An invitation to network with the Genetics Community, across breeds and species.

Dear breeder

I am writing to you to invite you to participate in a small survey that is focussed on the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics, or AAABG. [http://www.aaabg2015.org/](http://www.aaabg2015.org/)

AAABG was formed in 1979 by a group of visionary breeders and geneticists, who saw real value in an organisation that brought together animal breeders across species with animal breeding scientists, extension personnel, advisors etc. It has the following objectives:

1. To promote communication among all those interested in the application of genetics to animal production, particularly breeds and their organisations, consultants, extension workers, educators and geneticists.
2. To foster the application of genetics in animal production.
3. To promote the scientific study of animal breeding.
4. To hold regular Conferences to provide a forum for:
   a. Presentation of papers and in-depth discussions of general and industry-specific topics concerning the application of genetics in commercial animals production’
   b. Scientific discussions, and presentation of papers on completed research projects.
5. To publish the Proceedings of each Conference and circulate them to all members.

The organisation, originally Australian, now has an international reach including New Zealand and South Africa.

Since its inauguration, AAABG has held 19 Conferences in a range of locations around Australia and New Zealand. At each Conference, a local organising committee is responsible for developing the program, aiming at a high quality mix of scientific and extension papers, together with some sort of industry day, usually somewhat focussed on practical application of genetic technologies, and issues around that implementation.

Over the period since the Inauguration of AAABG, animal breeding in Australia and New Zealand has seen major changes and innovations:

- National or international genetic evaluations are in place (such as BREEDPLAN, Sheep Improvement Limited, LAMBPLAN, MERINOSSELECT, PIGBLUP, Australian Dairy Herd Improvement Scheme)
- Each of these has their own communications and outreach programs, focussed on breeders in the respective species
- As well as significant technological advances, more traits under evaluation in most species, new tools, including genomics, along with many other developments.

Now more than ever there is a role for innovative and leading breeders to network through AAABG, mixing with leading scientists, and challenge the research community.

We think there is a unique opportunity to foster these conversations and bring the community of animal breeders, researchers, agribusinesses and service companies into the 21st century and launch this new approach at the conference in Lorne this year.

We have initiated this survey to improve the interaction and dialogue between breeders, scientists, advisors and others interested in this most exciting field.

Our invitation is simple – please take a few minutes to either:

a) answer the following questions and return your response to rbanks@une.edu.au
b) answer the questions at our Survey Monkey https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DDNGNWM

All responses will be treated as confidential, and no personal details will be shared.

We will collate the responses and summarise them, both for circulation to everyone who has responded, but also in the form of a paper to the next AGM of AAABG, in September this year in Lorne (conference details available at http://www.aaabg2015.org/). Great suggestions can be included in the conference program especially for the Breeders’ day.

Many thanks

Rob Banks

On behalf of:

Rob Banks, Lucinda Corrigan & Mike Goddard
Questions:

1. Did you know of AAABG? (yes/no)
2. Have you ever:
   a) Attended a AAABG Conference? (yes/no) If so, how many?
   b) Attended a AAABG Industry Field Day? (yes/no) If so, how many?
3. If you have not had any involvement with AAABG, are you interested in learning more about the organisation? If so, please insert your email address:

4. If you have had previous involvement with the organisation:
   a) Are you still a member?
   b) If not, why did you stop being a member?
   c) What would you like more of:
      a. Regular newsletters
      b. Conferences
      c. Regional workshops on specific topics
      d. Webinars
      e. Other (please specify)

5. This survey can help the team planning this year’s conference – are there any specific topics you would like included either in the Conference itself, or in the industry Field Day that is part of the Conference? eg
   i. How the different genetic improvement systems work in Australia, NZ and other countries ADHIS, BREEDPLAN, LAMBPLAN, SIL ETC.
   ii. 30 years of Breedplan, planning for the next 30 years.
   iii. On farm R and D needs, new collaborative structures to solve on farm innovation challenges.

6. Overall, do you think the original aims of AAABG are relevant today?
7. What changes would make AAABG meet your needs?