



Engagement Education Exploration Exchange

August 2018

MerinoLink Limited Newsletter

Issue 8

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Dates for the Diary...

- ✓ **Tues 4th September**
2018 South West Slopes Stud
Merino Breeders Field Day
- ✓ **Tues 11th September**
2018 MerinoLink AGM
- ✓ **Various member ram sales and field day**
See inside newsletter for more details



Welcome to the eighth edition of MerinoLink Limited Newsletter

As a mixed bag of emotions fill many farmers' thoughts across eastern Australia as the drought really settles in, I thought I would try and restore some positive thoughts back to MerinoLink members. Firstly, by quoting a paragraph from a great Australian poet Dorothea Mackellar;

*"I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains,
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror,
-The wide brown land for me!"*

Dorothea Mackellar wrote this poem in 1907 at the age of 22 and I still believe it has a firm significance to all of us, especially now considering the flooding rains of 2016 and then again in December 2017, and now in 2018 we are facing one of the worst droughts on record. I like this paragraph as it shows that for over 100 years, and longer, farmers have been experiencing the harsh conditions that Australia produces and will continue to produce, BUT the horizon will change and there is still plenty of positive reasons to keep focused in the sheep industry. With wool prices and lamb prices at record levels and mutton still having high demand I encourage all members to maintain the momentum as it's still a very exciting time to be in the Merino Industry.

At MerinoLink, the past few months have been very busy and exciting. This issue covers our extremely successful Conference and Field Day; The MerinoLink–Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) Trial; and The MerinoLink and University of New England (UNE) DNA Stimulation project. As always, the focus for MerinoLink is to deliver results to its members and with the trial work currently being carried out by MerinoLink and our partners I look forward to delivering those much-anticipated results! Making decisions is always hard, but with knowledge and information those decisions can be made with confidence.

Good luck with the upcoming spring, let's hope for some widespread rain and may the positive vibe continue.

Richard Keniry
MerinoLink Chair



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“MerinoLink Limited is a not for profit organisation that aims to facilitate the sheep breeders and service providers link with information, knowledge and research.”

MerinoLink’s founding members are from a wide range of sheep businesses with varying production systems. The members have been brought together by a common enthusiasm for profitable Merino sheep and a desire to continue to build their businesses, client businesses and the sheep industries profitability.

MerinoLink is committed to assisting our members make better use of past and current research. In addition, MerinoLink aims to build networks and add value to existing and future research and development.

MerinoLink recognises the opportunities to work together to develop research projects for the future improvement of the Australian Sheep industry.

MerinoLink aims to provide all members with access to industry organisations and facilitate a two-way dissemination of information.

MerinoLink consists of ram and commercial producers, and service providers wanting to move our industry and members forward as fast and effectively as possible. This is made possible by MerinoLink’s engagement with members and industry, education of members, exploration of research ideas and exchange of the results.



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MerinoLink & UNE DNA Stimulation Project

Sally Martin, MerinoLink CEO & Project Manager

Project Introduction

The MerinoLink & University of New England (UNE) UNE DNA Stimulation project is a partnership with UNE, MerinoLink, MLA Donor Company and the project Participants which includes 26 Merino ram breeders and up to 200 commercial Merino breeders.

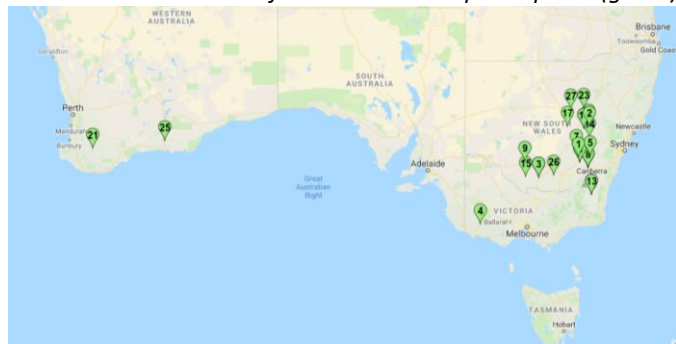
How will this project be different?

The MerinoLink & UNE DNA Stimulation project is not about testing whether genetic tools work or the implementation of single tools in set situations but taking the best tools and knowledge from our world leading researchers and delivering it through service providers and ram breeders to commercial producers and building a supported system to best use the genetic tools in industry. The project will focus on capacity building and working collaboratively at all levels within and across the industry.

