Understanding MERINOSELECT Visual Traits ASBVs

Sheep Genetics report ASBVs for a number of visual traits that can be scored using the *Visual Sheep Scoring Guide.* Visual assessment is an important part of any breeding objective and the guide was developed to create a standardised scoring system.

Breech Wrinkle

Rams with a lower breech wrinkle (BWR) will produce progeny that have a lower degree of wrinkle in the breech area. A ram with an ASBV of –0.3 score will produce progeny that are -0.15 scores lower than the progeny of a ram with an ASBV of 0.

DAG

Animals with a lower dag ASBV will genetically have a lower amount of faecal material adhere to the breech area. A higher dag score is often associated with increased flystrike risk.

Wool Character

Wool character describes the definition of crimp in the wool. A ram with a lower ASBV for character will have a better defined crimp than a ram with a higher ASBV.

Staple Weathering

A ram with a lower ASBV for staple weathering (WEATH) produce lambs that have a lower degree of deterioration down the staple due to penetration of dust and water.

Trait	BWR	BCOV	DAG	COL	CHAR	FROT	WEATH
ASBV	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-0.5	-1.0	-0.1	-2.0
Acc	45	55	50	45	30	40	35

Breech Cover

Breech cover refers to the amount of natural bare skin around the perineum and breech area. Animals with a more positive ASBV for BCOV will produce lambs that have more breech cover.

Wool Colour

Wool colour describes the intensity of whiteness and yellowness of greasy wool. A ram with an ASBV of -0.5 will, on average, produce progeny that have -0.25 scores whiter greasy wool than progeny of a ram with an ASBV of 0.

Fleece Rot

Rams with a lower fleece rot ASBV will produce progeny that are genetically less susceptible to fleece rot. This ram will sire progeny that on average show -0.05 scores less stain in the staple than progeny of a ram with a 0 ASBV for FROT

- *Note:* A useful rule of thumb for converting ram ASBVs into production differences is to simply halve the ASBV (as rams contribute half the genetics of the lamb)
- Accuracy – published as a percentage, is a reflection of the amount of effective information that is available to calculate the ASBV. All ASBVs are now published with accuracies. The higher the percentage, the closer the ASBV is to the true breeding value of the animal. Breeding values without accuracies are Flock Breeding Values (FBVs) and can only be compared within the flock.

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