



## Allflex EID tags prove a cost-effective way to meet performance goals at farms across New Zealand

### BACKGROUND

Will Gibson mixes family farm activities with his full time role as a genetics consultant with NeXtgen Agri. There he is primarily responsible for advising clients across New Zealand on how to get more value from the livestock data they are collecting.

### CHALLENGES

"I know there's a heap of value to come out of EID tagging by actually finding out what a flock is doing, without really doing any more work," say Will. "Farmers have animals at the yards more than they actually think they do, and a lot of those times when they're there, they could be collecting something on them."

But before tagging any sheep or cattle with EID tags, Gibson advises farmers to really focus on what data they want to collect and what they want to gain from it.

Common goals among his clients include wanting to compare ram sources, make breed changes, and improve culling decisions to increase profitability.

*"The potential value gained in putting an electronic identification (EID) tag in the ear of every ewe lamb in the country far exceeds the \$2 cost per head."*

Will Gibson, Genetics Consultant and Farmer

### AT A GLANCE

**Roles:** Sheep farmer and livestock breeding consultant with NeXtgenAgri

**Location:** Otago, New Zealand

**Herd size:** Sheep and cattle

#### Challenges

- Gather data from sheep to see what they're doing – as individuals and a flock
- Use that data to achieve specific, pre-defined goals

#### System

- Allflex electronic identification (EID) tags

#### Results/Benefits

- Successful transition of a flock to a different breed
- Better mating decisions, for increased conception rates
- Accurate understanding of the impact of using different feed
- Improved culling decisions based on individual animal performance
- Improved survival, better growth rates and better weaning weights in ewes



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## SYSTEM

Will is a strong advocate of mandatory EID tagging of all sheep to collect individual animal data. He uses Allflex EID tags on his own farm – and recommends them for the farms he advises.

“If you’ve got some sort of computer background, the data is easy to store and pull together. Otherwise there are people like ourselves who do that for them.”

## BENEFITS

Will says one of the best examples of making more informed decisions based on individual animal identification was a client who transitioned his Romney flock to half-bred Merino. Having individual ewe data meant he could source rams from the best stud for his property and stock.

Another farmer split his flock into three groups for mating. At scanning time, after winter rotation, the EID tag data showed that two mobs had conceived at a typical level, but the third mob had 20% dries. Further analysis explained the drop in conception – a water problem in the block where they were being mated.

Other farmers are using the Allflex EID tags to evaluate animal performance on different crops or pasture mixes. Will says that culling decisions in times of a feed shortage can be greatly improved based on individual animal performance, using data from the EID tags.

On the Gibson family farm, using collected data has allowed them to improve lamb survival. Pregnancy status information recorded at scanning time allows them to set the auto-drafter to create initial mobs of singles, twins and triplets. Then, at pre-lambing vaccination time, the lambing period data is loaded into the auto-drafter to split them again to early, mid and late groups for set stocking on different feed and on different blocks before lambing. Will notes that “this approach has really helped our bottom line through improved survival, better lamb growth rates and better weaning weights in our ewes.”

“All this is not unachievable without EID, but it takes a hell of a lot more work,” he says. “And I reckon you could be looking at about a 10% improvement in survival in your twins because you’ve got less mob pressure and more feed on offer. That’s a win right away.”

For Will, these great results are only the beginning. “There is huge scope to learn more from managing individual animals rather than a mob of animals. EID tags and the technology that is now available takes the time and effort out of collecting it, processing, and storing it for use at a later date.”



## About Allflex Livestock Intelligence

Allflex Livestock Intelligence is the world leader in the design, development, manufacturing and delivery of solutions for animal identification, monitoring and traceability. Our data-driven solutions are used by farmers, companies and countries to manage hundreds of millions of animals worldwide. By putting intelligent, actionable management information into farmers’ hands, our solutions empower them to act in a timely manner to safeguard their animals’ health and wellbeing, while achieving optimal production outcomes for a healthy food supply. Allflex Livestock Intelligence is a livestock portfolio of digital products within MSD Animal Health.

Through its commitment to the Science of Healthier Animals®, MSD Animal Health offers veterinarians, farmers, pet owners and governments one of the widest ranges of veterinary pharmaceuticals, vaccines and health management solutions and services as well as an extensive suite of digitally connected identification, traceability and monitoring products. MSD Animal Health is dedicated to preserving and improving the health, wellbeing and performance of animals and the people who care for them.

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