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For Immediate Release

New Zealand farmers reaping the rewards of high quality genetics

New research shows large numbers of New Zealand farmers are placing a high value on genetics and see new technologies as vital to boosting genetic gain.

A market research study commissioned by Rissington Breedline and undertaken by an independent research firm surveyed 225 farmers from throughout the country to gain a better understanding of the genetics market.

The results show 72 per cent of respondents see real value in genetics and place a priority on them for their farming business.

Rissington Breedline General Manager Alastair Nelson says the research backs up what their clients are telling them which is high quality genetics are vital in a successful farming operation.

He says for Rissington Breedline those high standards are achieved through ongoing research and development, which keeps the company ahead of the game and allows it to bring new innovations to its clients.

"A staggering 92 percent of farmers believed new technologies are essential to optimising genetic gain. That's telling us they want us to continue with our in-depth research and development."

Alastair says close to 90 per cent of respondents strongly agreed new technologies provide value for money for commercial farmers.

"What's also exciting given our pending merger with Landcorp Farming's genetic division is that three-quarters of farmers surveyed believed consolidation of genetic providers will enhance the uptake of new technologies."

Those results are backed up by North Canterbury farmer David Hyde who has been inspired to buy a second farm after swapping to high quality genetics.

Seven years ago the Scargill sheep and beef farmer was running Corriedales on his 12 hundred hectare farm and looking for a new breed to maximise lamb returns.

After extensive research and despite being a little skeptical about how a new breed would handle the traditionally dry North Canterbury climate he switched to Rissington Breedline genetics and says the farm hasn't looked back.

"I noticed the difference Rissington Breedline rams made straight away and quickly dispelled the myth that only Corriedales could handle the dry," says David.

"It's taken my farm to a whole new level with fertility, growth rates and ability; my lambing rates are up 30 to 40 percent."

David Hyde farms Inverloch with his son James. It's a hard hill country property with 8,500 stock units, including 5,000 ewes (predominantly Highlander), 1,100 replacements, five to eight hundred carry-over lambs, 150 Stabilizer cows, 130 Stabilizer rising two-year olds and 135 Stabilizer yearlings.

He says it's been a difficult 2010 and a hard winter and his ewes got into lamb in relatively poor condition, but despite this they've still performed well.

“We've had more twins; fewer losses and bearings, lambs weighing more and we've lost less ewes at lambing.”

And he says it's a similar story with his cattle.

“We've seen easier calving, better growth rates and great finishing which is all great news.”

This success has given David and his team the confidence to invest in a second 774 hectare nearby farm which runs 4,000 stock units.

“I've seen the results over the last seven years and it has given me the confidence to grow our operation. I wouldn't have been doing this if I hadn't switched to Rissington Breedline genetics.”

Further North Andy Pottinger from the Anerley Partnership in Wairarapa says the improvements in the Highlander flock have translated into consistent growth in his flock.

“Since introducing Highlander I've seen the docking percentage average increase to a consistent 150%. But what's even more significant is the importance Rissington Breedline places on the survivability rate in their genetic selection. Survival of multiples is the key to maximising your returns,” says Andy.

Te Pohue farmer Garry Brady says over and above the growth and performance rates he's looking for consistency which he has found with Rissington Breedline genetics.

“The Primera lambs I had were all excellent. Getting the last few kilos on was pretty easy and I was able to bank on them being ready. Because I had no tail-enders we were finished by December and able to move onto the next thing.”

Alastair Nelson says it's that kind of feedback from farmers that keeps the Rissington Breedline team motivated to continue with high quality sheep and cattle breeding programs.

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