



SHEEP CRC NEWS - OCTOBER 2016

From the Homestead

We are looking forward to the Participants Forum and AGM on 16 November 2016 as an opportunity to review progress and start planning for the final years of the CRC.

We are now at the halfway point in the CRC's five-year Extension Programme. It is clear that in the first two and a half years we have laid a good foundation for achieving our goals. It is therefore very important that we use the final two and a half years to achieve the full potential impact of our outputs.

This week our Commercialisation Manager, David Faulkner, commenced work and his first priority will be to help develop plans for the delivery of the apps targeting Enhanced Wellbeing & Productivity. We are looking forward to David's contribution to the team and the new capabilities that he brings from a strong commercial background.

In 2013 the CRC licensed the ParaBoss program to UNE in order to ensure the continued delivery and ongoing development of this important source of information on parasite management. Under UNE's direction, and with strong support from MLA and AWI, ParaBoss has made excellent progress over the last three years, and the CRC is now in the process of completing the handover. A Phase II ParaBoss program is planned outside the CRC and will include parasite management information for both goat and cattle production.

It is very pleasing to see another CRC product being taken up with the strong support of industry in a way that will ensure its ongoing delivery and contribution to the Australian livestock industries.

We look forward to meeting with as many Participants as possible at the Forum on 16 November.

James Rowe
CEO



*Sheep CRC Commercialisation Manager
David Faulkner*

paraboss



*The Participants Forum and AGM will be held on 16
November 2016*



SHEEPCRC

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Wellbeing and productivity

The app development team will commence work in earnest on the Wellbeing app by the end of October. Discussion with the Data2Decisions CRC on the data analytics and user interface functions of the app have led to agreement on data storage areas and the simplification of APIs that need to be written for information flow between the data platform and the user interface. The Bureau of Meteorology continues to contribute significantly to the modified data sets needed in the biophysical models.

We have welcomed our new postdoc, Saleh Shahinfar, who brings skills in machine learning and genetics. Saleh's first task will be to take responsibility for developing machine learning models for fleece weight and quality aspects.

Work is continuing on the Productivity index and its incorporation into the data platform. A visit to Armidale by Jess Richards has further informed the user interface team about required input and outputs of the productivity model and implications for design.



Work on prediction of body condition score from video image analysis is progressing. Early indications are that larger data sets will be needed for accurate predictions. SARDI are in the process of identifying producers with animals immediately 'off-shears' who are willing to collaborate in the project to provide a wide range of animals of different age, sex, frame size, weight, condition score and pregnancy status.

A team meeting was held for the Enhanced Wellbeing and Productivity group on Friday 21 October in Sydney to discuss the latest developments from the data analytics project area to ensure that the team was in agreement about the minimal viable product to be produced by March 2017.

RamSelect

.com.au

Quality-based sheep meat value chains

The Meat Program team has sent information about new forequarter cuts from large carcasses to AUSMEAT for potential inclusion into the AUSMEAT handbook. This is seen as an important step towards the utilisation of new CRC information for a broader range of sheepmeat products.

Danish company and Sheep CRC Participant, Carometec, will visit Australia in early November to give an update on the new Mark II hyperspectral camera for measuring IMF.

Planning for the rollout of the MSAcuts-based system for sheepmeat was undertaken with MSA in Brisbane on 28 September. The plan will be presented to the MSA sheepmeats task force on 18 November 2016.

It is planned to have discussions on objective measurement of lamb quality traits between MLA, Sheep CRC, AgResearch and Beef and Lamb NZ in Wellington, in late January 2017.

The CRC is working with Beijing Agricultural University to evaluate different cuts of sheepmeat with Chinese consumers using the 'hot-pot' cooking methods. The first trials will be completed by mid-November.

Faster affordable genetic gain

The majority of the full sequence analyses is close to completion and all sequence information for ~350 sires will be reviewed when the genomics group meets on 3-4 November in Armidale for a detailed planning meeting.

Naomi Duivesteyn has started a postdoctorate with the CRC and will be working on the sequence data and finding ways to improve the accuracy of predicting breeding values.

A case study is being finalised with a White Suffolk breeder in NSW. The stud has had difficulty lifting the average breeding value of the flock to above the top 20% of the terminal population. The Sheep CRC will look at strategies to lift the stud's average breeding values. Strategies will include the use of pedigree information, artificial insemination, genomic selection and phenotyping traits. We hope to complete this work by December 2016 and share the information with other breeders via a case study analysis.

The use of www.ramselect.com.au continues to increase and the numbers of catalogues and rams listed in 2016 is now around 20-30% higher than at the same time last year. During the current season 156 catalogues have been listed with a total of 14,129 rams. The number of users storing details of the rams they have purchased is lower than anticipated given the advantages associated with being able to use ram-team data in future years.

- Ram searches for this ram selling season – 4,300
- Catalogues listed – 156
- Rams listed – 14,129

