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A calendar of farming operations for cereal and sheep areas of Western Australia

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia

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A Calendar of Farming Operations for Cereal and Sheep Areas of Western Australia

Areas Receiving 11 in.-30 in. Annual Rainfall — 7 in.-23 in. Growing Period (May-October) Rainfall

This calendar of farm operations for the Cereal and Sheep areas replaces the calendar published in the December 1949 issue of the Journal of Agriculture and reprinted as a leaflet. This leaflet was subsequently reprinted twice with some amendments.

The present edition has been completely revised not only to cover more up to date recommendations, but to include recommendations for the handling of new land in the cropping section and beef cattle in the stock section. The recommendations are also designed to cover the part of the Agricultural areas lying approximately between the 11 and 30 inch isohyets, that is, the area bounded by the Southern Cross, Esperance, Mount Barker, Boyup Brook and Northampton districts.

The range of growing period (May to October) rainfall is approximately seven to 23 inches.

It is obviously not possible to include full recommendations within the compass of this calendar and references to Departmental leaflets have therefore been included so that these can be obtained for further reading. These leaflets are reprints of articles published in the Journal, and in each case the number given in brackets, e.g. (2847) refers to the number of a leaflet dealing with the particular topic. In the case of No. 2847, it is the Drenching of Sheep.

Copies of these leaflets are available free on application to the Department. Those who keep the Journal can check the month of publication of the article by reference to the list of leaflets published in the December issue each year.

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February


If not already done, have all seed grain well graded and dry pickled with an organic mercury compound (2165). If sufficient summer rains received, plough or cultivate land for ensuing season's seeding. Check machinery required for seeding. In early districts, burning-off of newly cleared areas can be carried out as soon as declared burning season opens (2706). Check firebreaks and notify local fire authority before burning.

March


Complete burning-off on new land areas. "Scratched-in" crops of oats on stubble land can be seeded dry. If rain pending late in month burn off pasture paddocks intended for cropping.

Sheep—Drench weaners

Follow up drench for weaners where necessary. Regular inspection—supplementary feeding of weaners to commence. Remove rams.

Cattle—Management; early autumn calving

Sheep—Crutching; mules operation; inoculation; supplementary feeding

Crutch all sheep especially mated ewes around the udder (1091). Mules operation and tail stripping on freshly crutched ewe weaners. Tail strip wether weaners (2394). Inoculate against pulpy kidney (Entero-toxaemia) (2438). Supplementary feeding of weaners at increased rates. Pre-natal supplementary feeding of ewes to commence six weeks before lambs are due. Ensure a rising plane of nutrition (2758). Chose water same as for February. Dry cattle may need supplements also.

Cattle—Management; autumn calving

Ewe flock to be drenched against worms with Phenothiazine. Maintain supplementary feeding of weaners and cows with calves at foot. Supplementary feed to dry cattle.

April


Pasture land to be cropped without fallow should be burnt and can be ploughed (plough is better than scarifier) if, and after sufficient rain received for weed germination. Cultivate ordinary fallow areas. After rain, plough back new land fallow areas. Fire burn where necessary. Carry out root picking: use of root chains can be highly advantageous (2507, 2706, 2875). Plant early feed crops but delay main seeding on established areas until next month. Early seeding of new land can be carried out with later maturing varieties. First crops on new land should receive 1 bag per acre of Super-Copper-Zinc fertiliser. In some areas, 1 to 1 cwt. of Sulphate of Ammonia can be economic (2880, 2574, 2871).

Sheep—Lambing; lamb marking

Lambing ewes on good rations. Twice daily inspection of lambing flock (2773). Mark young in temporary yards under hygiene conditions. Cut tails level with tip of vulva in ewes and equivalent in wethers. Mules and tail-strip lambs if desired. Ensure all cattle have adequate bulk. Main mating for autumn calving.