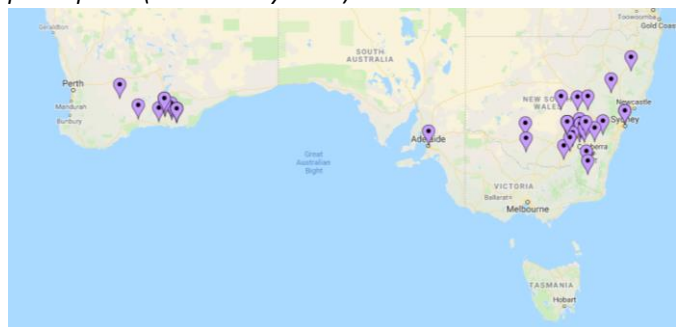
Project Funding

The MerinoLink & UNE DNA Stimulation project is funded on a 50:50 basis with project participants and the MLA Donor Company. The project has been instigated by MerinoLink Limited and is managed by MerinoLink and supported by the University of New England. The project will work with 26 ram breeders and up to 200 commercial breeders across Australia.

Below are the location of the ram breeder participants (green).



Below are the locations of the commercial breeder participants (as at 1st July 2018)



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Project Aim

The aim of the MerinoLink & UNE DNA Stimulation project team is to work with a group of seed stock and commercial breeders to increase their use of genetic and genomic tools currently available with the aim to double genetic gain in line with the MLA's National Livestock Genetic Consortium's strategic direction by 2022.

The project also aims to genetically benchmark a cross section of the commercial breeders in Western Australia, NSW and Victoria (however the project is not limited to these states). The project team will work with the commercial breeder participants to explore the use of ASBVs in conjunction with their current ram selection practices and how to understand and interpret the Genomic Flock Profile for the best results.

The Process – Ram Breeders – Each ram breeder will have their flocks current position benchmarked using the Sheep Genetic RAMPing-Up and genetic trend reports (if available). The information gained from the initial benchmark will be used to assess the participants current strengths and target opportunities for improvements to achieve and realise their breeding objective. Each ram breeder will have the opportunity to participate in an annual one on one meeting with the project team and attend an annual workshop. The annual workshop will aim to address key issues identified in the one on one meetings, facilitate greater networking and collaboration amongst ram breeder participants and service providers and identify next step actions for the project and post project.

The Process – Commercial Breeders - Conduct a Genomic Flock Profile with up to 200 commercial flocks (initial benchmark) on the 2017 drop ewe lambs/weaners. Each project participant will be expected to attend a workshop to discuss the results and work through options for future ram purchases. The project participant will be able to take the results back to their ram source and work with the ram breeder to address the strengths and weaknesses of the results. A repeat Genomic Flock Profile will be conducted after 4 years (2021) and compared with the initial benchmark results to assess what gains have been achieved. In addition to the Genetic Flock Profile the project will attempt to benchmark other production measurements to assist in monitoring any

improvements in productivity. Each participant will have the opportunity to participate in an annual workshop that will focus on understanding and interpreting results, assessing ram team genetic merit, setting targets for the next ram buying season and fine-tuning breeding objectives to maximise production targets.

Project objectives

1. To increase the number of Merino ram breeders submitting full pedigree data to Sheep Genetics by 100% (greater than 95% full pedigree). The impact will be to increase the accuracy of ASBV's and genetic gain.
2. To increase the use of genomic testing by Merino ram breeders to select stud sires. The impact will improve ASBV accuracy and increase selection response.
3. To increase the number of Merino ram breeders that use MateSel to maximise genetic gain.
4. To increase the number of commercial Merino breeder using Flock Profile tests to benchmark their genetic progress and target ram selection by incorporating the information in RamSelect.
5. To explore the use of the Flock Profile test by ram breeders and their clients to better tailor ram selection to client needs and measure changes in genetic merit and changes in breeding programs over time.
6. To facilitate data collection and genomic testing to enhance the existing genomic reference population.
7. To test the concept for ram breeders to carry out genomic testing only, without phenotypic measurement, whilst being supported by an industry run reference flock that they are strategically linked to.
8. To provide an extension process to guide, facilitate and explore optimal use of DNA testing for both parentage and genomic selection, as well as mate selection and explore future opportunities with the project participants.
9. To train and mentor service providers in the application of DNA testing and genomic selection in Merino breeding programs.

For more information about the project please contact Sally Martin on 0400 782 477 or sallymartin777@gmail.com

About MLA Donor Company:

MLA Donor Company Limited (MDC) is a fully-owned subsidiary of Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA). MDC accelerates innovation across the value chain so the Australian red meat and livestock industry can remain competitive on the world stage. It does this by attracting commercial investment from individual enterprises and others that share a mutual interest to co-invest in innovation that will benefit the industry. www.mla.com.au/mdc



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Optimising the use of Parentage and 15K Genomic Testing in Merino Ram Breeding Flocks

Tom Granleese, University of New England

Key messages

- The price differential between the SheepDNA Parentage test (\$21 plus GST) and the SheepDNA 15K test (\$27 plus GST supplied in a TSU) has been substantially reduced.
- Genomic testing of all ram lambs and parentage testing of ewe lambs will cost the same as parentage testing all progeny and then 15K testing a 20% of ram cohort, with the benefit of increased rates of genetic gain.
- Genomic testing all ram lambs can increase genetic gain of the breeding objective by up to 16% when first mating age is 18 months.
- Genomic testing all ram lambs can increase genetic gain of the breeding objective by up to 23% when using ram lambs only as sires.

