

AN INITIATIVE OF

Making More From Sheep



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development



Australian Wool
Innovation Limited



Sheep Management for Dry Seasons

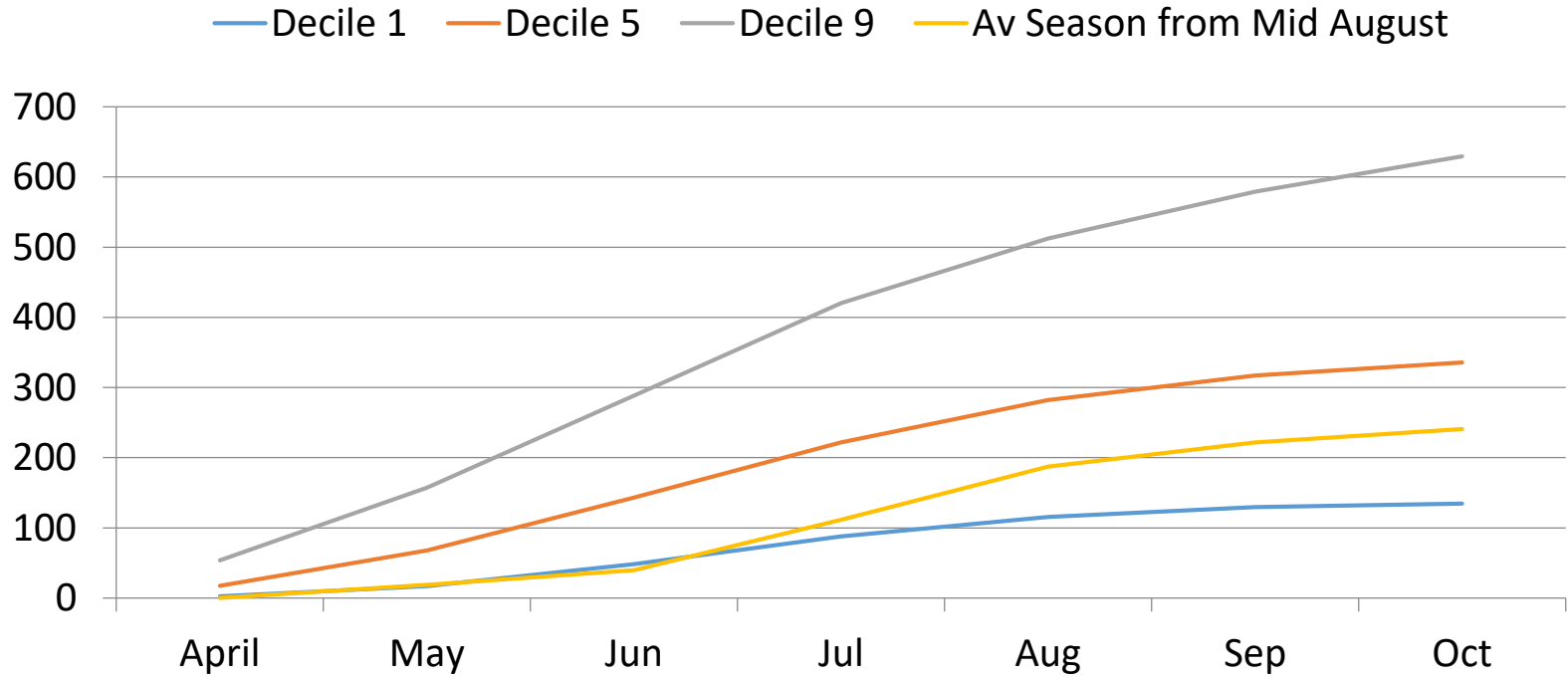
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EVENT SUPPORTERS:



Northam Rainfall



Are you farming next year?

- Where do you want your business to be in April 2018?
 - Lessons from 2017
 - Will you have mated ewes?
 - What lambing do you want to expect?
 - How much wool are you chasing?

What will you learn from 2017?

- Things didn't turn bad overnight, they happened incrementally
- Did you recognise the signs?
- Did you have trigger points?
- Did you act on these trigger points?

