



In this issue:

- ***B+LNZ Genetics farewells general manager***
- ***Low Input Sheep Progeny Test underway***
- ***Calendar of activity for sheep progeny test sites***
- ***Wool Quality Module in development***
- ***B+LNZ Genetics beef programme funding***
- ***Sheep Breeder Forum 2019 dates***
- ***Sheep Breeder Roadshow dates & locations***
- ***B+LNZ AgInnovation videos***
- ***Taste Pure Nature campaign wins award***



B+LNZ Genetics Farewells General Manager

With B+LNZ Genetics' five-year MBIE Partnership Programme concluding, the B+LNZ and B+LNZ Genetics boards are reviewing the organisation's structure. General Manager Graham Alder has decided it is the right time to step aside and move on to new opportunities.

Graham has been with B+LNZ Genetics since its inception in 2014 and achieved significant success over that time, including:

- The Partnership programme achieved an impressive two gold star from MBIE, recognising it as an excellent example of what Partnerships were set up to achieve;
- Development and launch of NZGE – the world's first single-step genomic multi-breed genetic evaluation for sheep;
- The well-supported Sheep Breeder Forums and innovative digital marketing programmes, including last year's virtual Beef Breeder Conference; and
- Collaboration with Australia's MLA to form the Trans-Tasman beef genetics programme.

Graham says he is extremely proud of B+LNZ Genetics' performance over the past five years. "It's been a privilege to establish this organisation and facilitate so much good research, breeder interaction and farmer extension. After five years, however, this is the appropriate time for me to move on to new opportunities and for the entity to move into a new phase."

B+LNZ Genetics Chairman Chris Kelly will act as Executive Chair, until the organisation's ongoing structure is determined.



Low Input Sheep Progeny Test underway

The low input sheep progeny test at Orari Gorge Station is now underway.

In April, 1100 ewes were synchronised for mating and 975 of these were inseminated. The live weight of ewes averaged 58-60kg with a BCS average of 3.5-3.7. Pregnancy scanning and DNA sampling is also completed.

Ewes will lamb early September and be assessed at docking. The intention is to leave tails on male lambs and remove tails from female lambs. This allows us to assess the impact of leaving tails on, before we commit to leaving them on retained ewes.

At docking time, Docking Weight, Tail Length, Leg Length and Bareness of skin will be recorded, as well as DNA samples taken for parentage. Lambs will be weaned in December with Wean Weight and Dag Score recorded.

Ewe hoggets will not be mated this year, but teasers will be used to detect puberty.

Sheep Progeny Test Sites: Calendar

Mating and pregnancy scanning is complete at all progeny test sites. Docking, weaning and processing dates are confirmed for all sites. See table.

	Ewes mated	Mate type	Mating	PScan	Docking	Weaning	Processing
Invermay - HUB	750	AI	April	July	September	December	February
Glenside - HUB	520	AI & NM	April	June	October	December	March
Low Input	975	AI	April	June	September	December	March
Smedley	1100	NM	April	July	October	January	March
WRIG	1100	NM	April	June	October	December	February
SIGC	800	AI & NM	April	July	October	January	January

*AI = artificial insemination, NM = naturally mated



Wool Quality module in development

In recent years, breeders have responded to the lower wool prices in several ways, including:

1. Breeding finer wool within flock/breed
2. Outcrossing with finer wool sires
3. Opting for non-shearing or shedding flocks (notable increase on SIL)

B+LNZ Genetics is therefore developing a dual purpose Wool Quality module that will work in tandem with Dual Purpose Wool (DPW).

The index (DPWQ) will reward finer micron wools with a value that is higher than 37 micron crossbred wool. The reward is non-linear and greater at finer microns. The index also includes Wool Colour.

The new module will support options 1 and 2 above, enabling breeders to identify and select for more valuable (finer) dual purpose wool.

There is also a shedding scoring system available for option 3, but there is no module to provide breeding values as yet.

We anticipate the Dual Purpose Wool Quality module will be available later this year. For flocks interested in recording data for this module at hogget shearing, it requires:

- Measured micron (mid-side sample). The same sample can be used to measure lean fleece yield if desired
- Colour score – 1 (very white) to 5 (very yellow).

As colour is an expensive test, a colour score chart can be used. Email info@blnzgenetics.com to request a copy of the chart.

As per normal, fleece weights should be recorded and entered in SIL to inform DPW.

Note: If pregnant and non-pregnant ewe hoggets are managed separately prior to shearing, the fleece weights should be given separate mob codes. If different groups are shorn at different times, also use different mob codes.

BEEF



B+LNZ Genetics beef programme funding

In order to continue beef genetics research specific to New Zealand, B+LNZ Genetics has applied to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures fund. MPI have approved the first phase of the application with their industry advisory panel and agreed the proposed program would be of great benefit to New Zealand. We are now preparing a business plan to be submitted in December 2019 and a final outcome is expected early next year.

We will update you on funding progress as we learn more. Please don't hesitate to contact jacqui.edwards@blnzgenetics.com if you have any questions in the meantime.

EVENTS



Sheep Breeder Forum 2019

23-24 June, 2020

Napier Conference Centre

Keep an eye out for an invite and RSVP details early next year.



Sheep Breeder Roadshow dates & locations

Join the B+LNZ Genetics team at one of its five October Sheep Breeders' Roadshow events. The roadshow is a great opportunity to get up to speed on key projects and ask any questions.

If there are topics you would like us to focus on, please email info@blnzgenetics, so we can ensure they are covered.

North Island:

- Tuesday 15 October – Copthorne Hotel, Masterton
- Wednesday 16 October – Waipukurau Club, Waipukurau
- Thursday 17 October – Hamilton Airport, Hamilton

South Island:

- Tuesday 22 October – Darfield Community Centre, Darfield
- Wednesday 23 October – Gore RSA, Gore



B+LNZ AgInnovation videos

The B+LNZ AgInnovation Conference was held in Palmerston North in May. The event adds value to farm businesses through presenters and topics looking at the latest in science, information and technology innovation. Two topics of interest for sheep and beef breeders were:

- 1) Max Tweedie: [Data for decisions: Our beef genetics story](#)
- 2) Hadleigh Smith: [Can strong wool surf the merino wave](#)

[View the full playlist of presentations](#)



Taste Pure Nature campaign wins award

B+LNZ's Taste Pure Nature country of origin brand was recognised at the inaugural Primary Industries Awards earlier this month.

[Read More](#)

PEOPLE



The team (from left): IT Programme Manager David Campbell, Lead Scientist Dr Michael Lee, Genetic Evaluation Technical Manager Sharon McIntyre, Sheep Genetics Manager Dr Annie O'Connell, Genetic Systems Analyst Jacqui Edwards 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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