

New Indexes, Reproduction and Condition Score added to Flock Profile in 2024

Flock Profile has been a widely used and well-regarded product available to Merino producers to genetically benchmark their flock. In September 2024, Flock Profile will be updated to include additional traits of Weaning Rate and Condition Score as well as the new MERINOSELECT Indexes. This document provides more information on these updates.

Weaning Rate

Weaning Rate (WR) describes the genetic difference between animals for the number of lambs weaned per ewe joined. A ram with a higher ASBV for WR will produce daughters that wean more lambs.

The ASBV for WR is a sub-index, balancing the three component traits of reproduction: conception (CON), litter size (LS) and ewe rearing ability (ERA). WR is a single figure that can be used in overall selection for improved reproduction. Individual animal ASBVs for the three component traits are available for ram selection.

Condition Score

Condition Score (CS) describes the genetic difference between the condition of ewes at joining. It is expressed in the same units as the Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) guidelines condition scoring guidelines. A ram with a higher ASBV for CS will produce daughters that have higher condition scores at joining.

New MERINOSELECT Indexes

Earlier to 2024 Sheep Genetics released 4 new MERINOSELECT Indexes: Fine Wool (FW), Wool Production (WP), Sustainable Merino (SM) and Merino Lamb (ML). These indexes are modelled to represent common production systems in Australia, and help drive genetic gain in the Merino industry. They range from fine wool production systems where the large majority of income is generated from the fleece, to a sheep meat based production system where majority of income is derived from meat. For more information on the new MERINOSELECT Indexes, please refer to the MERINOSELECT Indexes Ram Buyer's and Ram Breeder's Guides.

What does this mean for you?

Producers that now complete a flock profile will receive a report, genetically benchmarking their flock for fleece quality and quantity, growth, carcase, health traits, as well as the new traits described above: weaning rate, condition score, and the new MERINOSELECT Indexes.

Producers who have completed a flock profile in the past can receive an updated version with the new traits and indexes. Please contact Sheep Genetics to arrange this.

For more information on Flock Profile, please visit:

<https://www.sheepgenetics.org.au/resources/genomics/>