

MARCH 2004

merino inc. newsletter

from the chairman ...



As the current manager of levy funds for research, technology development and industry training for Merino growers, Merino Inc is actively advocating for our industry. We want to ensure that the R&D program being developed by Meat and Wool NZ Ltd recognises the specific research needs of different breeds, especially the merino industry.

The new levy organisation for meat and wool, Meat and Wool NZ Ltd, is rapidly being set up. The new structure has been created and staff are being recruited. It will formally operate from July 1 2004, but is already developing its portfolio of investment in research, development, and training.

A major strength of the Merino industry has been its ability to work together and to use its united strengths to overcome some very large obstacles

both here and overseas. As the recent changes in the industry, following the McKinsey report, have bedded down this same unity and co-operation has come through. For example, Merino Inc and The NZ Merino Co Ltd are jointly undertaking R&D on new product development, redesigning wool classer training, and product life cycle analysis.

The role of Merino Inc is to assist merino growers to improve profitability. For Merino Inc that means working with an integrated industry, and we have also entered into a number of projects with other sheep breeds (gene marker work on cold tolerance and internal parasites with mid-micron and others), and other agricultural industries (ARGOS with sheep and beef and kiwifruit). Naturally there are also projects that are specifically merino, such as the impact of changes in

consumer demand, and the risks to NZ's reputation in the market place for merino products from our farming systems.

Our objective is for Merino Inc and Meat and Wool New Zealand to work together for the betterment of the growers and the industry. We are offering an established link to the merino industry that includes the regional grower networks of the regional associations. We know that we can share information and experiences as to the needs of the industry. We believe that it would be inappropriate for Meat and Wool NZ to establish additional consultative committees with the merino industry.

Rob Mathewson
Lake McKay Station
Chairman

how do you become a wool classer?

Successful completion of the Certificate in Wool Technology course provides direct entry into the classer registration scheme. The two year programme is taught by correspondence, with short block courses providing practical training. Experienced tutors are available to assist throughout the course.

Enrolments are still open for the 2004 courses, but the study programme is beginning now, so if you know someone who might be interested, please encourage them to get started very soon. Student loans and allowances are available for those who are eligible.

Training new classers is vital for the

merino industry. Growers can help by encouraging and supporting course participants both to get started and then to complete their studies.

For more information contact: Laurie Boniface Tectra Limited Tel 0800 496 657 (freephone) mobile 025 338 925 or email laurie.Boniface@tectra.co.nz

'classer select' market linked training initiatives for the 04/05 season

The New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) is currently developing 'Classer Select', a new range of Merino clip preparation training initiatives for the 2004/05 season. The new resources are an industry-wide initiative, focussing on the needs of classers, including owner-classers. 'Classer Select' replaces previous Merino classer professional development and ongoing accreditation programmes.

'Classer Select' aims to improve skills and knowledge for customised clip preparation to meet current market needs, so the industry can maximise the value of the Merino wool. The market is increasingly complex and demanding, and classers need up-to-date information, as well as excellent technical skills.

With funding from Merino Inc, NZM, supported by input from classers, is now developing the programme.

'Classer Select' Seminar: 3rd and 4th June, 2004 Landing Service Building, Timaru.

- Mill visit – Chargeurs topmaking facility
- Workshops on various topics and key market messages for the 2004/05 season
- Support materials for classers and grower/classers (e.g. videos, folders)
- A website where all classers can access classer news, training resources and other clip preparation material.

Details for the seminar will be sent out soon. For further information contact Emma van Asch at NZM on (03) 377 7990 or Claire Mulcock at Merino Inc on (03) 365 9686.

“good lines of communication essential”

“At shearing, ensure that you have clear arrangements that are understood by everybody” is a key message from the in-shed workshops for classers, growers and shearers run for the merino industry by Tectra Ltd in 2003 and funded by Merino Inc.

Gavin Rowland, Wool Harvester Training Manager, for Tectra noted that, while technical skills and quality assurance are obviously important; the effects of poor communication among the team isn't always recognised.

From the workshops, he summarised the following as some key communication aspects:

- The grower must know what he or she wants
- Recognise the different roles involved in shearing and wool preparation
- Classers are the link between grower, broker and shearing contractor
- Don't forget to consult with your broker

- Make clearly understood arrangements with the shearers and classer
- Use of the whiteboard is important
- Don't forget to include the presser and woolhandler in discussions
- Solve problems now – don't wait – ask for change if you aren't happy.

A total of 75 shed classers; 52 owner classers; 30 owners and 49 shearing contractors and staff attended the 7 in-shed workshops run in 2003.

footrot gene marker project

The MAF Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) project that is supported by Merino Inc and others will end in September 2004. By the end of the project some of the Merino ram breeders in the project will have tested all their ewes, but others only the stud sires. Nevertheless, the project will significantly increase the number of rams that can be identified as genetically tolerant for footrot. Commercial farmers are now able to select rams for footrot tolerance, if required.

