



## CopRice Intensive Lamb Finishing Protocol

**COPRICE LAMB FINISHER** is manufactured using cereal grain, grain by-products (brans and pollard), protein meal, salt, minerals, vitamins and rumen buffers. It is a complete feed that does not require the concurrent use of additional minerals, lick blocks, or loose licks. It is a requirement for lambs to be fed **Coprice Lamb Finisher** in conjunction with good quality hay or straw (referred to as roughage). Roughage intake is essential for sound rumen function, and aids in the prevention of acidosis. Acidosis is a major cause of poor feed conversion, mortality, and losses in profitability. It is very important that the following steps are undertaken, to ensure that your flock is conditioned to adapt to Coprice Lamb Finisher and avoid the incidence of acidosis.

### Preparation

- Vaccinate all animals 14 days prior to feedlot entry with 6 in 1 vaccination to ensure lambs have adequate time to build up immunity before confinement.
- Inject with vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and vitamin A, D& E.
- Drench all animals prior to feedlot entry with a combination of no less than four unrelated drench actives, with one of these being monepantel (Zolvix). This can be done using multi-active (combination) and/or single-active products concurrently: up the race with one product, then up the race again with the next. Do not mix different drenches unless the label states you can, as different products may be incompatible. Hold the sheep in quarantine in yards (small mobs) or a secure paddock (larger mobs) for at least three days to allow worm eggs present at the time of drenching to pass out of the gut.
- Correct any known deficiencies related to selenium or copper. This should be completed on recommendation from a veterinarian and injected in conjunction with vaccinations and drenches. Sheep producers should not supplement their stock concurrently with lick blocks containing trace minerals while feeding Coprice Lamb Finisher.
- Shear all lambs with more than 15mm wool prior to feedlot entry.
- Ensure that water troughs are thoroughly cleaned prior to feedlot entry. During confinement feeding, water on offer must clean, cool and freely available.
- If possible pre-condition lambs before entry to allow lambs to become accustomed to yards, social interaction with mob, build up immunity and become familiar with feeding equipment.

### Pen Preparation

- If possible, draft lambs into mobs of bodyweight ranges of no more than 4kg .
- Target mobs of 200 head per pen; adequate feeder space for each pen is as important. Maximum mob size should not exceed 500 head per pen.
- Design pen size to allocate approximately 5m<sup>2</sup> per head.



- Allow access to a minimum of 2.5cms per head of water trough space. Ensure water flow allows for the allocation of water intake at 6-7 litres per kg of dry matter consumed. Ideally trough input flow should allow 1L/second.
- Allow access to a minimum of 7.5cms/head for cross-bred lambs and 10cms/head for merinos of feed trough space.

#### Induction – Stage 1

- Provide each pen with access to ad-lib hay for the first 2 days prior to pellet feeding, to ensure 'gut fill' before the introduction of pellets.
- Feed good quality hay that is palatable, mould free and highly digestible, legume dominant hay has shown good gains during the induction period (first 14 days). **See footnote.**
- Introduce pellet at 100g/head/day by trail feeding.
- Allow access to restricted use of a self-feeder. Feeder should allow some allocation of pellets, but be tightened to restrict flow as much as possible.
- Increase pellet offering on trail feed by 50g/head/day until lambs are **all consuming** 700g/hd/day. The dietary increase in pellet allocation from 100g to 700g should take a minimum of 14 days.
- Once lambs are consuming 700g on trail feed, slowly increase self-feeder setting every 2-3 days until lambs have ad-libitum access to pellets. When lambs have ad-libitum access to self feeders, discontinue trail feeding. Note: initial induction to discontinuation of trail feeding should take 14-21 days. Shortcuts in the induction phase will result in poor performance and longer time on feed reducing profit.
- Producers should monitor lambs feeding behaviour for first 2 or 3 days once consuming full ration. Ideal feeding behaviour should be observed within the pen and is displayed as groups of lamb on the feeders, on hay rings, on water troughs and resting/ruminating (cud chewing). Remove or isolate shy feeders and sick animals as soon as they are observed.

#### Induction – Stage 2

- Once lambs are being offered target amount of pellet (40kg x-bred lamb will eat approx. 1.3-1.5kg/hd day in the finisher phase), feed low nutrient roughage such as cereal hay or straw until lambs reach target weights. This should account for 15-20% of the diet. High quality legume/pasture hay must be removed from the feedlot during phase two of induction.
- Ensure ad libitum access to cereal roughage and pellets remain available at all times. Lambs without access to feed, for even as brief as 6 hours, are at high risk of developing acidosis and reduced feed conversion efficiency.
- Monitor feed intake on self-feeders and clean trays daily of spoiled or stale feed.
- Monitor water cleanliness and clean water troughs daily.
- **Continue until desired live weights are achieved.**



FOOTNOTE; Gut fill is important during the transition period, it is important to offer a high quality source of hay when pellet intake is restricted. It is equally important to remove the source of high quality hay when lambs are fully inducted onto grain based ration. Failure to remove palatable source of hay will result in reduced daily weight gains through restriction of caloric intake. Failure to provide palatable and digestible source of hay during the first phase of induction may result in weight losses and an increased acidosis risk.

### **Practical Tips**

- Never allow pellets in feeders to become stale. Remove saliva and manure soiled feed from troughs as soon as possible.
- Ensure a fibre source of cereal straw or equivalent is available at all times. It is imperative to replace fibre source prior to it running out.
- Ensure pellets are always available. Never allow self-feeders to run out. If feeders do run out of feed for a period of 24 hours or more, immediately reduce access to pellets and re-start feedlot induction protocol.
- Ensure water troughs are cleaned as regularly as possible, best practice is to clean water troughs daily.
- Monitor and remove shy feeders from pens. Shy feeders may be fed in smaller groups with additional trough space on offer or trail fed in a small paddock. Best practice is to remove shy feeders from intensive feeding systems to prevent economic losses.
- All lambs should remain on low grain rations until ALL lambs are consuming pellets.
- If lambs present with symptoms of acidosis, immediately reduce pellet intake, and increase the supply of highly digestible roughage until symptoms desist.