Cattle—Management; mating

Pasture establishment

Sow new pastures as early as possible but moist seed bed preferred, particularly in drier areas (2579, 2529). Use good seed, liberal superphosphate, especially with new land, and inoculate seed, particularly on new land and where correct bacterial strain unlikely to be present. Lime pelleting of inoculated seed recommended, especially with early seeding and under dry conditions (2804). Complete March recommendations.

May

Main seeding month...

Sow cereal varieties in strict order of maturity and suitability to districts. With ploughed up pasture land seeding, if necessary, to ensure adequate weed control with wheat there should be an interval of about 2 weeks between initial cultivation and planting to ensure good webworm control and diminish root rot incidence. New land should be seeded as early as possible (see April also).

Sheep—Lambing; lamb marking

Lambing ewes on good rations. Twice daily inspection of lambing flock (2773). Mark young in temporary yards under hygiene conditions. Cut tails level with tip of vulva in ewes and equivalent in wethers. Mules and tail-strip lambs if desired. Ensure all cattle have adequate bulk. Main mating for autumn calving.

Cattle—Management and mating

Pasture establishment and management

Sow pastures as for April. Avoid over-grazing newly sown pastures—use green cereal fodder, self sown and renovating crops or hand feeding for preference. Light grazing of new pastures will retard grass competition until onset of cold weather. Follow up January rabbit control measures (2764).
### A calendar of Farming Operations for Cereal and Sheep Areas of Western Australia—continued

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<th>MONTH</th>
<th>CROPPING</th>
<th>SHEEP AND CATTLE</th>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Completing of cropping. Fallowing</td>
<td>Sheep—Lamb marking; supplementary feeding</td>
<td>Pasture management...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In main cereal areas restrict plantings to early maturing types. Clean and store seeding machinery, order parts required. Inspect crops for non-emergence (2869, 2895) and spray for webworm control where necessary (2555, 2760). Commence fallowing—early fallow is better than late, particularly in drier areas. With new land a good ploughing with complete inversion of the sod is essential to expose soil root zone (2507, 2875, 2796).</td>
<td>Complete lamb marking. Ewes and lambs on best pasture. Continue supplementary feeding to weaners and lactating ewes in late seasons</td>
<td>Rotate grazing as much as possible—fresh grazing is best for stock and also permits best pasture development. Suitable time for rabbit fumigation and warren ripping (2764).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Fallowing in drier areas. Land clearing and general attention to improvements</td>
<td>Sheep—Preparation for shearing; pre-shearing crutching; culling prior to shearing</td>
<td>Pasteure management...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue fallowing as required. Inspect crop for noxious weeds (turnip and radish). Prepare for spraying and spray if necessary (2658, 2779). Early clearing of new land areas very desirable. Carry out renovations, renewals, etc., to plant and permanent improvements</td>
<td>Prepare shed, yards and gear for shearing (2440). Order spare parts, wool packs, hooks, branding fluid, etc. A pre-shearing “clean up” crutching is usually warranted. Cull maiden ewe flock (2645). Use scales for accurate culling on fleece weight. Mark evis for later identification. Book ram requirements. Use dry cattle in particular to graze down dominant grass paddocks</td>
<td>As for June—growth often slow this month. Towards end of month, select and close-off from stock paddocks intended for meadow hay. Roll hay paddocks with heavy roller to provide good mowing condition (2496).</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Sheep—Shearing; weaning; marketing fat lambs; drenching</td>
<td>Pasteure management...</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attention to early fallowed land if weedy but use stock in preference to cultivation. Check hay-making machinery and conserved fodder requirements for coming year. Continue clearing of new land and fallowing in later districts. Order at least portion of next season's fertiliser supplies</td>
<td>Shearing (2409, 2721). Draft sheep into groups—wethers, ewes, lambs. Do not yard for more than 24 hours without feed—long periods without feed and water cause Hypocalceamia (2485). Wool brand shorn sheep with appropriate coloured sro-mark (2630). Wool classing. Avoid over-skirting and overclassing (2635). Use standard bale markings. Weaning—early weaning 12-14 weeks is best. Give weaners best paddocks, Drench weaners. Market fat lambs—use scales and select drafts at 60-70 lb. liveweight (2432).</td>
<td>Generally this month pastures can be heavily grazed with frequent changes desirable. Grass dominant pasture paddocks intended to be cropped next year should receive most concentrated grazing—cattle and dry sheep useful here, but ewes and lambs should have best quality grazing. Control grass and cereal cover crop growth in newly sown clover pasture. Spring sowings of in-corne In main cereal-growing areas (2374).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Attention to fallow. Hay and silage making. Land clearing. Summer fodder crops</td>
<td>Sheep—Dipping; market fat lambs</td>
<td>Pasteure management...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultivate fallows but only when absolutely necessary (see August). Cut cereals for all go or early hay (later part of month). Cereal silage should be made at or before flowering. Cereal hay</td>
<td>Sheep must be dipped within 6 weeks of shearing (2333). Allow 1-2 weeks for shearing to heal. Use approved dipping fluid according to maker's instruction. Complete dipping declaration</td>
<td>Pasture management similar patterns as for August. Do not graze newly sown clover pastures during flowering and seed setting period. Pasture silage should be cut before full flower. Meadow paddocks...</td>
</tr>
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October

