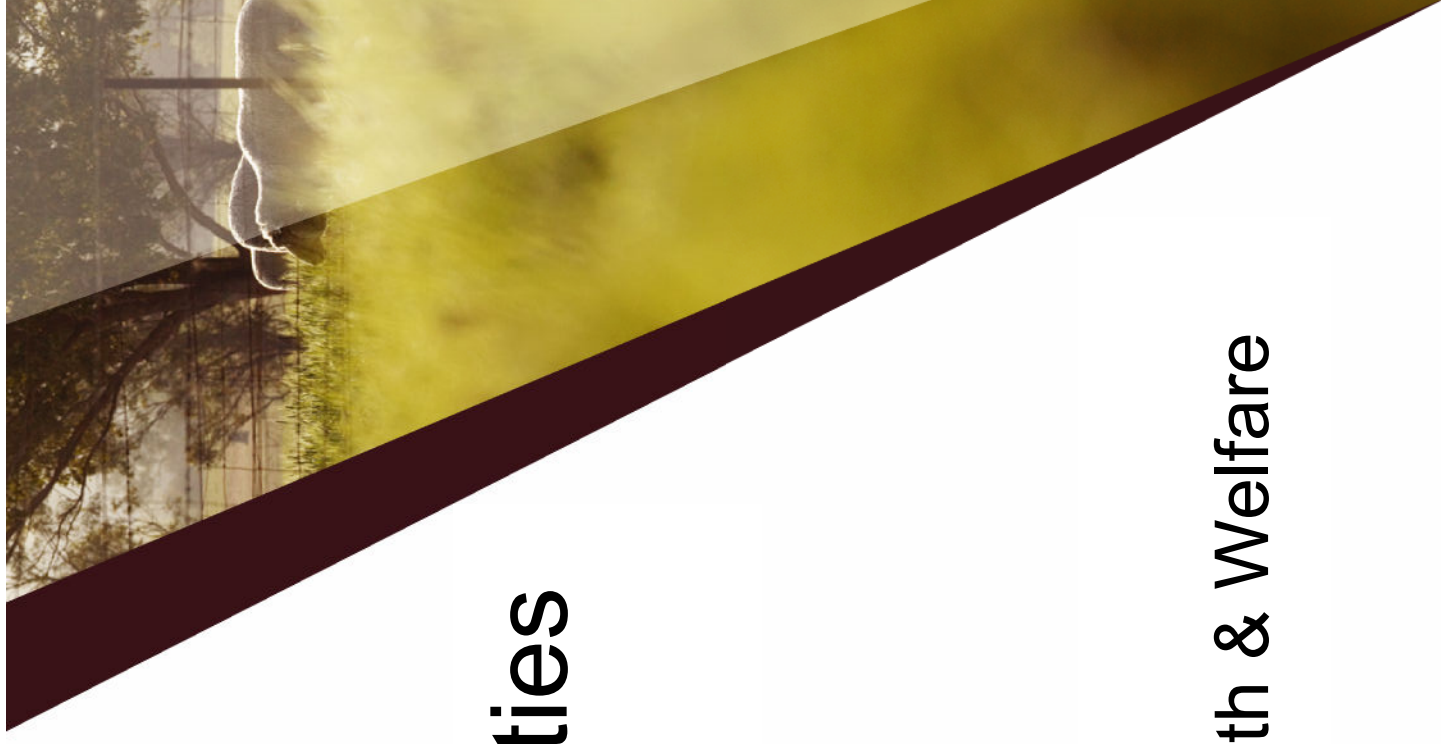


# Animal Welfare Priorities and Programs for Extensively Raised Sheep

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# Today's Presentation

- Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Plan
  - Economics of disease
  - Identification of priority welfare issues
- Projects to address high priority welfare issues
- Projects to address other welfare issues

