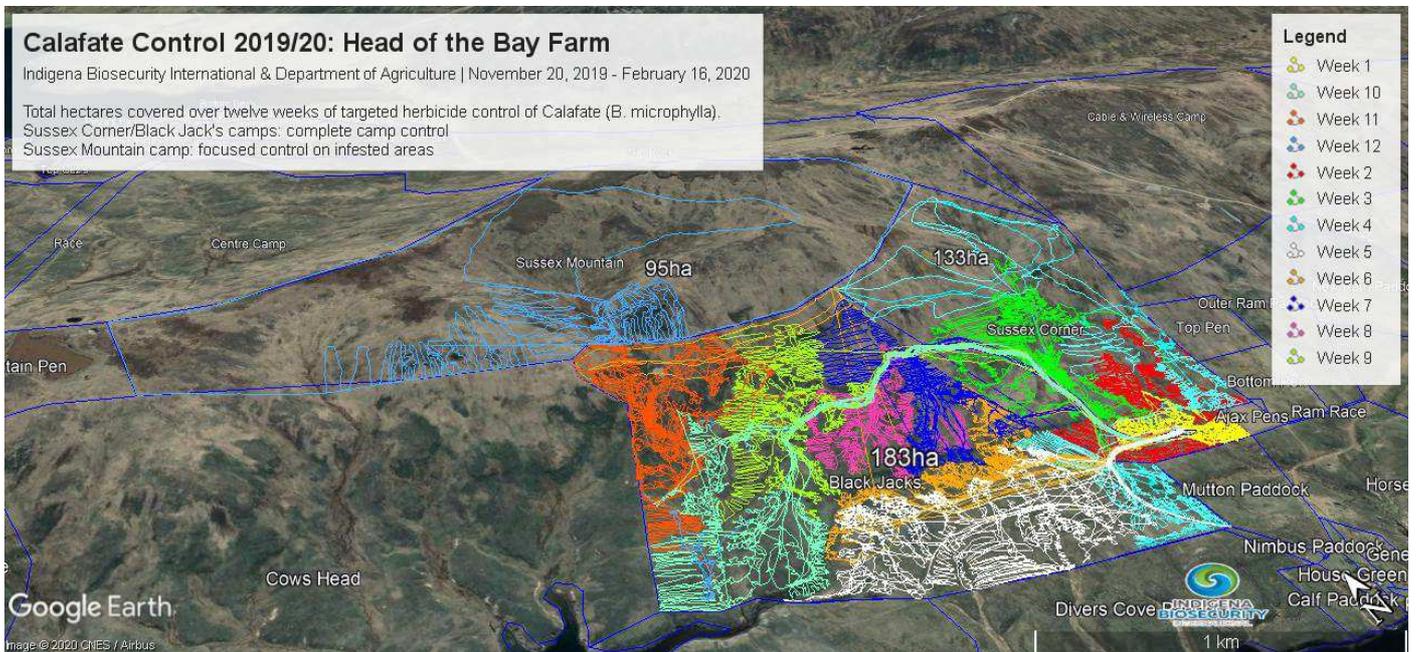
Michael and Ben moved out to San Carlos on the 19<sup>th</sup> November. Thank you to Matthew McMullen for the use of White Grass Cottage.

This season, the focus was on Head of the Bay farm owned by Ted and Sheila Jones.

Within the first 3 weeks Sussex Corner was sprayed. A total of 133ha took 18 working days.

Next to be tackled was Black Jack's camp (183ha). This took a total of 47 days, spread over a period of 8 weeks which also included the Christmas break and 9 other days off.

The camps Sussex Corner and Black Jacks were well covered (see Head of the Bay map) but in future years will need to be checked and any missed plants sprayed.



Over a 5 day period Sussex Mountain camp was targeted but on infested areas only.

In preparation for next year's campaign, a couple of days were spent surveying Cantera Horse Paddock and Terra Motas, both areas on Port Sussex farm owned by Richard and Toni Stevens.

Six days were also spent spraying in Cantera Horse Paddock, an area of 84ha, (see Port Sussex farm map) with a focus on areas sprayed in previous seasons.

Michael and Ben were assisted by local resident Terence McPhee who knows the area very well and provided great assistance with camp skills. Terence and Ted both commented that they learnt a lot from Michael and Ben about safe and effective herbicide use in the difficult terrain that calafate frequently grows. Unfortunately, Terence won't be available next season, but we are all hoping that Michael and Ben will return. Also, a special mention and thanks to Sheila McPhee (Terence's wife), who provided a bit of motherly care to two young lads a long way from home.



The DoA is currently working on a paper with policy options for Executive Council to consider a continuation of the program in 2020/21. This proposal will include works on Terra Motus (261.55ha) which and would be a major control on Port Sussex farm. There are also some smaller coastal areas identified near the Port Sussex settlement that are adjacent to Black Jack's point, known as Point Paddock (40.10ha), Divers Cove (38.2ha) and Mutton paddock.

## FAREWELL BBQ - STANLEY

The Department of Agriculture put on a farewell BBQ for Michael and Ben who expressed their thanks to all those involved and said what an enjoyable season they had. MLA's Teslyn Barkman and Stacy Bragger were in attendance as well as Dr Andrea Clausen, the Director of Natural Resources.

Senior Agricultural Adviser, Tom McIntosh welcomed everyone to the event before the DoA's Agronomist, Matthew McNee, described the successful season that was had. He noted that the Indigena team had been a very positive social entity in the camp community. Matt expressed his thanks to all those involved in the work, not forgetting former advisory DoA staff Adam Dawes and James Bryan. Matt made particular mention of their previous work finding an effective herbicide mix to kill calafate, the procurement of a very good hose and gun trailer system and a capable weed eradication company. He also thanked Tom for his early efforts in contract negotiations with Indigena shortly after arriving in the Falkland Islands in August last year. Matt said that with all of these things in place, there is now a very good calafate eradication program on the islands. It is important that the community at large continues to put their support behind it, stressing that this program was for the benefit of the whole of the Falkland Islands.



