

Lesson objective

In this lesson students learn about the needs of farm animals by investigating a sheep property and apply what they have learned by creating a paddock suitable for holding a mob (flock) of sheep.

Students will have the opportunity to:

- reflect upon what they already know about the needs of plants and animals
- recognise the needs of living things in a range of situations
- use drawings to represent observations and ideas and discuss their representations with others.

Lesson focus

The focus of this lesson is to encourage students to adapt their knowledge of what they have learned so far about the needs of animals, plants and consider how the needs of animals on farms are met

If you are using this activity as an extension to the [ScienceWeb unit Needs of living things](#), explain to students that during this lesson they are going to explore how farmers meet the needs of farm animals, such as sheep.

If you are using this as a stand-alone lesson you may need to spend more time early in the lesson to introduce the concepts of the basic needs of living things. A guide to teaching this concept can be found in the [background material for the full unit of work on the ScienceWeb website](#).

Introduction

Explain to students that in this lesson they will be talking and thinking about what animals on farms, like sheep, need to survive and how these needs are met.

Create a mind map to review the basic needs of living things (air, water food and shelter).

Body of lesson

1. Gather students as group at the front of the classroom and play the video [Sam the Lamb – The needs of sheep](#). When the video is finished, ask students to tell you three things sheep need to survive that were covered in the video. Record students' responses on a whiteboard or in your class science journal if appropriate.
2. Read students the story *A Year on our Farm* by Penny Matthews and Andrew McLean.
 - As you read the story draw students' attention to the activities being carried out in February.
 - Ask why the farmer might be checking the water troughs and feeding hay to the sheep during summer. Make note of the picture of the sheep shelter in the shade of the trees during summer and ask students how farmers might make sure sheep don't get too hot during summer (trees/shrubs/windbreaks/).
 - Note the lambs in this story are born during autumn. Ask students to think about what newborn lambs need to survive?
 - During winter the family plants windbreaks. Guide the students to think about the purpose of windbreaks on a farm (shelter and protection for animals, pastures and crops). Ask students how sheep stay warm during winter and explain their wool fleece protects them, but so do the windbreaks.
 - Ask students to compare the pictures of the paddocks during spring and summer – what do they notice. Encourage them to think about the colour and length of the grass. Ask students why farmers might make hay in spring and summer (to store feed for later in the year).
3. Read to students page 12 of *The Story of Wool* book (Kondinin Group) – What do sheep eat?. Allow students to explore the Year on our Farm, *The Story of Wool* book and the LEARN ABOUT WOOL factsheets, [Sheep – the wool producers](#), [Wool production](#) and [Wool production in Australia](#).
4. Explain to the students they are going to pretend to be farmers and will design a paddock for their sheep that has everything they need to survive. Divide the class into groups of: summer, autumn, winter and spring. Explain that you want the students to create a paddock in their given season that meets the needs of their sheep.

5. Hand out the student worksheet, *My sheep paddock* and ask students to create a paddock that will provide Sam the Lamb and his friends with everything they need to survive. You might like to explain that Sam no longer needs his mother as he is old enough to graze pasture, OR you might like to encourage students to draw a few more sheep in their paddock, including Sam's mother.
6. As students are creating their paddock, guide them with the following questions:
 - What will your sheep need to survive in your particular season?
 - How will your sheep get water?
 - Will there be plenty of grass in your paddock at this time of year?
 - What would happen if all the food in your paddock ran out?
 - How will you protect your sheep from hot/cold/wet/windy weather?

Encourage students in each group to discuss what they are drawing and why.

Conclusion

When students have finished, select a student from each group to share their group's drawing with the class and explain what they have drawn.

As group, ask the students the following questions:

- What other types of animals are kept on farms?
- Do all farm animals need food (water/shelter)?
- What other types of animals rely on people to meet their needs? (pets/zoo animals)
- Do we need food (water/ shelter)?
- Do you agree food (water/shelter) is something all living things need?

Extension activity — guest presenter

In rural areas consider asking a local sheep producer to come and talk to the class about how they look after their sheep to ensure they stay healthy. You might like to organise an excursion to a local wool-producing property.