

## NEWS RELEASE

Tuesday, 21 June 2016

### Major upgrade on the way for RamSelect.com.au

Commercial sheep breeders could soon have access to a new DNA test that profiles the average genetic merit of their flock.

This new information will increase the precision with which rams can be selected to have the greatest impact on flock performance.

The DNA test results will feature in an upgraded RamSelect app, which will also allow breeders to store details of flock rams and their genetic merit in order to make better decisions about how they are used and how long they are kept.

Sheep CRC chief executive James Rowe said both of these new features of RamSelect.com.au would be available to producers in time for the forthcoming ram-buying season to identify and purchase the rams that are best-suited to their requirements.

“We are currently trialling the ‘Commercial Flock Profiler’ DNA test on a small number of properties, and early indications are positive that it could be a game changer for the industry,” Prof. Rowe said.

“The results of the test will improve sheep breeders’ understanding of the genetic make-up of their flocks, pinpoint traits which require improvement, and increase precision in ram selection targeting profit drivers in their business.

“By using the Flock Profiler DNA test on about 20 randomly selected young ewes, we can now calculate a ‘flock average’ by identifying genetic linkages to animals with full genomic profiles on the Sheep Genetics database.

“And by better understanding the genetic make-up of their flocks, commercial breeders will be better able to buy rams which fit their specific breeding objectives.”

Prof. Rowe said Flock Profiler results would greatly enhance the power of the popular RamSelect.com.au web-based app, which allows users to identify rams listed for sale which align with the specific genetic traits they are looking for.

Until now, the DNA tests offered by the Sheep CRC have been mostly purchased by the stud breeding sector to identify their superior rams and ewes earlier in life to accelerate the rate of genetic improvement in their flock.

Prof. Rowe said that while this demand from the stud sector would continue, it was exciting to see new avenues for participation opening up for commercial producers.

Prof. Rowe said that with the initial tests providing encouraging results, a larger-scale pilot trial would begin later this year, with a view to full commercial availability in 2017.

“The new Ram Team Manager feature on RamSelect.com.au will also provide valuable information about the genetic merit of the flock as it is the genes from the flock rams that flow through the flock and establish the genetics of the ewes,” he said.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Industry,  
Innovation and Science**

**Business**  
Cooperative Research  
Centres Programme

*Making the possible practical*

“For commercial producers who have purchased rams with ASBVs and maintained good records of their ram team over time, the data will provide a flying start in having ready access to flock benchmarking data via RamSelect.com.au.”

In anticipation of the new version of RamSelect being launched at LambEx in August, producers can start documenting details of their ram teams. All that is needed is the unique Sheep Genetics identifier and the years that the ram has been used.

<ends>

**Media contact:** Michael Thomson, 0408 819 666.