Parentage test

Full pedigree recording has been widely adopted by Merino ram breeders in recent years. The Sheep Genetics “Gold-Star” approach to recording pedigree is to “mother-up” lambs as this is the most accurate way to record critical life events that have a large impact on ASBVs. These major events include date of birth, birth type, birth weight and maternal behaviour score. However, in some seed-stock flocks, mothering up is not possible. Yet the importance of knowing pedigree is extremely important in generation of accurate ASBVs. The benefits of recording maternal pedigree by a range of methods are detailed in Table 1. Both the SheepDNA Parentage test and the 15K Genomic test can be used for allocating parentage.

Table 1: Benefits of different methods of recording full pedigree

Benefit	Mothering Up	Smart Shepherd, Pedigree Matchmaker	Parentage testing all	15k genomic testing some	15k genomic testing all
Pedigree assignment of all drop of sheep	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Know date of birth, birthweight, birth type	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Increase accuracy of ASBVs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Can mate in syndicates and know sire pedigree	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Can mate in syndicates and know dam pedigree	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Add to genomic reference population	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Increase variation of ASBVs prior to trait measurement	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Test for genetic defects or major genes	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Poll/horn assignment	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓

Under previous pricing structures the recommendation has been to parentage test all male and female progeny and then 15K test approximately 20 - 33% of the ram cohort to increase the accuracy of ASBVs and the variation in ASBVs amongst a cohort of ram lambs. With the introduction of new pricing and a reduced differential between parentage and 15K genomic testing, the Sheep CRC has reviewed the potential benefits from different DNA testing strategies.

Tables 2 and 3 show comparisons of the annual rate of genetic gain, in terms of MP+ index points, under different testing scenarios, the percentage increase in rate of gain compared to parentage testing only and the cost of genomic testing per index point of gain, for rams mated at 7 and 18 months of age.

Table 2: Rates of gain for ram lambs joined at 7 months

	Parentage testing all progeny	Double testing – Parentage testing all progeny followed by 15K testing 33%* of ram lambs	15K Testing all ram lambs and parentage testing all ewe lambs
Maximum rate of index gain (MP+ points/year) [^]	5.3	6.3	6.5
% increase	0%	19%	23%
Testing cost/index point of gain	\$4.57	\$4.62	\$4.18

*Assuming testing 33% of ram lambs will return 80% of genomic testing benefit

[^]Assuming within-flock selection. Faster rates of gain can be achieved using high-ranking outside sires

Table 3: Rates of gain for rams joined at 18 months

	Parentage testing all progeny	Double testing – Parentage testing all progeny followed by 15K testing 20%* of ram lambs	15K Testing all ram lambs and parentage testing all ewe lambs
Maximum rate of index gain (MP+ points/year) [^]	5.0	5.6	5.8
% increase	0%	12%	16%
Testing cost/index point of gain	\$4.82	\$4.88	\$4.66

*Assuming testing 20% of ram selection candidates will return 80% of genomic testing benefit

[^]Assuming within-flock selection. Faster rates of gain can be achieved using high-ranking outside sires

Testing all ram lambs with the 15k test and then mating at 7 months of age would lead to a 23% increase in genetic gain compared to parentage testing only. This is a 4% improvement on the earlier recommendation to double testing with parentage and then 15K of a 33% cohort. For many breeders mating ram lambs at 7 months is not practical or achievable. Table 3 shows the benefits from 15K testing all ram lambs and then mating at 18 months. The rate of genetic gain is increased 16% compared to parentage testing only and also represents a 4% improvement on double testing with parentage and then 15K of 20% cohort.

The benefits of 15K genomic testing come from extra accuracy and variation in traits particularly where traits are measured late in life or not measured at all. Greater accuracy and variation allows “correlation breakers” to be identified and enables accelerated rates of genetic gain where a multi-trait breeding objective or selection index is used. For more about benefits of genomic testing go to <https://youtu.be/-6GQWokNZlg>

Practical Example

A producer has 1000 lambs born in their stud nucleus a year. They have made the substantial commitment to DNA parentage testing which would cost \$24,000 annually (\$21 per test plus \$3 TSU). For an extra \$3,000, total cost of \$27,000, they can 15k genomic test their entire ram drop rather than parentage test. This costs exactly the same as the double testing scenario (parentage test all progeny and then 15K the top 20% of rams) with the added advantage of more accurate ASBVs and increased variation in traits that are not or have not yet been measured. This producer first mates sheep at 18 months of age which means the investment in 15k testing of the ram cohort will increase their rate of genetic gain by a maximum of 16% (Table 2).

