

QUARTERLY PROGRESS SUMMARY: October – December 2016

THE NEW ZEALAND SHEEP INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (NZSTX)

Summary of progress during this quarter

Fibre

Note: PGP investment in the fibre component of NZSTX ended on 30 June 2015.

- This quarter we have travelled extensively in Europe and hosted brand visits to New Zealand.
- Brands remain highly conscious of addressing public dialogue about animal welfare and sustainability, and they are continuing to seek information about options for protecting their reputation.
- New wool shoe brand Allbirds visited New Zealand and generated considerable media interest in both their product and the ZQ Merino programme.

Meat and Other

Note: PGP investment in the Meat and Other component of NZSTX ended on 30 June 2015.

- This quarter, the focus has been on rebuilding the supply base for the SILERE programme, with the transition to Alliance Group (from Silver Fern Farms) for processing.
- NZM is confident in the positive direction of the programme, with good support for the short-term contracts offered so far.

Production Science

- An open day was held at the central progeny test (CPT) site near Omarama in late October. Growers were invited to inspect a selection of the progeny, with progeny groups selected to demonstrate the range of genetic variation between the various sires represented in the CPT.
- Work on the development of the genomic breeding value (gBV) for footrot resistance is ongoing. Information about the wider FeetFirst project can be found on www.perfectsheep.co.nz.
- As reported in previous quarters, we are continuing to provide support to the NZSTX transition farms (in both the North and South Islands), including data collection, and support regarding forage and breeding decisions.

Key highlights and achievements

This quarter's highlights and achievements:

- The October to December quarter is an important time of year on fine-wool farms and studs, with lambing, lamb marking (and, in some cases, weaning) taking place, as well as preparation for the upcoming ram selling season. In addition to a large amount of data collection at the CPT, the Production Science team have been supporting stud breeders with processing their own data and preparing EBVs for their ram sale catalogues.
- With fine-wool sheep being trialled on North Island farms, particularly in the Gisborne and Hawkes Bay regions, we are supporting ram breeders supplying those farms with testing for tolerance to facial eczema (FE). This is to identify rams that are more tolerant to FE to offer to these farmers.
- We have recommenced NZM Grower Group meetings (following the shearing season), with five groups meeting this quarter. More groups will meet in Q3. The content is tailored to the needs of each group, with groups covering a range of topics, including ewe health, lamb survival, forage development, internal parasites and integrating EID technology.

Upcoming

- A further open day will be held at the CPT site in mid-February, where progeny from 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 will be on display. There are 175 sires being progeny-tested in the CPT, and the data being generated is being used to generate estimated breeding values (EBVs), which are available on the MERINOSELECT database managed by Sheep Genetics.
- In addition, the CPT progeny are a valuable dataset for refining the breeding value for footrot resistance. A meeting with stud breeders will also be held in mid-February to discuss the future direction for the CPT and development of the footrot breeding value.
- The Production Science team will do further work with stud breeders, assisting with collecting and processing data, and preparing EBVs for their ram sale catalogues. In addition, the team will be working with commercial breeders to refine their breeding objectives for the coming season.

Investment

Investment period	Industry contribution	MPI contribution	Total investment
During this Quarter	\$0.2m	\$0.2m	\$0.4m
Programme To Date	\$16.4m	\$16.4m	\$32.8m