Richard & Toni Stevens from Port Sussex, brought a fleece along to the BBQ to show first-hand the effect that dead Calafate is having on the wool. A dead Calafate bush can increase the vegetable matter in the wool; although this is low by world standards it is high for the Falkland Islands. It is also very uncomfortable for the animals, shearers and wool handlers.

*Continued on Page 14*

## CALAFATE SITE TOUR – PORT SUSSEX AND HEAD OF THE BAY 16<sup>th</sup> March

Funding for another season of calafate control was a subject of discussion at the calafate field tour hosted by Richard and Toni Stevens on the 16<sup>th</sup> March at Port Sussex farm. At this event MLA's Teslyn Barkman, Stacy Bragger and Leona Roberts attended. It was great to have Greg Green (Wool Innovation), Andrew Stanworth (Falklands Conservation), Denise Blake (Policy unit) and Sally Poncet all there to join in the discussions and to see first-hand the significant progress that was made this season at Head of the Bay farm.

The DoA's Agronomist Matt McNee opened the day and gave a sobering reminder that Calafate is still a number of years from being completely eradicated. He stressed the need for a better understanding of this weed, which has evolved into a Falkland Islands 'type', being much more invasive than the same species seen elsewhere in the world.

Matt said, "We know that at best, we've killed 80% of the weed population on the hard ridges above the valley. It's difficult to locate small calafate plants within the surrounding vegetation".

The message was that there is a need to go back to those areas and mop up, but we don't have all the information required to plan for that. We might need to wait until the small plants grow taller, however long that may take. The mop-up will be a slow and painstaking process. We can't expect to cover the same number of hectares every year.



Matt also commented "We also know that the conditions this season were very good for killing calafate and the chemical was very effective at killing large bushes in the valley floors and gulleys. This may not always be the case if we have some very dry summer conditions".

Following Matt, Denise Blake gave a short update on her PhD research which is looking at calafate. Ted Jones then spoke for about 20 minutes describing their experience at Head of the Bay. Ted's presentation was very well received by all in attendance.

Ted quite rightly pointed out just how much he and his wife Sheila had achieved since they took over the farm, particularly building up assets on a farm that had been "asset stripped" when they bought it.

All in attendance heard how they had transformed the farm into what it is now despite all the ups and downs with wool prices and other difficulties like a lack of skilled labour for the extensive fencing that has been undertaken. All the while they have had to farm with a weed that has invaded at a scale that no two people could possibly control alone.

Senior Agricultural advisor Tom McIntosh acknowledged the efforts of both landholders and expressed the Department's thanks for their on-going commitment to the calafate control program.

# Tell us what you would like to know more about

Please score:

**? The 3 systems:**  
(most important) **1** to **3** (least)

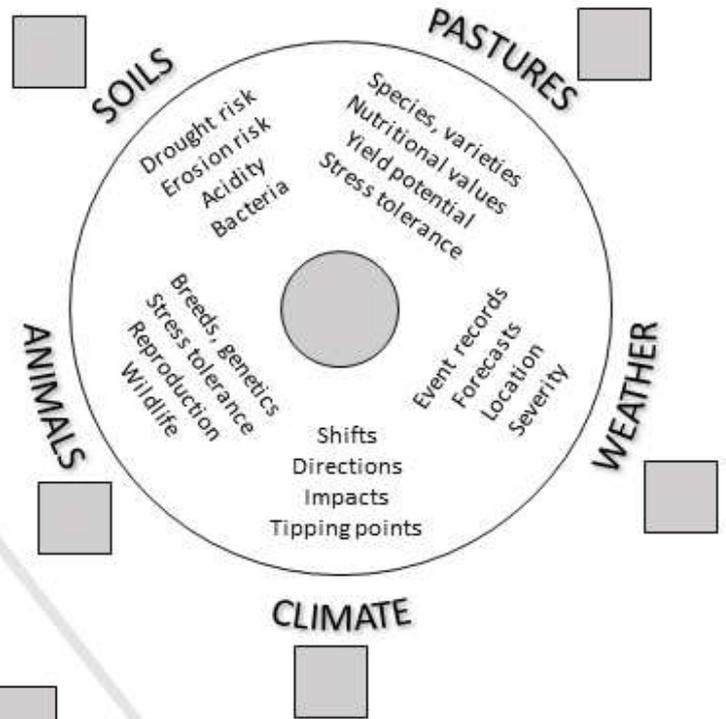
**? And for each system:**  
(most important) **1** to **5** (least)