# Economic modelling

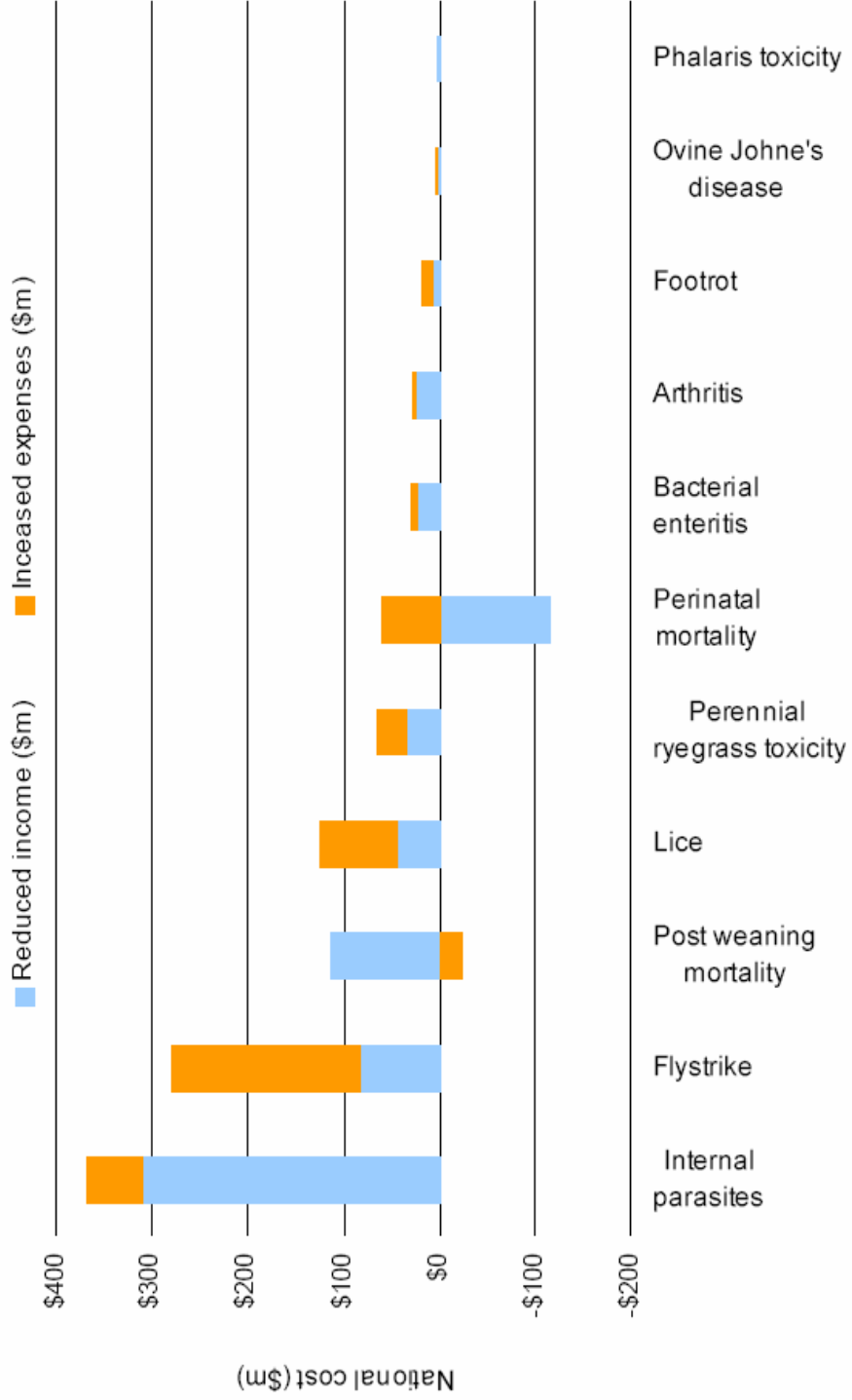
- Modelled at the margin
- ABS 2001 numbers
- Stop at farm gate (excludes zoonosis, regulation)
- Annual average costs
- Flock/herd average cost
- 10 yr average prices



