

1 May 2025

Sam Uffindell MP, Chairperson, Health Select Committee

Cc: Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology  
Hon Todd McClay, Minister of Agriculture  
Hon Mark Patterson, Associate Minister of Agriculture  
Hon Andrew Hoggard, Associate Minister of Agriculture  
Hon Nicola Grigg, Associate Minister of Agriculture

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Dear Chair,

Further to our joint letter of 20 December 2024, Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) remains concerned about the timeframes around the Gene Technology Bill (the Bill) and requests the Committee slow down the process to enable adequate engagement and ensure we get the settings right.

As stated in our previous correspondence and through the submissions process, we support a review of the legislation and we do see opportunities for our farmers. However, there are also gaps in the proposed legislation that have potential implications for farmers that need to be worked through.

This issue is hugely important to our farmers and B+LNZ is in regular contact with many farmers who are deeply unhappy with the lack of consultation around this legislation and do not feel they have enough information about the potential opportunities and risks to make an informed decision or to feed into the process.

As set out in our submission, some of the issues include:

- Ensuring market risks associated with the adoption of gene technology are managed as part of the regulatory framework.
- Co-existence of gene technology with 'traditionally-bred' species and traceability to ensure that farmers who do not want to use gene technology are able to not do so and therefore market their products as GMO-free.
- There is a lack of clarity in how different levels of risk will be determined, which in turn makes it difficult to assess level of caution. We would like to see the current proposed risk management approach to allow for a more case-by-case decision making process depending on the technology seeking approval that would take in account market access and traceability considerations.

We strongly urge the Committee to extend the timeframes around the new legislation to provide time to work through these issues with farmers.

We know from our limited consultation with farmers that the majority have low declared knowledge of all aspects of gene technology.

As part of this extension, we request the Committee asks the Government to undertake targeted engagement with farmers to step them through the opportunities and risks and get their feedback on how the risks can be managed.

Gene technology is such a technical area that we need experts to engage in this with farmers, and our role is supporting sheep and beef farmers to work through the implications.

We also recommend hearings be held by the Primary Production Committee on the Gene Technology Bill so that particular issues relating to farming can be canvassed and focused on.

We hope you will seriously consider these requests.

Yours sincerely

Kate Acland

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the letters 'KA' followed by a stylized flourish.

Chair, Beef + Lamb New Zealand