

Dargo Annual Ryegrass at Cuballing.

Producing quality Lambs at Cuballing.

CUBALLING farmers, John and Mike Patmore have set themselves some productivity goals that are largely related to their background as farmers in the state's south west, near Rocky Gully.

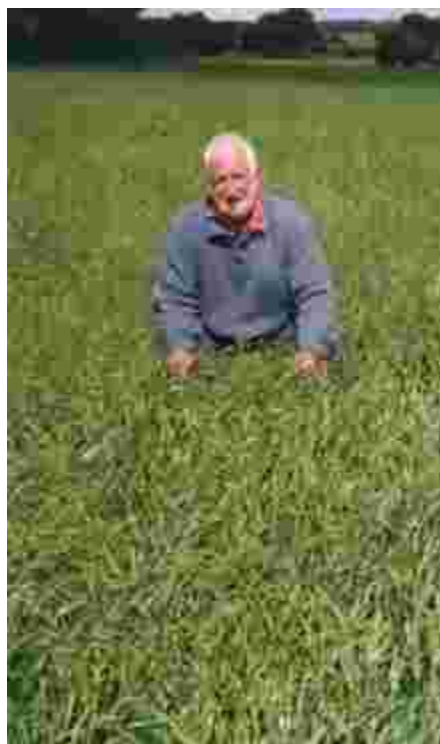
About 20pc of the 1200ha farm is share cropped, but with 4200 breeder ewes, John is aiming at similar carrying capacities as the Unicup property.

Boosting body weight is the key in the Patmore's prime lamb enterprise.

Half of the ewes are crossed to Poll Dorset and Texel, with the balance Merino sires.

Lambing rates are currently in the order of 80pc.

Lambs are dropped in June and John is finishing them to an 18kg dressed weight – a Q Lamb specification.



In his four years at Cuballing, John has focused on pasture renovation and he is working to replace the barley and silver grass with a more productive alternative.

Previously he sowed Progrow annual ryegrass, but last year he opted for Dargo, a strong winter producer.

"We have good background levels of clover, but we are looking for an early flush of green in the winter," he said.

Both Progrow and Dargo have performed and we are undecided which is best.

"Progrow appears to have a broader leaf and produce over a longer season."

John had sown Dargo as part of a mix previously, but last season sowed an 8ha area to Dargo in June.

A further 30ha of Progrow and Balansa clover was sown directly into an oat stubble also in June, grazed twice by 400 lambs and then cut for hay.

John fertilised the ryegrass with nitrogen, phosphorus and potash.

100kg/ha of Whitstar Plus was applied at seeding, followed by 80kg/ha of Urea in August and then a combination of Triple Super, Sulphate of Ammonia, Urea and Megaphos in September, at an application rate of 100kg/ha.

With ample winter and early spring feed on the ground last year, John was able to finish 400 of his prime lambs in the first week of October.

They had an average dressed weight of 20.5kg.

The green pasture and good season were instrumental in John taking out one of the six finalist awards in the Allan Jarman trophy - Hillside's Prime Lamb Quality competition.

Lambs are finished in a dedicated feed lot and supplemented with pellets over a four week period.

Next season John will again work on improving his pastures – sowing a larger area to the ryegrasses and manipulating pastures to get rid of silver and barley grass.