

GRAIN ASSISTING LAMBS

Technical Bulletin



Grain assisting lambs – how to maximise production over the summer months

Grain assisting lambs over the summer months is a great way to maximise production and profitability. As with feedlotting, there are some guidelines to follow to ensure maximum production and to minimise potential challenges.

What grain should I feed?

Barley is the best option as it has good starch and energy levels. Oats are the safest option, being lower in starch and higher in fibre, however barley will give better results.

Can I feed wheat and triticale?

Yes, but a careful introductory period will be critical to minimise losses.

Should I include a legume?

Ideally, yes. A maximum of 30% in the diet is sufficient, any more than this and the lamb is not able to utilise it and it will be passed out the back end. Lupins are the best option.

How much should I feed?

This will depend on the amount and type of paddock feed and also how quickly you are trying to grow out young stock. As a general guide 200g – 500g / hd / day as a supplement will be effective. A lamb will consume 3% of its bodyweight in feed per day – we can also assist with individual recommendations based on paddock feed available.

Do I need to induct lambs onto grain?

Yes, starting with either a trail or if using adjustable self-feeders, work on 100g / hd / day and increase the amount in increments of 100g / hd / day until you reach the desired amount.

Should I feed test?

Yes. To ensure you are feeding to maximise production, aim for a crude protein range of 12-14% and an ME of above 11% in the total diet.

What about fibre?

Providing a fibre source, such as good quality cereal hay is important, especially while the lambs are being introduced to the self-feeders.

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Should I be providing a grain additive?

Yes. Cereal grain is low in calcium relative to phosphorous and potassium, so a mineral supplement that has good calcium and Vitamin B levels is essential, especially if lambs are on cereal stubbles. Buffers are important to reduce the risk of acidosis, such as Acid buf® or yeast-based supplements, especially if feeding above 500g / hd / day. A grain additive such as Blueprint® Sheep 50 Concentrate Pellet mixed with the grain in the self-feeder provides the essential balance of vitamins, minerals, buffers and Bovatec® along with Alltech's organic mineral technology.

As lambs are still growing, providing a supplement containing essential vitamins such as A, D, E and the B group is encouraged. If feeding less than 500g / hd / day of grain a loose lick such as Blueprint® Lift Sheep is an option. This can be provided ad-lib in the paddock in containers.

What challenges could I face?

- Acidosis – this can be managed by a gradual induction to the grain and the addition of a good buffer. Monitoring faeces consistently is a good indicator of acidosis
- Mycotoxins – given the season, being mindful of grain and hay quality will reduce this
- Prolapses – watch for rain that will freshen pastures, especially lucerne, grazing patterns of pasture, too high protein in the diet and excessive coughing
- Coccidiosis – seasonal conditions may give rise to coccidiosis in some areas, speaking with your vet to diagnose is advised. Prevention with a loose lick or grain additive containing Bovatec® can reduce the risk
- Red Gut – this happens when there is a change in feed, it tends to be more prevalent when there have been changes in weather such as temperature.

Feed formulation and advice?

The on-farm and nutritional teams at Alltech Lienert, can work through a program to suit your farm and formulate a feeding program using your feed tests.

Please contact your local ruminant representative for further information.

Alltech Lienert Australia

8 Roseworthy Rd, Roseworthy SA 5371
PO Box 65, Roseworthy SA 5371
Tel: (08) 8524 8150 / 1800 649 231
Fax: (08) 8524 8001
Email: alltechaustralia@alltech.com
alltechlienert.com.au



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