Then take a photo and send to:  
**mmcnee@doa.gov.fk** or **53847**

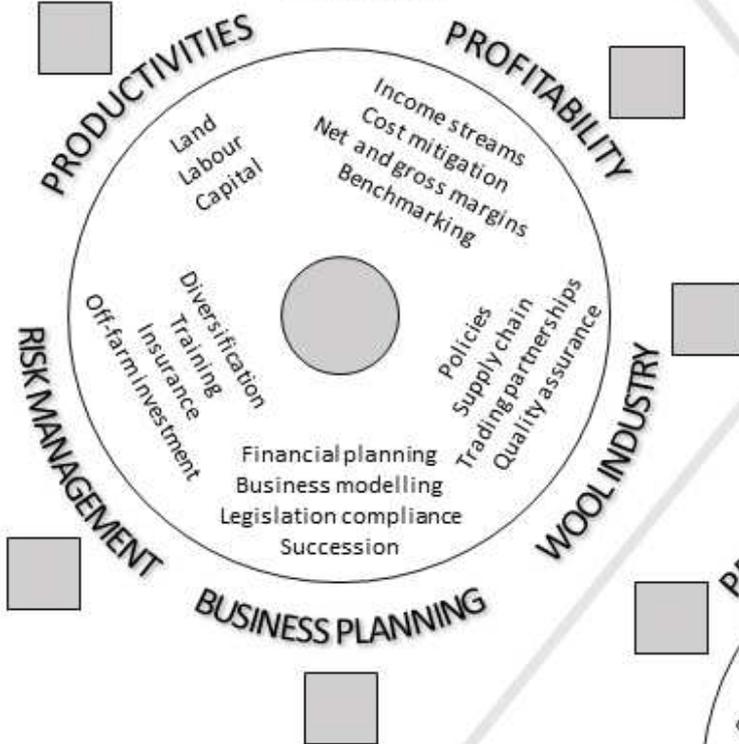
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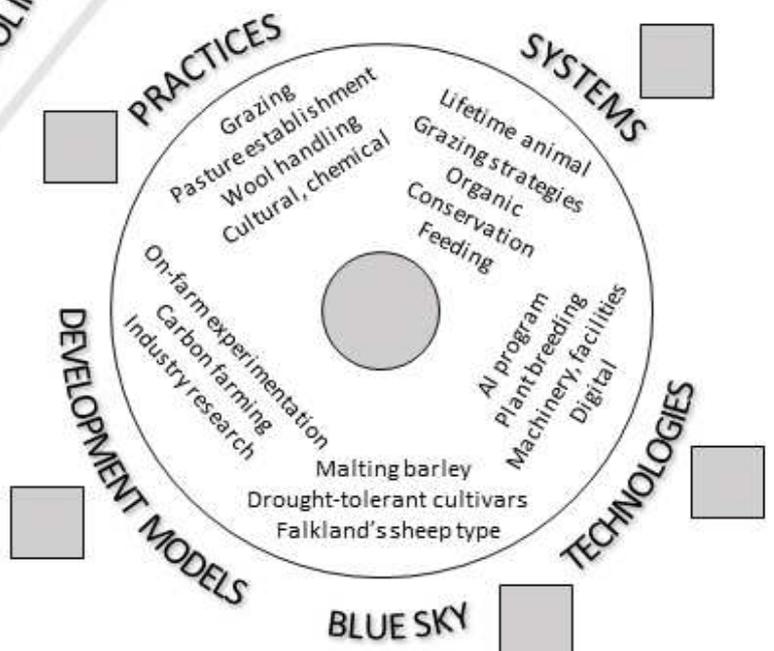
## THE AGRO-ECOSYSTEM



## THE BUSINESS SYSTEM



## THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Contact Matt McNee at the DOA if you would like to discuss your answers or make suggestions

# Suggestions for the Long Winter Months

*By Sally Poncet, Island LandCare*

This is an update from Island LandCare (run by myself and Ken Passfield) on the habitat restoration, wildlife surveys and invasive weed control we do round the Islands, both in Stanley and out in Camp. Currently, we're working on spear thistles on Saunders, Keppel and Pebble Islet and calafate on Keppel (all funded by FIG Environmental Studies Budget and in-kind contributions from David and Suzan on Saunders); thistles (both spear and creeping) on Fitzroy land near East Cove; gorse on Ship Island (supported by Falklands Conservation); and weeds on Stanley Common funded by the FIG Policy Unit.

Wildlife surveys go hand in hand with restoration projects. Whether its rat eradication, tussac planting, feral cat control or simply fencing off an area to keep livestock out, bird counts are such good reliable indicators of what is happening on your land. Get rid of rats, cats and let the grass grow high, and you'll have more small birds and more wildflowers, it's as simple as that. Last November, we surveyed one such area out at West Lagoons Pond for Karl Nightingale and Sian Ferguson, who have recently fenced off a section of this magnificent freshwater pond to create a nature area complete with Californian club-rush and loads of different kinds of waterfowl (a project supported by Springcreek Conservation through Falklands Conservation). It's brilliant to see such additions being made to the growing network of nature areas set up by locals: examples that come to mind are the Patricia Luxton National Nature Reserve, the Fox Bay Nature Area, the Neil Clark Nature Area at Port Howard, Blue Beach Farm Wildlife Area, the Lyn Blake Nature Reserve, the Rustling Grass Tussac Plantation at Elephant Beach and all those other as yet un-named fenced-off areas being planted with natives and set aside for wildlife.

Re-planting areas with tussac and other native plants in the battle against soil erosion is now increasingly recognised an integral part of responsible land management. A handful of landowners and farmers, along with the local conservation trusts (Falklands Conservation, the New Island Conservation Trust and the Antarctic Research Trust) are re-discovering the value of setting land aside and restoring native habitats, seeing the small birds and wildflowers return, as they follow the example set on West Point and Carcass Islands many decades ago. If you're interested in finding out what assistance might be available for future projects, give Frin Ross at Falklands Conservation a call on 52001.

Island LandCare is involved in one such restoration project on Hummock Island, funded by the island's owners, the Antarctic Research Trust, using donations for carbon offsetting and with the aim of stopping soil erosion and revegetating former tussac areas. Year 1 (2019) got off to a flying start with a team of 6 people planting up about 15 hectares during two 10 day sessions last April. Three records were set: Leiv's 655 tillers in seven hours (this includes 'pulling', which as all veteran tussac planters know is the hardest part of the job) and the team record of 2,400 tillers a day and 30,000 tillers in 20 days. These records were set by Josh Peck, Leiv Poncet, Diane

Towersey, Dale Evans, Chris Bath, Giselle Hazell, myself and Ken Passfield. On the island we stayed in the 'House of Art', a very comfortable 21<sup>st</sup> century 'shanty' with running hot and cold water, heating, washing machine, shower and 24 hour power. Cost per hectare was around £1,000 for wages, food and travel. This might seem to be an expensive per/ha cost compared to a reseed but when you realise that the tussac plantations on West Point Island are still being grazed after over 100 years, it's perhaps a better long term investment than a field of turnips.

*L to R: Sally, Ken, Leiv, Josh, Dale, Diane*



Year 2 of course came to a grinding halt when the reality of Coronavirus hit the Falklands in March. Our plans to sail to the West on *Porvenir II* were shelved; no more passenger movements on FIGAS or Concordia Bay, farm gates shut and everyone hunkered down for the winter. The tussac will be doing just fine without us of course. There's been plenty of tussac seed produced this year and if it stays nice and damp there'll be a mass of seedlings this coming spring, ready for us to plant out next year.



