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B+LNZ GENETICS eNEWSLETTER
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SHEEP

B+LNZ Genetics Sheep Breeder Forum 2017

The fourth Sheep Breeder Forum was held in Napier on 26-27 June and attracted 150 attendees. The speakers covered a spectacular array of topics and discussions for sheep breeders to get their teeth into. As in previous years, the forum was over subscribed, which is why we've aimed to get this newsletter out, ASAP.

Day One: Morning presentations' summary
It was a science theme on morning one.

Andrew Cromie,
Irish Cattle Breeding Federation Technical Director
Andrew spoke about "The Irish Experiment". The Irish beef industry has begun a transformation, adopting whole herd performance recording, genomics, data quality indexes, new database technology and analytic reporting services. With €300m of funding over six years, the Irish are set for a "challenging but exciting" time.

Ben Hayes,
University of Queensland:
Ben provided an Australian perspective on new types of genetic evaluation. He emphasised the need for a balanced approach to breeding and technology. The use of indexes – appropriately applied and relevant to market requirements – resonated with the audience. Sequencing and AI technology will have a part to play in the future, especially if we want to predict across breeds.

Dorian Garrick,
Massey University
Dorian talked about the complexities of new genetic evaluation models. Single Step evaluation can more efficiently utilise the information from genotype, phenotype and pedigree databases. The message (although scientific) was clear: Genomics is simply part of doing business. It doesn't matter whether you are breeding Hanwoo cattle or layer hens, DNA technology is an essential tool.

Michael Lee,
Otago University
Michael discussed the history of genetic evaluation concepts and models. He delivered some interesting results from early Single Step test runs with SIL facial eczema data. He confirmed that accuracy increases, especially for young animals, such as ram hoggets. Single Step also enables a more streamlined evaluation, able to deal with some of the challenges faced by the current multi-step evaluation.

Sheryl-Anne Newman,
AgResearch
Sheryl-Anne outlined the ongoing enhancements of SIL and the NZGE. Connectedness was again recognised as an important consideration in any modern breeding programme, especially in order to take advantage of new and developing technologies, such as genomics. The NZGE is growing in popularity, but there are still concerns about "why and how to use it", compared to using within-flock evaluations.

Day One: Afternoon presentations
Afternoon presentations included:

- Peter Amer, AbacusBio
- Collier Isaacs, FarmIQ
- Neville Jopson, AbacusBio
- Nick Beeby, B+LNZ

Visit B+LNZ Genetics YouTube Channel to watch videos of speakers' presentations and workshops

Click here to visit our YouTube channel

Day Two: Morning presentations
Presentations covered:

- The CPT
- Connectedness
- Next Generation Flocks
- Breeding collaborations
- The consumer and how Progressive Meats is staying in touch

Day Two: Afternoon
Sheep breeders then walked through an afternoon of workshops covering:

- Annie O'Connell demonstrating a spreadsheet-based ram selling or sorting tool
- Results from a ram wastage experiment by vet Dave Robertson
- Auto-drafter demonstration from Prattley Industries
- Reproductive technology demonstration of AI technology from ABS
- New analytics reporting tools developed for sheep breeders by Zoetis

Thank you to all the attendees, speakers, contributors, helpers and contractors for making the event vibrant, yet relaxed.

The 2018 forum will be back south in Dunedin. If you have any thoughts about how the event can be improved, **please contact us** at info@blnzgenetics.com

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Low Input Sheep group

Following the B+LNZ Genetics Sheep Breeder Forum in Napier, a group of breeders focusing on low input sheep took up the challenge from the floor to start a Low Input Sheep Breeding group.

There are currently 13 flocks interested and breeders are at the initial stage of defining exactly what aspects of "low input" they want to use. They are also working out how to create connectedness across flocks to be able to benchmark with genetics from the wider industry. This would occur in a low input environment.

Invitations are open to any other interested ram breeders. Get involved now and contribute to

the group's goals.

Contact Dave Read on 06 838 8976 or email bogaardread@gisborne.net.nz

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Wanted: Your feedback on the forum

A questionnaire has been distributed to attendees, to help us understand how we can make future forums better. The survey takes five minutes and we value all feedback. It is confidential and anonymous, so be open with your comments.

Sheep Industry Awards' winners

The 2017 B+LNZ Sheep Industry Awards were hosted in Invercargill last week. Here is a quick overview of the Genetic Award winners.

- **AbacusBio New Zealand Maternal Worth:** Twin Farm TEFRom, Andrew and Katherine, Russell and Pam Welsh, Gore
- **Beef + Lamb New Zealand Maternal Trait Leader for Parasite Resistance:** Nikau Coopworth, Kate Broadbent, Waikaretu
- **Alliance Group New Zealand Terminal Worth:** Waikite FocusPrime™, Focus Genetics, Peter Strawbridge, Reporoa
- **Beef + Lamb New Zealand Terminal Trait Leader for Lamb Growth:** Rosebank FocusPrime™, Focus Genetics, Barry & Julie Crawford, Gore

Industry awards' winners

SIL: Best Practice Performance Recording

Download now

What's Due?