# Diseases of sheep in Australia

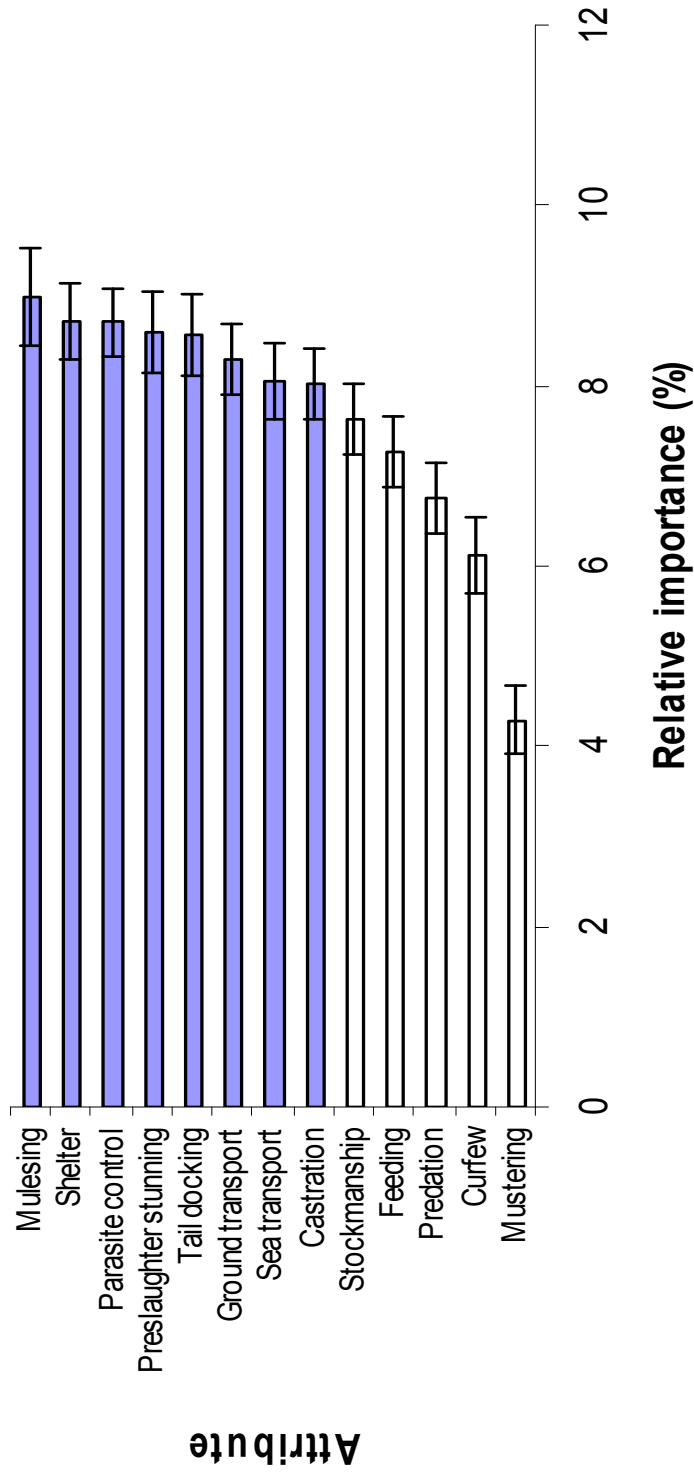
High economic impact	Medium economic impact	Low economic impact
Abortion and stillbirth	Caseous lymphadenitis	Clostridial disease
<b>Arthritis</b>	Fluke	Dermatophilosis
<b>Blowfly</b>	<b>Foot abscess/Footrot</b>	Grain poisoning
<b>Lice</b>	Redgut	Hypocalcaemia/pregnancy toxaemia
<b>Ovine Johne's disease</b>	Scabby mouth	Mycoplasma ovis
<b>Peri-natal mortality</b>	Trace element deficiency	Nitrate poisoning
<b>Plant poisons</b>	<b>Yersinia</b>	Ovine brucellosis, actinobacillosis
<b>Post-weaning mortality</b>		Pneumonia
Scouring		
<b>Worms</b>		

