

This report is a compilation of the responses for the 2015 Annual Subscriber Satisfaction Survey. The survey was distributed electronically on the 21st December 2015 and closed on the 15th January 2016, with 100 flocks responding, a rise from 84 last year.

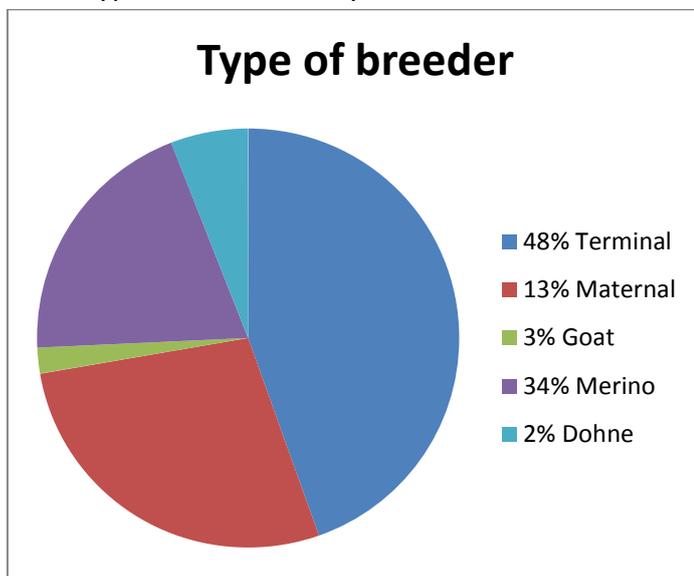
2015

Survey Results

Nicole Williams

Breeder Information

1. Name (optional),
2. Postcode
3. What type of breeder are you?



4. What is the size of your performance recorded flock?(count of flocks)

Flock size	Merino	Dohne	Goat	Maternal	Terminal	% of flocks by size
0-50 animals				1	1	2%
50-100 animals			1	2	4	8%
100-300 animals	5	1	1	1	19	27%
300-600 animals	10	1		1	13	25%
600+ animals	19		1	8	10	38%
Percentage of flocks by breed	34%	2%	3%	13%	48%	

5. How many rams have you sold throughout the year?

Flock	Total Count
Dohne	200
Merino	3622
Goat	100
Maternal	2418
Terminal	6351
Total Animals	12706

6. How many doses of semen have you sold throughout the year?

Flock	Total Count
Dohne	50
Merino	12310
Goat	2250
Maternal	410
Terminal	2325
Total Doses	17345

7. What proportion of your annual drop have performance records submitted to Sheep Genetics? (number of flocks)

Flock size	Merino	Dohne	Goat	Maternal	Terminal
<25%	8		1	2	2
25% to 50%	3				2
51% to 75%	2				1
>75%	21	2	2	11	40
Total Number of Flocks	34	2	3	13	46

8. Do you use a service provider (number of flocks)

Breeder Type	Data Manager	Carcase Scanner	Breeding Program Advisor
Dohne	2	1	1
Merino	31	32	30
Goat	2	3	2
Maternal	12	13	12
Terminal	38	45	36

Staff

9. Sheep Genetics staff Are easily contactable

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	25%	20%	23%
Agree	70%	69%	70%
Disagree	5%	11%	7%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%

Are approachable and friendly

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	43%	40%	42%
Agree	52%	51%	52%
Disagree	5%	9%	6%
Strongly Disagree	0%	0%	0%

Are helpful and patient with requests

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	34%	29%	32%
Agree	59%	63%	60%
Disagree	3%	6%	4%
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	4%

Requests are dealt with in a timely manner

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	25%	20%	23%
Agree	62%	60%	61%
Disagree	8%	17%	11%
Strongly Disagree	5%	3%	4%

