

Delaney's Sheep Farm



This farm is located near Hamilton in western Victoria.



Peter Delaney

Owner: Peter Delaney

This is a small farm (200 ha) in the Hamilton area of western Victoria, receiving on average 750 mm of rainfall per year.

The farm has recently been purchased, and the pastures improved (now mostly perennial ryegrass / sub clover). It is currently just running wethers, no breeding stock. The owner wants to change to a breeding ewe flock and lamb production to get better value from his investment in the farm.



The contrast between improved (left hand side) and unimproved (right hand side) pastures on the Delaney property near Hamilton. Photo taken in September.

But, what stocking rate would be appropriate, and what is a suitable lambing date? Peter has a good line of Dorest x Merino ewes available, with an average mature liveweight of 55 kg. The DSE rating of these animals is about 2, which suggests 10 ewes / ha might be a good starting point for this rainfall.

This line of ewes has consistently achieved 150% lambing. Lambs are weaned at 3 months age. Peter wants to be able to rear as many lambs as possible to sale weight of 36 - 40 kg by the end of December / early January. If we assume an average daily weight gain of 180 g / day for the lambs, this will require approximately 6 months. But, will this combination of stocking rate and lambing date work for the property?

Assume that pasture cover at start of lambing = 1000 kg DM / ha.

Questions to address here are:

- what stocking rate of ewes is appropriate, at least to start with?
- what lambing date would be best?

Fact Sheet

Location	near Hamilton
Average annual rainfall	750 mm
Grazing area	200 ha
Pasture type	Recently improved. Reasonable perennial ryegrass base with sub clover
Enterprise	Proposal is to change to a ewe flock
Flock size	To be determined
Breed	Dorset x Merino
Lambing date	To be determined
Mature liveweight	55 kg
Weaning percentage	150%



Peter Delaney wants to take advantage of the extra productivity capacity of improved pastures such as this by changing animal enterprise.