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B+LNZ Sheep Industry Awards: Call for nominations

The B+LNZ Sheep Industry Awards are an annual flagship event, where sheep farmers celebrate the top performers in their industry – farmers, breeders, industry innovators and leaders.

This year's event will be held on 5 July at the Ascot Park Hotel in Invercargill.

There are two categories of awards: The genetics awards and the industry awards. The four genetics awards are generated from the SIL database and no nominations are required.

[Download the SIL Genetics Categories – general conditions](#)

Industry awards – get nominating

The industry awards do require nominations and you're encouraged to put forward individuals and organisations, accordingly. There are six awards:

- Science award
- Trainer of the year
- Innovation award
- Significant contribution to the sheep industry
- Emerging talent
- Supplier of the year (open to meat processors, only)

Nominations close 5pm, Friday 19 May.



B+LNZ Genetics "Quick-fire" Roadshows: A summary

B+LNZ Genetics held a series of roadshow events throughout New Zealand over February and March. We aimed to address several topics that have been front of mind in recent months, including:

- **NZGE vs other evaluations** - Determining whether improved connectedness or the inclusion of cross-bred progeny had major effects on re-ranking. The presented data from a number of evaluation examples demonstrated that, while connectedness and the inclusion of cross-bred progeny were confounded and hard to separate, there was a high correlation between the NZGE and other evaluations. Animals of high merit were still animals of high merit and animals of low merit were still animals of low merit.
- **Connectedness** - Connectedness continues to play a significant role in effective genetic evaluation systems and breeders were reminded how to get connected for traits that were important to them and their ram-buying customers.
- **Leader Lists** - These lists are now generated from the NZGE with very similar criteria to previous years. Breeders can opt-out of leader lists, should they wish to.
- **"Restricted Traits" and "Blanking" projects** - While these projects can mean breeders have access to slightly less information, they aim to ensure that breeders are making the best decisions possible when looking for outside sires from across-flock evaluations.
- **National Breeding Objective** - The National Breeding Objective has been recalculated and will be addressed in detail at the B+LNZ Genetics Sheep Breeder Forum in June (see below). There has been little change, which is good.
- **Better information platform** - B+LNZ Genetics has a vision for a better information platform – one that incorporates many of the disparate software tools and utilities that currently exist.
- **Non-linear NLB** - Breeders affirmed that non-linear NLB should be something that is implemented in SIL, so that rams with very unbalanced genetic profiles can be better managed.



Important Sheep Breeder resources

Many breeders asked for a reminder as to where they can locate important online resources. The following links will take you directly to the information.

NZGE

- [NZGE Participants and Flock Connectedness](#)
- [NZGE Sire Leader Lists](#)
- [NZGE BV and Index percentile band tables](#)

Connectedness information

- [Principles](#)
- [Best Practice](#)
- [Interpretation](#)
- [SIL Newsletter 2013 describing use of Traffic Light report](#)

Traffic Light connectedness reports, indicating the strength of flock connectedness by goal trait, can be sourced from bureaus or the B+LNZ Genetics extension team.

- [Bureaus contacts](#)
 - [B+LNZ Genetics team contacts](#)
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Adult ewe size

Adult Ewe Size, or DPA, was released as a trait to industry in 2010. Driven by the need for a tool that began to explore the meaning of 'efficiency' and balance lamb growth with the size of the ewes, DPA has been a tough nut to crack.

Lambs that grow and finish prime, have sometimes tended to come from ewes that are, on average, relatively large. It is more desirable to have lambs that grow and finish prime from more-moderate sized ewes. DPA has therefore tended to penalise large ewes.

There have been concerns that the DPA penalty is too large and, in some cases, may be incorrectly penalising ewes of moderate size. At the Sheep Breeder Forum 2016, it was agreed to reduce the penalty and explore the interactions of DPA in some flocks.

B+LNZ Genetics has reduced the DPA penalty and committed to new analysis looking for better ways to account for inefficient, large ewes. While the work will take some time to complete, we hope to update breeders at the Sheep Breeder Forum 2017.



Sheep Breeder Forum 2017: Save the date!

This year's Sheep Breeder Forum will be held in Napier on 26 and 27 June. The event brings together sheep breeders, scientists and industry professionals from across New Zealand. It is an opportunity for breeders to share ideas with fellow breeders, talk directly to us about our

programme and hear updates about research and innovations underway.

Schedule

Monday 26 June: 9am–5pm (Dinner: 6pm)

Tuesday 27 June: 8am–2.30pm

Venue

Napier War Memorial Centre, 48 Marine Parade, Napier

We are finalising details of the two-day programme. A formal invite with RSVP details will be distributed early next month.



Sheep Progeny Test reporting

On 11 April, results were sent to breeders who contributed rams to the Hub and Maraetotara progeny tests. They received results and information on the performance of their own rams, as well as the top 20 rams.

BEEF



Better Beef Breeding Workshops:

Bull buying for the commercial beef breeder

Bull buyers wanting to learn how to interpret genetic merit from estimated breeding values (eBVs), Indexes and physical appearance should take advantage of the last two Better Beef Breeding workshops for 2017:

- **Nelson/Marlborough – 9 May**
- **Whangarei/Northland – 19 May**

The day begins with a whiteboard session, where workshop participants note the characteristics that make or cost them money at slaughter, post weaning and in the maternal cow environment. Next, they view bulls and discuss how what they see relates to how the bull is likely to perform as a parent. This is followed by an introduction to estimated breeding values and indexes. Bulls must be sound and physical characteristics matter – these points are demonstrated also. Finally, the attendees make up teams that ‘purchase’ real bulls with

virtual money in a competitive Helmsman Auction scenario.

If you want to alert any of your clients to these workshops, here are links to the details:

[Nelson, Marlborough – 9 May](#)

[Whangarei, Northland – 19 May](#)



B+LNZ Genetics events at Beef Expo 2017

B+LNZ Genetics will be hosting a genetics forum and technical breakfast at Beef Expo 2017. Both events will be held in the upstairs suites at Manfeild Stadium:

Sunday 14 May: 1pm-5pm

B+LNZ Genetics Beef Breeders Forum

Tuesday 16 May: 7am-9am

B+LNZ Genetics Technical Breakfast

[View full programme](#)

Both events are free to attend.
Spaces are limited at each event.

[RSVP](#) to confirm attendance at one/both events



The team (from left): General Manager Graham Alder, IT Programme Manager David Campbell, Lead Scientist Dr Michael Lee, Technology and Extension Manager Sharl Liebergreen, Science Manager Eleanor Linscott, Genetic Evaluation Technical Manager Sharon McIntyre, Extension Officer Dr Annie O'Connell, Extension Officer Max Tweedie and Office Administrator Pam Schofield.

[More information about team](#)



The future's in the genes



For more information visit
www.blzgenetics.com

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