10. Are there any other areas that Sheep Genetics staff could improve?

- improve turn around time of information that we can't get out of the system ourselves
- Very happy with staff performance. Hoping studs that have been struggling with data quality for whatever reason are dwindling in number
- No
- Reply to emails
- now that data is not accepted in excel I have to find another way to submit data.pedigree wizard won't download and stock books is too expensive.
- Sort out data problems between releases so you don't have to wait for the update to see if it is all correct
- Staff need to listen to how genomics work in the practical farm situation and not just rely on the numbers
- None
- Not at this stage
- More farm visits
- Have more info days in Victoria, Make it easier to log into White Suffolk elites
- No
- KIDPLAN ebvs and indices need attention. I understand that this is low on SGs priority list but it is important to get the goat business going.MATESEL needs to get out and about more widely and rapidly.
- Deliver on promised Matsel delivery and availability of training to breeders
- Customer service

Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) & Services

11. ASBVs

ASBVs play a significant role in the selection decisions that I make.

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	66%	66%	66%
Agree	26%	20%	24%
Disagree	7%	11%	8%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	2%

ASBVs assist in achieving breeding objectives

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	62%	63%	63%
Agree	26%	31%	28%
Disagree	10%	6%	8%
Strongly Disagree	2%	0%	1%

ASBVs are an effective marketing tool

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	28%	31%	29%
Agree	61%	57%	59%
Disagree	7%	9%	7%
Strongly Disagree	5%	3%	4%

ASBVs are used to assist in making joining decisions

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	57%	46%	53%
Agree	30%	40%	33%
Disagree	10%	9%	9%
Strongly Disagree	3%	6%	4%

ASBVs are routinely used by my clients to purchase animals

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	20%	29%	23%
Agree	52%	40%	48%
Disagree	20%	23%	21%
Strongly Disagree	8%	9%	8%

Using ASBVs has meant that I am able to achieve a higher rate of genetic gain

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Strongly Agree	51%	54%	52%
Agree	41%	34%	39%
Disagree	7%	9%	7%
Strongly Disagree	2%	3%	2%

12. Which Sheep Genetics service have you used throughout the year? (count of flocks)

	LAMBPLAN	MERINOSELECT	TOTAL
LAMBPLAN	56		
MERINOSELECT		35	
KIDPLAN			3
MATESEL	7	4	
WEBSEARCH	29	19	
SALE CATALOGUES	23	10	
ELITES LISTING	24	11	35
RAMPOWER	3	2	

13. For each of the services you have used throughout the year, how beneficial do you consider they have been to your business?

	HIGH%	MEDIUM%	LOW%
LAMBPLAN	67%	30%	4%
MERINOSELECT	76%	12%	12%
KIDPLAN	33%	33%	33%
MATESEL	64%	27%	9%
WEBSEARCH	59%	28%	13%
SALE CATALOGUES	27%	45%	27%
ELITES LISTING	20%	57%	23%
RAMPOWER	40%		60%

Investment & Value

14. How much did you directly invest in Sheep Genetics services during the year?

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
\$0-\$500	16%	13%	15%
\$500-\$1000	35%	34%	35%
\$1000-\$1500	19%	25%	21%
\$1500-\$2000	9%	3%	7%
>\$2000	21%	25%	22%

15. How much did you invest in the related areas of; (79 flocks)

	Average \$ spent	Range
Recording performance (i.e Scanner costs, fleece testing, software)	\$3463	\$0-\$50,000
Genotyping/DNA	\$2103	\$0-\$16904
Classing	\$1231	\$0-\$8000
On farm labour	\$11170	\$0-\$100,000

16. What value do you believe that you received from your investment in Sheep Genetics services?

	LAMBPLAN %	MERINOSELECT %	TOTAL FLOCK RESPONSE %
Very High	18%	25%	20%
High	44%	50%	46%
Medium	23%	13%	19%
Low	14%	9%	12%
Very Low	2%	3%	2%

