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SHEEP

With the Sheep Breeder Forum only days away, here's a re-cap of B+LNZ Genetics' two big sheep-related projects for 2018: nProve and Single Step



nProve update

The first release of nProve – the new genetics tool that will ultimately replace SIL – is currently being tested, in preparation for a limited “beta” release to some breeders and bureaus.

nProve takes raw data and turns it into accessible information that you can use to make quicker, more accurate decisions.

Built from new software and back-end technology, nProve draws on New Zealand Genetic Evaluation (NZGE) information and will encompass the functionality of all the old tools – BreederFinder, FlockFinder and RamFinder. Significantly, it will also provide greater transparency and the ability to “mine” your own data more deeply.

Over the coming year, regular nProve updates will help you access data in a user-friendly manner and support farmer decision-making around ram selection.

nProve timeframes



Early nProve search screen, showing criteria to the left and results on the right.

Mid 2018:

- Workshop feedback being collected on first design concept
- Improved basic search functionality

Late 2018-2019:

- nProve updates – at approx. 6-8 week intervals – to provide increasingly greater levels of functionality, brand new functionality and more direct access to your information

2019:

- Visual “re-skin” of existing SIL website to nProve



Single Step update

Internationally, Single Step is the best practice genetic evaluation system for production species. B+LNZ Genetics' investment in this technology will provide you with more accurate genetic information and a much quicker turnaround time between information in and out. Single Step enables the genetic potential of younger breeding animals to be identified much earlier and therefore speeds up your genetic gain by years if you have SNP chip genotypes.

[Single Step FAQs](#)

Single Step timeframes

June:

- Results of data review shared with breeder pilot group
- Single-step process running in parallel with NZGE to identify any bugs or discrepancies

July-Sept:

- Extensive validation phase
- Re-ranking of sires reviewed to ensure accuracy

Late 2018:

- Launch (Oct)
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Forum strategy discussion: your feedback needed

National Sheep Genetics Manager Dr Annie O'Connell will facilitate an interactive discussion on our future sheep genetics strategy. During this session, we will focus on the two questions below.

1. **From a breeder's perspective, what should B+LNZ Genetics and ram breeders focus on over the next 10 years?** *E.g. Health traits, connectedness for flocks, etc.*
2. **From a commercial farmer's perspective, what should B+LNZ Genetics and ram breeders focus on over the next 10 years?** *E.g. Understanding NZMW & NZTW indexes, etc*

Please send us your feedback ahead of the forum – whether you are attending or not, we want to hear from you. This will give us an idea of the popular topics we need to focus on for discussion.

Feedback can be submitted online by visiting: bit.ly/sheepstrategy



Sheep Breeder Forum livestream link

Like previous years, we will be livestreaming this year's Sheep Breeder Forum. You can watch the livestream from the videos page of our website: www.blzgenetics.com/video-clips

For a list of speakers and their topics, [view our conference programme](#)

S.I.L.



Meat Module update

Dr Neville Jopson from AbacusBio has been working away behind the scenes, updating the SIL Meat Module. It was last calculated in 1990, when a 12-13kg carcass was the norm.

This R&D project aims to improve the accuracy of breeding values for meat yield traits. All ultrasound, meat processor grading system and CT scan meat yield data collected and stored in NZGE will be used to better predict breeding values. It will allow breeders to use any mixture of measurement technologies, but get one set of breeding values. It involves:

- Redeveloping the genetic evaluation system for meat production, to make it relevant to the technologies used and breeds of sheep in New Zealand today
- Collecting ultrasound, CT scan and meat processor data of animals sourced from breeders and CPT flocks
- Calculate new genetic parameters to replace the existing values, some of which relate to data collected around 1990 from 13kg carcasses

At this year's forum Neville will explain what we can expect to see in August, when the new module is launched.



[View Best Practice Guide](#)

SIL REMINDERS

- **DNA parentage flocks** – record lambing groups for all ewes. Survival calculations are based on ewes present at lambing. For more information on DNA parentage, see page 8 in our Best Practice Guide
- Send full **pregnancy scanning records** to your bureau (including dries). For more information on pregnancy scanning, see page 18 in our Best Practice Guide

BEEF



Bull breeders: tips to assure clients of your *M. Bovis* status

There is general nervousness within the dairy and beef sectors about buying beef bulls in this new *Mycoplasma bovis* era. Here are five tips that will help you reassure your clients of your *M. bovis* free status.

[View 5 Tips](#)



Sheep Advisory Group nominations

B+LNZ Genetics is seeking nominations from industry for representatives on the Sheep Advisory Group (SAG). Ideally for each island we want a balance of:

- 3-4 breeders representing maternal and terminal breeds
- 1-2 commercial farmer(s)
- 1 stock agent
- 1 service provider

The group will meet approximately twice a year (either in person, or by Skype) to provide feedback to B+LNZ Genetics on its programme of services and developments, and to provide industry with a route to table ideas or issues with B+LNZ Genetics, relating to sheep genetic evaluation.

[View current SAG members](#)



B+LNZ Levy vote

As you'll be aware, B+LNZ – our parent company – is seeking feedback on its proposal to increase farmer levies.

It proposes increasing the sheepmeat levy by 10c (to 70c/head) and the beef levy by 80c (to \$5.20/head). The additional funds are earmarked for rolling out the Taste Pure Nature origin brand and Red Meat Story, and helping lift the sector's environmental performance and reputation.

B+LNZ Genetics General Manager Graham Alder urges breeders to have their say, alongside commercial farmers. "B+LNZ has committed to core fund B+LNZ Genetics from October this year, so we also have a stake in successfully serving levy payers. "It is worth noting that – before seeking the levy increase – B+LNZ first made significant savings internally. Since 2015, \$5.1m of savings were made and \$3.7m of those funds were re-deployed into priority areas. Overall, the organisation's expenditure has fallen \$1.4m."

Submissions close 13 July.

[Find out more](#)



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](#)



The future's in the genes



For more information visit
www.blzgenetics.com

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