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Australia's number one trace mineral competition is back to assist farmers in improving animal growth and fertility

It has certainly been a challenging year for most livestock producers across the country. The on-going impact of poor to desperate seasons across Australia has focused many cattle and sheep producers on the nutritional challenges and one leading animal health company is determined to assist.

Virbac Australia are now inviting sheep, beef and dairy producers to enter the *Multimin Performance Ready Challenge*, a 12-month program focused on the effective use of trace mineral injections for cattle and sheep. As part of the Challenge up to seventy-five producers will receive discounted Multimin product in exchange for sharing their experiences and results with using Multimin and one lucky competing individual or team will win the ultimate prize of an overseas study tour. Valued at more than \$21,000, the prize will offer professional development tailored to the winner and their enterprise.

"Last year's challenge received an incredible amount of support and engagement from the public and livestock experts all over Australia. Challengers saw better conception rates, tighter calving intervals, improved immune function, reduced disease, and better general health," said Dr Jerry Liu, Nutritionist and Livestock Nutrition Marketing Manager, Virbac Australia.

For previous Multimin Challenge winner Renee Murfett, the Multimin Challenge was a great opportunity to see the significant impact of trace mineral supplementation on her dairy calves immunity and health. As part of her prize, Virbac Australia is sending Renee to the World Ag Expo in the USA in February where she will learn more about best-practice dairy farming.

"We want to work with sheep, beef and dairy producers from across Australia to see how they too can improve fertility, animal health and ultimately herd performance with the use of Multimin and encourage all to enter," says Dr Liu.

"We know that during high demand periods such as joining, weaning and birthing, animals have elevated requirements for trace minerals. And consequently, with less feed available than normal in many areas of Australia, stock are not receiving many nutrients, including trace minerals."

"Large parts of the country are certainly struggling and keeping a positive mentality can be difficult for producers during these unfavorable times. The industry data we are seeing is indicative of this with producers purchasing less drenches and vaccines which is one sign that stock numbers have declined. There are far fewer animals to treat this year versus last year the last few weeks of bushfires doesn't help.

"Our national interest is to re-build Australia's livestock numbers and improving the immunity and fertility in our animals will be a major contributor to this. During these tough times, improved health and productivity is going to pay off and we want to assist producers as much as we can to do this," Dr Liu said.



Angus producer Nick Boshammer from NBGenetics in Chinchilla, QLD has recently had a positive result with Multimin and looks forward to entering the Multimin Performance Ready Challenge to further advance his herd and gain access to industry experts.

“I used Multimin pre-joining in October this year and saw a 100% response rate in my fixed time AI program. I want to get as many AI pregnancies as I can which means getting stock in calf as early as possible. It’s about increasing my animals’ trace minerals levels during this high demand period to give them every opportunity to cycle early on.

“We need all the help we can get in these tough conditions, so I’ll be entering the Multimin Challenge this year and encouraging my friends to enter as well. I think there is a big opportunity for Multimin to be used in early weaned calves. I will Multimin every one of my weaned calves this month to give them a rapid top-up of essential minerals for future performance and fertility,” Mr Boshammer said.

As part of the program, producers will have the support and expertise of some of Australia’s most experienced animal experts to hone their operations. Experts include:

- Dr Paula Gonzalez-Rivas, Technical Services Manager for Nutrition at Virbac Australia
- Dr Matthew Ball, Veterinarian and Senior Technical Services Manager - Cattle at Virbac Australia and owner of Beacon Veterinary
- Dr George Cox, Technical Services Manager - Sheep at Virbac Australia
- Dr Colin Trengove, Veterinarian and Managing Director, Pro-Ag Consulting
- Dr Enoch Bergman, Owner Veterinarian, Swans Veterinary Services
- Dr Graham Lean, Principal Consultant at Agrivet Business Consulting

As well as the overseas trip, the overall winner will also take home a 12-month supply of Multimin. The second and third runners-up will receive a six month supply of Multimin.

Entries for the Multimin Performance Ready Challenge are open from 1 December 2019 with only seventy-five challengers selected.

To find out more and to enter, visit www.multiminchallenge.com

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Photo captions:

1. Nick Boshammer from NBGenetics
2. Dr Enoch Bergman, member of the Multimin Challenge expert panel