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In this issue:

- ***B+LNZ Genetics welcomes new team members***
- ***Things to be aware of in COVID-19 Alert Level 2***
- ***Events: Low Input Field Day & Sheep Breeder Forum***
- ***Latest results from the Dairy Beef Progeny Test***
- ***Study on follow-up bulls in dairy herd***
- ***Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) conference goes virtual***
- ***Sheep Progeny Test update: mating programme and rams used***
- ***SIL Reminders - MRAM & MATEGP, updated DNA collection calendar***
- ***nProve commercial farmer screens – ready to go live***

PEOPLE



B+LNZ Genetics welcomes new team members

This month we welcomed Anna Boyd and Sarah-Jane Powdrell to the B+LNZ Genetics team. They have been appointed to the roles of Genetics Operations Specialist - Beef, and Genetics Operations Specialist - Sheep, respectively.



Anna and Sarah are very experienced in genetics programmes and the work that breeders do to deliver high-quality stock to commercial farmers. Their roles will be in the field, managing progeny tests, research programmes and working with our breeder community. With them in the organisation, we look forward to being able to continue to deliver world-class genetics services to our breeders and commercial farmers around New Zealand.

Pictured: Anna Boyd (top) and Sarah Powdrell (bottom)



Things to be aware of in COVID-19 Alert Level 2

Sheep Scanners: The government has approved, in principle, the entry of a limited number of experts from overseas to undertake the critical service of pregnancy scanning of sheep over the coming months. We recommend you contact your usual scanner. Their entry will be subject to meeting normal visa conditions and they will also have to meet strict COVID-19 requirements.

Bull sales: If sales are run by stock agents then they should have protocols for farmers to follow for sales on their farm. Farmers should check with the agency they are selling with to see what protocols they have.

EVENTS



Upcoming virtual events

As many of you are aware, the Low Input Sheep Progeny Test Field Day and the Sheep Breeder Forum were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

It's not practical to postpone these events until later in the year, as it clashes with lambing, ram buying season and a particularly busy time on farm for most. Instead, they will be held as virtual events using the Zoom meeting platform.

Please circle these dates in your diary - we will share more details with you all soon, including a list of topics and speakers, start times and how to register/join each event.

- **23 June: Low Input Sheep Progeny Test Virtual Field Day**
- **1-2 July: Sheep Breeder Virtual Forum**

BEEF



Right bull can lift weights by 45kg

Calves from the first two cohorts of the Dairy Beef Progeny Test have been processed and results show that up to 45kg of additional carcassweight can be achieved by mating dairy cows to the right beef bulls.

In the latest Country-Wide Beef, Project Leader Rebecca Hickson reviews the processing data from progeny test calves.

[Read article](#)



Correction to Autumn Dairy Beef Report

A correction has been made to a table in the latest Dairy Beef Progeny Test report. The ranking values for Marble Score in Table 10 (Carcass trait measurements) were listed in the wrong order. These have been corrected and the updated report is available on the B+LNZ Genetics website.

[View Report](#)



Study into follow-up bulls in dairy herd

Drawing on data from the Beef Progeny Test, Massey University PhD student Lucy Coleman has been investigating factors affecting the profitability of using Angus or Hereford bulls for follow-up in a dairy herd. Coleman used computer modelling to compare the profitability of using Hereford or Angus bulls instead of Jersey bulls, and the profitability of buying a Hereford or Angus to run with the herd vs artificial breeding.

[Read more in the latest NZ Hereford magazine \(Pg 58\)](#)



BIF conference

The Beef Improvement Federation (BIF) symposium in the USA is an excellent conference where science and industry interact around beef cattle recording. Due to Covid-19 restrictions they will now host the conference online – for free.

For those in the beef breeding industry, this is a great opportunity to attend a highly-regarded conference, at zero cost. (And the afternoon start time works well for NZ viewing)

The conference will be held on 8-12 June. You can view the programme in the link below.

www.bifconference.com



Mating programme adapted in response to Covid-19

Due to restrictions under Level 4 lockdown, an adjustment to the mating programme for the Sheep Progeny test was required. Although artificial insemination (AI) was classed as an essential service, AI for the purposes of research was not considered essential during the lockdown period.

This meant that the AI programme on the commercial farm at Glenside could continue as planned, as well as a smaller AI programme at the Low Input site in Geraldine, but not at the Invermay research site or the South Island Genomic Calibration (SIGC) site.

The approach taken at each site is summarised below:

- **Glenside (HUB):** Full AI programme. This involved 520 ewes over 2 days. This site will evaluate 9 maternal sires in 2020.
- **Invermay (HUB):** No AI programme. Instead, 850 ewes have been mated naturally. This site will evaluate 12 maternal sires, and relevant replacement ewe lambs for 2020.
- **SIGC site:** No AI programme. Instead, 800 ewes were mated naturally. Linkage was achieved by using local, well-linked research sires.
- **Low Input site:** A smaller AI programme involving 300 ewes and 6 rams. The remaining 700 ewes were mated naturally. This site will evaluate 7 maternal sires by AI and 8 sires that were supplied for natural mating.

Impact on terminal sires

The difficult decision not to assess terminal sires this year was made in order to prioritise as many maternal sires as possible. Terminal sires will still be assessed through the SIGC and PML progeny test sites this year. Linkage will be re-established for terminal sires and these progeny test sites through the HUB mating programme in 2021.



Sheep Progeny Test: Updated Ram list

We've updated the list of rams used in this year's mating programme to reflect the changes discussed above. This list is available on the SIL website

[View list of rams](#)



nProve update

We're now making the final preparations to launch nProve in the coming weeks. Thankyou to everyone who provided feedback during the final testing phase. Some valuable points were raised and we've made changes reflecting that feedback. Please take this opportunity to experience nProve as commercial farmers will, before it goes live.

[More about changes made](#)

[Click here to preview nProve \(commercial farmer/public access\)](#)

Next steps

The rollout of nProve will be phased. There will be a soft launch ahead of ram buying season, while breeders and bureaus manage the transition and become accustomed to the new tool. This means it will be live and available for anyone to access, but we won't be promoting it to farmers until later in the year



Updates to DNA collection calendar

We've updated the DNA collection calendar to make it clear what information needs to be provided to Bureaus for accurate DNA Parentage – all lamb information (tag, sex etc.) and LAMBGP (for lambs and ewes) needs to be provided to your Bureau for loading into SIL.

[View DNA collection calendar](#)



SIL Reminders

- **MRAM and MATEGP should now be loaded:** This is a requirement of DNA parentage (MATEGP for sires; MRAM and/or MATEGP for Ewes). It should be loaded against ALL breeding ewes – including Wet/Dries
- **Start considering lambing mobs:** this is recorded as LAMBGP and is requirement of DNA parentage (LAMBGP needed for ewes and lambs)



The team (from left): General Manager Dan Brier, IT Programme Manager David Campbell, Genetic Evaluation Technical Manager Sharon McIntyre, Lead Scientist Dr Michael Lee, Genetic Systems Analyst Jacqui Edwards, , Sheep Genetics Operations Specialist Sarah Powdrell, Beef Genetics Operations Specialist Anna Boyd and Office Administrator Pam Schofield.

[More information about team](#)

