



**Western Murray Land Improvement Group Inc**

# Designer Genes Workshop

## The Subject

Sheep breeding enterprises should establish breeding objectives and goals and implement selection processes to achieve those outcomes. Within your enterprise you will be buying animals for different tasks, it is very worthwhile having a genetic plan for each of these different tasks, such as buying rams for mating ewe lambs, as terminals or to breed replacements.

Mark Ferguson the co-founder of neXtgen Agri is renowned in the sheep industry. neXtgen Agri focuses on converting the complexities of genetic science into understandable logical and intuitive decisions.

## Challenges and objectives

Genetic gain is an ever-improving objective. It is not about breeding the perfect sheep, it is about breeding your perfect sheep to achieve the outcomes that you have identified in your breeding plans.

It is not as simple as visually identifying the traits that you want such as the conformation or shape of the animal. It is about understanding genetic measurements to assess the relative worth of the animal to your enterprise; and using breeding values that are calculated from the animal's performance and the performance of its relatives.

## Solution

On Monday, 14th of March, Central Murray BestWool BestLamb and Western Murray Land Improvement Group collaborated to deliver a Designer Genes Workshop presented by Mark Ferguson from neXtgen Agri at Moulamein's Jeraly Woolshed.

The workshop was designed so that attendees think about the outcomes that they would like to see on farm and to make educated decisions when buying rams or ewes. By having a balanced genetic plan and incorporating the four key aspects will assist the producer by making genetic gains.

## Results

The Jeraly Woolshed welcomed 45 attendees to this workshop. All attendees found the information relevant and engaging. The workshop was rated 8.3 out of 10, with 93 per cent of attendees were more likely to make on-farm changes following the presentation. Including using Australian Sheep Breeding Value's (ASBV's) for better ram and ewe selection, identifying traits that you want, being more accountable for the changes that you want to see, and genetic gain is about making good decisions on a consistent basis.

**This project was funded by the Australian Government under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program.**



**Australian Government**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment



The evening covered the importance of genetic planning focusing on four key aspects:



1. Things that make you money.



2. Things that save you money.



3. Things that save you time.



4. Things that delight your customer.