Genotyping and performance recording

If breeders choose to genotype their ram lambs as a method to parentage test, they will receive a genomic enhanced ASBV once they have submitted pedigree and at least one performance record. Some breeders will be tempted to do an "early-cull" with this data. However Sheep Genetics implore breeders to continue measuring some key performance records on the entire cohort including obvious culls prior to any major removing from the nucleus. This will help prevent any bias creeping into ASBV calculations.

Please contact Sheep Genetics if you are looking to cull early to prevent disappointment.

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QPLU\$ Revisited

Sally Martin, MerinoLink CEO & Project Manager

As a new generation of sheep breeders and service providers are coming into the industry, the MerinoLink Board felt it was timely to revisit some key industry research. QPLU\$ is one of those industry research projects. MerinoLink has worked with NSW DPI to be able to re-publish key papers from the 2006 and 2007 QPLU\$ field day proceedings with the entire report available on the MerinoLink website –

www.merinolink.com.au

MerinoLink would like to acknowledge and thank the dedication of the NSW DPI staff involved in this project from its inception to conclusion, a massive 15 years, as well as the financial support from both Australian Wool Innovation and NSW DPI.

MerinoLink is committed to assisting our members make better use of past and current research. In addition, MerinoLink aims to continue to build networks and add value to existing and future research and development. We recognise the opportunities to work together to develop research projects for the future improvement of the Australian Sheep industry. We trust that everyone will benefit from having access to this important industry research information.

QPLU\$ Project Overview

The Trangie QPLU\$ Project is a Merino breeding project that was initiated in 1992. It was designed with a number of aims:

- To demonstrate the efficiency of using a selection index to rank sheep based on measured performance.
- To provide Merino breeders with information to help them choose a balance of measured and visual selection that will achieve their breeding objective.
- To give breeders the opportunity to see the process and results of index selection first hand.

As Merino breeding technology has been developed, the use of objective measurement has become easier and more affordable. The correct use of objective measurement allows breeders to maximize their genetic progress and therefore satisfy the demands of

their clients, who are in turn aiming to meet market demand.

The subject of objective measurement and the selection of sheep based on these measurements always raise questions in the wool industry:

- What sort of genetic gains are possible?
- What will happen to non-measured characteristics like wool style and conformation?
- How can we find a balance between measured and visual selection?
- What do we need to measure and what information do we need to record?

The Trangie QPLU\$ Project was set up to answer these and other questions. A series of open days in the past have occurred to allow Merino breeders and producers to see the progressive results of this project for themselves. The final two open days presented the sheep and the outcomes from the completion of the ten rounds of selection planned for the project. The papers in this publication offer some answers to the questions listed above.

To put the information that is contained in this publication into context, the history of the flocks and the breeding program is outlined.

History

In 1992, Merryville, Haddon Rig and East Bungaree ewes and rams were purchased from the parent studs (or on the recommendation of the parent stud in the case of the Merryville ewes). These three bloodlines were chosen because of their influence at the time in the strains that they represented (i.e. fine, medium-Peppin and broad wool strains).

They were mated in 1993 and 1994 to produce a fully pedigreed foundation flock, from which the selection lines were created in 1995. Until 1998, all selection was through the rams selected as sires within each line. Subsequently, both rams and ewes were selected. Rams were selected across three age groups while ewes were selected across six age groups. In successive years, about 30% of ewes from each line have been culled. Selection continued for a total of ten rounds, with the final drop born in 2004.

The QPLU\$ Selection Lines

The Merino flock being studied within the QPLU\$ Project consists of nine selection lines derived from three strains as described in Table 1.

Table 1: *The QPLU\$ selection lines*

Strain	Breeding Line	Breeding Objective
Fine	8% MP	Equal emphasis on reducing fibre diameter and increasing fleece weight.
Fine	Control	Random mating to maintain a line that represents the original population.
Medium	3% MP	Maximize increase in fleece weight and maintain fibre diameter.
Medium	8% MP	Equal emphasis on reducing fibre diameter and increasing fleece weight.
Medium	15% MP	Maintain fleece weight and maximize reduction in fibre diameter.
Medium	Industry Line	Reduce fibre diameter by 0.5 micron, increase fleece weight and improve/maintain wool quality and conformation.
Medium	Control	Random mating to maintain a line that represents the original population.
Broad	8% MP	Equal emphasis on reducing fibre diameter and increasing fleece weight.
Broad	Control	Random mating to maintain a line that represents the original population.

The selection lines named 3% MP, 8% MP and 15% MP were selected using an index of fleece weight and fibre diameter. An index allows information on more than one trait to be combined into a measure of overall genetic merit for profitability, without the need to consider each and every trait separately for all animals. The percentage figures refer to the micron premium (MP) on which they are based, which in turn reflects different emphases on fleece weight and fibre diameter. Micron premiums can also be used to describe a breeding objective in terms of likely response to selection. A '15% MP index' is an index that maximises returns in a wool market that is returning 15% more for wool that is 1 micron finer.