Next time - The exit strategy

- If this season was overwhelming - Come up with strategy before next season
- Determine potential stocking rate for a range of seasons
- What tactics are available?
- When will the tactics be employed?
- What & Who – mechanics of employing tactic
- Review, revise, repeat

Moving Forward - Breeding Ewes

- Breeding Ewes most important asset
- Good condition = good yield potential
- Why?
 - Increased Condition Score
 - = ↑ wool cut
 - = ↑ conception rates (yield)

What options do you have to attain the result you want?

Measure to manage Condition score

Condition Scoring

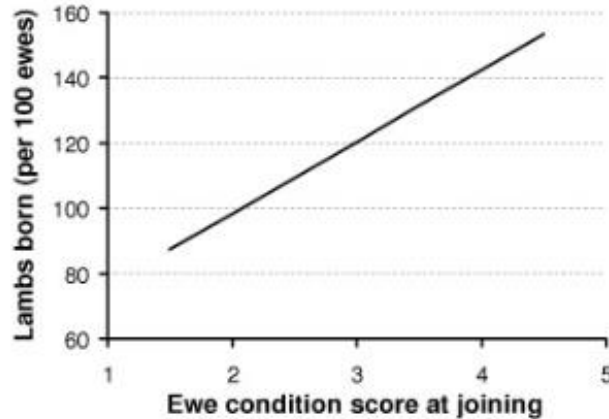
- Condition scoring is a critical skill in poor seasons



How to Condition Score		
<p>Condition Score 1</p>	<p>Backbone The bones form a sharp narrow ridge. Each vertebra can be easily felt as a bone under the skin. There is only a very small eye muscle. The sheep is quite thin (virtually unsaleable).</p>	<p>Short Ribs The ends of the short ribs are very obvious. It is easy to feel the squarish shape of the ends. Using fingers spread 1cm apart, it feels like the fingernail under the skin with practically no covering.</p>
<p>Condition Score 2</p>	<p>Backbone The bones form a narrow ridge but the points are rounded with muscle. It is easy to press between each bone. There is a reasonable eye muscle. Store condition- ideal for wethers and lean meat.</p>	<p>Short Ribs The ends of the short ribs are rounded but it is easy to press between them. Using fingers spread 0.5cms apart, the ends feel rounded like finger ends. They are covered with flesh but it is easy to press under and between them.</p>
<p>Condition Score 3</p>	<p>Backbone The vertebrae are only slightly elevated above a full eye muscle. It is possible to feel each rounded bone but not to press between them. (Forward store condition ideal for most lamb markets now. No excess fat).</p>	<p>Short Ribs The ends of short ribs are well rounded and filled in with muscle. Using 4 fingers pressed tightly together, it is possible to feel the rounded ends but not between them. They are well covered and filled in with muscle.</p>
<p>Condition Score 4</p>	<p>Backbone It is possible to feel most vertebrae with pressure. The back bone is a smooth slightly raised ridge above full eye muscles and the skin floats over it.</p>	<p>Short Ribs It is only possible to feel or sense one or two short ribs and only possible to press under them with difficulty. It feels like the side of the palm, where maybe one end can just be sensed.</p>
<p>Condition Score 5</p>	<p>Backbone The spine may only be felt (if at all) by pressing down firmly between the fat covered eye muscles. A bascule of fat may appear over the tail (wasteful and uneconomic).</p>	<p>Short Ribs It is virtually impossible to feel under the ends as the triangle formed by the long ribs and hip bone is filled with meat and fat. The short rib ends cannot be felt.</p>