Meanwhile, for those of you lucky enough to be out there on your farms with plenty of time on your hands over the winter, here are some tips from Hummock to put to use if you've got a section of ungrazed fenced-off coastline on your land.

And, please, while you're out there, keep an eye open for any thistles (the ones with purple flowers) and calafate. These weeds are on the move, and what might be your neighbour's problem today will most definitely become yours tomorrow. If you find any or something you're not sure about, give us call on 21826 or text/call 52826, or email a photo to [sallyponcet@horizon.co.fk](mailto:sallyponcet@horizon.co.fk).

### **Tussac Planting Tips**

- Some of us preferred pulling and planting our own tillers (laying out 100 bunches at a time in rows, then planting them), finding that it broke up the physical effort and added variety. These people were invariably those who planted the most bunches.
- Others preferred to work in a team with 2 other people, changing roles around to break up the monotony by taking turns at pulling, carrying, laying out and planting.
- Planting was done mostly on black tussac peat where tillers have the best chance of surviving. Loose, sandy-textured tussac peat 'dust' and hard clay were avoided.
- A gentle but firm pull on the leaves of a planted tiller will tell you if it has been sufficiently well heeled in or not. Occasional 'pull' checks in the first couple of days planting for first-timers is good practice 'quality control'.
- A 'dibber' (pointed wooden pole) was effective if the peat soil was neither too hard nor too loose (which was not very often!). A garden spade with a sharp edge was used in hard peat.
- Choose healthy dark green leafed tussac bogs - avoid light green yellowing plants.
- We generally put at least three tillers in a bunch, a bunch being a fistful; ideally the tillers would be 3 to 4 cm diameter with several white rootlets and sourced from a mature bog.
- Smaller bogs and seedlings obviously have smaller tillers so you need more tillers per bunch but they also have shorter leaves so are less likely to get whipped around in the wind, and shorter roots don't need such a deep hole.
- Very long and thin tillers taken from mature bogs are easily whipped around and damaged by the wind, but our trial plots showed that despite the battering, most of these tillers recovered and did just as well as others.
- In very windy exposed areas we planted bunches of tillers a metre apart: closely spaced plants seem to create more favourable conditions for seedlings to establish, resulting in a faster rate of regeneration.
- Usually though, bunches were spaced 1.8 to 2 metres apart, in order to maximise the effort per hectare planted up – the further apart each bunch the more ground you cover.
- And as others have said before: it doesn't really matter what you plant or where, just get out there and make a start!

# New Plant Maps for the Falklands

By Frin Ross  
(Falkland  
Conservation)

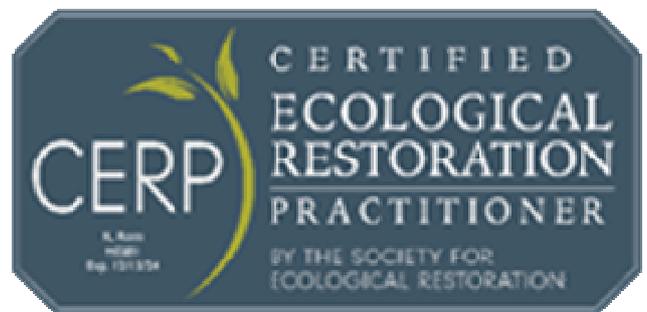
Hot on the heels of the new Field Guide to the Plants of the Falkland Islands, Falklands Conservation are keen to let you know about some new resources which they hope will be helpful for plant spotters and those with an interest in land-care and nature.

Firstly - together with iLaria from SAERI's IMS-GIS Datacentre we have developed a WebGIS (interactive map), which you can use to see new and historic plant records across the islands. These records span over 60 years, including work with Royal Botanical Gardens Kew. You can access them here: [https://ims.saeri.org/lizmap\\_fc/www/](https://ims.saeri.org/lizmap_fc/www/) and there is a user guide on the welcome page.

Secondly, we've started a couple of iNaturalist projects. iNaturalist is an international citizen science program which helps people to identify and map wildlife. You can upload your pictures online and either get help with plant identification or help others to identify plants they have seen. The first project: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/falklands-native-plants> is for all native species, so, in time you will see the whole range of species growing in an area for restoration projects, or you can get help identifying a species you have not seen before. The second project: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/falklands-threatened-plants> focuses on threatened species so that we can all learn more about their life and habitats. As people submit photos we hope to find that some of the "rare" species are actually more widespread than currently thought. Uploading your pictures to these projects makes the information available to everyone and ensures information on what the islands look like today is saved for the future.

Both systems can take a bit of getting used to so if you would like to have a run through please contact Frin Ross ([habitatsrestore@conservation.org.fk](mailto:habitatsrestore@conservation.org.fk) or phone 52001). All of the projects are works-in-progress and we hope to slowly improve them over the coming years as time allows. Do let Frin know if you would like to help.

*Silvery Buttercups are only found in the Falklands.*



# British Island and Mediterranean Region Commonwealth

## Women Parliamentarians Farm Day

*By Cherie Clifford (Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council)*

A delegation of the British Islands & Mediterranean Region Women Parliamentarians attended a conference in the Falkland Islands from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> February. The delegates had a busy program.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> February they were able to experience Camp life, kindly hosted by Gilberto Castro and Suzi Clarke of Fitzroy Farm and their able team. There was a display of sheep shearing by Michelle Amor and wool handling by Mandy Ford, whilst Suzi explained the importance of the wool, the different microns and the varying uses. Nancy Locke exhibited this with her spinning and final products of shawls.



Michelle then provided a display with her dogs and the 'gathering' of the sheep. Although the weather was not favourable it still lent itself to farm life. The group were joined for the day by the ladies from the Department of Agriculture and other ladies from the farming community, where they were able to learn about women in farming in the Falklands.

An asado with accompanying salad dishes was produced by Suzi, Gilberto and the Chilean farmhands. Nigel Bishop and his team provided tea, coffee and smoko. What a spread! Thank you to all.