17. What Changes to services would improve the value you receive from Sheep Genetics?

2020 index favours people who use wec and perhaps should be called a wec index. It can give unfavourable comparison of those not doing wec. The index without wec would be more appropriate for whole industry.
A more easily adapted service that combines all sources eg. Lambplan, ASBV's, kidplan and merino select.
AS ABOVE. IMPROVED KIDPLAN EBVs AND INDICES. WIDER AVAILABILITY OF MATESEL
Being able to get into W S Elites More info days in Victoria
being allowed to get meat eating quality traits without it mucking up the ASBV's particularly just before ram sales
Crack down on Stud breeders who are miss using ASBVs. MUST maintain a high standard and integrity. Example: Studs including figures from Shedded or Show animals with there main flock, to get INFLATED ASBV numbers
database and subscription charges are becoming too expensive. Sheep genetics don't seem to talk to sheep CRC when DNA tests are done.
education of people using the numbers
Explain to the commercial buyer how significant the figures really mean when they only get the same price for their progeny as that of a lamb producer who buys rams from anon lamb plan ram producer
Get our fertility figures downloaded properly.
Get rid of NIw
Happy with present services
High speed DNA results
I know we haven't been involved in SGA for very long but our breeding values still aren't well correlated with performance in our environment. Also the time it takes to find our if there is errors in our data.
I WOULD LIKE SHEEP GENETICS / MLA TO PROMOTE THE CONCEPT MORE VIGOROUSLY TO GOAT BREEDERS AND PRODUCERS
I would like to see custom indexes, and the indexes better explained. I also think there could be some more detail on how breeding values are calculated on web page for details guys like myself- understand you don't want to create confusion but could have a in depth section for those interested. I have good understanding of ASBVs but would love some deeper reading
I would like to see more workshops to keep us updated and these workshops could come down to southern tasmania, a forgotten sheep area
improve Pedigree wizard or negotiate a better purchase price for suitable software for data entry
improved website
Lower Fees
More marketing to promote benefits to agents and so they understand it
more timely adoption and use of data that is collected ie preg scan, mating module etc. web site is too slow and cumbersometoo much time spent on slow movers
More training so we can use information to it's full potential
More tutorials for individuals to use programs the, selves without needing service providers
Moving from an excel based method of performance recording to something compatible with Sheep Genetics is pretty costly in both time and money. It would be great if there was some assistance to this. Sheep Genetics is for me primarily a marketing tool. I believe it can

provide value but it is up to me to make better use of that by driving further enquiry. Having said that, having been a participant in Sire Evaluation Trials for nearly a decade, and having performed exceptionally well, it would be useful to me if those trials were higher in the minds of clients and more was being done to put the trials there.
Nil
Nothing
Possibly more producer workshops
Questions to be meet with consideration and respect
report trait leaders within wool type groups
The service provided by Sheep Genetics Aus is real value for money.
There is a need for partnerships to validate EBVs in the paddock. ie how does eye muscle and fat correlate in the abattoir. This would improve information and greatly assist the uptake of breeding values. The information is there, and with a few simple protocols enormous value would be added in update of EBVs and identifying holes in some of the current information. Sheep CRC meat information is not available for maternal breeders despite it being the most rapidly growing 'breed' in Australia. What is the business case for how we invest ?
We need the ability to better define breeding objectives and reflect these with indexes and associated percentile bands. There is little ability to reflect grass root producer requirements into breeding programs, with changes reactive not proactive. I haven't seen any evidence that anyone in the associated bureaucracies have recently been onto a self replacing meat flock property, and invitations to do so have been turned turn, highlighting the culture that exists.
When doing web searches on the MerinoSelect sire, when you click on the top of a column to sort results, default should be max to min, no the other way around, I am looking for best performance ram for YWT, GFW etc. not the lowest ones, this means I have to wait for results to come up in order then re click the column to get the results in max to min sorted. Just a little thing but annoying.
When you recieve reports it would be good to know animals in the system to date for that drop, breeders that represents and the percentage of the expected of both of them.