# National cost of disease to the sheep industry

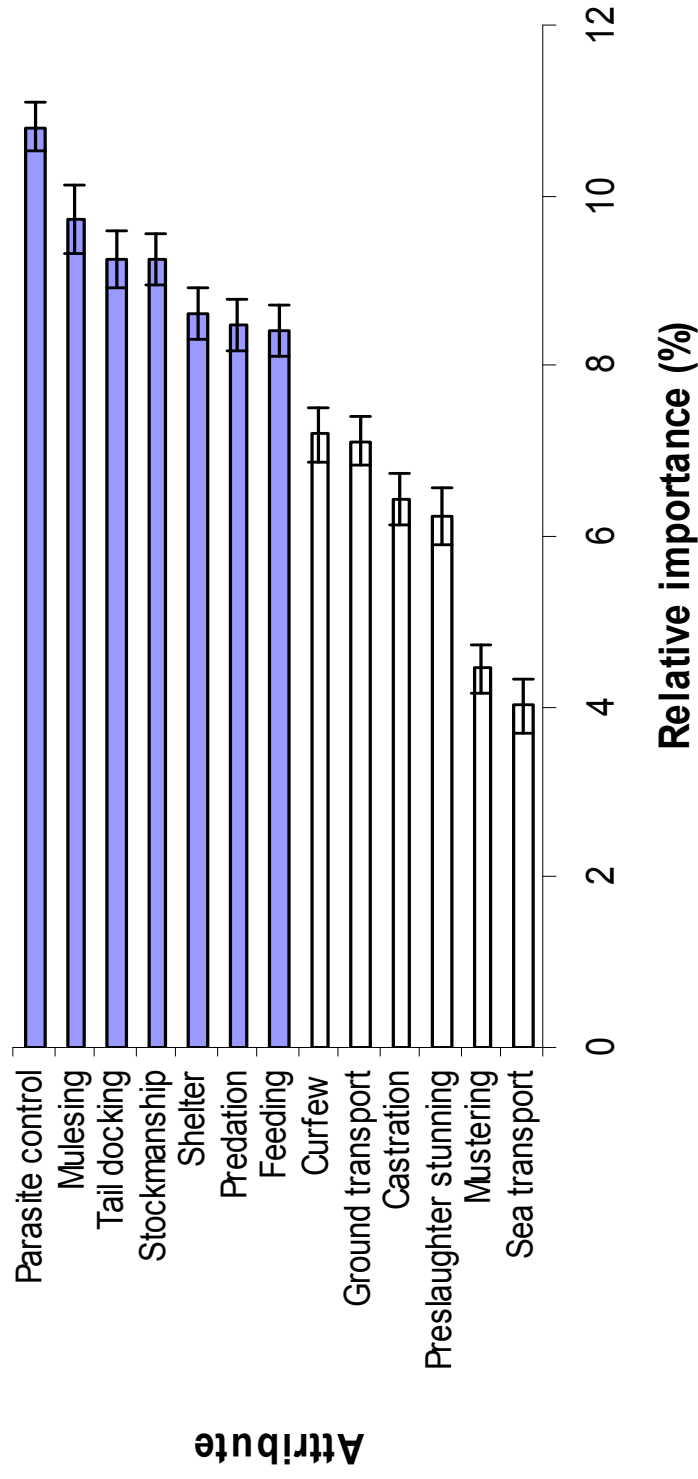


The cost of peri-natal lamb mortality represents the return to industry for a 10% increase in lamb survival

# Attitudes of animal welfare representatives to Australian sheep welfare issues



# Attitudes of producers to Australian sheep welfare issues



# Common issues

- Both groups ranked the same four issues within the top priorities
- Both groups ranked mulesing and parasite control in the top three issues
- Both groups ranked tail docking and shelter in the top five issues