Within each QPLU\$ index selection line, rams and ewes were ranked on estimates of genetic merit across age groups, according to the appropriate index of clean fleece weight and average fibre diameter, based on all available sources of information. This information included an animal's own performance in mean fibre diameter and clean fleece weight and the performances of its relatives through pedigree records. Adjustments were made also to the performance records to account for the influence of early environmental effects (e.g. birth type, rearing type and age) and reproduction.

Genetic merit of an animal was given by a BLUP index value, based on estimated breeding values obtained using BVEST. Sires and dams were selected on BLUP index values, based on all of the available sources of information as described above, across age groups.

The objective for the Industry line was set by the QPLU\$ Industry Liaison Committee. This was a committee of ram breeders, classers and wool growers whose objective for the line was to reduce fibre diameter by 0.5 micron, increase fleece weight and improve/maintain wool quality and conformation. Selections were made by stud classer, John Williams from the Monaro Region, NSW. In the Industry Line, sheep were ranked according to an index that was developed to meet the breeding objective. John used this ranking in combination with his own visual assessment to make selections.

The Control Lines were randomly mated to represent the foundation sheep from which the first selections were made. In addition, semen from the foundation sires has been stored so that at the end of the project, the top sires produced from 10 years of selection may be compared with the starting rams.

The risks of high oestrogen sub-clover on reproduction and animal health

Potential Sub-Clover Project – The risks of high-oestrogen sub-clovers on reproduction and animal health.

MerinoLink has recently been contacted by the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Western Australia to look more closely into the issues resulting from high oestrogen sub-clover varieties.

Dr Kevin Foster has a background in pasture breeding, agronomy, farming systems and has worked for many years at the Agriculture department in Western Australia selecting low oestrogenic sub clovers as part of National breeding programs.

Forage legumes contain oestrogenic compounds that can cause infertility in grazing animals. In Dr Fosters recent National survey (except for Tasmania), morphological analysis of plants sampled over autumn and winter of 2014-15 showed that up to 20% of pastures in southern Australia are still dominated by the older cultivars of high-oestrogen subterranean clover (Yarloop, Dwalganup, Geraldton and Dinninup). Another 15% were found to be naturalised variants of cultivars

that have evolved (from natural crossing events or mutations), some of which are also known to be highly oestrogenic (Eden Valley in SA; Book Book in NSW).

In these older cultivars as well (as the new variants), high concentrations of oestrogenic compounds can cause two infertility syndromes in sheep: a) Short-term infertility that can be resolved by removing the animal from the oestrogen source; b) permanent infertility, commonly known as ‘clover disease’, that brings a variety of serious disorders including dystocia and uterine prolapse, often leading to mortality in the ewes as well as post-natal mortality of lambs. Ewes suffering from permanent infertility rarely present with clinical signs at mating because they can show normal oestrous cycles. The condition therefore often goes unnoticed by producers especially in the Merino and Merino cross ewes. Lambs born onto oestrogenic pastures may even be infertile at their maiden lambing (35% recently on Kangaroo Island).

If you are interested to find out more about the project and/or would like to be involved, please contact Sally Martin 0400 782 477 for more information.

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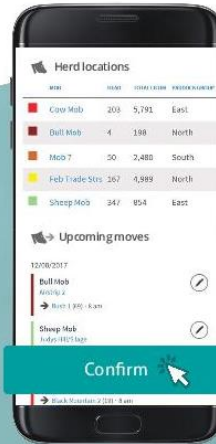
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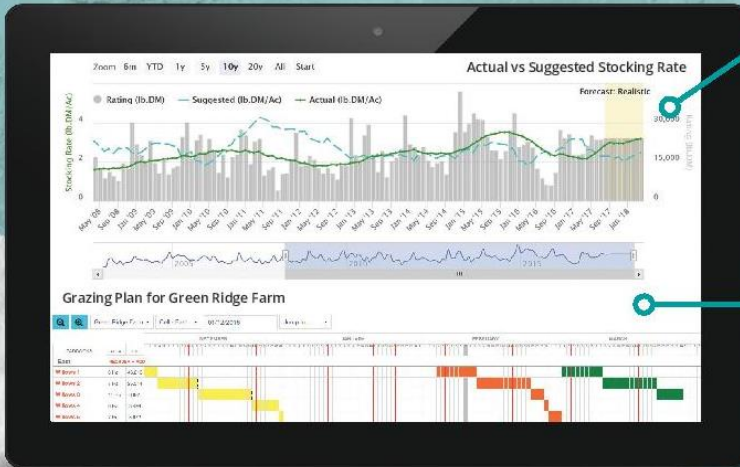
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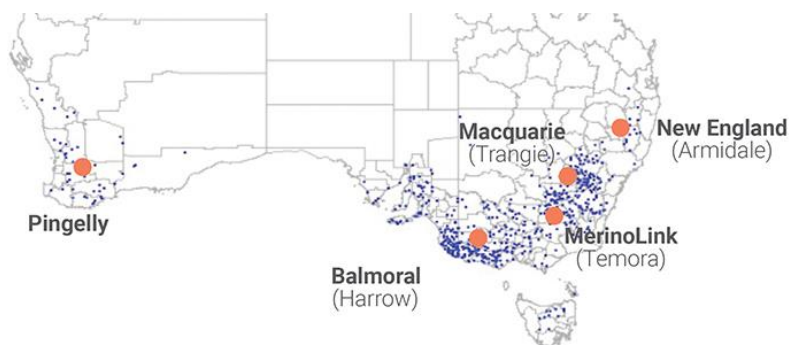
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MLP Update Merino Lifetime Productivity Project – MerinoLink Site Update



