

Breakthrough M&S Lamb Pledge announced



Three years of working alongside British retailer Marks & Spencer has come together for Rissington Breedline with the announcement of a supply contract for Highlander® - Primera® lamb.

Lamb will be sourced from Rissington Breedline clients throughout New Zealand who are using their Highlander and Primera genetics and farm management systems to produce consistent, high quality product to the specification demanded by British consumers.

The lambs will be processed by PPCS who were prepared to commit to the terms of the 'M&S Lamb Pledge'. The Lamb Pledge was developed by M&S in collaboration with Rissington Breedline and a farmer working group and ensures producers are paid a fair base price which is fixed for the season. They can also earn additional reward for good performance through an end of season payment from M&S that will be administered by Rissington Breedline.

Rissington Breedline Chief Executive Jeremy Absolom says the contract is a significant breakthrough for the company and its loyal clients.

"The M&S Lamb Pledge philosophy is all about giving producers certainty through a fixed base price and then encouraging them to help deliver ongoing product improvement and brand value by providing additional financial reward for achieving pledge objectives"

"Although this has taken sometime for Rissington Breedline to achieve, the outcome is really just the beginning for us as a producer group. Now it is up to us to demonstrate that we can commit to this and deliver a quality product week in week out. When we do this, we will be well on the way to building a model that will deliver far greater sustainability for all our businesses."

"There is a growing trend towards retailers wanting to link their consumers with producers. This requires a different approach at our end and PPCS have recognized that as not only an opportunity but also a way forward to build more sustainability for producers."

Models like this will bring more certainty to those in the sheep industry. We have seen many sheep farmers switch to other land use options because of this uncertainty. During this time Rissington Breedline has continued to invest in R&D, in their breeding programmes and on new horizons such as traceability, meat quality and importantly market development.

High performance genetics, simplified farming systems and links to the end consumer are all crucial ingredients to the long term viability of the sheep industry. Rissington Breedline are committed to playing an integral part in the ongoing development of these supply chains.

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