The afternoon finished with a short memorial service at the Welsh Guards Memorial by Revd Canon Kathy Biles with Joyce Watson AM, Rhiannon Passmore AM (Welsh Assembly) and Connetable Sadie Le Seur-Reynard (Jersey) laying wreaths.

Thank you to Suzi, Gilberto and team (Fitzroy Farm), Nigel Bishop and his team (NCB Solutions), all the ladies from the DoA and wider farming community who came along and made this day a very special event for our CWP delegates. Another brilliant showcase of the Falkland Islands and its people.



# Falkland Islands Wether Trial – 2019-2021

By Andrew Bendall (Sheep Adviser) & Lucy Ellis (Assistant Agricultural Adviser)

## The Falkland Island Wether Trial (FIWT) Background

The Department of Agriculture along with Australian animal consultant Sally Martin have developed a trial designed to demonstrate the differences between strains of genetics within the Falklands and the value of investing in genetics from studs that have clear economically based breeding objectives.

Unfortunately, with less participants entered than expected, the wethers in the trial are not as varied as we may have hoped for. However, we are still seeing some differences that can have significant financial implications.

What will also become quite apparent as the trial progresses is how important the grazing management has on the performance of the animal, its wool production & quality and how wool preparation has on the profitability of a wether enterprise. Both are controlled within the farm gate and when done well help express the true genetic potential of the accumulative value of investing in good rams.

A total of 75 wethers from five farms (four farms from the East and one from the West) arrived at Saladero, the DoA farm, in February 2019. They were shorn to create an even shearing platform and have been run as one mob thereafter. Body weights & body condition scores (BCS) have been taken throughout the year.

Saladero had a pretty tough winter and start to what can only be described as a slow spring. The wethers were shorn in February 2020, well below the trials targeted weights and body condition. However we have seen their condition and weights improve remarkably, a function of compensatory growth.

What's been measured and when:

- Body weight & Body condition throughout the year
- At shearing, a mid side sample from each sheep will be tested for fibre diameter, coefficient of variation of fibre diameter, staple length, staple strength, & yield. Wethers will also be visually scored for face cover, wool colour and non-fibre pigmentation.
- All fleeces will be weighed, and commercial values will be calculated using 5 year averages
- Fleece values will take into consideration the above test results and these will be determined by an independent wool valuer.

Presented in the next pages are some graphs indicating the different traits measured within the trial!

It must be kept in consideration that this is a two year trial and these are only preliminary results. A full report will be published with expert analysis at the end of the trial.



Department of Agriculture *Webpage*



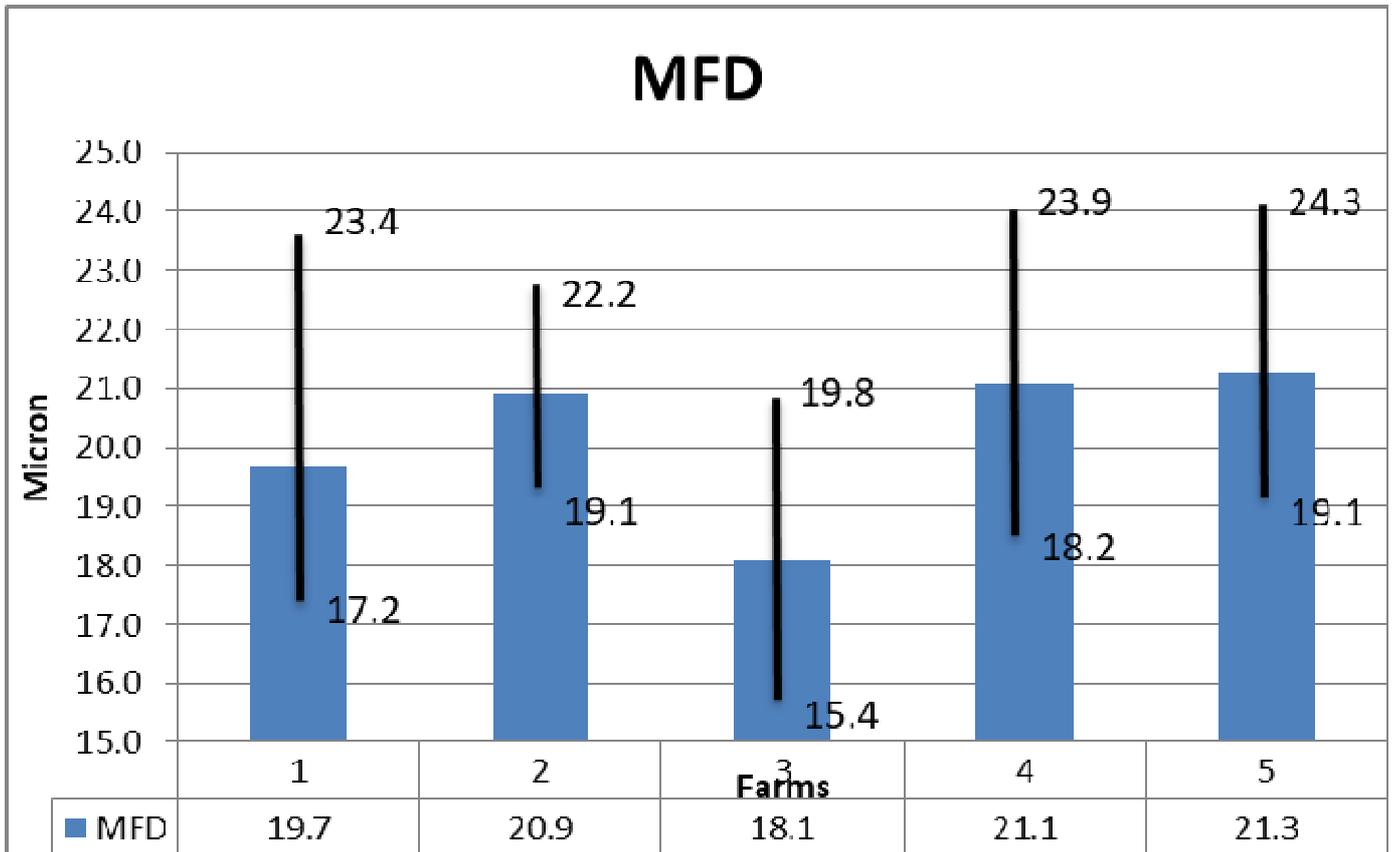
Falkland Islands Government

[www.fig.gov.fk/agriculture](http://www.fig.gov.fk/agriculture)

