

CONFINEMENT FEEDING

THE RESOURCES FOR CONFINEMENT FEEDING CAN BE THE SAME AS THOSE FOR LOT FEEDING LAMBS.

AIMS

- Preserve existing ground cover
- Facilitate pasture establishment
- Deliver feed resources to meet animal requirements

SITE SELECTION

- Conveniently located near handling facilities, feed storage, and water source
- Located far enough from residences to avoid nuisance
- Avoid pollution of waterways and groundwater
- 2-5% slope to allow run-off but limit erosion
- Preferably on a soil type that facilitates compaction
- Pen size of approximately 1500m² is optimal
- Allow for modular expansion
- Exclude existing trees or provide protection to the drip line

GROUP DYNAMICS

- Allow approximately 5m²/head for adult sheep
- Segregate sheep into cohorts likely to compete comfortably e.g. weight range <10%
- Group size preferably <350 head
- Identify, segregate, and manage any sick or poorly adapted individuals as early as possible

FEED TROUGHS

- Allow 2-5cm/head self-feeder space with ad lib access
- Allow 30cm/head trough space with adequate capacity
- Design troughs to prevent soiling e.g. bars or strained wires to prevent ingress

WATER

- Water is a valuable resource in dry times
- Low volume, rapid recharge troughs are preferred
- Place water troughs near the bottom of the pen, well away from feed
- Allow 1cm/head access
- Water requirement will typically be 4-6 litres/kg dry matter

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

- Recommendations will vary according to wool length
- Ensure full vaccination for enterotoxaemia (initially 2 shots 4-6 weeks apart); if sheep have not had a shot for >3 months before entry, administer a booster
- Drench if indicated; sheep may have little resilience due to nutritional stress &/or may have been close grazing prior to entry causing an increased likelihood of a worm burden
- Transition from confinement to pasture should be appropriately managed

GET IN TOUCH

0447 649 020

info@kojonupfeeds.com.au
www.kojonupfeeds.com.au

23368 Albany Highway,
Kojonup, WA 6395

CONFINEMENT FEEDING

CONTINUED

NUTRITION

- Kojonup Feeds Finisher Pellets can be used to provide energy, protein, and mineral requirements
- Kojonup Feeds Confinement Pellets are a safer option where full adherence to these management guidelines is not practicable
- Kojonup Feeds pellets are grain-based products and feeding practices need to follow established grain feeding guidelines to ensure a good outcome
- A separate source of roughage should be available at all times. Hayracks will avoid a lot of wastage; they can be as simple as a perimeter of weldmesh
- Once feeding of pellets has begun, they should be available at all times (self-feeders) or consistently available according to the feeding schedule (troughs)
- If pellet feeding is interrupted, re-introduction should be followed (self-feeders) or feeding rate temporarily decreased to an appropriate level (troughs)
- Introduce sheep to confinement feeding by placing ad lib good quality hay/haylage in the pen for the first 7 days; allow 24-48 hours to allow sheep to familiarise with the environment and fill up on hay; when satisfied that sheep are settled and full, fill the feeders with pellets or feed the allotment of pellets in troughs
- From 7 days, provide good quality straw in place of hay/haylage
- Feed pellets at a rate to maintain body condition or meet the desired level of performance
- Pellet allowance should typically be increased gradually in 50-100g increments every day to the second day over a 14-day period; pellets can also be trail fed as an introduction prior to confinement

ANIMAL HEALTH

- Shy feeders are those that fail to adequately adapt to the system. Numbers are minimised by following sound management principles
- Acidosis ('grain poisoning') can occur if the introduction to pellets is too abrupt or there is an interruption to access to pellets
- Enterotoxaemia ('pulpy kidney') can cause insidious deaths of the best individuals in a group or an outbreak in sheep with inadequate immunity
- Salmonellosis can occur due to faecal contamination of feed by birds, vermin, or asymptomatic carrier sheep
- Pregnancy toxaemia can occur in individuals with inadequate feed intake
- Hypocalcaemia can occur in late pregnant ewes depending on the level of intake of various feeds. The pellets contain a high level of calcium but provision of a loose lick is justified for heavily conditioned ewes carrying multiples in the last month of pregnancy

PELLET STORAGE

- For information on storing pellets, please see guide to pellet storage.

MORE INFORMATION

- Google "Feeding and Managing Sheep in Dry Times" published by the Department of Agriculture and Food for comprehensive guidelines or go to the URL below:
- <https://researchlibrary.agric.wa.gov.au/bulletins/112/>

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