

The Monaro Stationhand Challenge

Background

Sheep and cattle have been at the centre of the Monaro farming systems since European settlers first trekked into the region in the 1820's. The region is the fourth largest wool producing district in the AWEX regional classification for NSW. The region is renowned for the quality of the wool and the "doing" ability of its sheep and cattle. Similarly, the skills of the stockman that produce the stock are highly recognised. The stationhand is essential to the efficiency and profitability of a modern farming operation. A good stationhand with traditional and modern tools is an invaluable asset.

The Objective of the Monaro Stationhand Challenge

The objective is to find the best three stationhands who demonstrate accomplishment and confidence in the traditional skills, the initiative and understanding of modern skills involving IT and WH&S, and the temperament and understanding of animal behaviour to minimise stress on stock.. Thus, the requirement is to demonstrate the full range of skills and understanding required to work effectively in a modern progressive farming operation.

The Overall Structure - Skills to be Challenged

The skills to be tested fall into three broad categories

- Traditional hands-on skills that underpin the daily operations of a farming enterprise
- Modern science and IT skills required to drive performance and economy in the 21st century
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the laws, WH&S regulations, and the social licence that the industry operates under.

Categories

There are three age classifications. Participants to provide proof of age at registration

- Junior station hand - 16 years and under
- Jackaroo/Jillaroo - 17 to 25 years of age
- Senior station hand / overseer - 26 years and older

Skills to be assessed in 2020

Overriding all of the assessment of skills is a demonstration of temperament, patience, foresight and respect for the animals they are handling, respect for the equipment they are using, and respect for those they are relating to– this is a key assessment criteria that applies to all tasks assessed.

1. Assessment and classing of commercial sheep

- 1.1. Visually assess and score 12 commercial merino ewes according to AWI/MLA Visual Sheep Scores, Version 2 – 2013.
- 1.2. Using the objective data provided and the visual assessment class ewes into Studs, Flock and Terminals
- 1.3. Condition Scoring

2. Ram Selection using ASBVs

Using a set of breeding objectives, subjective data and ASBVs (to be provided), the stationhand has been asked by his employer to attend a local annual stud ram sale and purchase three rams. The stationhand is to select the three rams and a reserve selection that best meet the specified breeding objectives. This is a paper exercise.

3. Woolclassing

Class and score six commercial fleeces

4. Weed assessment

Assess a number of stationery displays and exhibits of weeds

5. Grain assessment

Assess a number of grain samples.

6. Cattle judging

As part of the local cattle judging competition, visually judge a number of select animals

7. Bull Selection using ASBVs

Using a set of breeding objectives, subjective data and ASBVs (to be provided), the stationhand has been asked by his employer to attend a local annual stud bull sale and purchase three bulls. The stationhand is to select the three bulls and a reserve selection that best meet the specified breeding objectives. This is a paper exercise.

8. Pest Animal Management

Identified a number of pest and feral animals from photographic and static displays

9. Legal and WH&S multiple-choice exam

A 10 to 15 multiple choice exam on legal and WH&S that apply to a modern farming operation.

Entry Fees

Entry Fees are \$5 for the junior stationhand category, \$15 for the jackaroo/jillaroo and senior stationhand classes.

Ribbon & Prize Pool

The entry fees will form part of the pool of prize money in conjunction with donations from sponsors. Detail of the total prize pool will be provided prior to the competition.

Each age category winner and the runner up will receive a winner's sash

Registration

Pre-registration is preferred so that numbers can be managed. Those that register on the day may not be admitted to the competition if numbers are excessive.

Pre-registration can be undertaken by sending an email to: robguthrie59@gmail.com

Please state in the subject line "Monaro Stationhand Challenge Registration". In the body of the email provide Name, age category, and mobile number.

Participant Briefing & Background

All participants are required to attend the pre-competition briefing commencing at 8:30 AM outside the sheep pavilion on the day of the competition / Show.