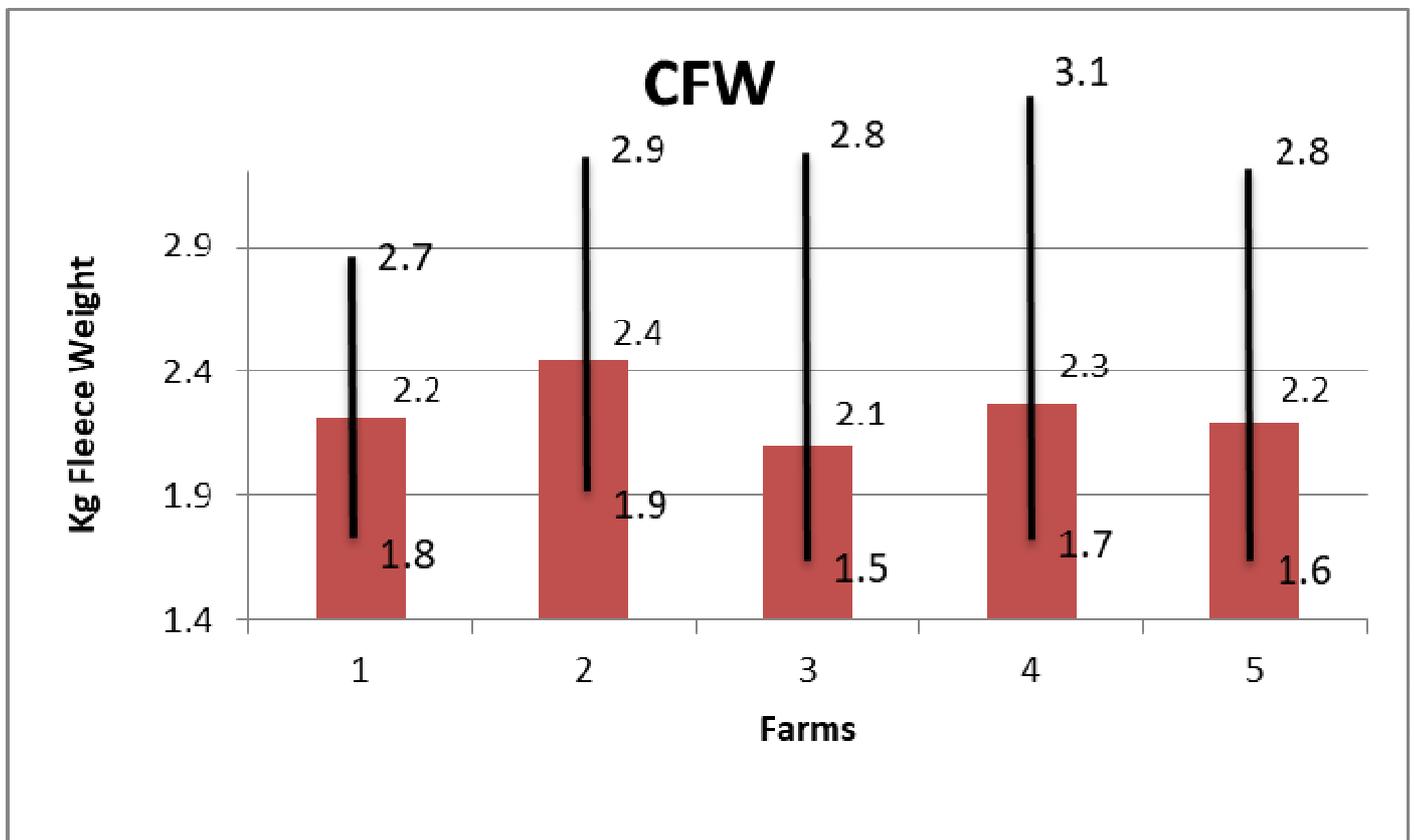


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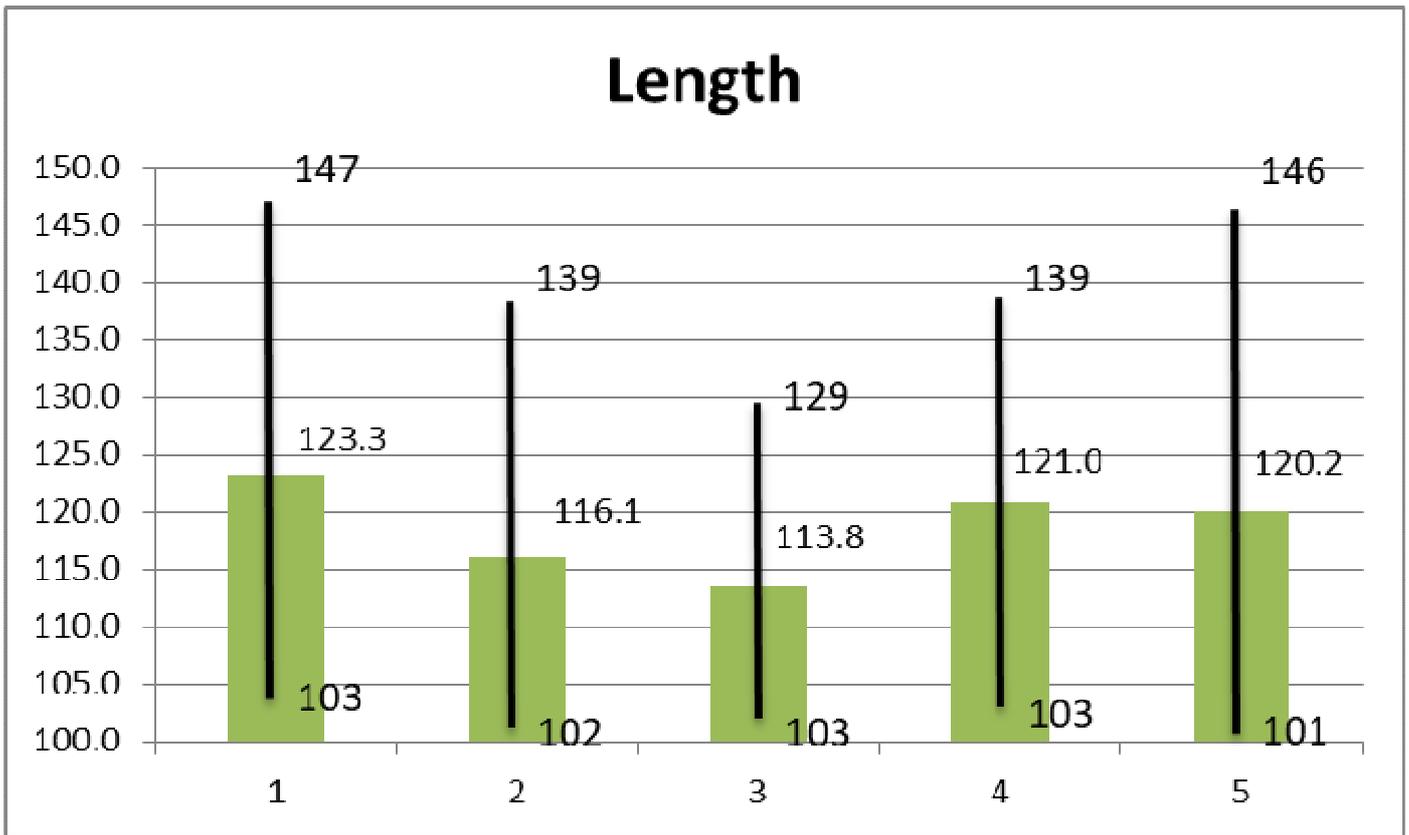
Graph 1. MFD – Micron of the wool grown & a key driver of price realised per kg



