AN INITIATIVE OF
Making More From Sheep

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

awi Australian Wool Innovation Limited

mla MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

Getting a Jump with Genetics

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MERINOSELECT ASBV

LAMBPLAN ASBV

EVENT SUPPORTERS:

Elders

LANDMARK

SHEEP CRC

Todays agenda

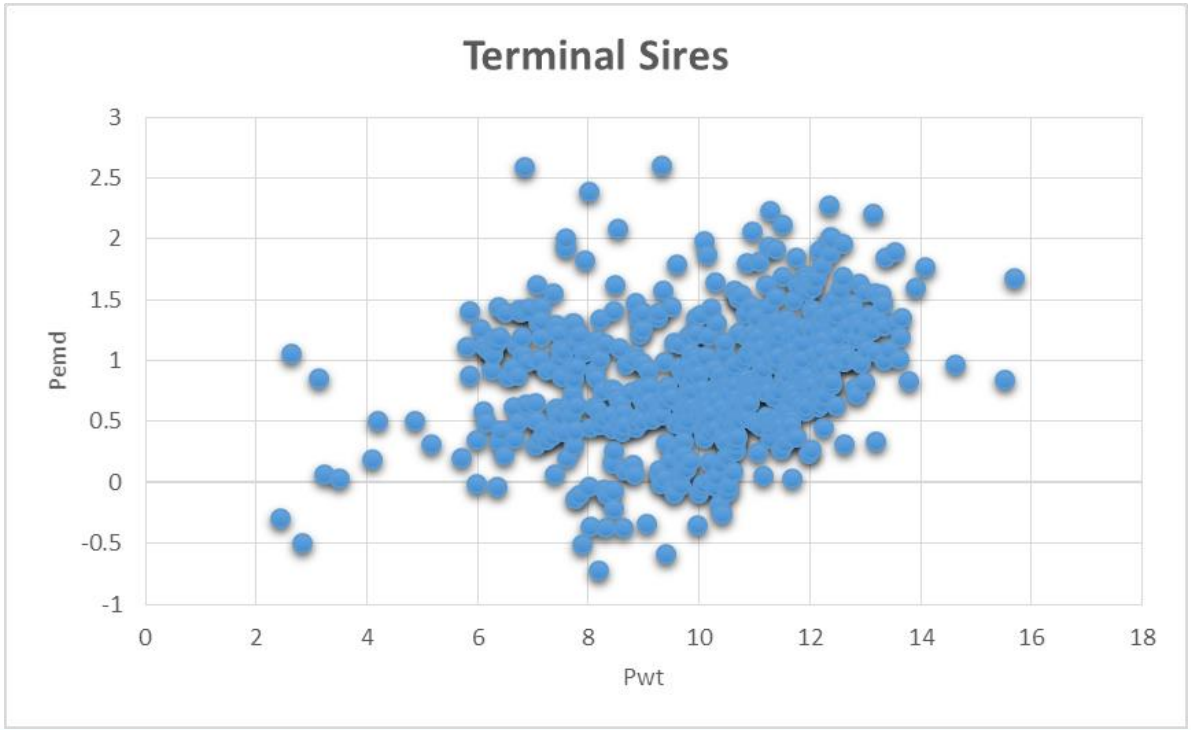
- Formulating a plan
- Using your plan
- Getting help with your plan

HAVING A PLAN

Knowing your starting point

- Identifies opportunities
- Helps make smarter decisions
- Highlight what is important to you

Knowing your starting point



Knowing your system

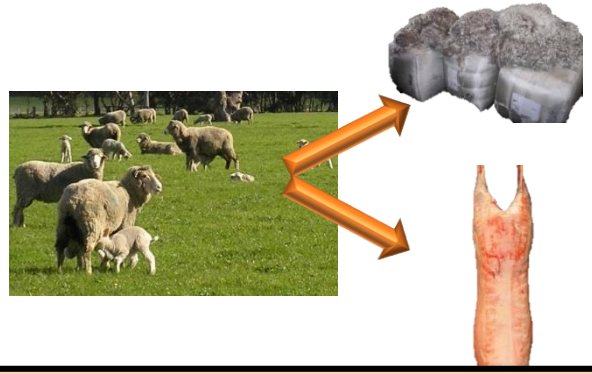
1. Money Makers

2. Money Breakers

3. Environmental and other limitations

Which traits are for YOU?

- That depends on:
  - Your production system



These are decisions only you can make

–

and it is important that you do!

