# Media Release

**The Hon Ros Spence MP**
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers

Thursday, 25 September 2025

# NEW PASTURE RESEARCH TRIALS TO BOOST SHEEP PRODUCTIVITY

The Allan Labor Government is supporting a new research program at Agriculture Victoria's Hamilton SmartFarm, using next generation technology to help Australian farmers raise healthier, more productive flocks.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence announced that the *MultiMix* forage research program is now underway, to determine which combinations of multispecies pasture mixes work best for Australian sheep producers – research that will support meat sheep production while also cutting methane emissions.

The Government is investing $2.4 million to support Agriculture Victoria to officially launch the program, with additional support from Meat & Livestock Australia and the Zero Net Emissions Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre (ZNE-Ag CRC), bringing the total funding to $5.5 million to deliver the three-year program.

The Hamilton SmartFarm ensures our scientists remain at the forefront of agricultural research and can provide Victorian farmers with the skills and knowledge they need to continue to thrive in a changing climate.

This research will deliver important insights into the benefits of using mixed pastures as an alternative to perennial ryegrass, currently the main source of feed for Australian sheep farms. Globally, researchers are exploring diverse pasture mixes by blending different plant species to create more resilient and productive pastures.

Most of the research to date has been conducted in higher rainfall zones, so it's important to understand how well these pasture mixes will perform under drier Australian conditions.

These mixes can grow deeper roots, require less fertiliser, and may even help reduce enteric methane emissions from sheep and cattle. The goal of *MultiMix* is to find the right combination of plant types that are both productive even in drier seasons and can reduce methane emissions from grazing livestock.

The pasture trials started a couple a months ago, with 25 hectares of pasture trials already sown at the Hamilton SmartFarm as part of the first stage of the project and is ready for sheep to graze now.

The program is part of the Government's ongoing work to deliver cutting-edge agricultural research and innovation with industry, farmers and research institutions to test, trial and apply new ideas in Victorian conditions.

For more information, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/about/research/research-smartfarms

**Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence**

*"We're working with industry to invest in research that will deliver resilient pasture systems and support Victorian farmers to adapt to a changing climate, improve productivity and reduce emissions."*

*"This nation-leading research will help prepare sheep grazing pastures for future climates, to help farmers grow more and secure better returns."*

**Quotes attributable to Meat & Livestock Australia's General Manager for Research Development and Adoption, Sarah Strachan**

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*"In the face of increasingly variable climates and rising input costs, producers are actively seeking pasture systems that reduce reliance on nitrogen inputs through enhanced legume content and improved resilience.*

*"This project is aligned with MLA's new 2030 strategy to have productivity-led investments in sustainability, that contribute to the industry net zero ambitions.*

**Quotes attributable to Zero Net Emissions Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre Research Director, Professor Ben Hayes**

*"A significant step in our mission to deliver practical, science-backed solutions that help Australian producers transition to low-emissions farming."*

*"By validating multispecies pasture systems in lower rainfall zones, we're not only addressing methane mitigation, we're responding to producers' calls for more resilient, productive feedbase options."*

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