CS Set's up potential – Lambing %

Ewe condition score at joining and number of lambs born

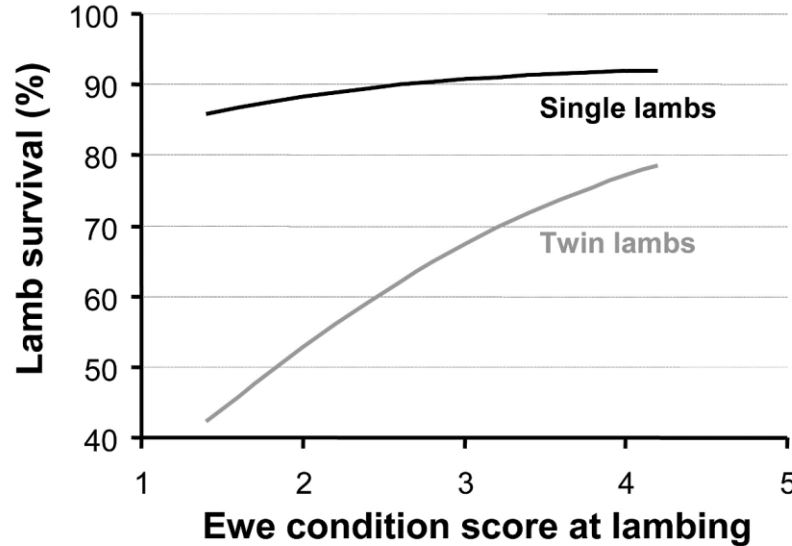


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Average response is about 20 extra lambs per 100 ewes for an additional CS at joining

CS Set's up potential – Lamb Survival

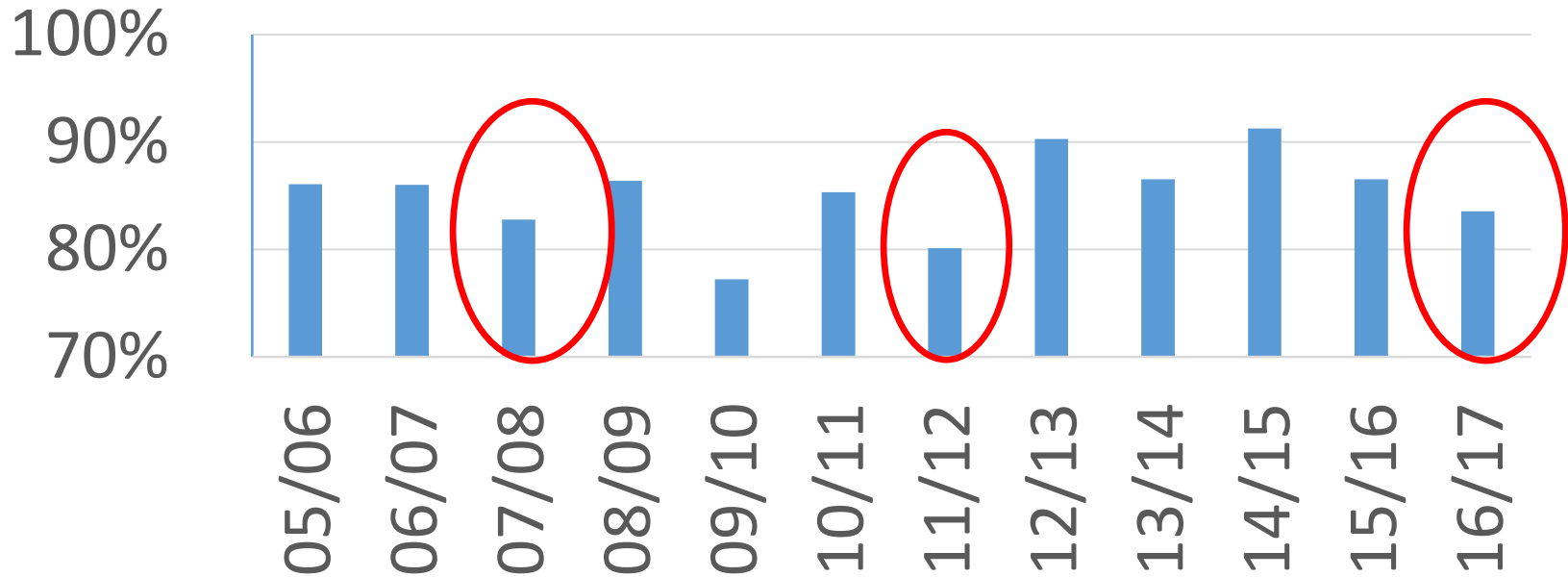
Starting too far behind will affect survival