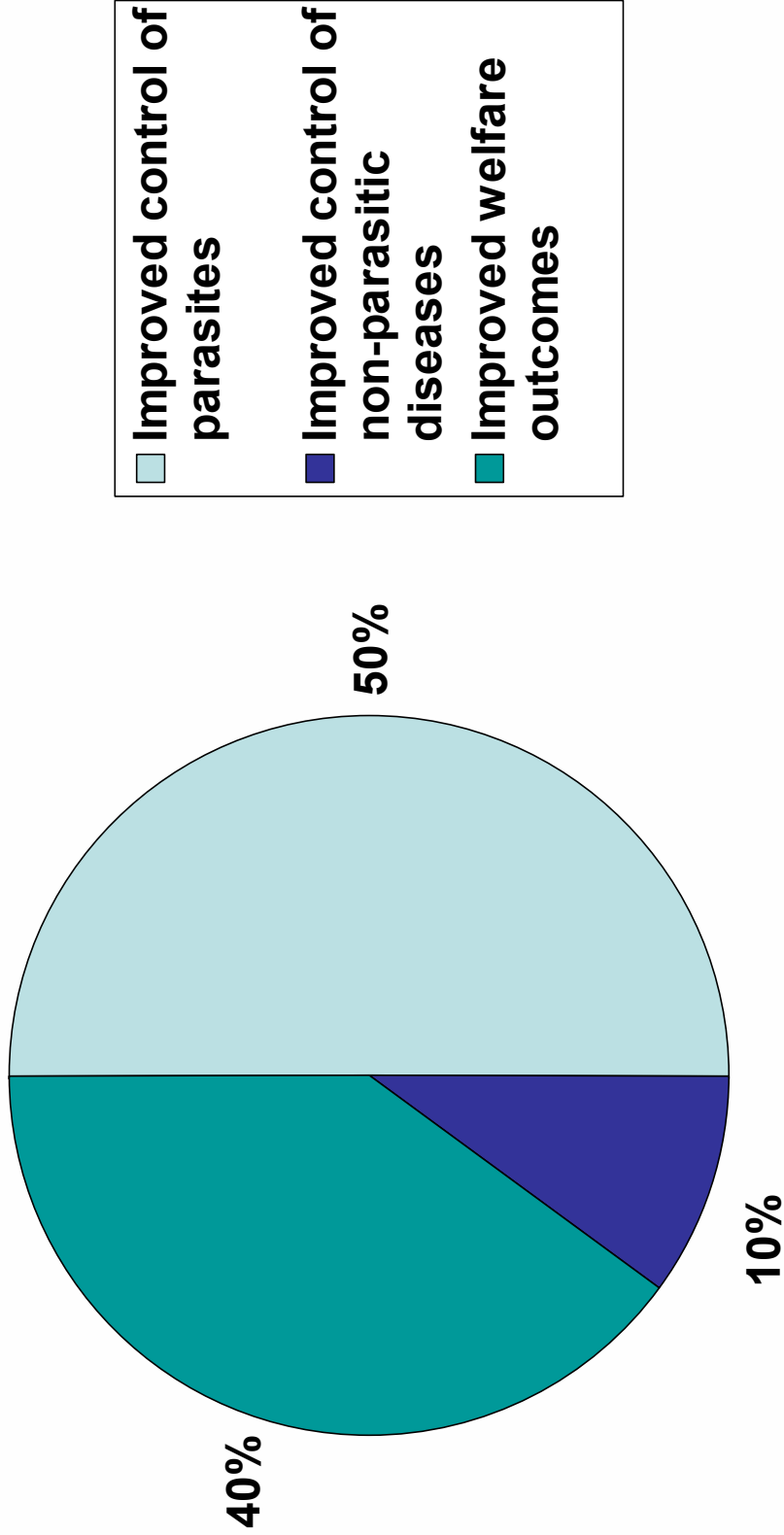


# Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Plan 2007-12

## *Program Goal*

- AWI will successfully address current and future animal welfare related issues, including:
  - By December 2008 100% of woolgrowers who conventionally mules their own sheep will have had access to the accreditation training package through the National Mulesing Accreditation Program
  - By 2010 100% of woolgrowers who previously carried out surgical mulesing will have adopted a new technology for breech fly strike control
  - By 2012, 30% of woolgrowers will have increased neonatal and weaner lamb survival to at least 85%
- By 2012, 30% or 12,000 woolgrowers and 200 service providers will have adopted an AWI innovation that has reduced the national on-farm economic impact of internal and external parasites by \$100 million annually

# Animal Health & Welfare Program Budget



Total budget 2007-08 \$4.5m

# Today's Presentation

- Results of MLA survey of perceptions of animal welfare
- Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Plan
- Projects to address high priority welfare issues
- Projects to address lower priority welfare issues

# Mulesing

## *Aim*

- Improve and replace current mulesing practices through a combination of accreditation, new products and breeding options

# **National Mulesing Assurance Program (NMAP)**

A positive initiative demonstrating that Australian woolgrowers are committed to the highest standard of animal welfare



# **National Mulesing Assurance Program (NMAP)**

Important as part of discussions with retailers

Now a requirement in the national animal welfare codes

Progressing well – over 700 accredited





• australian wool  
