

NEWS RELEASE

Monday, 6 August 2018

ASKBILL now available to all sheep producers

ASKBILL and its powerful predictive technologies are now available for use by sheep producers across Australia following its commercial launch at LambEx today by the Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC).

ASKBILL, www.askbill.com.au, is an online tool that provides timely and accurate predictions for sheep wellbeing and productivity using climate, stock and pasture information, and is now available online for sheep producers throughout Australia at an annual subscription of \$110/year (inc. GST).

It complements grazing knowledge with detailed analysis of livestock and pastures conditions to predict opportunities and threats to individual businesses from weather, pests or disease—the critical information needed for making more precise farming decisions, protecting flock wellbeing and maximising productivity.

Speaking at the launch of ASKBILL at the Sheep CRC's LambEx Breakfast Seminar, CEO James Rowe said extensive testing in real-world conditions of ASKBILL's predictive capability had resulted in a tool that was ready to put Australian sheep producers on the front foot in preparing for the inherent variability of climatic conditions and their impact on sheep production.

"ASKBILL is unlike any other technology currently available in that it links individual farm records with predictive modelling and big data analytics to spot risks and alert producers to opportunities to improve sheep production and wellbeing, up to six months ahead of events to help plan joining, lambing, weaning and sale decisions," Prof. Rowe said.

"Predicting the state of pastures and livestock six months into the future is difficult even for experienced producers, but the Sheep CRC has now made this not only possible, but delivered a practical tool to help producers to develop and act on these insights."

WA sheep breeder Brad Wooldridge, of Arthur River, spoke at the launch about his experiences in using ASKBILL during the Sheep CRC's trial work and said it was like having a "sheep expert in the paddock with you every day".

Mr Wooldridge runs 2200 ewes across two properties in the southern WA located 220km apart, with the second property carrying a high-risk of Barbers Pole worm.

"Our property on the South Coast is the one that stresses me most. I've been travelling 1500km a week to feed sheep there, which is a lot of driving, but it's been a decision backed by the alerts from ASKBILL and it's pleasing to achieve good results in a challenging season," Mr Wooldridge said.

"The sophistication of the modelling is what sets ASKBILL apart from other tools and its predictions mean you can plan ahead – if you're not planning, you're reacting and from a management perspective that's a whole lot harder."

Prof. Rowe said producers could also combine ASKBILL with the Sheep CRC's RamSelect system and DNA test range, meaning they would only need to enter data once in one application to access benefits from all platforms.



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Additional benefits to producers from using ASKBILL include:

- 'What If' tools to calculate how much of which supplement they need to feed sheep to maintain live weight and condition, or to finish growing sheep;
- Alerts to changes in ewe condition score, which is critical to the performance of a sheep breeding business as it affects the lifetime performance of her progeny;
- Predicting wool cut for a flock at any time between shearings;
- Assistance in meeting weight and fat specifications—vital for successfully supplying a target market for best financial returns;
- Allowing users to validate the standard of care their animals received.

ASKBILL is available for purchase online at a subscription fee of \$100/year (ex. GST). For more information www.askbill.com.au.

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