

QUARTERLY PROGRESS SUMMARY: January – March 2017

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 throughout Europe and the USA. In addition, multiple brands have also visited New Zealand, with a focus on establishing closer ties to NZM and our growers, and to better understand the NZM ZQ Merino programme.
- Public dialogue about animal welfare and sustainability remain high on the agenda, and brands continue to seek information about options for protecting their reputation.

Meat and Other

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

- We continue to focus on rebuilding the supply base and in-market presence for the SILERE programme, following the transition to Alliance Group for processing in late 2016.

Production Science

- Another open day was held at the central progeny test (CPT) site near Omarama in mid-February. Breeders were invited to inspect the progeny, with progeny from each ram identified and put into stud-based groups. The most recent estimated breeding values (EBVs) for each ram were also presented 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. More information about the FeetFirst project can be found on www.perfectsheep.co.nz.
- We have developed several new fact sheets for growers, which are available on www.perfectsheep.co.nz and through the NZM grower group network. The fact sheets have covered managing ewe body condition, rejuvenating clovers on uncultivable hill country and integrating EID technology into fine-wool farming systems.

Key highlights and achievements

This quarter's highlights and achievements:

- The January to March quarter is an important time of year for fine-wool studs preparing for the ram selling season. The Production Science team has been supporting stud breeders with processing their data and preparing EBVs for their ram sale catalogues, as well as assisting commercial breeders with developing their breeding objectives and identifying the rams they wish to purchase.
- The Gisborne-based transition farm hosted a grower group meeting this quarter, where the Production Science team presented the data that has been collected from the 2016 progeny. The fine-wool progeny have performed well and some of the ewe lambs are being kept as replacements.
- A further five grower group meetings were held this quarter. The groups continue to build momentum, with the content being tailored to the needs of each group, covering a range of topics, including ewe health, lamb survival, forage development, EBVs and integrating EID technology into fine-wool farming systems.

Upcoming

- The 2017 breeding programme at the CPT site will be implemented in Q4, with a further 30 sires being entered this year. As in previous years, we will collect performance data from their progeny across a

comprehensive range of production, animal health and ease-of-management traits, with a particular focus on resistance to footrot.

- Completing single-step analysis of the current FeetFirst dataset, predicting the footrot breeding value for sires where we have collected DNA information only, based on the information we have for sires that have had their progeny tested for footrot as well as DNA information collected.
- A further nine grower group meetings are planned for Q4, prior to the fine-wool shearing season (winter / early spring).
- This upcoming quarter is the final quarter for the NZSTX programme, and the emphasis for the whole NZM Production Science team is on bringing projects to their conclusion and / or transitioning them post-PGP.

Investment

Investment period	Industry contribution	MPI contribution	Total investment
During this Quarter	\$0.18m	\$0.18m	\$0.36m
Programme To Date	\$16.6m	\$16.6m	\$33.2m