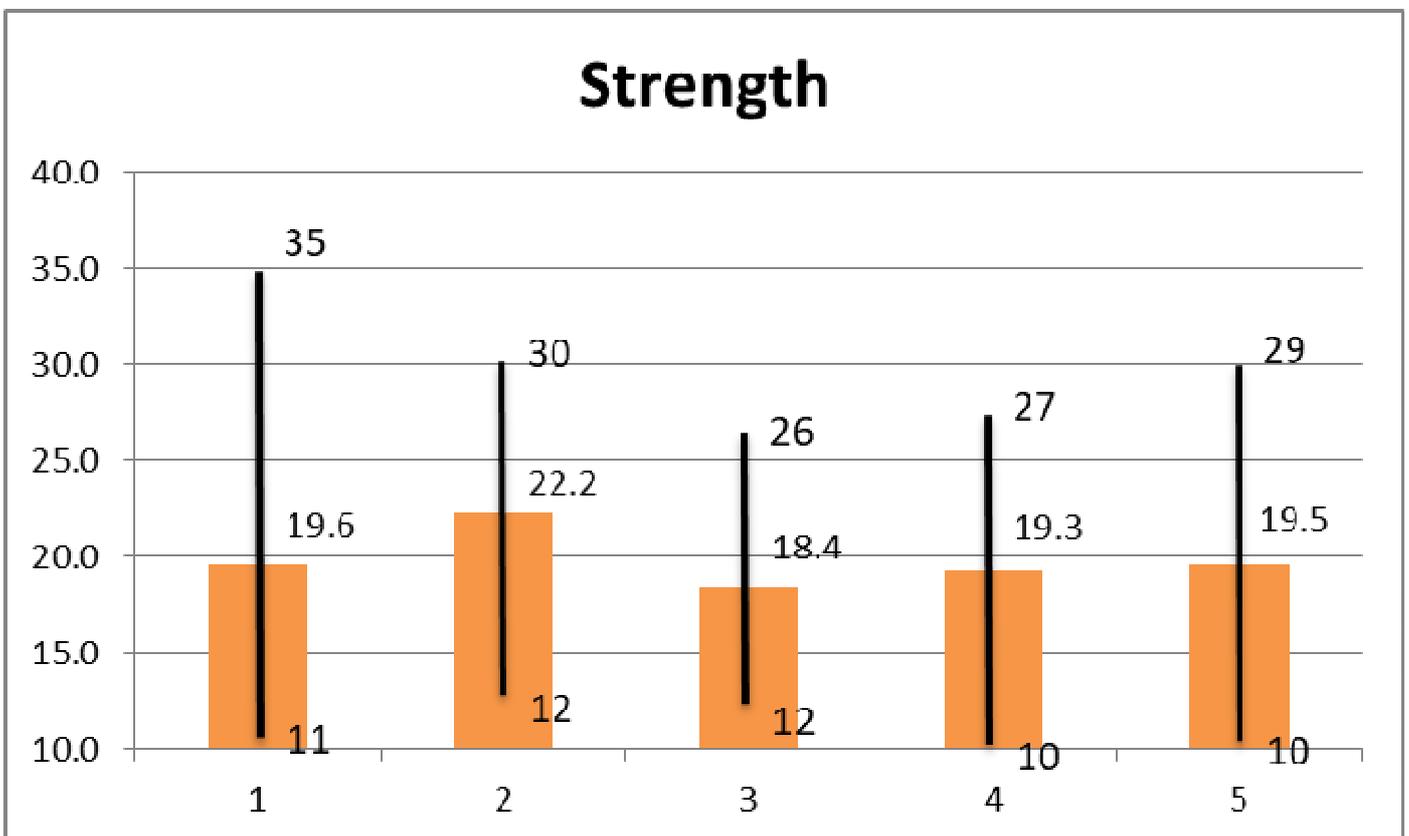
Graph 2. CFW – Clean Fleece Weight, a measure of the total greasy fleece weight by the yield of the fleece. Heavier higher yielding fleeces will improve overall wool profitability.



