

TIPS & TOOLS

Recording Fate Codes

Improving survival of rams, ewes and lambs on farm ultimately will improve the bottom line and increase productivity of any business. The research and development behind Sheep Genetics is dependent on data coming into the analysis. Currently there is not a lot of data collected on the reasons why rams, ewes, or lambs discontinue having records recorded, nor is this information collected using the same codes and in the same location in software's.

To develop a breeding value for survival and ensure that genetic differences between animals that survive longer is captured, an END OF LIFE data collection point has been included in software's. This not only relates to lambs but all animals on farm. FATE codes are developed to capture the reasons why animals leave the system that are non-genetic such as disease, weather events, ram break down or sale animals. The aim of this data is to identify the animals that struggle to survive or stay on farm due to genetic difference and gives the ability to penalise these animals using a breeding value.

FATE codes are different to status and Birth type/rear type. Status is a field designed for breeders to keep track of current, dead or sold animals in a quick and easy manner. Birth type and rear type are also still required as they are key data sources used throughout the analysis to flag, filter and exclude animals. Many breeders have recorded information on why animals leave the system in the comments or notes sections of their software's and now have a centralised location in a uniform manner.

A preliminary list of End of Life codes has been developed (Table 1). If there, are other reasons that you have been capturing or would like to include please contact Sheep Genetics.

Reason	Code	Reason	Code
Fostered	FOS	ET recipient	ET
Hand-reared	POD	Culled as undesirable	Culled
Born Dead	DAB	Died from Unknown causes	DIED
Died between birth and marking	DBM	Died during lambing	DAL
Died between marking and Weaning	DMW	Management cull	MGT-CULL
Died Misadventure	DIED – MIS	Sold	Sold
Born Dead - Premature	DAB- Prem	Cast for age	CFA
Died from weather	DIED – Weather	Missing for unknown reason	MIA
Culled at Birth (alive not tagged)	CAB	Ram breakdown	Ram
Died during lambing	DAB-DYS	Downgrade	COM
Barren/Dry ewe Culled	DRY-Culled	Died a cast sheep	DIED- CAST