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BEEF



B+LNZ Genetics Beef Progeny Test Field Days

During the past two weeks, we've held field days at Caberfeidh Station in the Hukataramea Valley and Tautane Station on the North Island's east coast. About 150 farmers, progeny test participants and industry supporters came along to hear Jason Archer (AbacusBio), Annie O'Connell and Max Tweedie (B+LNZ Genetics) discuss outcomes from the latest round of commercial recording.

The most dramatic results to date are the high accuracy of the bulls' estimated breeding values for growth. Despite the bulls' calves being grown out on large commercial properties – some with challenging topography and climate – the youngstock are growing at rates just below what the bulls' breeding values predicted.

The message for commercial farmers is coming through loud and clear. If you want fast-growing youngstock, then choose bulls with high estimated breeding values for growth.

The 18-month weight of the progeny reinforces the point and puts dollars against it. The animals ranged from 407kg to 479kg – a 72kg difference. At \$2.50/kg liveweight, the heavier calves are worth \$180 more than the lightest. If a bull sires 150 calves through his working life, that's up to \$27,000 difference.

A second message to come through is the reliability of the breeding value for "days to calving". Again, this is proving an accurate indicator for its trait – in this case, heifer conception date. Some farmers will be surprised to hear that heifer conception date is not related to any other traits. While body condition and fat are important for heifer fertility – because they allow the animal to realise her genetic potential – genetically selecting for rib or rump fat is not going to improve fertility.



Six tips for better performance recording

As a stud breeder, your goal is genetic improvement. Here are six top tips to help you identify where you can improve your performance recording.

[Download tips](#)



Five steps for finding the right bull for your operation

Point your bull-buying clients towards this easy-to-use guide. As you know, the decision they make about which bull to buy affects their business for four cow generations. Taking 10 minutes to read this five-step guide has the potential to yield them exceptional returns.

[Download guide](#)

PEOPLE



Invermay scientists recognised with prestigious awards

Sheryl-Anne Newman, Senior Scientist in the Animal Genomics GenomNZ team, became the second woman in the New Zealand Society of Animal Production's history to receive the Sir Arthur Ward Award. The award recognises the successful application of research or experience to an aspect of animal production in New Zealand.

Sheryl-Anne has been at the forefront of developments to the SIL genetic engine since its inception, working closely with scientists from a range of fields and the sheep breeders who use SIL breeding values to improve their flocks – all with the goal of applying genetics research for the betterment of the New Zealand sheep industry.

John McEwan, GenomNZ Principal Scientist, received an Honorary Life Membership at the society's 77th annual general meeting in Rotorua in June. This award recognises people who have contributed significant service to the cause of animal production.

Research earns accolades

Veterinarians Dave Roberston (Oamaru Vets) and Neil Sanderson – who are both involved in B+LNZ Genetics-funded beef research programmes – have received awards for their work into beef cow fertility. Their research was conducted outside regular duties, ensuring they gained animal ethics approval and statistical validation. Congratulations to them both.

[Read Oamaru Mail story](#)

[Read NZ Herald "The Country" article](#)

SHEEP



NZMW & NZTW being rolled out

We will begin rolling out the new standard indexes – New Zealand Maternal Worth (NZMW) and New Zealand Terminal Worth (NZTW) – to commercial farmers over coming months.

The introduction of the NZGE means every ram sold by a SIL breeder now has a single "index": one number that's comparable across all rams, regardless of breed. The higher the number, the better the ram.

The average NZMW is 1600, while the average NZTW is 1150. (Note, terminal rams have lower scores, simply because their index is calculated from a smaller number of traits.)

We will also alert farmers to specific traits, like FE tolerance or resistance against internal parasites.

Sheep Breeder Survey

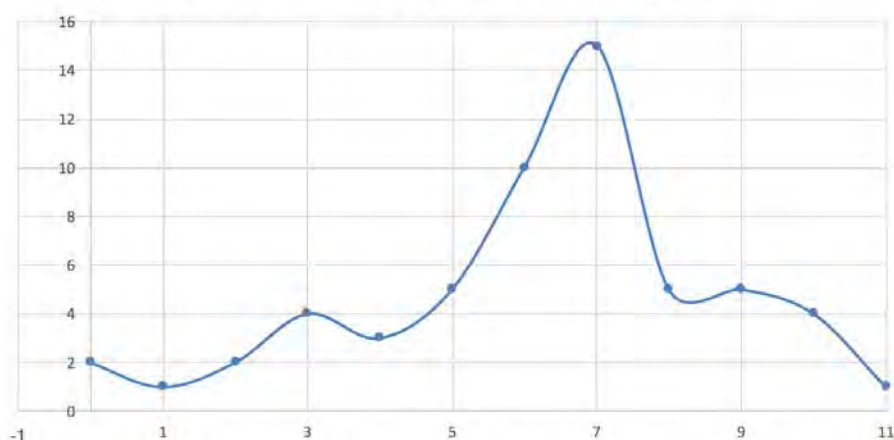
Thank you to all who contributed to the survey conducted just before Napier's Sheep Breeders Forum. The survey asked about:

