



## Pohuetai Farms easily identifies “lights” for more focused care using Allflex EID tags

### BACKGROUND

Pohuetai Farms is a 2174 hectare (5372 acres) breeding, finishing, and trading property located east of Dannevirke, in New Zealand. It has been owned by the Knight family for 135 years.

In addition to 1031 bulls and 106 Angus heifers, the farm has an almost 14,000 strong sheep flock. 5300 Highlander ewes are put to maternal Highlander rams and 4200 to terminal rams, plus 2800 ewe hoggets are put to terminal Primera rams.

### CHALLENGES

With so many animals to manage, Pohuetai Farms wanted a quicker, easier way to identify light ewes at different stages of development.

In addition to allowing staff to better care for such animals, it would help identify ewes that should be removed from the breeding flock.

*“This year has been a really tough, dry season. The ewes seem to have held up really well, but being able to identify lighter animals does give us flexibility to get rid of another class of stock if we need to.”*

Daniel Preece, Manager, Pohuetai Farms

### AT A GLANCE

**Company: Pohuetai Farms**

**Location: Dannevirke, New Zealand**

**Herd size: Almost 14,000 sheep**

#### Challenges

- Identify light ewes for preferential care, and if necessary, removal from the breeding flock

#### System

- Allflex electronic identification (EID) tags

#### Results/Benefits

- Light ewes are identified at different stages and given better feed if needed
- Accurate identification of lighter animals makes for better culling decisions
- Automatic identification facilitates wool handlers' work
- Wool buyers are pleased to receive fleece without markings



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## SYSTEM

Pohuetai Farms has been using Allflex electronic identification (EID) tags for many years. The farm was home to a Highlander sheep stud until three years ago, which means most of the ewe flock are EID-tagged.

## BENEFITS

For now, the focus is on the hoggets. "They're shorn as ewe lambs in February, and they get an Allflex EID tag and toxo[plasmosis] vaccine so we know for sure who has had it. If they're tagged, they've had their vaccine and other animal health treatments as replacements," says Daniel Preece, Manager, at Pohuetai Farms.

With an aim to identify more efficient sheep, Preece says they're using the EID process to target tail-end ewes and remove them from the breeding flock. "They're condition scored as a hogget at weaning, hand on, then we'll check them pre-tup as a two-tooth then at scanning as a two-tooth. And anything light will go in with the triplets after scanning to be preferentially fed", he continues.

The scanner records information as he goes, enabling the team to follow lighter ewes a bit more. "As they go to the maternal breeding flock as a four-tooth we'll check them again. If they're light again, they'll go to a terminal sire with the B mob."

Preece says he's been happy with scanning results this year – 180% for the ewes and 145% for the ewe hoggets – despite the tough, dry season.

He is also collecting data on wet dries in the hoggets. And being able to prevent markings on the wool has proven beneficial. "There's no marking of what's inside them, it's just recorded, which means there's nothing on the wool when they're shorn. Wool buyers don't want the marks but it's also to make sorting easier for the wool handlers too."

"Pre-lamb, we'll draft five ways on weight and number of fetuses from the machine on the EID and then set stock accordingly based on what type of feed we have. If anything's a bit light, we can put it on the better feed," he continues.

The information gathered from the Allflex EID tags is recorded into FarmIQ. According to Preece, these records are "good for showing you the actual age structure of the flock, because it gives a full breakdown of every ewe, which in hindsight, means we can set stock the B flock mixed-aged ewes by age off the EID if we need to. That's mainly driven by an opportunity to sell ewes with lambs at foot; just another market to try and capture if we need to. It's that flexibility again."



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