18. What are the main challenges that your ram breeding business is facing?

(1) WE ARE UNABLE TO PRODUCE ENOUGH DORPER RAMS FOR THE DEMAND COMING FROM THE WESTERN RANGELANDS.(2) WE HAVE TO PRODUCE BUCKS/BILLIES FOR WESTERN GOAT PRODUCERS THAT DO THE JOB FOR THEM. THIS WILL INVOLVE IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT ANIMALS AND BUILDING PRODUCERS CONFIDENCE IN THEM.
A lot of rams for sale, low prices of some rams that have no testing or health QA, Agents understanding of Lambplan.
Agents and clients understanding asbv
Being able to purchase rams that have accurate ASBVDifficulty in introducing non lambplan sires
Breeding enough rams
Building more depth throughout the breeding flock
Buyers are not interested in ASBVs
Buying good quality stud rams that perform as expected.
Clients grasping asbvs and using them when buying rams
Commercially NLW and Growth are the 2 key drivers. NLW- we would like greater involvement in how this is formulated. It is a key commercial driver and subject a lot of variation. We realise it is WIP but feel ALL maternal breeders need greater transparency.Growth- An analysis that compares all breeds. We now have clients using our rams as terminals as they perform better.
Competition from alternative breeds.Convincing clients wool quality is still important. Premiums for quality are still there even in a flat market.
Cropping keeps taking area away from sheep enterprises
Declining ewe flock nation wide
Declining number of merino breedersIntegrity of some aspects within the merino industry
Decreasing ewe numbers, and potential ram clients that don't know the financial benefits of sourcing lambplan tested rams.
Demographics, changing of enterprises in and around our immediate area. Ram buyer don't seem to like to travel. There is still a lack of good commercial understanding of the benefits of the figures. There should be more use of trials data showing proof of profit such as was don by Brent McLeod on birth wgt's and pwt a few years ago. There is heaps of data that could be published in rural press on a more regular basis.
Desperately need rain especially in QLD.
Distance from providers, understanding how to use our data collection software
drought
education of livestock agents
Finding sheep that have good breeding values for key economic traits
getting accurate data
I guess costs,also with Poll Merino flock I think clients wanting high index rams and not considering visual traits
I only sell ewes the rams are sold thru a different source. Falling interest in sheep production
Improving client profitability is an ongoing challenge in the midst of seasonal conditions, and changing impacts on farm businesses.
IN THE GOAT INDUSTRY MOST PARTICIPANTS HAVE NO IDEA OF THE VALUE OF USING EBVs AND THUS ANIMALS WITH HIGH EBVs. THE FOCUS IS STILL ON COLOUR AND HEAD SHAPE RATHER THAN ON ATTRIBUTES THAT WILL PRODUCE A MEATIER ANIMAL THAT ACHIEVES THAT POTENTIAL IN A SHORTER TIME