- Your knowledge of B+LNZ Genetics, its direction and strategy
- The organisation's work programme and deliverables
- Your levels of satisfaction with B+LNZ Genetics' performance
- B+LNZ Genetics' online tools and apps.

The results were encouraging and your feedback will help us deliver the genetic evaluation infrastructure you require to support your business.

Please indicate on the following scale how much feel you know about B+LNZ Genetics strategy for building stronger genetics?

0= nothing at all and 10= a lot, If you are unsure, please select 11.



S.I.L.

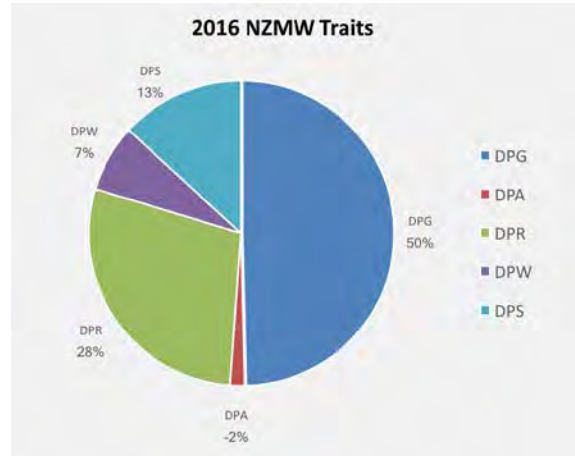
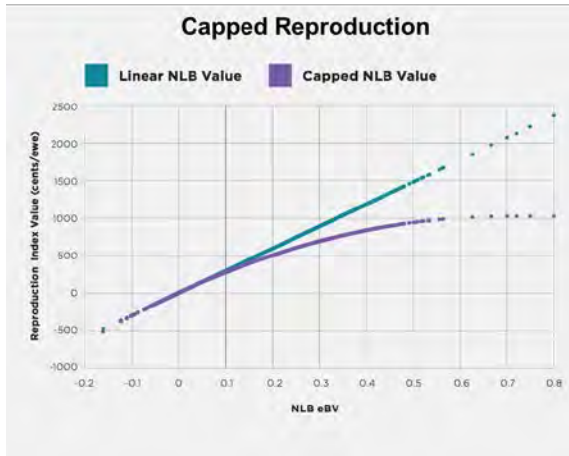
ID	NZMW	MW+M	DPCR	DPS	DPG	DPA	DPW	DPM
34/13	2666	2830	785	302	1557	-340	362	164
33/13	2856	3017	785	371	1759	-413	354	161
236/13	1729		357	325	1623	-793	217	
95/13	501	655	140	-61	1312	-1033	143	154
6504/13	444		258	180	1000	-973	-21	

Reporting by Connectedness: Released 7 August

The weekly New Zealand Genetic Evaluation (NZGE) generates breeding values for all traits for all animals. However comparison of breeding values between unconnected flocks is not valid. Monitoring connectedness across a range of goal trait groups – and especially indexes – can be difficult.

SIL has provided the option of restricting reporting to connected flocks (with unconnected breeding values not being reported – i.e. they are left blank (pink shading above)). This gives you a simple tool that identifies valid breeding comparisons.

[Find out more](#)



Capped reproduction in NZGE: Released 24 August

A new economic method to cap number of lambs born has been developed for implementation in the reproduction breeding objective. This addresses the concern that a constant linear economic value (reward) applied to all animals – regardless of the level of performance – over valued NLB in highly prolific animals.

While increasing the number of lambs born in less prolific flocks increases revenue per ewe, at high numbers of lambs born, ewe and lamb deaths may increase, ewes may not be able to rear all lambs and additional feed and labour are required. Therefore, in practice, there is an optimum NLB above which increasing the number of lambs born becomes unprofitable. Economic analyses for 2016 found the optimum NLB in commercial flocks was about 2.13 lambs/ewe.

