

FERNVALE GENETICS

Romney Romdale Suffolk Sufftex

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Welcome to the Fernvale Genetics update for 2014. This week has seen some challenges with regards to lambing and weather, although the sun is now trying to shine. We hope that you have all survived the week with minimal losses. It seems to be the nature of the beast that no matter when we decide to lamb, the weather can play a part.

The DNA testing is well advanced at Fernvale as we are now two years into the programme. This means that this season, all the 2th and 4th ewes have been DNA sequenced. These ewes are left to their own devices at lambing time – they are set stocked prior to lambing, left alone and tagged at tailing time using the Shepherd DNA test. Interesting to note here is that last year's 2th twins who were similarly left to their own devices at lambing had a 12% higher lambing percentage than the previous season, when these were manually tagged at birth.

We have attached an information sheet from Zoetis that explains the DNA sequencing process further.

The 5K breeding value index will be available on the Romdale rams this season. You may notice a slight increase in price of the Romdale rams. This is due to some of the costs of the 5K breeding value testing. We believe this is invaluable information to have on these animals.

The Romney rams also have 50K breeding value index data available as well as their standard SIL data. An individual FEC count data is also available on all these Romney rams. This data is in our Macrostud programme that can be accessed when you pick your rams. This FEC count data could be extended to the other breeds depending upon demand.

By ram selling season, we will all know whether we are paying an additional levy on our wool. The wool price has been showing signs of life over the past 12 months, but we are nowhere near what it needs to be worth. I personally believe that the biggest hindrance to our wool industry is the amount of inferior quality wool that now exists within our national capital ewe flock. I believe this is due to the introduction of composite breeds being incorporated into capital breeding programmes.

Our core policy of not retaining anything that does not rear multiple progeny to weaning is still one of our main focuses. Increased live lambs on the ground at weaning means increased productivity. This in turn equates to a better bottom line.

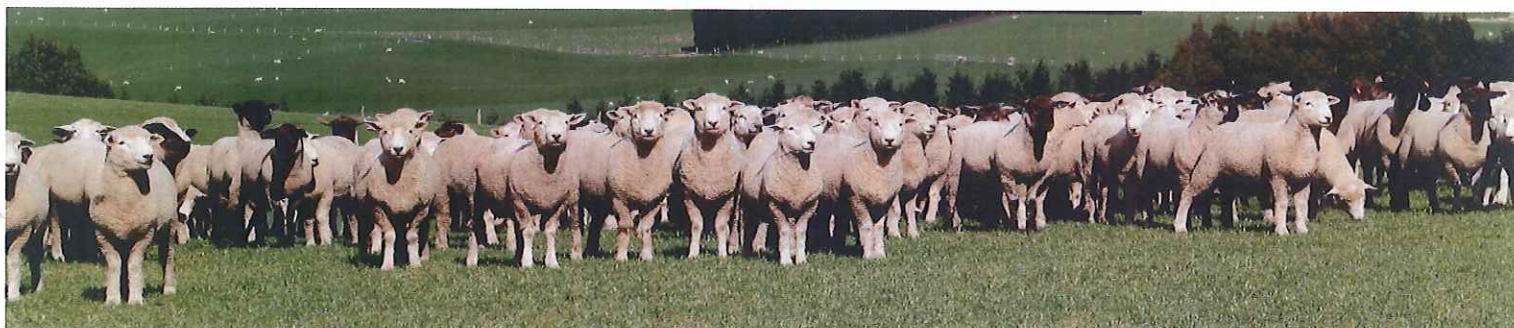
The Fernvale website is currently being built and will hopefully be up and running in the New Year. This has been a learning curve in that it takes time to sort out a website that meets the requirements you envisage.

Please return your Fernvale order form in the envelope provided with your ram requirements for this season. We will be contact to arrange a suitable time and date.

