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SHEEP

Sheep Progeny Test field day: Otiwhiti Station

In partnership with facial eczema breeders (FE) and Otiwhiti Station, B+LNZ Genetics hosted breeders and commercial farmers for a Sheep Progeny Test Field day earlier this month. This Next Generation site focuses on best practice use of existing genomic and RamGuard tools to identify rams that produce FE-tolerant progeny.

Key commercial farmer messages from the day:

- FE is increasing in intensity and frequency in more regions.
- You don't have to lose production to gain FE tolerance.
- Genetics is a permanent solution to FE challenge.

Key breeder messages:

- Star rating system and DPX do not highlight the same animals. So which is more accurate at predicting tolerance of progeny?

- All rams now have a GGT21 eBV and DPX compared to only some at start of trial.

- All participating flocks have results from this trial.

Watch [30 second Field Day video](#) (on Facebook)

Want to know more about this project? Call 03 477 6632 or email info@blnzgenetics.com

S.I.L.

Pregscan audit on SIL

A recent audit of pregnancy scanning data on SIL showed:

1. A number of flocks with no dry ewes recorded (i.e. no ewes with preg scan = 0), and
2. A number of flocks with a high % of dries (17-38%).

The first point reduces NLB BVs by inflating the flock average. E.g 100 ewes - 5% dries, 65% have twins, 20% single and 10% triplets = total of 180 lambs.

- With dries recorded: 180 lambs/100 ewes, flock average = 1.8 lambs per ewe.
- Without dries: 180 lambs/95 ewes, so flock average is now 1.9 lambs per ewes.

A greater proportion of ewes will be below the flock average, reducing NLB eBVs.
The second point means we do not have full records. If there is no lambing record for a ewe, the system will look for a preg scan record. If pregnancy scanning information is incomplete then ewes for whom there is not a lambing record – e.g. abortion, sale/culled/missing at lambing – will have no data, reducing the accuracy for related females.

For DNA parentage flocks, full pregnancy scan records are required to calculate number of lambs born, birth and rearing rank and to derive survival information.

Remember: With NLB (a trait with a low heritability), there is greater emphasis on relatives' information than for traits with a higher heritability such as live weights.

Take home message: Put all ewe and hogget pregnancy scanning records on SIL to increase NLB breeding value accuracy, including dries with preg scan = 0.

BPT Field Day: take-home messages

Beef Progeny Test field days were held at Mendip Hills and Rangitaiki Staion in May, attracting a total of 150 people. New processing data was presented.

The key points:

- A 35% difference between the highest and lowest sires for hitting Silver Fern Farms Beef EQ reserve grade (achieving high quality).
- Sire carcass quality EBVs are doing a fair job of predicting the actual carcass quality of their calves.
- Cattle that were heavier, fatter and handled well tended to hit the reserve grade more often
- It's about breeding and feeding to hit premium markets.

Watch this space for the full Cohort 1 sire report, due out next month.

Field day handout | Sire report

Power of the Bull Field Day

National Beef Genetics Manager Max Tweedie spoke to about 70 farmers and rural consultants at last month's Power of the Bull Field day on the Hore family's Stonehenge and Patearoa stations, near Paerau.

The field day focused on Hereford bulls and was organised by Southern Districts Hereford Club (SDHC) chairman Daryl King, in association with Beef + Lamb New Zealand.

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One step for cow – one giant leap for bovine-kind

[This story was written by B+LNZ Genetics for Country-Wide Beef, thus the commercial farmer focus.]

With every season that passes, predicting a bull's actual performance – before you invest in him – becomes increasingly accurate. The latest tool is called "single step". Yes, it's hard-core genomic science, but you don't need to worry about that. As a commercial farmer, all you need to worry about is that bull breeders who are investing in this technology deserve your attention, come bull-buying time.

If a breeder is using genomics, his sale bulls will have more accurate estimated breeding values (EBVs). That means you can have a lot more confidence that those bulls will deliver what their EBV figures predict.

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

More information about team