With so many woolgrowers focussing on improving their flock reproduction, the Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project is generating an important dataset that can be used to better understand the role that genetics plays in improving reproductive performance and overall lifetime productivity.

In 2018 the daughters from 78 industry sires were joined naturally to Merino rams across three different MLP sites, Balmoral (Vic), MerinoLink (NSW) and Pingelly (WA). In 12 months' time we will have a better understanding of the impact that maiden reproduction has on adult fleece, carcase, classing and disease resistance performance within (and possibly across) those environments. On the completion of repeat adult records we will then have greater insight into how these traits relate to each other, and how we can more efficiently and economically deliver lifetime ewe performance.



Each of the five sites will join their two drops of F1 ewes to Merino rams joined as a syndicate. The resulting F2 progeny are then DNA tested and leave the core MLP project following a weaning weight.

The Balmoral site located in Victoria was the first site to have their F1 ewes complete a full production cycle and have yielded the very first reproduction results for the project. If you haven't already checked out the results, head to the MLP website and follow the links to the report page to download a copy of the Balmoral MLP Report (www.wool.com/MLP).

The results suggest that across the 25 sires; there were small differences in conception, large differences in litter size and moderate differences in ewe rearing ability. When combined, we see large differences between sires in their ability to wean lambs (figure 1). It's good to remember that these results are based on just 500 records from what will become 25,000 lambing records - and that we need this number of records to be confident in overall outcomes.

The kinds of questions that the project will answer in relation to reproduction are around:

- What are the features, and how common, are ewes that can do it all – produce lambs, wool, carcase traits whilst coping with a worm burden?
- What is the most economical way for commercial growers to identify ewes that are more productive through life?
- What do we need to adapt in our current approaches to selection to deliver better ewe lifetime production?

If you would like to receive regular updates from the MLP project, make sure you head to the project website and click on the link to subscribe www.wool.com/MLP.

For more information on the MLP project call Sally Martin, MLP MerinoLink Site Manager, 0400 782 477 or Anne Ramsay, MLP Project Manager, 0400 368 448.

The Merino Lifetime Productivity Project is being undertaken in partnership between the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association Incorporated (AMSEA) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI). AMSEA and AWI would like to acknowledge those entities who also contribute funding, namely Woolgrowers through sire evaluation entry fees, site committee in-kind contributions, and sponsors of AMSEA. A special acknowledgement is also made to the Australian Government who supports research, development and marketing of Australian wool.

