

## Flock Profile Testing

The flock profile test is available through Sheep Genetics for all commercial Merino producers and is a useful tool for assessing how your flock compares to rest of the industry and how your ram team is performing. It involves taking random DNA samples from 20 animals, sending them to XytoVet to be processed and receiving the results either through RamSelect or in a pdf from Sheep Genetics.

### Equipment needed

- 20 x TSUs (Tissue Sampling Unit)
- TSU applicator
- XytoVet Flock Profile DNA Request form (please contact XytoVet to receive the correct form and instructions for completing it)

### Selecting the sheep

- Take the samples from one year group.
- It is important to be as random as possible when sampling your flock. Avoid taking the first 20 sheep through the race!

### RamSelect

- RamSelect is a powerful tool
- A visual representation of your ram team ASBVs can be populated in RamSelect. This allows for benchmarking and assistance with future selection decisions.
- For more information about RamSelect, visit <https://ramselect.com.au/>

### How to take tissue samples

1. Ensure the animal is safely restrained.
2. Fit the TSU into the jaws of the applicator and ensure that it can not slide back and forward.
3. Squeeze the trigger handle of the applicator so that the cutter is firm against the applicator shaft, then release the handle and remove the red guard from the tube.
4. Position the cutter of the applicator in the centre of the topside of the animals ear. Squeeze the handle firmly to quickly make the punch.
5. Remove the tube from the applicator and check that there is a piece of ear in the tube and that the red indicator in the cap is showing.

## Understanding the report

The flock profile report provides average breeding values for a number of traits and indexes. Your flock breeding values are compared, using percentile bands, to the average breeding values of MERINOSELECT flocks. So, if you have a score on the 20th percentile for a trait, your flock is in the top 20% of flocks for that trait.

You can use these results to identify which rams you might use to reach your breeding objective, or traits that are important to your flock. You can search for rams on the Sheep Genetics website that match the criteria you require to make improvements to your flock (go to [www.sheepgenetics.org.au](http://www.sheepgenetics.org.au) and use the animal search and results function).

It is recommended that you perform a flock profile test every four years to monitor the progress of your flock and ram team.