Pregnancy Scanning Data

Determining the number of foetuses the ewe carries through Ultrasound Pregnancy Scanning provides a measure of Number of Lambs Born (NLB) and Lamb Survival (SUR and SURM) for flocks. As you move into winter and use Ultrasound Pregnancy Scanning to determine appropriate feed for ewes carrying single, twin and triplet (or more) lambs also load this data to SIL to compliment your NLB and Survival data.

Wool

Hogget fleece weight is a more reliable predictor of genetic merit for wool production than lamb fleece weight and is preferred for best practice. Hogget fleece weight is typically measured when the animal is 12 months of age (FW12). Fibre Diameter (FDIA) is measured by taking small samples from the side or fleece of a sheep and measured with a portable instrument (such as an OFDA2000 (Optical Fibre Diameter Analyser)) or a mobile instrument system called a Fleecescan.

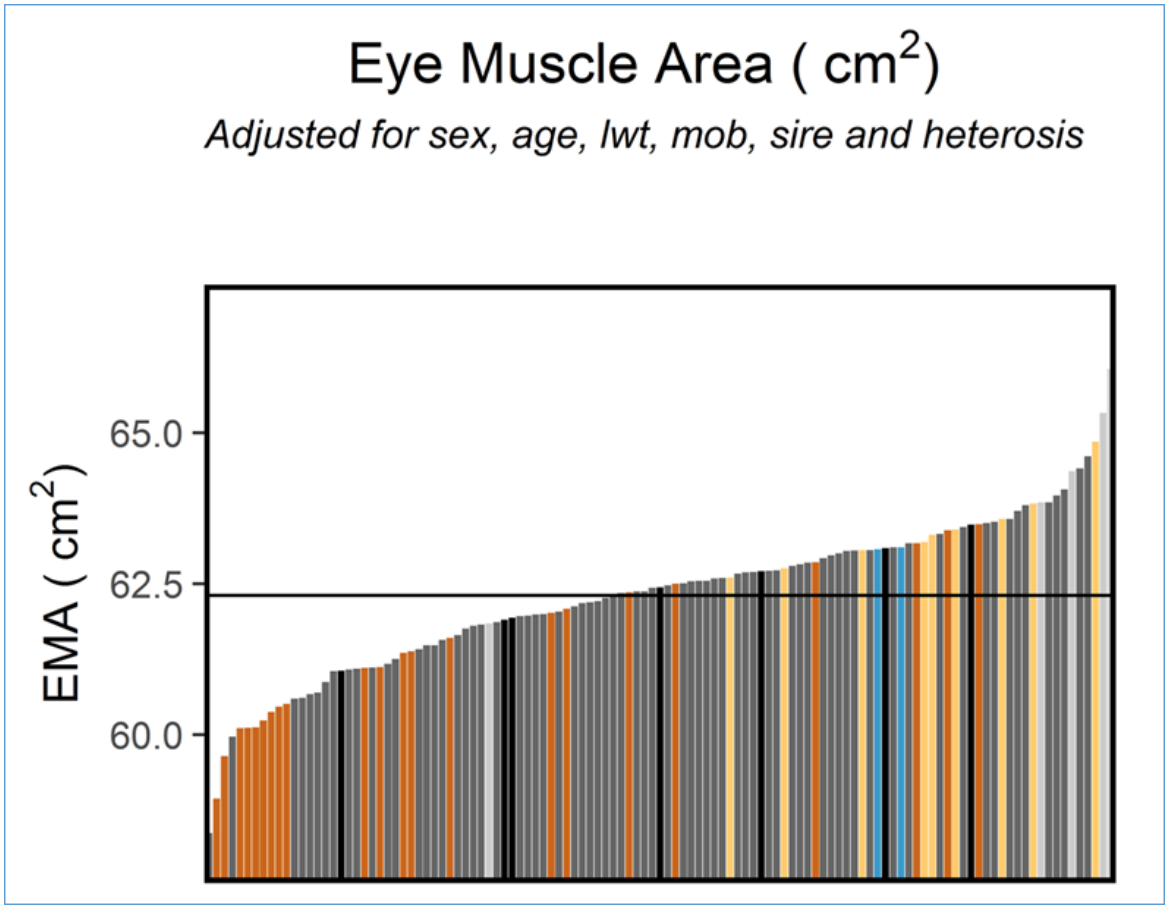
BEEF

BPT August Field Days: Tautane and Caberfeidh Stations

Dates have been set for Beef Progeny Test open days:

- **Caberfeidh, South Canterbury – 8 August**
- **Tautane, Hawkes Bay – 15 August**

Jason Archer from AbacusBio will present on the latest outcomes from the Carcase scanning data. More details to follow in the coming weeks



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.blnzgenetics.com