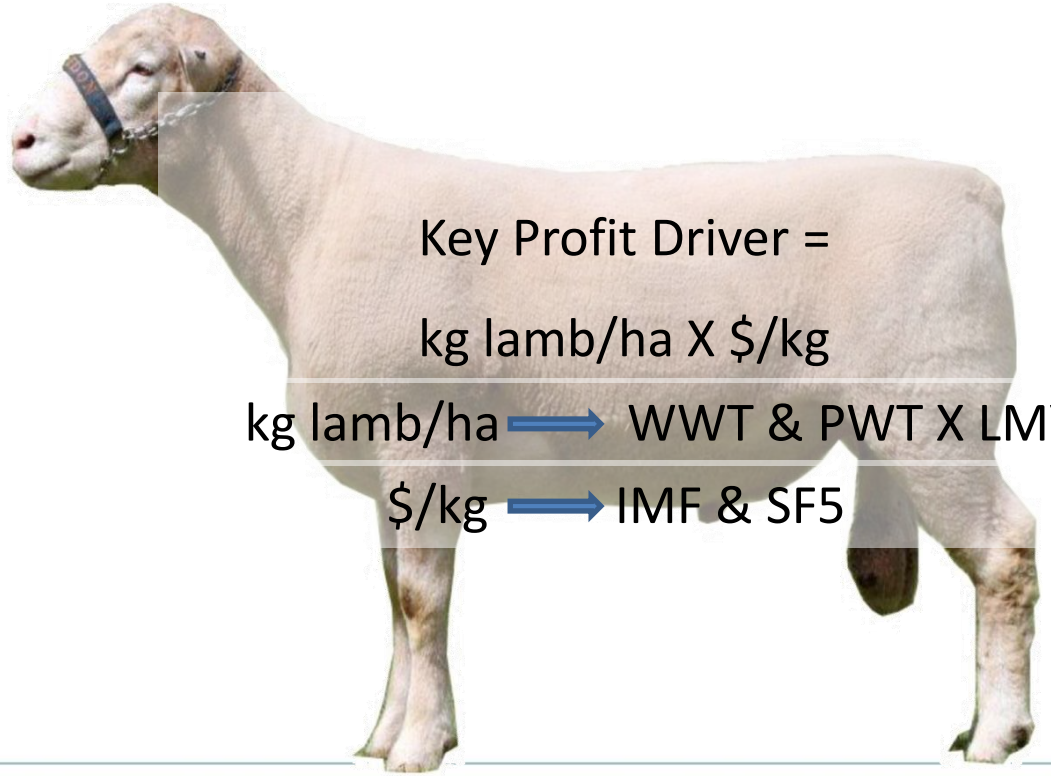
Merino and Maternal Production Systems

Fleece Values higher importance

Changing Profit Drivers

Fertility Rate higher importance

Terminal Sire Production Systems



Key Profit Driver =

kg lamb/ha X $/kg

kg lamb/ha ⟹ WWT & PWT X LMY

$/kg ⟹ IMF & SF5

KENKO
KK-5888
OFF
MRC
M-
M+
CE
ON

Weighing them up

Money Makers

Product Quantity

- Growth
- Fleece Weight
- Weaning %

Market Specifications

- Carcase
- Fibre Diameter
- Staple Strength
- Staple Length

Money Breakers

Maternal efficiency

- Adult size

Market Specifications

- Fat

Welfare traits

- Birth weight / Lambing Ease
- Wrinkle
- Dag
- Worms

Sheep connect NSW

Environmental limitations

Seasonable limitations

- Feed availability
- Parasite challenges
- Rainfall pattern and variability

Your farm enterprise

- Risk and stocking rate policies
- Labour availability
- Sheep in farm system

Document your plan

Breeding Objective

First step choose an index

What is an Index?

- Combines the ASBVs for several traits into one value
- Available to suit a range of different breeding programs
- Quick selection guide to narrow down which rams to look at
  - Still important to look at the individual ASBVs

Bringing you plan together

Identify the most suitable index

Merino	Maternal	Terminal		
		Lamb Prod		***+EQ***
FP+	BLX	Carcase Plus	~	LE
MP+	MCP	Lamb 2020	~	LEQ
DP+	MCP+			

Superior selections

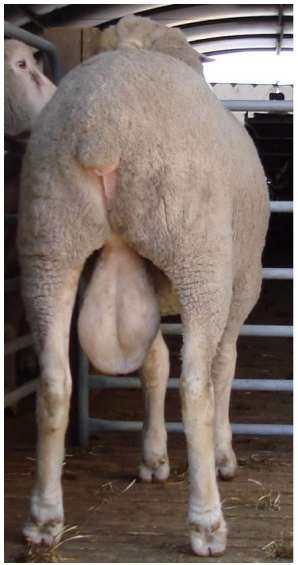
USING YOUR PLAN

Using your plan

- Go through your current battery to identify requirements:
  - Updated figures
  - Structural and visual assessment