Increasing wool cut,
labour availability
Lack of ewes to join to in this area so much so I have turned half my Flock into Commercials
Low brand awareness in a contracting market.
Maintaining genetic gain Marketing
Mastitis in ewesFoot abscesses in Spring
Maternal data collectionCommunicating the benefits of ASBV's & a more balanced approach to Merino breeding
Meat eating quality traits
Miss information from the stud industry Farmers going out of sheepAge of the livestock producers
More competition as more breeders use EBVs and have access to high index sires
my sector of the merino industry is ignored by merinoselect
narrowing genetic spread
not enough commercial and stud breeders understand the power to ASBVs and still look for the biggest overfed sheep.stud expenses like data collection and fees and labour almost make it not worth getting breeding values.
Ongoing drought limiting the availability of separate paddocks for joining.
Ongoing research with AWI?/MLA fundingProfit and ram sales.
Pressure from other breeds
Receiving a return for the rams, that reflects their production merit.
rising costs
Selling rams. Black wool. Feet problems.
Servivability, better meat characteristics
Severe drought conditions in our area and clients with very few ewes left and little money to invest in purchasing new rams.Also no carcass scanners in Queensland which makes it difficult to get scanning done as southern operators have to travel a long way to scan a small number of sheep sometimes
Sourcing sound sires with high ASBVs can be difficult as conformation problems tend to be overlooked at the expense of performance.
The Climate and trying to do WEC's properly without letting the stock slip
Time and skills in adapting to use ASBV's and adding to websites.I recognise that websites and using ASBV's are essential emphasis on business practices, but there is not where to do courses to learn and advance these skills
To get the wider acceptance and understanding of ASBVs, from the main stream farmers.
Trying to keep breed type and structure important and not having lesser stock of less quality with big figures more important. The fundamentals of the breed are the utmost important aspect of breeding. Figures should be a guide a very important guide but to have inferior quality animals with big numbers is the hardest part of breeding I'm frustrated with, you to have animals a quality animal with strong numbers to back the article up .
Uptake of ASBVs by clients in making ram purchasing decisions

19. Are there additional services that Sheep Genetics could provide to help you address these challenges?

A SOLID CAMPAIGN THAT TARGETS THE BLIND SPOT IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOAT PRODUCERS AND PROMOTES KIDPLAN AS A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE A SPECIES OF LIVESTOCK THAT HAS BEEN AS YET LARGELY UNTAPPED WHEN IT COMES TO GENETIC POTENTIAL GIVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO LANDLINE SO THAT I CAN TELL THEM WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED IF A BREEDER IS PREPARED TO COMMIT TO THE TARGET OF GROWTH AND MUSCLING
Wonder if cheap genetic testing could ID some sheep form studs without history of ASBVs that actually have good genetics?
We need fertility figures fixed. Have been recording full pedigree since 1988 but still not getting proper fertility figures.To compete with other breeds fertility in merinos needs to be improved.
We need customised services around breeding objectives. Our index development was a good case. We couldn't get any action, so we were forced to develop it ourselves. The current model needs to change. I am willing to pay for customised work to occur, but there is no mechanism for this to occur.
We feel that we contribute enormous time in improving maternal and prime lamb genetics in terms of information and promoting it to farmers. We also have a lot more information and skills that could be used to improve data and genetic gain but is not.
Same old same old is that we need a quicker turn around on DNA test
Research - predisposition within genetics?
Probably not really. The key thing for me is to be able to provide ASBVs to those clients who want them as simply and cost effectively as possible.
Online Training modules so we can revisit sections and update skills and save ourselves a call
not really
None I can think of
No.
No except more info days
No
more resources are needed for issues that will have a large impact and be adopted
More emphasis on adult wool cut, as we find the long staple free growing lambs cut ok as a lamb but don't cut enough as adult sheep
Maybe using genomics to enhance the early selection of rams in our breed (White Dorpers).
Concentrate a more on the actual animal
better utilisation of fertility traits
be inclusive to all breeders and breeds. not focus on one or two breeds
Absolutely, it would be great if they could offer free TAFE courses, enabling these challenges to be overcome. Totally agree that we all need to learn how to adapt to new concepts in our ever changing world, and free courses enabling us to learn how to achieve this would be fantastic
A communications officer would be of benefit to keep a constant flow of old and new information going into the medial

20. If there are additional services that could be provided, how should the cost of those services be covered?

	Count (65 responses)
Increase in Subscription fees	7
Increase in per animals Charge	16
Plus membership (standard Subscription fee for basic services, additional fee for advanced services)	23
Voluntary R&D Contribution	13
Other	
AWI Should fund	
Charge per animal, per service used	
Customised work	
Drum up more [articipants in kidplanthat would be a win/win situation	
Government funding for rural services x 2	
I barely can justify the cost as it is	
I think the charges are high enough as it is	
MLA	
Partnerships with DPI, JVs with industry, Business case to government demonstrating the potential value to regional and national economy through INNOVATION - BIG MAL loves this doesn't he?	
Percentage of Ram sales income	
Require subscribers to attend an in person or complete an online induction course, so SGA staff time (and wages) is not used going over and over the same info	
SERVICES ARE FULLY PRICED ALREADY.	
Support from industry - AWI	
User pays	
User pays - I would be happy to pay to do a course	
Wool taxes	
Would like to see AWI back development more	