Graph 3. Length (mm)– The most profitable market may have specified length, so wool outside of spec may be discounted. Time of shearing can help manipulate length.

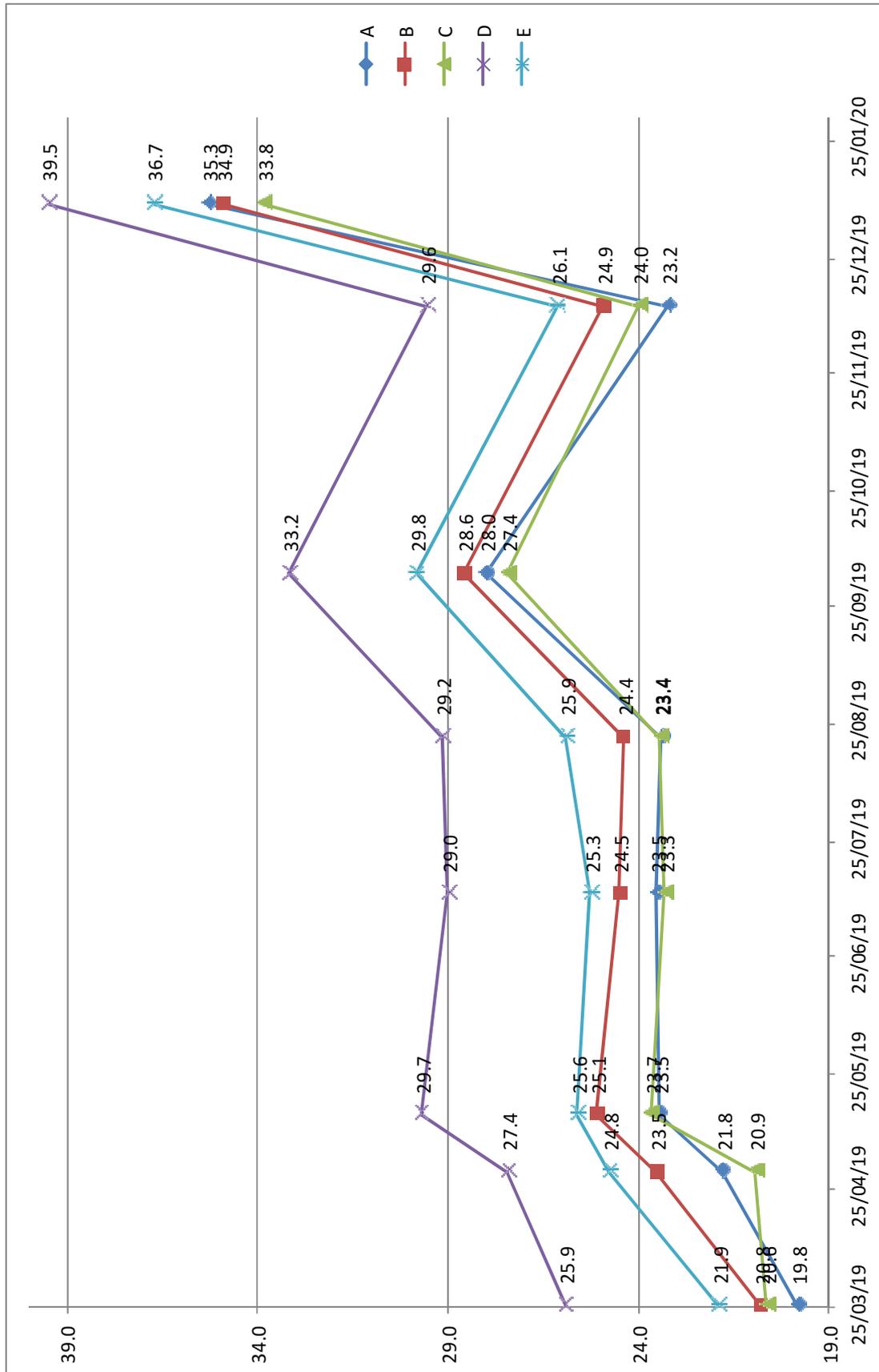


Graph 4. Strength (Newtons/Kilotex) – A vitally important factor as it can determine the wools' usefulness in what it can be used for. If the wool has a break in it, it will have a lower value. Breaks are largely caused by poorer nutrition and an inconsistent feeding regime.



This is a particularly hard balancing act here in the Falklands, the extensive nature of where most of the wethers are run has limited availability of forages with any real nutritional value. However, it is also genetically driven along with MFD, CFW & length, so it's of paramount importance that rams are sourced from breeders enhancing these factors.

Graph 5. Liveweight Gains – This clearly demonstrates the variation of how the season & management can influence productivity.



## Wether trial financial differences!

With a large proportion of the Islands farmers' income being derived from wool and wool largely being sold as a commodity, this makes farmers quite vulnerable to the uncertainties of the world market.

Within our wether trial, there's a 3.2 micron difference in the shearing fleeces which meant a difference of £0.50p between the finer & stronger fleeces. However, there is also a 300 gram difference between fleeces so the final total income per fleece is not all about fineness but producing wool that is "fit for purpose" for your specified markets.

Highest value fleece (an average over 15 fleeces) £18.00, 2.4kg of 20.9 um @ £7.70/kg

Lowest value Fleece (an average over 15 fleeces) £16.50, 2.2kg of 21.3 um @ £7.50/kg

The question being, do we know what our market actually wants or do we just market whatever we produce?

The answer to that is your massive opportunity to secure a consistent and reliable wool income every year.

The next 11 months of the trial will see the wethers wintered, body weights & body condition monitored, shorn in the New Year and killed at the Falkland Islands Meat Company (FIMco). With all final data analysis being done and presented this time next year.



*Some of the wethers from the trial prior to shearing*