



AWI investing more on fighting flystrike

AWI announced in October that it will spend an extra \$950,000 to accelerate research into flystrike genomics and new extension workshops on breeding for natural flystrike resistance.

This takes AWI's investment in research, development and extension projects related to breeding for flystrike resistance since 2005 to \$9.9 million. In August, AWI also announced an additional \$650,000 to fast-track further investigations into the development of a flystrike vaccine.

"The breeding of more profitable naturally resistant sheep to flystrike is a core research project for AWI and we are putting more money into it," said AWI Chairman Jock Laurie.

"As the industry's Wool2030 strategy highlighted, growers want to have confidence and tools to manage flystrike without mulesing.

"Evidence of increasing blowfly resistance to chemicals and the shortage in shearers are extra reasons why AWI will speed up this work."

AWI flystrike-related workshops

The new **Breeding for Flystrike Resistance workshop** is expected to have a similar format to existing successful AWI workshops 'Ramping up Repro' and 'Winning with Weaners', with a practical approach.

The workshop resources will draw on existing information, including from AWI's

Breeding for Breech Flystrike Resistance flocks, the Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project and MERINOSELECT.

The new workshop builds on another AWI workshop that is currently being piloted. **SimpliFly**, a one-day workshop for woolgrowers looking to implement strategic flystrike control on their property, introduces the concept of breeding for flystrike resistance as part of a holistic whole of farm plan.

SimpliFly participants will explore the many short- and long-term flystrike management tools and strategies, including breeding, that are available to them to help combat flystrike. They will also work through practical activities that enable them to combine these strategies and tools on their own property according to a customised annual flystrike management plan that best suits their specific circumstances.

The six planned pilot SimpliFly workshops were delayed by COVID-19, but the first two have now been held in NSW, and further pilots are to be held early next year in Tasmania, Victoria and WA. Learnings from the SimpliFly pilots will in turn inform the development of the Breeding for Flystrike Resistance workshops, which are expected to be piloted from mid-2022.

The workshops will draw on the information and interactive decision tools that are available on ParaBoss.com.au.

Flystrike genomics R&D

While the immediate focus to reduce the risk of flystrike is on lower wrinkle, dags, urine stain and cover, further genomic R&D provides the opportunity for these traits to be genomically enhanced, to create a stand-alone Breech Strike ASBV and provide genomic tools to assist woolgrowers that are not part of the ASBV system. The search for variations in the DNA associated with flystrike risk (or alternatively susceptibility) has long been a vision for the wool industry. All existing flystrike phenotypes and genotypes need to be pooled and analysed and further data needs to be collected to achieve these outcomes.

AWI is building on its earlier sheep genomic flystrike resistance work by increasing the human resources dedicated to wool issues. The additional investment will now create two post-doctoral positions targeted at flystrike, working on the MLP project and a range of further refinements to Merino genetic benchmarking technology.

ERADICATE FOOTROT

NOW - WITH THE

'FOOTROT SOLUTION'

1300 856 563

RADICATE

www.radicate.com.au

YES, IT WORKS!