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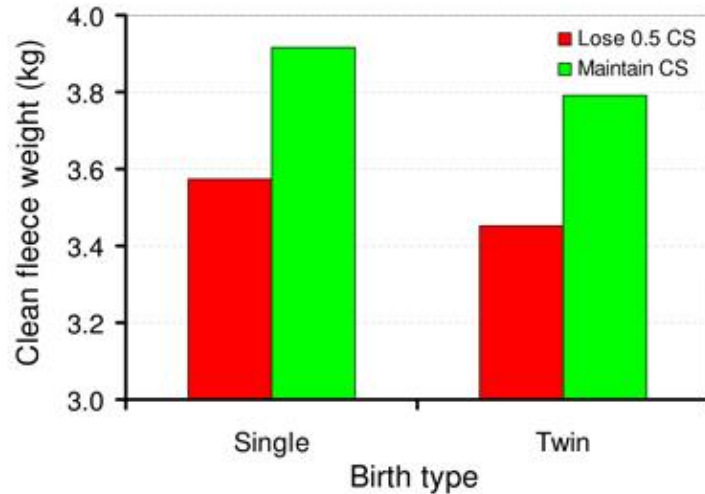
Don't let a poor season double up

Lambing Rates and the year after...



Setting up potential – Wool Cut

Ewe fleece weight is affected by ewe nutrition from early to mid-pregnancy



↑ CS sheep grows more wool

An increase of 1 CS ~ 0.8 kg CFW

Economics of Feeding Ewes

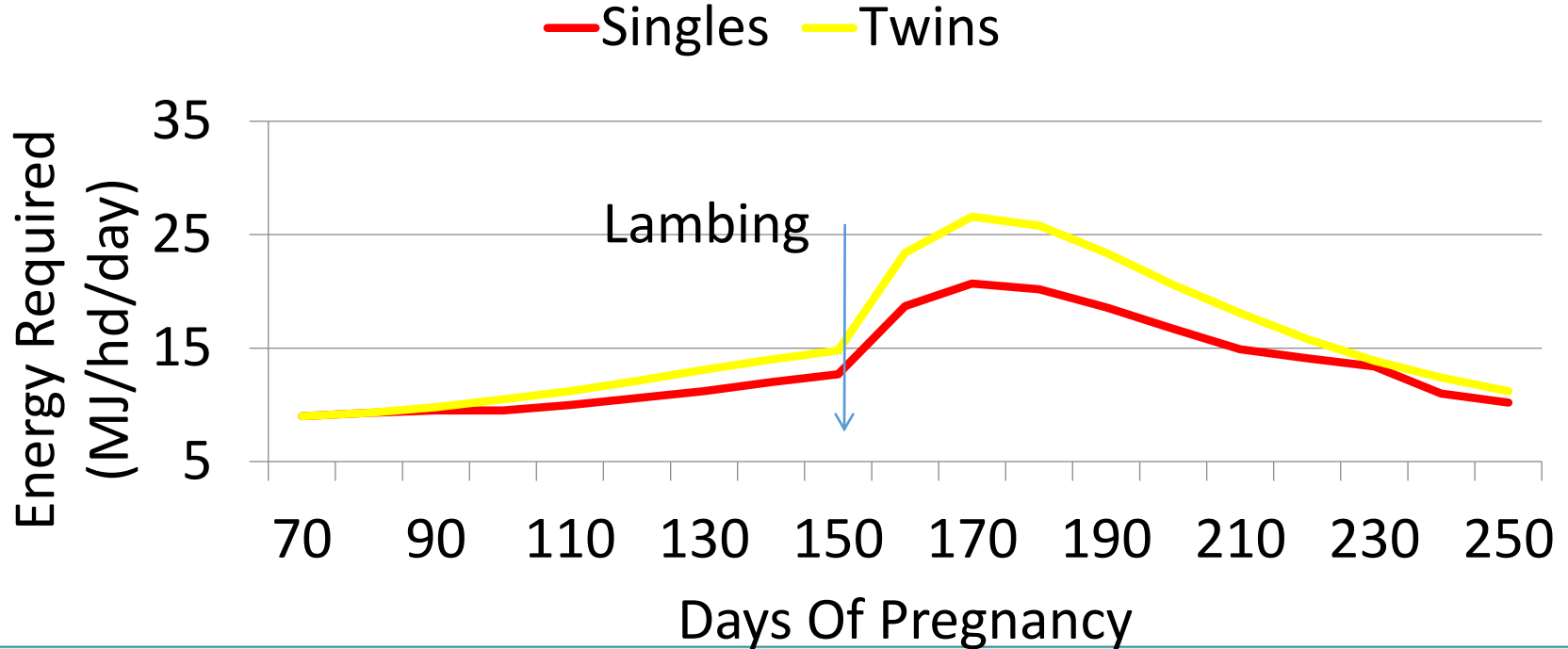
On this evidence

- It does pay to maintain CS
- In most cases ($>CS2.7$) it also pays to increase CS using grain

Need to know LTEM principles:

- CS of ewes
- Energy requirements of ewes
- Energy in paddock/feed
- Practicality of doing this

Energy Required



Moving Forward - ...

- What stock do you want in April 2018?
- Is it worth retaining sheep for 2018?

- What options do you have to attain the result you want?

Moving Forward – the entire flock

Important to discuss options for 2017

- Stimulate the thought process and be prepared
- For next time when it happens again...

What are the options?

Moving Forward – the entire flock

- Sell sheep: Hoggets, wethers, lambs, CFA ewes, breeding ewes?
- Feedlot: Feedlot to sell
- Grow More Feed: Nitrogen on pastures?
- Control insects: Not enough to share
- Differential Feeding: Draft up according to CS and feed accordingly
- Worm Control to reduce competition

Moving Forward – the entire flock

- Reallocate Paddocks?
 - Poor crops?
 - 2018 lambing vs 2017 grain
 - What is the impact on budgets?
- Wean early – invest in 2018 crop of lambs
- Get thinking! Summer crops?

Economics