Sire FBV Number of Lambs Weaned

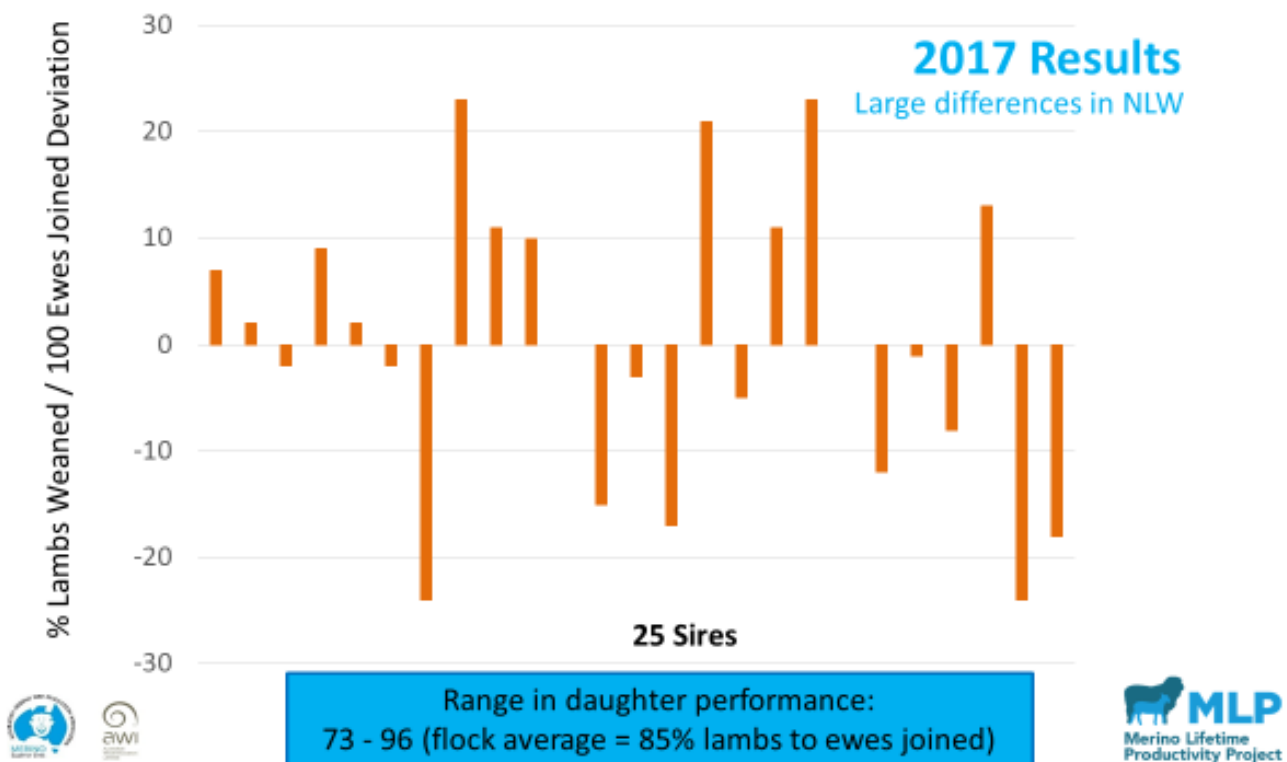


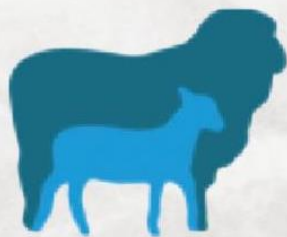
Figure 1: Sire Flock Breeding Values (FBV) for number of lambs weaned, Balmoral maiden ewe results*.

*Note that sire flock breeding values (FBV) are halved to generate the range in daughter performance. Breeding values are generated from data recorded within-site and within-drop and express the expected **genetic** performance of a sire relative to another sire in the evaluation. Breeding Values improve the accuracy of sire results because they account for the association between traits, the heritability of the trait, and non-genetic affects such as birth and rear type, sex (see adjustments listed earlier), and the number of progeny a sire has in the analysis.

Proven - Production - Profit

GREENDALE

merinos



MLP

Merino Lifetime
Productivity Project

Merino
LINK

Greendale 120012 indexed 1st MP+, 1st FP+ (2016)

Greendale 140141 indexed 1st MP+, 1st FP+ (2017)

2006-2016 Merino Bloodline Comparison

Greendale Genetics ranked **1st**

Overall Profit \$/HA of **77 Bloodlines**

The Most Proven Profitable Merino

ON PROPERTY MERINO RAM SALE
THURSDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2018

CONTACT Alan McGufficke 0429 448 078 www.greendalemerinos.com.au



Stud Name	Event	Date
Heathfield Merinos	Open Day. Sales by private inspection from 24 th August	Friday 24 th August
Trigger Vale Poll	On-property Sale	Friday 7 th September
Kerin Poll	On-property Sale	Monday 10 th September
Rocklyn	On-property Sale	Thursday 13 th September
Plevna Merinos	Inspection Day	Thursday 13 th September
Centre Plus Poll	Open Day	Friday 14 th September
Yarrowonga	On-property Sale	Monday 17 th September
GullenGamble	On-property Sale	Tuesday 18 th September
Roseville Park	On-property Sale	Thursday 20 th September
Plevna Merinos	On-property Sale	Thursday 20 th September
Avenel	On-property Sale	Friday 21 st September
Woodpark Poll	On-property Sale	Monday 24 th September
Pooginook	On-property Sale	Tuesday 25 th September
Bogo Merinos	On-property Sale	Thursday 27 th September
The Yanko	On-property Sale	Thursday 27 th September
Bundilla	Production Sale	Wednesday 3 rd October
Billandri	On-property Sale	Tuesday 9 th October
GRASS Merinos	Field Day & Ram Sale	Thursday 11 th October
Hazeldean	Riverina Ram Sale	Thursday 11 th October
Grassy Creek Merinos	On-property Sale	Monday 15 th October
Tallawong Merinos	On-property Sale	Tuesday 16 th October
Adina	On-property Sale	Monday 22 nd October
Grogansworth Merinos	On-property Sale	Monday 22 nd October
Boudjah	Ram Sale	Tuesday 23 rd October
Hazeldean	Cooma Ram Sale	Thursday 25 th October
Greendale Merinos	On-property Sale	Thursday 25 th October

