Transcription details:

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| Date: | 6-Apr-2016 |
| Input sound file: | Precision Sheep Management |

Transcription results:

**0:00 (playful instrumental music)**

0:16 We're on the Kirby Research Station

0:18 at the University of New England.

0:20 It's about an 800 hectare property

0:23 which runs predominantly sheep,

0:25 but some grazing cattle as well.

0:31 The RFID tag, which is the way

0:33 in which we identify individual animals

0:35 is an electronic means for us to automatically

0:39 record that individual animal rather than

0:41 to have to read one-by-one an e.Tag

0:44 and write that e.Tag down which is traditionally

0:46 what has been done.

0:51 In the past, sheep producers have only been able

0:53 to manage their flocks on a group basis

0:56 and because we didn't have any way

0:57 of individually identifying animals,

0:59 that was sufficient in terms of time and labor,

1:02 all we could ever gather was mob average information.

1:05 We now have access

1:06 to radio frequency identification technology in these tags.

1:11 So, that information that comes from that tag

1:14 allows us to identify the individual accurately,

1:17 and you'll be surprised at how inaccurate tags are

1:20 when people are reading tags in a race.

1:24 So, with the use of RFID technology,

1:27 we can now actually put a tag in the sheep's ear

1:30 and have an individual electronic identification number

1:33 for every animal in the flock.

1:35 So, this technology has taken the producers

1:37 a huge distance in terms of their ability

1:39 to manage animals.

1:46 So, my main role here is really

1:48 to be collecting data.

1:50 And to do that, it's essential that each sheep

1:52 has an individual electronic ID.

1:54 I collect all sorts of information on them

1:56 regarding their weight, any health problems they may have,

2:00 how many lambs they're having.

2:02 You name it and we collect it

2:03 even down to how many teeth they've got.

2:11 It's a technology which has been around for a long time.

2:14 I guess the most familiar way in which it's used

2:17 is probably the people who've got cats and dogs.

2:19 An implant in those cats and dogs

2:21 which identifies them.

2:22 That technology is the same technology

2:25 as we're now applying in livestock.

2:27 So, the radio frequency identification tag

2:29 has a little transponder in it, which is excited

2:32 when we put a tag right up beside it.

2:34 It's 16-digit number that's individual

2:37 for every tag that's produced in Australia.

2:40 Animal welfare is a really important part

2:42 of the research that we do here.

2:43 And a lot of the information that we collect

2:45 can be used to improve the animals' welfare.

2:48 So, if a sheep is continually fly struck,

2:51 we record that and we look

2:52 at the reasons why she might be fly struck.

2:54 So, using that information, we can then look

2:56 at other sheep which have similar traits

2:59 to the ewe involved.

3:00 And we know that we should be able

3:01 to pull them out and treat them

3:03 to prevent them from getting fly struck as well.

3:06 We have the capacities to put what are at the moment,

3:09 fairly large tags on the animals

3:11 that can actually monitor from GPS satellites

3:15 the position of the animals.

3:17 We have the capacities to manage pasture.

3:21 The technology's changing so quickly

3:23 that my guess is within five years,

3:25 a lot of that technology is possibly

3:27 to be used on properties.

3:29 My job would be impossible

3:31 without the technology that we have.

3:33 It would take far too long to record

3:35 all this information about each individual sheep,

3:38 and they'd be too much error involved

3:39 with reading an e.Tag and writing it down.

3:42 Information gives you a lot of power

3:44 to make decisions.

3:45 You make really good informed decisions.

3:47 The best thing about my job is I get

3:49 to be outside a lot, and that's really great

3:51 on the beautiful sunny days that we have

3:53 up in the New England.

3:54 And then, when it's raining, I get to go inside

3:56 and do some report writing

3:57 which suits be perfectly. (laughs)