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B+LNZ GENETICS eNEWSLETTER

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SHEEP

Sheep Breeder Roadshow update

The B+LNZ Genetics team were on the road last month, catching up with breeders as part of the Sheep Breeders' Roadshow.
Topics covered included: Single Step, nProve, connectedness, data quality, new modules and BVs such as methane (greenhouse gas), meat quality and wool quality. Around 100 breeders attended across the five locations and there was a lot of good discussion. Videos from the livestreamed event in Gore are available on the B+LNZ Genetics YouTube page.

Thanks to all the breeders who came out and got involved.

View videos from the Gore roadshow

Methane research BV launched

B+LNZ Genetics has just launched a Methane research BV for sheep.
The move is the result of a 10-year multi-million dollar collaboration between the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium (PGGRC), New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre (NZAGRC) and AgResearch, supported by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Ministry for Primary Industries.

Ram breeders wanting to pursue the methane breeding value will need to measure a portion of their flock using Portable Accumulation Chambers. These chambers are onboard an AgResearch-operated trailer, which travels to individual farms. Sheep spend 50 minutes in the chambers, where their gas emissions are measured. This happens twice, at a 14-day interval. The resulting information is then used alongside other genetic information to calculate the methane breeding value.

PGGRC general manager Mark Aspin says the new BV takes advantage of the fact individual sheep vary in their levels of methane emission and these differences are passed on to the next generation.
“This is a global first for any species of livestock. Launching the methane breeding value gives New Zealand’s sheep sector a practical tool to help lower our agricultural greenhouse gases. This is significant. Up until now, the only option available to farmers wanting to lower their greenhouse gas emissions has been to constantly improve their overall farming efficiency.

Although progress via breeding can be slow – around 1 per cent per year, assuming a breeder was selecting only for methane – it is cumulative and has no negative impact on productivity.

Visit www.methanebv.co.nz for more information, including common questions and the on-line booking form.

Sheep Progeny Test update

Low input site

In early October, 950 lambs were DNA sampled from 679 ewes present at docking. Male lambs were left with tails on, whereas females had tails removed by rubber ring. This is so

we can assess the impact of leaving tails on in this trial without affecting ewe lambs that will be retained to adulthood.

DNA parentage results are expected ahead of weaning on the 12 December and we will be able to summarise weaning weights and tail length data per sire.

At weaning the lambs enter a worm resilience protocol and WormFEC data will also be captured through to March. Methane emissions and residual feed intake will be measured in selected female lambs over the May-June period.

Docking completed at all sites

It was docking time last month at the Sheep Progeny test sites. The table below gives a summary of data collected.

Site name	MATE START	DOCK DATE	N LAMBS	N RAMS	AVERAGE DOCK WEIGHT	TAIL SKIN	TAIL LENGTH	LEG LENGTH (TO HOCK)
Glenside HUB	3-Apr	6-Oct	416	19				
Invermay HUB	8-Apr	12-Oct	548	19		6.0cm	22.3cm	23.8cm
Low Input	14-Apr	7-Oct	950	17		8.3cm	23.6cm	20.9cm
SIGC	17-Apr	15-Oct	887	37	14.3kg			
Smedley	20-Apr	31-Oct	1647	25	15.1kg			
WRIG	4-Apr	4-Oct	1424	12				

S.I.L.

DNA Parentage reminder

- For DNA Parentage all breeding ewes require a Lamb Group (LAMBGP) and Mate Group (MATEGP) or Mate Ram (MRAM) traits
- For DNA Parentage all breeding rams require a Mate Group (MATEGP) trait
- For DNA Parentage all lambs required a Lamb Group (LAMBGP)
- SIL requires LAMBGP, MATEGP and/or MRAM to be loaded in order for recommended laboratories to complete DNA parentage.

BEEF

Beef Progeny test update: AI underway

It's AI time in our Beef Progeny Test programme.
Landcorp's Renown Farm, which is home to our dairy-beef progeny test site, has completed AI successfully.
Mating for Cohort 6 of the test is underway at our beef sites – starting with Whangara Farms last week. View the list of sires for Cohort 6 on our website.

View Dairy-Beef sire list

View Beef Sire list

Fine tuning heifer mating

This 'Birth to first pregnancy' guide is only two pages long, yet contains a wealth of information. The priority is to get heifers in calf EARLY.

Download 'Birth to first pregnancy' guide

The team (from left): General Manager Dan Brier, 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