**innovation** • limited

# Welfare study

## Conclusion for clips

*“ ... the clip treatment has only a mild impact on the biology of lambs and thus the welfare risks are considered relatively minor...”*



# Parasite Control

## *Aim*

- Develop new extension materials, tools and products for use by woolgrowers and their advisors to reduce the economic impact of internal and external parasites

## *Projects*

- Extension of IPM strategies
- Improved test to monitor worm burdens in sheep
- Fungal bio-pesticide for control of lice
- Identification of novel targets for development of new anthelmintics and insecticides
- Lice detection test

# Shelter

- Issue raised by both producers and welfare groups
- Important for the survival of ewes and lambs, especially during inclement weather
- Addressed through lamb and weaner survival program in new Sheep CRC

# Tail Docking

- Essential for flystrike control
- Most recent survey of Australian sheep producers in 2002
  - 50% sheep docked with rubber ring
  - 27% sheep docked with gas knife
  - 22% sheep docked by knife or shears
  - 52% dock at recommended joint
- Welfare outcome (behaviour and cortisol)
  - Gas knife > rings > knife

# Tail Docking (cont'd)

- Phasing out of mulesing presents an opportunity to improve tail docking
- As part of development of alternatives to mulesing AWI has developed a modified gas knife
- Use of this and improved technique will be promoted alongside the mulesing alternatives

# Today's Presentation

- Results of MLA survey of perceptions of animal welfare
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The breeding ewe plays a pivotal role in the wool production system

It makes good sense to have her in the right condition at the right time as her condition affects;

