

# Footrot Sally

Securing  
Our Region



Tama Ropiha, Catriona Vickery, Jessica Smith,  
Ellie Fishlock and Lizzie Lostroh

Deniliquin North Public School



## **Creative Catchment Kids**

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

**[www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/](http://www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## **Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre**

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

**[www.wirraminna.org](http://www.wirraminna.org)**

## **Enviro-Stories**

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeekKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

**[www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

# Footrot Sally

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Ellie Fishlock and Lizzie Lostroh

**Teacher:** Cynthia Smith

**School:** Deniliquin North Public School

**WARNING:** This book contains images that  
may be distressing to some readers.

## Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land  
Services



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## Local Land Services (LLS)

Sally Osborne is currently employed by the Local Land Services (LLS) in the Murray region. LLS is a service provided by the NSW State Government, and is responsible for managing environmental issues throughout our region. Sally is based in Deniliquin.



**Local Land  
Services**  
Murray



## Personal Information

Sally Wright was born in Deniliquin. She lived on a property on Finley Road, with her siblings and parents, Lindsay and Judy Wright.

Sally met James Osborne, and they were married in 1990. Sally and James Osborne have two children, Henry and Isabel.





## Sally's Education

Sally Osborne was educated at Deniliquin North Public School, before moving on to Deniliquin High School.

After finishing Year Twelve, Sally decided to go to Dookie Agricultural College to further her studies as an environmental, bio-security officer.



## Sally's Job

Sally is a senior bio-security officer, responsible for maintaining and inspecting saleyards throughout the Riverina. She works to prevent the introduction and spread of animal diseases. She also plans fox baiting programs in the area.

# P.T. Farming

## Dealing with footrot

Footrot does not have to be looked at as a major disaster as it is a manageable disease. This is reflected in the success which the Rural Lands Protection Board has had in eliminating the disease in this area.

Two years ago more than 25 per cent of properties in the A Division.

Now less than 1.5 per cent of properties are affected and the area has been declared a footrot protected zone.

Rural Lands Protection Board veterinarian, Dan Salmon, expects footrot will be totally eliminated from the division within the next three months.

He said the key to defeating footrot was working smarter, not harder.

"We aim to reduce the farmer's worktime and expenditure," Mr Salmon said.

"A lot of people have a 'save them at all costs' attitude and they lose sight of the fact that they are trying to eradicate footrot.

"They should work hardest at saving the clean sheep, not the infected ones," he said.

Mr Salmon believes one of the most attractive options in dealing with footrot infected sheep was to destock the property by selling affected mobs direct to abattoirs (selling through saleyards is prohibited).

There are many other options on how to deal with the disease including footbathing, paring and antibiotics, depending on how much time and money the farmer wants to spend.

Everyone in A Division must inform the Rural Lands Protection Board if they suspect they

have footrot as, because they are in a footrot protected zone, it is a notifiable disease.

There are fines of up to \$5000 for people who fail to report they have the disease on their property.

Mr Salmon said notwithstanding the fines, it was in the farmer's best interest to notify the RLP Board.

"We can double or even treble their chances of getting rid of footrot," he said.

Footrot officer, Sally Osborne, said wool growers could not hide the disease forever.

"Sooner or later we find out about it, whether it is through neighbors or because some of the sheep turn up in a saleyard," Mrs Osborne said.

"They have nothing to gain from trying to hide it," she said.

When a neighbor suspects footrot Mrs Osborne said the board would make discrete enquiries and observations.

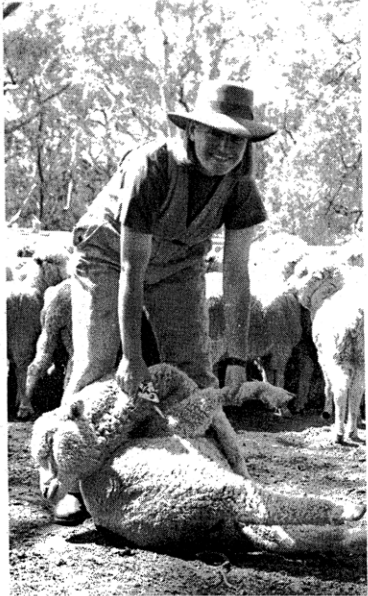
The person reporting the disease is not informed about whether his neighbor has footrot or not unless the property is quarantined.

"It is a confidential matter," she said.

In many cases the reports turn out to be false alarms as the sheep are instead troubled by foot abscess, shelly toes, grass seeds, scabby mouth, arthritis or injury.

"However, we would rather be called and proved wrong than not told about it," Mrs Osborne said.

"Some diseases look a lot like footrot and that is where professional advice proves useful," she said.



## Footrot

Sally Osborne takes care of sheep by checking if they have a severe bacterial infection called Footrot. Footrot spreads during wet seasons such as Autumn and Winter because the skin, in between the sheep's hooves is moist, letting infection in.