Further Comments

21. Please feel free to provide any comments/suggestions:

ASBVs do help us market and assess our sheep. The costs of collecting data and the associated physical and practical problems it presents in a flock of 1000+ ewes, mainly collecting birth dates and birth weights are significant, as is the data management.
Better help files or tutorial on using and utilising Pedigree Master, there are parts that I do not utilise due to now knowing how it all works and so I don't get full potential from it, as well as maybe full data entry.
Caris Jones was very friendly, approachable and helpful. She even came into my tent at Sheepvention and introduced herself on her own initiative. I was very impressed by this. It is marginally frustrating to have to adopt new technology infrastructure to create ASBVs as it adds to the cost quite significantly. However, it was useful to have the assistance of Caris and, where she could not assist directly, her colleague David Rubie.
Generally a good service is provided. Still needs to be education of breeders who don't understand the need to include all animals in there groups and get skewed results. They lack the understanding on linkage and the use of several sires at the same joining. I think the lambing ease figures don't mean much and are seldom used. You can have too many figures that tend to confuse rather than help.
AVEN'T I SAID ENOUGH FOR NOW?
I do not recommend any increase in fees or charges. We are charged fees by the state gov. for just being farmers in south australia.
I like the Idea of genetic testing for pedigree and increase accuracy of breeding vales but would use it lots more if it was cheaper. Great service and instrumental to the progress/profitability of our wool enterprise. Keep up the good work! keith
it would be good if when you search for an animal on the lamplan website, you could click (or right click) on any given animal in a pedigree and that would bring up a list of all its progeny. I realise you can serch for progeny of a sire, but not dam currently.
It would be great if I could get a prompt reply to emails even if it was only a receipt notice and intention to reply.
LAMBPLAN AND KIDPLAN ARE BOTH SUPERB SERVICES BUT THEY ARE RATHER EXPENSIVE.WE INTEND TO CONTINUE BUILDING UP RECORDS FOR GOATS AND WILL BE STARTING TO SUBMIT DATA FOR A DORPER RAM-BREEDING PROGRAM.
Nothing
people with practical knowledge of how to breed and run stud sheep to be listened to by sheep genetics and not just the advisory board
The ASBVs are improving all the time thanks to some good work over the past few years, particularly in hard to measure traits like reproduction. Work needs to occur to continually look at the impact of traits on profitability. This isn't just a job for scientists, but a partnership with key players in industry.
This service needs to be continually pushed as a benefit to whole of industry . If traditional breeders could be encouraged to add some figures to the visual show ring selection approach the industry stands to make some serious genetic gain.
Very happy with Sheep Genetics and their staff
Very happy with the service and really appreciate having access to the data for ram selection and sales advantages.Many thanks

Was timed out twice. Takes time to put info required together. Sneak preview before starting would help in knowing what was required.
We appreciate being a member of LambPlan.
When changes are made to Lambplan website more information re the changes There is still a lack of Prime Lamb breeders following ASBV's so much so that when I sell privately I advise the buyer which Rams to purchase for his Flock but at the Annual sale very few buy on figures
when scanning sheep should measured for length at the moment lambplan selection make sheep shorter short sheep never weight as heavy ones ,this includes suckers,the only part of lambplan worth using is growth rate,at the way it is going in 10 years we will have sheep with 40 pwwt that are no better then ones that now have 25 pwwt
Workshops a good idea, as are the Ramselect days to help educate buyers in use of EBVs