

# Allambie Field Day

A Field Day at *Allambie* in the Paroo Catchment was held in early May - a very big thank you to Brett McDonald and Cathy Zwick for hosting the day, which was very successful with some attendees travelling over four hours to be there.

The discussion part of the day was held in the shearing shed with penned-up goats bleating in the background (see right) - this made for a very engaging atmosphere! Brett and Cathy are very conscious of their environment, and manage their property to maintain good ground cover wherever possible. The day demonstrated just how well they are managing in this particularly challenging time of drought. Some rain clouds did develop on the day, however despite unanimous encouragement from all, they unfortunately did not produce the goods.

Mother of millions is the primary weed of concern on *Allambie*, and Brett and Cathy have been working hard to control this invasive plant which chokes out grasses and is toxic to animals. The infestation is now considered to be controllable, and the lessons learnt along the way include ensuring that wetting agents are used appropriately to avoid having to respray. The major pest animal issue at hand is wild dogs, and this was discussed at length by attendees. *Allambie* uses a range of tools to manage this problem, including baiting, trapping, shooting and utilising electric fences. *Allambie* will soon be also implementing the new Canid Ejectors (see page 19 for more details), and feral pigs and cats are also targeted at peak times of the year.

The electric fence discussion was comprehensive and included a break down of costs and effectiveness of the range of designs that have been developed over the years. The key lesson here was that electric fencing does require ongoing maintenance, however it is significantly cheaper than full exclusion fencing. Vegetation control utilising goats and Dorper sheep was also an interesting subject - attendees compared a paddock which is fenced and utilised by goats and Dorsers to one next door where there is significant regrowth and thickening of mulga, which is overwhelming pasture species. The first paddock had a good mix of mulga and pasture.

*Allambie* is a registered Kalahari Red stud breeder, and produces a wide range of goats including Rangeland/Kalahari crosses, Boer/Kalahari crosses, Nubian/Kalahari crosses and Kalahari full bloods. The goats generated a lot of interest, and Julie Petty from Meat and Livestock Australia was on hand to discuss the goat industry and provide valuable information and direction on the wide range of support and assistance available. USBs were handed out to all attendees, and contained a great range of material including copies of each presentation, information on cactus issues in the Paroo system, a large selection of documents around goat production, plus information about the Paroo system.



Above: Penned Kalahari cross goats at *Allambie* serenaded Field Day attendees, and proved a popular topic of discussion for vegetation control.



Above: Julie Petty from MLA presenting in the picturesque woolshed at *Allambie* Station.