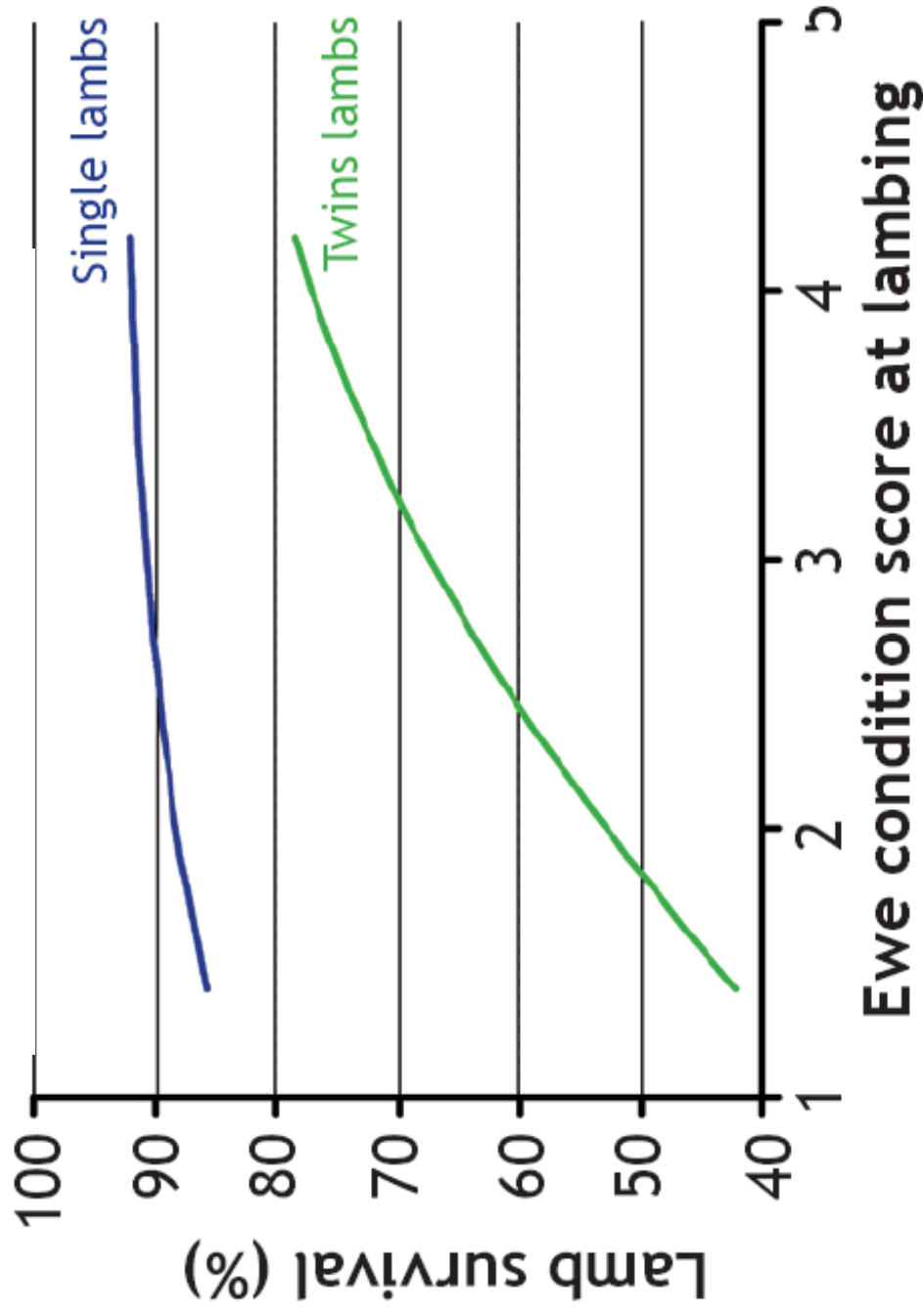
- **reproduction levels and lamb survival**
- **wool production of herself and her progeny**
- **pasture utilisation and efficient use of feed resources**

lifetimewool has a series of ewe and pasture targets that increase productivity and profitability of the Merino sheep enterprise for regions across southern Australia

**lifetime**wool

more lambs, better wool, healthy ewes

## Ewe condition at lambing and lamb survival



# Predation by foxes and feral dogs

- Ranked highly as a welfare issue by producers
- Estimated to cost >\$30m annually
- AWI will continue to work with the Invasive Animals CRC for a more humane toxicant to replace 1080



# Summary

- AWI's Animal Health & Welfare Strategic Plan aims to reduce economic cost of disease and to address priority welfare issues
- Some conditions are both of high economic cost and a welfare issue
- Generally speaking, producers and welfare groups are in agreement as to the high priority welfare issues
- AWI is making progress in several areas, including alternatives to mulesing, improved parasite control, tail docking, ewe nutrition and predation