

Bridgetown Sheep Attacked by Lions!!!

Yes it's on again. The Bridgetown Lions Club is organising the annual sheep shearing weekend for small landholders in the district. On the weekend of the 15th and 16th of September volunteers and members of the Lions Club will be picking up, drenching, delousing and shearing over 1000 sheep from the Bridgetown and Greenbushes area for people who have flocks from 1 to 40 sheep.

If you want to be part of this weekend you can turn up at the Showgrounds any time on the weekend to help with the catering, in the yards or collecting and delivering sheep. If you can't make it you can donate food to feed the hungry, hardworking helpers.

If you want your sheep shorn etc you must book them in beforehand. You can do this either at Richfeeds, with the crew there, or by ringing Ann on 97611419 and leaving a message on the answering machine. It will cost you \$2 a sheep if you deliver them yourself (they still need to be booked in) or \$3 a sheep if you need someone to collect them. (2005 prices. May be more now!)

If you are having your sheep shorn you will need to make sure that they have been "dried out" for at least 24 hours before they are to be shorn. "Drying out" means that they are to have no food or water for the 24 hours. This is so that the volunteers and shearers who are working with the sheep are not working knee deep in sheep shit because if they have been eating beforehand this is what sheep do as soon as they are moved into the yards at the show grounds. So this means you need to be thinking about spraying, mowing or eating out your sheep penning area now so that there is no feed there in September when you want to pen your sheep.

Now is also the time to remember the promises you made to yourself after last year's shearing. Remember how you and all your family and neighbours had to chase your sheep round and round the paddock to try and pen them. Remember how once you thought you had them securely penned they jumped over or pushed through the temporary fencing you erected for your pen. Remember how when the volunteers came to collect your sheep they could not back up to the pen because it was in the wrong place. Remember how the sheep could not be loaded into the ute or trailer because you had no ramp. Remember how you and the volunteers had to chase your sheep all round your pen because it was too big. Remember how you promised to make changes to your pen as soon as the sheep came back.

All of these things may look funny on the home video but they are not funny at the time so now is definitely the time to make the changes. If you need advice please see the crew at Richfeeds or ask Ann when you ring to book in but the basics are

- make the pen out of strong material - eg weldmesh and star pickets work wonderfully
- make sure the pen is small enough so that your flock just fits it - there is no room for the sheep to move once the last gate is closed.
- make sure that a vehicle and trailer can easily manoeuvre when backing up to the ramp or gate way opening. The gate on the vehicle is always on the driver's side so make sure that matches with your gate opening.
- if you have a ramp built your sheep will be picked up first because the Lions Club only have 3 portable ramps which need to be carried to each location.
- when positioning your pen think about how you are going to get your sheep in. If you need to chase them make sure that there is a fence line and possibly a "funnel" and gate system that will enable you to easily move the sheep into the small pen at the end.
- think about "bucket training" your sheep with lupins so that they will follow you or begin feeding them now in the pen so that they get used to going into the small pen before the 15th and 16th of September.