Project manager, John Bates (JBT Consulting) recently produced a comprehensive newsletter on this and other related projects. To obtain a copy, please contact John Bates (jbates@ihug.co.nz) tel 03 448 8349 or Merino Inc

technical leaflets

Enclosed with this newsletter are three new Merino Inc leaflets. The Ryegrass Endophyte and Internal Parasite Management leaflets were prepared at the request of the North Island Merino Association, but we feel that they are of wider interest. The summary of the Meat Evaluation research gives some interesting information about the results of the project carried out by Lincoln University and JBT Consulting.

farewell

Dr Ken Geenty, R&D Programme Manager with Meat and Wool Innovation Ltd (formerly WoolPro), has recently left New Zealand to take up a senior position with the Australian Sheep Co-operative Research Centre, based at Armidale in New South Wales. In his professional capacity, and as merino grower himself, Ken is an enthusiastic supporter of the merino industry. The gain that Australia is making with his knowledge and expertise in both research and extension is our loss. We wish him well!

merino inc research and training contracts active in 2003–04 year

(FUNDING MAY BE FOR UP TO 3 YEARS)

Project	Research/Training Provider	Merino Inc funding*	Other funders	Notes	Status
Review of NZ Merino Industry	Lincoln University	\$22,500	No		Complete
Market Reputation Survey	Tectra Ltd	\$33,750	No		Complete
Merino Meat Evaluation	Lincoln University	\$20,080	Yes	Total project funding \$75,162	Complete
AgITTO courses	Agriculture Industry Training Organisation	\$2,250	Yes	Other education & industry funders	Complete
Shearer & Classer Training 2003	Tectra Ltd	\$100,188	Yes	Plus some AgITTO funding	Complete
Young Farmer Survey	Graeme Ogle	\$3,850	No		Complete
Adaptation to Climate Change	Earthwise Consulting Ltd	\$15,000	Yes	Funders include SFF & various regional councils	Active
Hieracium Biocontrol	Hieracium Control Trust	\$16,875	Yes	Has government & other research funding	Active
Technical leaflets	Meat & Wool Innovation Ltd	\$11,250	No	Leaflets prepared by Dr Peter Rattray	Active
Grower Study Groups	RFT Ltd	\$103,000	Yes	Group members also contribute	Active
Cold tolerance genetics	Lincoln University	\$149,000	Yes	FRST; Lincoln Uni & individual farmers contribute	Active
Stocksale Website	Canterbury Merino Assn	\$14,298	No	Upgrade + hosting to 04/05	Active
Sire Evaluation Scheme	Merino Studbreeders Assn / Canesis	\$50,000	No	Studbreeders contribute	Active
Hogget Growth Rates	Peter Anderson, The Vet Centre, Blenheim	\$30,000	No	Previously had other funding	Active
Footrot gene marker	Lincoln University	\$37,500	Yes	SFF; Lincoln Uni; MidMicron & farmers contribute	Active
Functional Fabrics	NZ Merino Co Ltd	\$220,000	Yes	Government funding \$350,000 (TBG)	Active
On-farm Sustainability research (ARGOS*)	Otago & Lincoln Uni; Agribusiness Group	\$60,000	Yes	Other industry & government research funds. Total funding \$8.2m over 6 years.	Active
Classer Select	NZ Merino Co Ltd	\$86,978	Yes	In kind contribution from NZM	Active
Seed contamination scoping	Tectra Ltd	\$6,480	No		Active
Life Cycle Analysis	Tectra Ltd	\$45,000	Yes	SFF funding \$80,000, in kind contribution from NZM	Active
Other contracts approved		\$13,250		Details to be confirmed	
Total Contracts		\$1041,249			

Notes: ARGOS: Agriculture Research Group on Sustainability

NZM: The New Zealand Merino Co Ltd

SFF: MAF Sustainable Farming Fund

FRST: Foundation for Research, Science & Technology

* GST inclusive

TBG: Technology for Business Growth Programme



dates

May 24 – June 2:

Tour of Tasmania

Organised by Canterbury Merino Assn.

Contact: David Wilson

Email merino@redgorton.co.nz; or
phone (03) 347 8483.

May 25 – 26:

Two tooth competition

Waitaki / Mackenzie Merino Assn.

June 3 – 4:

Classer Select: professional
development conference for all classers.

To be held in Timaru. Contact Emma
van Asch at NZM on (03) 377 7990

July 1:

The New Zealand Merino Company
Ltd conference

Late July:

(date to be confirmed): Merino Inc AGM

merino inc directory

Directors

CHAIR	Rob Mathewson LAKE MCKAY STN, WANAKA	Ph (03) 443 7653
MARLBOROUGH	Ross Beech (Deputy Chair)	Ph (03) 575 7365
NORTH ISLAND	Lyn Finch	Ph (06) 354 0276
WAITAKI/MACKENZIE	<i>Vacant, contact Richard Burdon</i>	Ph (03) 443 1554
OTAGO	Richard Burdon	Ph (03) 443 1554
CANTERBURY	Bob Todhunter	Ph (03) 302 8232
APPOINTED	Geoff Mavromatis	Ph (03) 332 4090
ADMINISTRATION	Allison Brook	admin@merinoinc.co.nz
RESEARCH MANAGER	Claire Mulcock	claire@merinoinc.co.nz

www.stocksale.co.nz

Don't forget that the Stocksale web site, run by the Canterbury Merino Association, is available for you to sell your merinos. There's no cost to use the web site. If you've forgotten your user name and password, contact your regional Merino Association, or david@stocksale.co.nz.