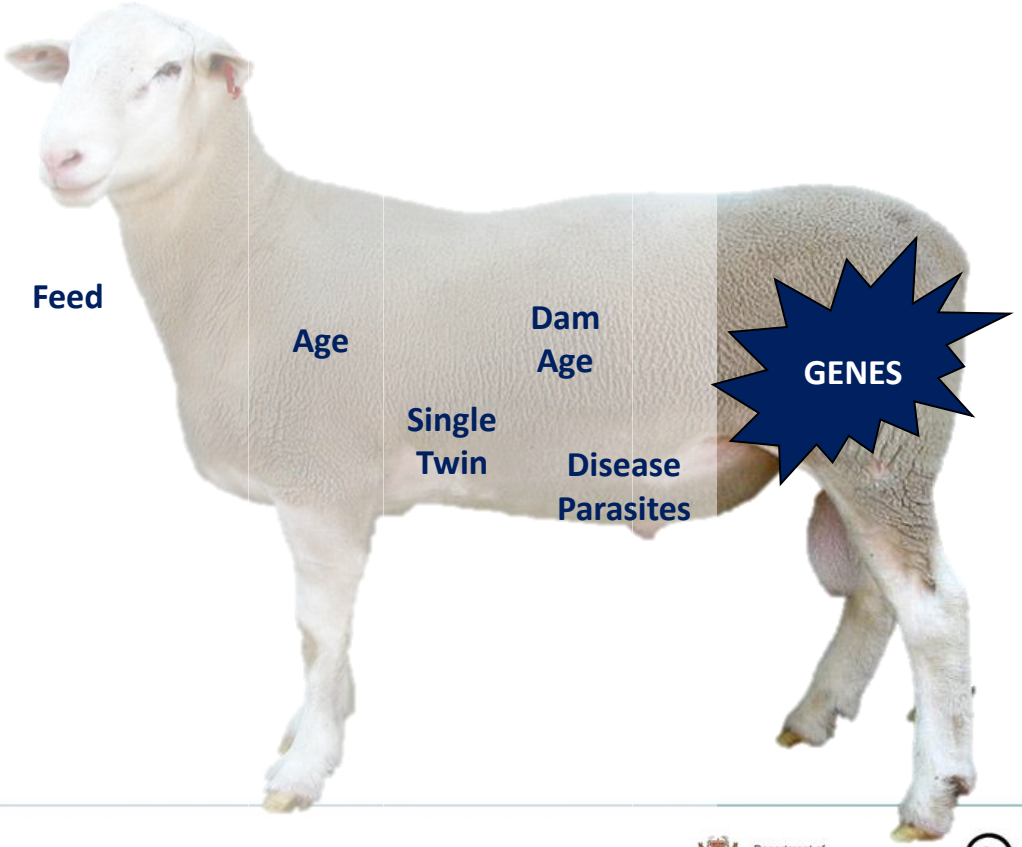
- Identify Superior genes

We Buy Genes



To produce more profitable sheep

What impacts a sheep's performance?



What impacts a sheep's performance?

Key Points about ASBVs

- ASBVs allow us to rank animals based on the genes they carry
  - Not the environment they have been raised in
- Identify what traits drive profitability in your business
- Match those traits to the right ASBVs for selecting rams

Breeding for lambs

- ASBVs for Number of Lambs Weaned (NLW)
- Huge range in sires (over 30 lambs / 100 ewes)
- Plus get other things going in your favour
  - Growth, muscle and fat
  - In Merinos: wrinkle, face cover etc

Healthy Easy Care $heep

- Large genetic variation in sheep resistance to internal parasites
- Use WEC ASBVs as much as possible to breed more resistant sheep
- Reduce but not remove reliance on chemicals
- Wrinkle, Fat/EMD and DAG

WHY IDENTIFY SUPERIOR GENES?

Using your plan

Which Gate / Sales

Which Pens

What you can choose from!

	Number of rams	Range between Studs	Range within Studs
Merinos	975	$14	$19
Maternals	536	$10	$29
Terminals	1254	$9	$6

What you can choose realistically?

	Range between top 20% & bottom 20%
Merinos	$9.00
Maternals	$10.90
Terminals	$3.30

What could this mean for your flock?

Initially ~$4,500 / yr / 1000 ewes joined

After 5 years (using better sires each year) this compounds to ~$8,750 / yr / 1000 ewes joined

What progress are the sellers making?

	Top 20%	Bottom 20%
Merinos	$2.50	-$0.35
Maternals	$2.34	-$0.29
Terminals	$0.89	-$0.06

The basics haven't changed!

- As much as ever before making sure a ram looks right is important.
- It must be:
  - sound and have good structure
  - suitable for your farm
  - wool quality ‘fit for purpose’
- This can differ between people and regions

Don’t forget your ewes!

- They provide half the genes!
- Phenotypic selection valuable
  - Current flock performance
  - Genetic gain
- Massive variation in performance exists
- Use any data you collect

WHERE DO I GET HELP?

Having a plan

- Flock Profiling-Sheep CRC
- Rams Used
- Merino Bloodline Performance
- Merino Lifetime Performance project/AMSEA sites

Using your plan

- RamSelect
- Sheep Genetics
- Private service providers
- Stud breeders

Workshops/Training to attend

- Bred Well Fed Well
- Ramselect
- Sheep classing workshops
- Profitable Grazing Systems
- Making More From Sheep

Key Messages

- Understand profit and cost drivers ➡ Breeding Objective
- Identify ASBVs and index
- Utilise variation between and within sales
- Ensure the ASBVs are better each year
- Balance visual and objective selection