Bogo Merinos

Performance Genetics



RAM SALE

THURS 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

RAVENSWOOD | CAVAN STATION | YASS

Inspections 10.00am | Auction 1.00pm

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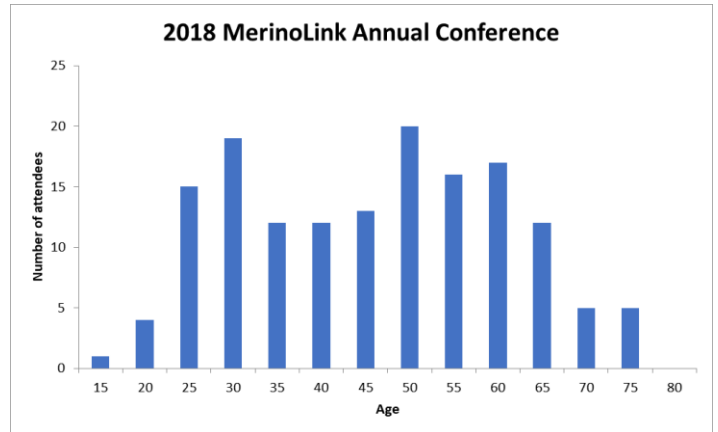
Bogo Merinos/ Industry Leading Breeders of Merino and Poll Merino Genetics. *Part of Cavan Station.*

2018 MerinoLink Conference Report

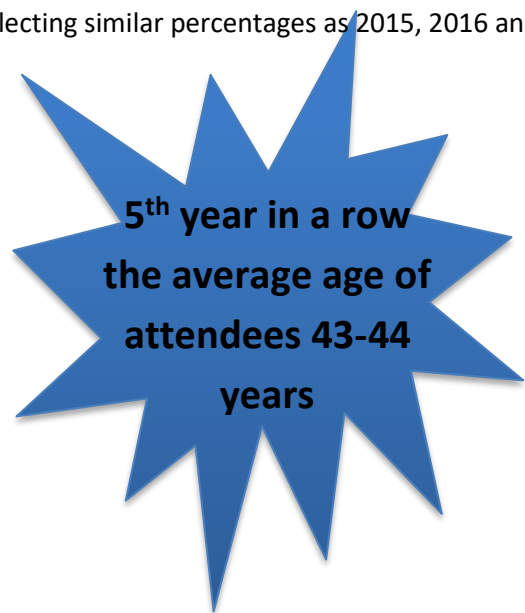
The MerinoLink Conference was held in Goulburn for the second year running and attracted 180 delegates from as far as Western Australia. The conference concluded with a field day at Cavan Station (Ravenswood) Yass where the 2017 drop progeny from the MerinoLink Sire Evaluation were on display. The field day was also well attended with 100 growers and service providers attending. The average age of the MerinoLink Conference and Field day delegates was 44 years, consistent with the previous 4 MerinoLink conferences.

The conference and field day delegates this year encompassed the following demographics of the sheep industry:

- ✓ Commercial producer
- ✓ Seed stock producer
- ✓ Service provider
- ✓ Students / recent graduates
- ✓ Peter Westblade Scholarship recipients – 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018



The Conference delegates travelled from NSW, ACT, VIC, WA – reflecting similar percentages as 2015, 2016 and 2017.



180 delegates at MerinoLink Conference 2018 held in Goulburn



Adele Offley, Moses & Son; Carmen Thackeray, MerinoLink and Rachael Gawne, Sally Martin Consulting Pty Ltd

The Hour of Power!

The Hour of Power was a new concept included in the MerinoLink Conference in 2018 and proved to be an enormous success. The “Hour of Power” was a fast-paced, informative session presented by a range of young researchers, scholars and innovators from across Australia. University students had the opportunity to present their research projects and findings directly to members of the sheep industry that their research could benefit. Previous Peter Westblade Scholarship scholars were also invited to highlight the experiences they gained through the scholarship and how it has helped them in pursuing their career. The “Hour of Power” also included other young innovators who are having an impact in the industry who shared their experiences and highlighted how they are making a difference.

Each presenter was allotted a 5 minute time slot in which they had to communicate their message in a succinct yet comprehensive manner.

Each “Hour of Power” speaker and anyone attending under the age of 25 was partnered with a mentor who’s role was to assist in making network connections during the conference.



2018 Hour of Power presenters with MerinoLink Chair and CEO

L to R – Sally Martin (CEO), Will MacSmith, Elise Bowen, Heather Earney, Dione Howard, Emma Turner, Forough Ataollahi, Rachael Gawne, Kate McCarthy, Octavia Kelly and Richard Keniry (MerinoLink Chair)



2018 Conference Sponsors

MerinoLINK would like to thank our generous sponsors and supporters, who have made this event possible.

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