Haymaking. Early harvesting. Summer fodder crops

Cart hay as soon as dry enough. Bale hay can be carted sooner than sheaf. Finalise insurance of standing crops. Arrange contract grain carting. Complete firebreaks around crops. Check all grain harvesting machinery; some early harvesting of oats may be possible but too early harvesting not desirable. Continue clearing operations if conditions right. Plough good firebreaks around areas to be fired late summer-early autumn. Main sowing summer fodder crops

Cattle—Management; fodder conservation

Larger quantities of hay required for cattle than sheep. Provide adequate quantities of good quality hay and silage

Sheep—Shearing (late districts)

Weaners should be given best grazing. Fatten cull ewes for off shears sales. Keep ewes in good store condition. Arrange for good paddock grazing and ample supplies of good water for spring calving cows. Complete hay-making for cattle

Hay-making

Hay should be cut when grass is in full flower and just prior to wilting stage for clovers. Very grassy paddocks or portions thereof not required for hay should be mown and left "in situ"—providing better quality summer grazing as well as controlling grass dominance (2453, 2690). Cultivate firebreaks around pasture paddocks.

November

Completion of hay cutting. Harvesting

"Rogue" stud seed plots for admixture and later harvest carefully to maintain purity. Complete hay carting. Plough firebreaks on new land

Cattle—Spring calving; management; fodder conservation

Grazing management

Hay-making. Pasture management

All hay-making operations should be completed this month except possibly in the late districts. Topped pastures should be windrowed in wetter districts. Hay baling should always be done as soon as possible after cutting. Cart early rather than late for best quality hay. Avoid overgrazing Wimmera rye grass paddocks to permit seed setting and especially with areas required for seed production. Harvest W.A. Lupins in early districts.

December

Completion of harvest in main districts

Harvesting should be completed in all but later maturing districts. Complete grain carting as soon as possible. Some seed grading by contract carried out. Reserve extra supplies earlier maturing varieties against late opening of season. Thatch or otherwise protect all haystacks

Sheep—Mating

Mate in small mobs and where possible use small paddocks. All ewes for plenty of shade and good water. Use 2-3% rams and if possible 2-4% for maiden ewes. Mate males separately—preferably a 1:1:1 ratio later than the main flock. Cut and left ("topped") pastures very suitable for all cattle, particularly cows with calves at foot. Cattle require ample good water at all times

Cattle—Management

Grazing management

Pasture seed harvesting. Rabbit control

Pastures provide good grazing, stubbles also become available. Check firebreaks and fire-fighting equipment. Clover seed harvesting can commence in early districts (2690). Order pasture seed supplies (2424, 2417, 2576, 2714, 2529, 2743). Rabbit control measures during summer months (2749).
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