[Find out more](#)

New index relative economic values: Released 24 August

It is important to update an industry breeding objective regularly to ensure it aligns with contemporary and projected future market conditions. The previous review of the New Zealand sheep breeding objectives was conducted in 2010.

The 2016/17 review reflects changes in sheep production practices, current and projected product prices and production costs.

[Find out more](#)

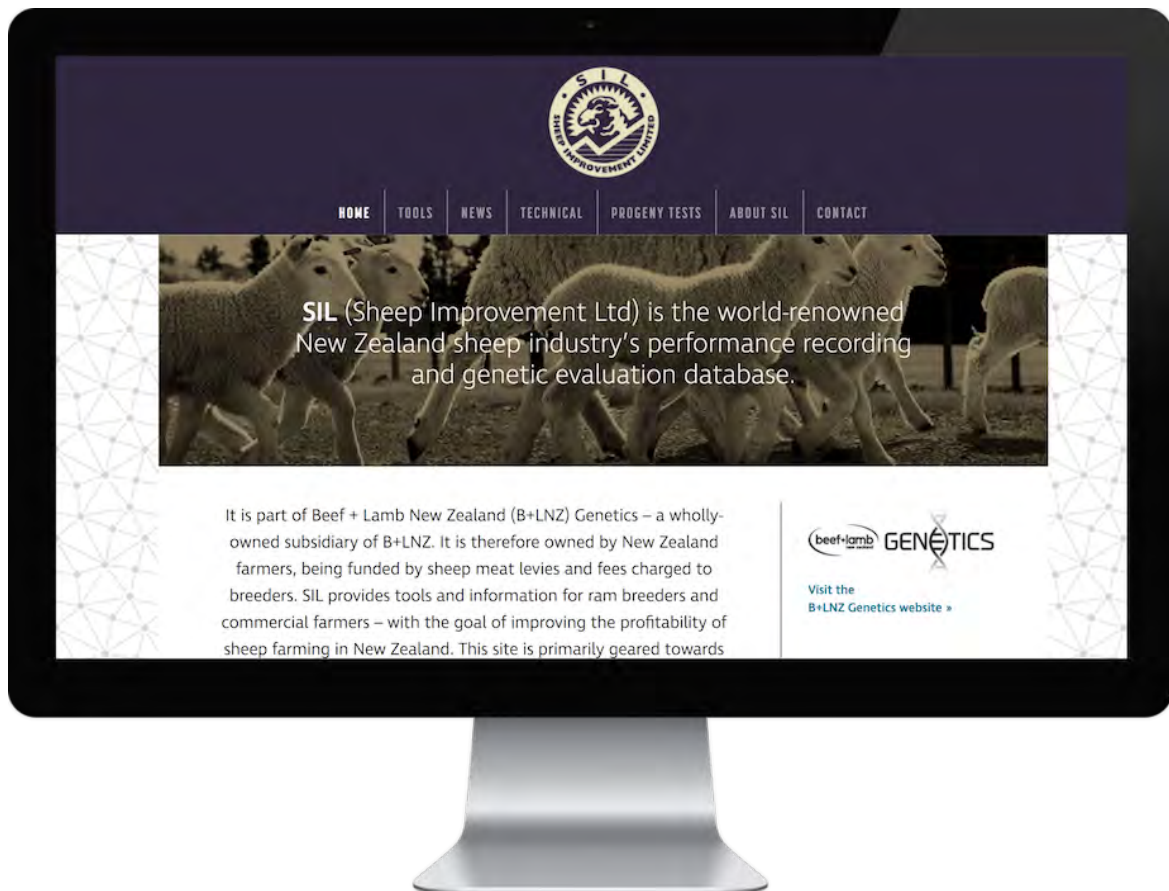


Amalgamating evaluations

As indicated at the B+LNZ Genetics' Roadshows and Sheep Breeder Forum, the two large evaluations NZGE and NGE are being combined to include all pedigree, performance and DNA information from all flocks across New Zealand. This amalgamation is possible because of the adoption of new genetic evaluation software and cloud computing technology. We can now use all available information to produce the best estimate of genetic merit for sheep in New Zealand.

[Find out more](#)

Keep an eye out for the saucy new SIL website coming to a web browser near you soon – 28 August, to be precise.



The team (from left): General Manager Graham Alder, IT Programme Manager David Campbell, Lead Scientist Dr Michael Lee, Technology and Extension Manager Sharl Liebergreen, Science Manager Eleanor Linscott, Genetic Evaluation Technical Manager Sharon McIntyre, Extension Officer Dr Annie O'Connell, Extension Officer 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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