Kind Regards

Lloyd and Angela Brensell

Ram Hoggets 8th October



DNA testing at Fernvale

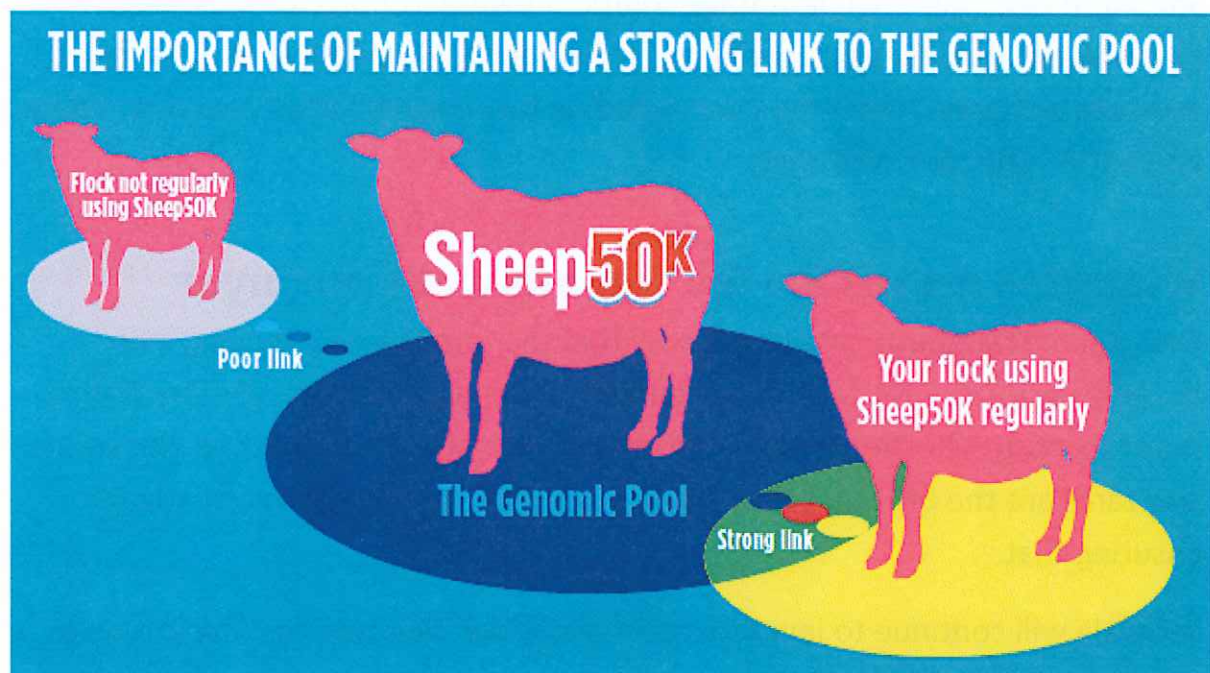
Fernvale are continuing to progress DNA testing in their Romney flock. Over the past 3 years, Fernvale have used a number of the DNA solutions offered by Zoetis including Sheep50K and Shepherd Plus.

Sheep50K

Sheep50K is a genomic technology. Genomic technologies help breeders by:

- Making breeding value data on young animals more accurate
- Allowing more reliable selection of younger animals e.g. ram hogget's
- Speeding up genetic gain

Fernvale have strategically used Sheep50K in over half of their Romney Sire team so far. Fernvale have used Sheep50K in this way to be well placed to take advantage of the latest generation of genomic technology i.e. Sheep5K.



To be able to use any genomic technology, it is important to have a strong and relevant base of high density 50K genotypes. With this in place, breeders can test many more rams with a less dense technology and receive the same benefits.

Sheep5K

Sheep5K will deliver for Fernvale more accurate breeding values and more genetic gain for 21 important traits including:

Production					Wool		Meat Yield			Health		
WWT	CWT	WWTm	EWT	EMAc	LFW	FW12	SHLY	LNLY	HQLY	AFEC	ADAG	GGT21

Fernvale will continue to performance record the same traits as it has in previous years, while also using genomics and DNA testing to explore other areas of interest such as Meat Yield and perhaps even Facial Eczema (GGT21). The lamb market is dynamic and as breeders, Fernvale need to be producing rams for tomorrows market.

Shepherd Plus

In addition to genomic testing, Fernvale are also in their second year of using Shepherd Plus, the DNA parentage solution. DNA parentage offers many advantages over manual recording, but perhaps the most significant is more accurate pedigree across the flock, which in turn means better breeding values and better selection decisions.

What this means for the commercial ram buyer

Commercial ram buyers want to know that the ram they are buying, will actually perform. DNA technology enables more accurate data and therefore more accurate selection decisions. Fernvale want to make sure that this year's sale rams are the best that they can be, and DNA technology is one way of ensuring that.

Fernvale will continue to invest in technology like DNA testing, where it helps produce rams that meet the needs of ram buyers, trusting of course that ram buyers appreciate the effort going in and continue to support the Fernvale program.

