



Central watering point cuts down stock travel

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Producers: Frank and Tracy Kenny

Location: Elliston

Property Area: 2,626ha

Enterprise: 2,000 self replacing Merino flock and 1,000 wethers

Annual Rainfall: 400mm

Feed wastage due to paddock size and the long distances stock had to travel for water was an issue on Frank and Tracy Kenny's property at Elliston. However, feed utilisation has been improved following the addition of a central watering point.

A single 650ha paddock had never been fully grazed, as sheep had to travel up to 6km from one end back to a single watering point at the other end. The trough is currently located at the southern end of the paddock and the sheep tend to graze into the southerly winds.

This results in overgrazing of the southern end of the paddock while leaving feed in other areas of the paddock virtually untouched.

Manipulating grazing habits using watering points

In September 2007, Frank decided to change his sheep's grazing habits by installing an additional watering point in the centre of the paddock. A 5,000 litre poly header tank was used to supply water to a new 2.4m long concrete trough.

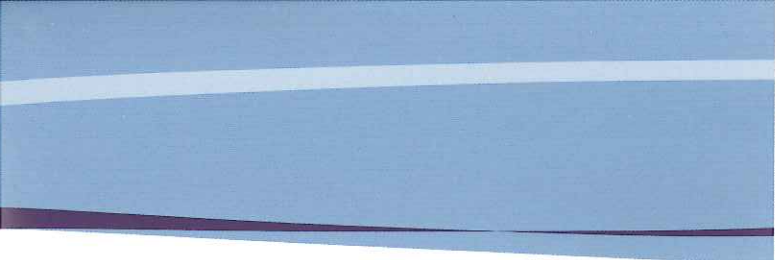
Frank was also keen to see how a large mob watered from a small trough with high flow rates compared with the existing 9.6m long trough.



40mm float valve provides high flow rate.



Frank with new 2.4m trough and header tank in the background.



A 3km run of 32mm ID rural B' class poly pipe was partially trenched-in and provides water to the tank. This then feeds into the trough through 40mm ID rural B' class poly to ensure a good flow rate into the trough and reduced mob watering times.

Water flows into the tank at a rate of 0.1L/sec, which provides about 8-9000 litres per day. The flow rate into the trough is 0.7L/sec, allowing a large mob to water quickly.

The total cost of water improvements was \$4,500, which equates to \$6.90 per hectare. To pay for the improvements in one year Frank would have to increase his stocking rate by 0.34DSE/ha from the current 1.08DSE/ha to 1.42DSE/ha.

Simple whole farm water system

Frank has one main bore on the property, which he uses to pump water 4km to a tank on a high point. From this tank he gravitates the water to other tanks and troughs on the property.

Effect on feed utilisation

The paddock was set stocked with 400 Merino wethers with both watering points made available for the stock. Normally 600 would be run but the number has been cut back due to the dry seasons.

While Frank is yet to turn off the original water point so the new central trough is their single drinking source, he has noticed the shorter distances to water has already had an impact on their grazing patterns. More feed is being utilised at the northern end of the paddock, where previously feed was left untouched.

The aim over the coming years is to gradually increase stocking rates which is a key profit driver. This will be achieved by further increasing feed utilisation through subdividing the paddock into 3 or 4 smaller paddocks and implementing a rotational grazing system. Until the fencing is complete Frank will be able to graze the paddock by water points just by having one point on at a time.



Current 9.6m trough in southern end of paddock.