Sell sheep

Low priority - dry sheep, CFA ewes, wethers, weaners

Selling ewes?

Good CS (CS2.7) or skinny (CS2.0)?

Costs roughly \$7/hd to put on 0.7CS rather than maintain

BUT ++ management skills of skinny ewes

Economics

Maintaining ewes in confinement with a full ration

Feed costs \$95/hd (Maintain to 1st May)

- Infrastructure?
- Skill set?

Husbandry \$20/hd

Will they have access to any spring feed or stubbles?

Economics

Income.

- \$50/hd wool net plus..
- 85% potential lambs on ground? @ \$60/hd (?) net

Sell ewes, buy back

- Emotional attachment

Economics – feed lotting sheep

- Feedlot – management skill - **do the numbers**

XB Lamb	32kg	\$75.00	\$2.40/kg LW
Feed costs		\$35.00	Pellets @ \$300/t
Sell Costs		\$8.00	Commission/levies
Freight out		\$4.00	
Target 95%	48kg	\$130.00	\$6.20/kg DW
			Shy feeders/deaths
Margin		\$8.00	

Economics – Growing more Feed

- Increased fert spend means more feed and less hand feeding
- 20 units N @ 15 kg/DM/unit N
 - = 300kg DM
 - = 1.00 c/MJ
- Green feed is the cheapest and highest quality feed source

Economics – Using limited green feed

Using the limited green feed in spring

1. Weaners (if you are keeping them)
2. Skinny ewes (if retaining)
3. Older ewes (if retaining)
4. All other ewes
5. To fatten stock for sale (lambs/ewes)

Summary - Options right now

- Nitrogen on pastures
- Make sure lambs know what grain is
- Establish feedlot (for lambs)
 - Do your economics properly
- Sell sheep in good condition
- Summer will be difficult for those with less than 30% cereal stubbles