## What Footrot Does

Since Footrot is a severe bacterial infection, once it gets into a hoof, it begins to rot the skin of the hoof, giving the sheep an extremely painful time. If Footrot is left untreated, it reaches the point at which sheep will not move, not even to eat.

# Eradicating Footrot

Sally has been working on eradicating footrot for 25 years now, but the bacterial infection has been an issue since 1788, when it was brought over from England with the First Fleet. New South Wales is currently a footrot protected area and, due to Sally's hard work, the infection affects less than 1% of all properties.

## Critical time for footrot identification

With autumn rains and green feed lurking, Rural Lands Protection Board footrot ranger, Sally Osborne has issued a warning to sheep owners.

Check your sheep are clean from footrot now, before the rain or before the stock is released onto irrigation pasture.

"Now is the ideal time to inspect all sheep if they haven't been through the eradication program. There is no point waiting until it rains to find out if they (the sheep) have footrot."

The footrot eradication program has proved remarkably successful since it was implemented in late 1988.

The instance of footrot in the district has been reduced from about 25-30 per cent in 1989 to less than 10 per cent currently.

This year, the Board will concentrate on division C, the division east of Deniliquin and the last to be targeted by the Board.

Mrs Osborne said D division, which came under the eradication spotlight last year, was expected to become a footrot control area in December this year.

A-division, north of the Edward River and west of the Conargo Road, is already a foot-

rot protected area while B division, south of the Edward River and north of the Mathoura-Bunnaloo Road is a footrot control area.

Mrs Osborne said while she was happy with the progress of the eradication program, stock was still suffering from the debilitating disease.

"While there is still footrot there is still a problem, we don't just want to control it we want to eradicate it," Mrs Osborne said.

Mrs Osborne said the eradication program had suffered a few minor hiccups since it began — an extremely wet summer in 1992-93 delayed the program and the continuing drought has also impacted on it.

But with farmers aiming to restock in the next few months, Mrs Osborne warned vendors to be careful. Inflammation of the disease is possible if they are not careful about the stock they buy once the drought breaks, she said.

"People need to be careful about what they buy. Always get vendor declarations and buy from footrot free saleyards such as Deniliquin."

Mrs Osborne said in the near future a footrot prevalence survey would be conducted in C division.



Investigate ... RLPB footrot ranger, Sally Osborne is urging farmers to check their sheep for footrot.

"We'll go out and talk about footrot and do inspections in yards or in paddocks."

Mrs Osborne said she could be more confi-

dent of the affects of the eradication program when the autumn rains came.

"We need go wait for the wet weather to

check mobs of sheep for lameness and to check lame sheep. Then we can be more certain," Mrs Osborne said.



## Footrot Treatment

Sally checks sheep for footrot, but how is footrot treated? Most, but not all farmers who own livestock affected by footrot, cure the infection by bathing each and every sheep hoof in a mixture of disinfectant to kill any harmful bacteria.

## What Sally Does

Not only does Sally help sheep by curing and preventing footrot, she also baits properties for foxes. Foxes are feral animals and kill native birds, animals, and livestock, mainly lambs.



## The European Red Fox

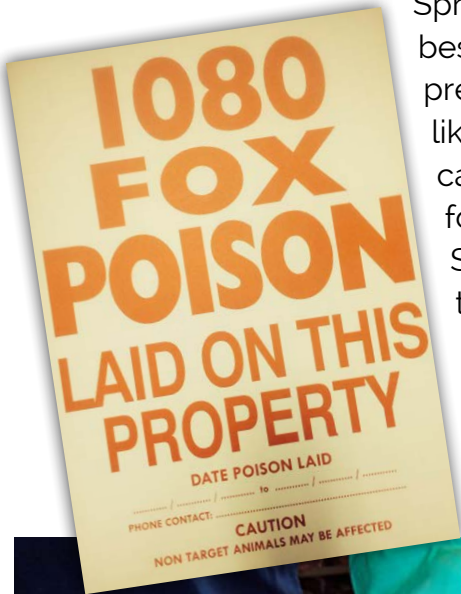
The European Red Fox (the scientific name is *Vulpes vulpes*) was introduced into Australia in 1855 for recreational hunting. Their population grew out of control and is still of concern today. The problems begin during autumn and winter when ewes start lambing, and the lambs wander. Then foxes take their opportunity for easy prey.



## 1080 Fox Poison

1080 is the most humane fox poison. Specialised chemical training is required to handle 1080. Commercial fox-baits can be purchased, but 1080 can be injected into fresh meat.

Spring and autumn are the best time to use 1080, when pregnant female foxes are likely to eat it. Fox baits cannot be placed within four kilometres of a town. Signs must also be used to inform neighbouring farmers that bait is being used.







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2015 Year 6, Deniliquin North Public School

## CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and  
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the  
2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be  
competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



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