

# Media Release

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FUTURE FARM  
INDUSTRIES CRC  
PROFITABLE PERENNIALS™ FOR AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

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## **Lucerne and chicory – the right paddock mix to boost lambing profits**

Victorian farmer Don Price is successfully using a summer active, lucerne-chicory pasture mix to boost his lamb enterprise profits.

First sown on his farm about nine years ago, Don grossed around \$2000 per hectare last year from the silage profit and the lambs turned off his lucerne-chicory paddocks.

“Lambs do poorly on lucerne alone as it produces ammonia that can cause red gut in the rumen,” Don said.

“However, mixing lucerne with chicory solves this problem and lambs do fantastically on the combination – it’s also a great weed control tool.”

Lucerne and chicory work together well as a pasture mix because they have complementary growth habits and do not compete for growing space. Chicory is a non-legume that readily uses the nitrogen produced by lucerne, which is a legume.

“We lamb during July and wean early, running weaners on a combination of clover, ryegrass and phalaris. In spring we also cut the lucerne for silage,” Don said.

“When the initial weaning paddock has dried off, the lucerne paddock is already showing signs of regrowth.”

Research by the Future Farm Industries CRC (FFI CRC) through the *EverGraze*<sup>™</sup> project has shown both species develop a dry soil buffer that protects the soil from recharge to groundwater reducing the threat of salinity.

EverGraze researcher Dr Malcolm McCaskill said using the combination makes the pasture more resilient to a range of adverse soil conditions.

“For example, lucerne grows poorly below a pH of 4.8 but chicory has a greater tolerance of subsoil acidity and is better able to cope with short-term water logging than lucerne,” Dr McCaskill said.

Don’s use of a lucerne-chicory mix to boost his business profits is one of many success stories featured in the debut edition of FFI CRC’s *Future Farm* magazine.

Copies of *Future Farm* can be downloaded from: <http://www.futurefarmcrc.com.au/publications.html>

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