COLLECTING LAMB PRODUCTION DATA

BACKGROUND

Measuring the lamb production data of individual ewes within a flock allows improved decision making ability regarding selection and breeding of the flock. Measuring the total kg of lamb weaned per ewe can allow comparison between animals and improved selection and culling decisions.

HOW IS IT DONE?

Through identifying which lambs belong to which ewes and a single measurement of ewe and lamb weight at weaning the productivity of each individual ewe can be assessed.

1. The maternal pedigree of each lamb can be identified through the use of electronic tags and a system known as Pedigree Matchmaker (see associated publication 'Pedigree Matchmaker; Setup and Operation'). This uses the sequence that ewes and lambs travel past an electronic tag reader to identify which lambs belong to which ewes. This process typically occurs between marking and weaning.
2. Liveweight of ewes and lambs is recorded at weaning
3. Total kilograms of lamb weaned for each ewe is calculated from the total weight of each lamb weaned.

Figure 1 - Pedigree Matchmaker panel and race used to identify maternal pedigree of lambs.

Further calculations may be made regarding the relative production of each ewe based on her own liveweight. Ewes that rear high total kilograms of lamb at a modest liveweight are worth identifying as they are efficient animals to retain in the flock. Conversely heavy ewes that do not rear high total kilograms of lamb may be culled from the flock.

Figure 2 - Weighing ewes and lambs

FURTHER INFORMATION

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