

DGSSA GOAT INFORMATION DAY 7.11.2015

HERD RECORDING, BIOSECURITY, NUTRITION

South Australia is embracing the Year of Herd Recording with gusto! The Branch has put on a first Information Day, primarily to highlight the benefits and economic advantages of HR.

PIRSA generously offered a venue at their rooms at Murray Bridge and the gathered group included commercial, stud and miniature interests. The goat fraternity came together and showed a united vision of the industry and where we are all headed, albeit along different paths.

The speaker from Dairy Express had to pull out at the last minute for health reasons but John Falkenhagen very confidently stepped in and gave a very thorough insight to the economic gains to be had from using HR as a genetic herd improvement tool as well as for building the reputation and \$value of progeny. From the commercial producer's point of view alone, the factories are now looking to the quality of the milk available rather than the quantity and to survive on the international market scene, we are putting ourselves at a distinct disadvantage if do not embrace every tool to make our product the best.

John went on to explain how to read herd test data. For so long we have all thought that milk testing of any sort relied on the percentage of butterfat and there it stopped. John pointed out the importance of looking beyond the BF and using protein and schematic cell counts as equal indicators of milk and herd health. Even the Production Index (PI) on the data sheet can be used as an effective culling tool to indicate individual lactation performances.

Drawing on the round-table discussion about individual experiences with herd recording, it would appear that there is great interest from all sectors to delve further and build on the presentation and take HR to greater heights in South Australia.

Following on Herd Recording we had an equally thought-provoking presentation by Jeremy Rogers, PIRSA, about biosecurity, focussing on goat diseases, CAE in particular.

Animal Health Australia has recently produced an excellent fact sheet on CAE (see www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au). It is a two-page publication and very informative.

Jeremy was a little taken back by the common thought across the represented sectors in the room, that all groups represented are already engaged in preventative and eradication programs, and had been for some time, and are supportive of national programs to rid the country completely of this disease. Many European countries have already achieved a CAE-free status and again if we all want to continue to compete commercially on the international market, we too have to strive to meet this world standard.

The presentations for the day concluded with Anthony Pearce, Animal Nutritionist, telling us what we should be looking at to get the best return on our feeding programs. Anthony

brought in all the factors such as season, stage of lactation, stage of life, stage of gestation to indicate that one regime is not a fix-all for all occasions and locations.

It is a very complicated subject indeed and then combined with the information taken away from John's presentation, a lot of very full heads came away from what can only be classed as a total success. The day was billed as an information day and that was what was given. Very, very worthwhile for all sectors of the dairy goat industry.