Business Basics

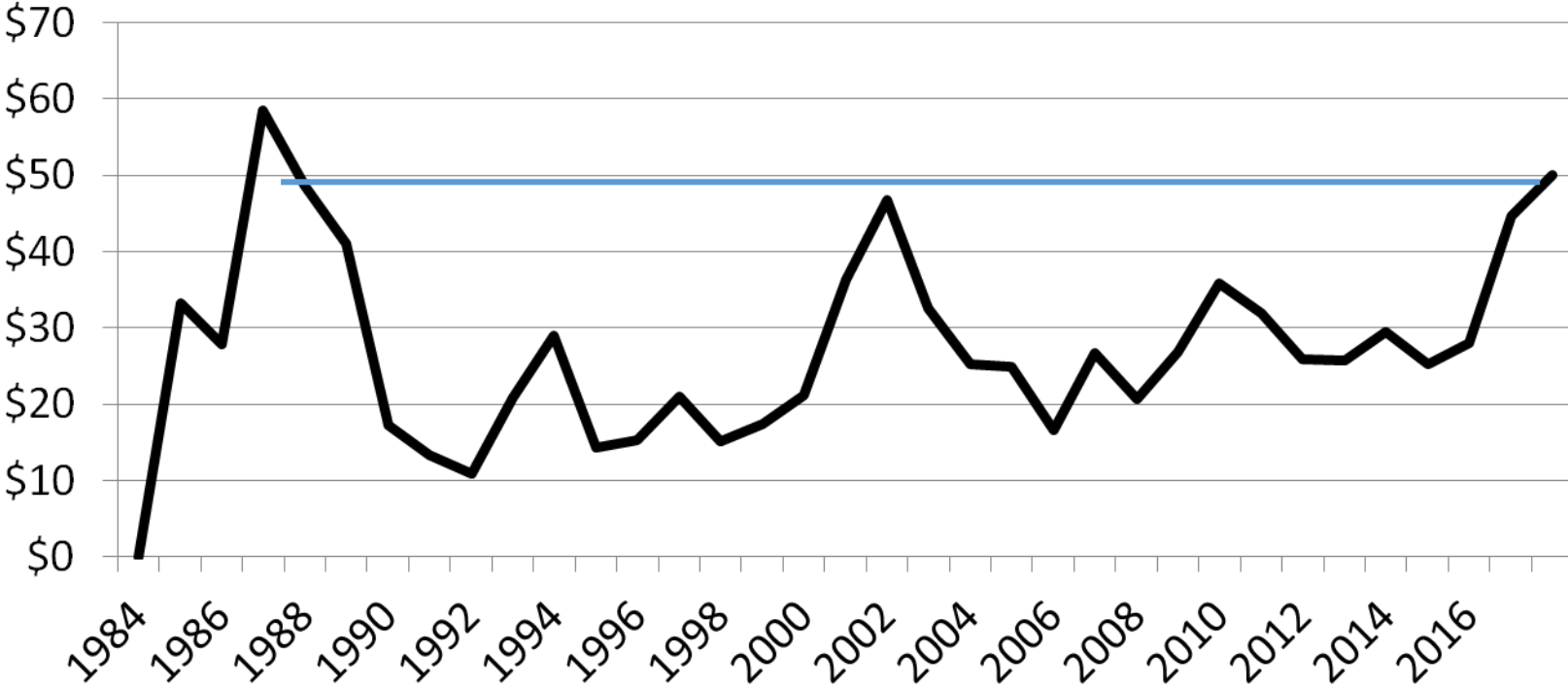
- Re do your farm budgets & assess
 - Wool Cut down by 30%
 - Feed Costs up 150%?
 - Lambing Rates? Average?
- Recalculate working capital and communicate with stakeholders
- Seek Professional advice

Business Basics

- There are two philosophies that will improve the likelihood of farm business success:
 - Get the basics right – efficient production and effective decision making
 - Expect the unexpected – have strategies in place that allow flexibility
- Learn from this season, it will happen again

17/18 forecast

Gross Margin \$/dse



Are you farming next year?

Where do you want your business to be in April 2018?

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www.awi.com

(Search for drought)

www.agric.wa.gov.au

(Search for drought-and-dry-seasons)

www.sheepsback.com.au