

DE automatic feeder a winner at Ongerup

By **KEN WILSON**

ONGERUP farmer Rivers Hyde has given the proverbial thumbs-up to a giant automatic sheep feeder manufactured by DE Engineers, Bellevue.

Mr Hyde ordered the feeder before it was displayed at the recent Make Smoking History Wagin Woolorama.

The 24 metre-long weather-proofed unit has two open troughs with restricted feed, either side of a central structure housing a 50 millimetre diameter PVC pipe with a centre-less Auger.

The feeder is solar-powered using a 24-volt system housed in a control box at one end of the feeder where run times can be set via Bluetooth from a smart phone.

The PVC pipe is connected to a silo or field bin and grain is dispensed through the pipe on-command.

According to Mr Hyde, he had been investigating an Eastern States' model which provided ad-lib feeding.

"I liked the technology and what I saw at Woolorama was even better for my needs because it was a lick-feeder," Mr Hyde said.

With limited water access for stock on his property, courtesy of a dry summer, he wanted to confine a 1000-head ewe flock to a smaller area where he also positioned two 30,000 litre-capacity water tanks and introduced barley straw for ad-lib feeding.

"We wanted a dedicated area where sheep could eat and drink without walking all over the farm destroying ground cover," he said.

"The DE feeder has worked well and we're not wasting any feed or having problems with water evaporation.

"I'm glad we made the decision."

Mr Hyde said setting run times was easy with three daily feeding schedules at 7am, 12 noon and 4pm.

"We feed pellets but we can do grain if we want to," he said.

"We have about 500 ewes either side of the feeder and so far there have been no problems with all the sheep getting access to feed.

"Being a lick feeder, the sheep need saliva on the tongue and so you see them going to get a drink when



□ Cuballing farmer Avon Furphy looks over the new DE Engineers automatic sheep feeder at this year's Make Smoking History Wagin Woolorama before it was sold to Ongerup farmer Rivers Hyde.

their mouths get dry and it's a fairly orderly process."

"In the other two pens of 500 we are just using lick feeders which works OK, but every six days we have to fill them up which is just another job, so we will be looking at another auto feeder from DE."

According to DE Engineers principal Kevin Prater, response to the feeder was

immediate at Woolorama.

"Most people liked the set-up and liked how easy it was to operate," Mr Prater said.

"Our new model will feature a remote control with a camera so you can access the feeder anywhere in the world to check how it is operating."

□ **More information: call DE Engineers on 9274 2632.**



□ The automatic feeder being installed on Mr Hyde's Ongerup property. About 500 ewes are now feeding on either side three times a day on automated run times.

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