



Beef + Lamb New Zealand

Sheep Breeder Forum

Programme Tuesday 19 May 2026

8:00am Welcome

B+LNZ's focus for 2026/27

Alan Thomson, Beef + Lamb New Zealand

This opening session sets the scene for the forum, with B+LNZ Chief Executive Alan Thomson outlining the organisation's focus for 2026/27. It will provide a high-level overview of programmes and priority areas across the organisation and explain where sheep genetics fits within these strategic pillars.

Sheep genetics review: findings and implications

Dr Robert Banks, University of New England

Dr Robert Banks is a highly respected livestock geneticist and pivotal figure in the Australian sheep genetics industry, with decades of leadership in national genetic evaluation, including the development of LAMBPLAN. Commissioned by B+LNZ, Dr Banks together with Peter Fennessy has undertaken an in-depth review of sheep genetics at a time when New Zealand faces declining ewe numbers. In this session, Dr Banks will share his analysis of the industry and the findings and recommendations from the review.

From review to roadmap: B+LNZ's sheep genetics strategy

Dr Jason Archer, Beef + Lamb New Zealand

Dr Archer will discuss the strategic direction of B+LNZ's sheep genetics programmes, drawing on findings from an in-depth review completed in 2025. Ongoing genetic improvement remains one of the key drivers of productivity gains across New Zealand's sheep industry, with breeders playing a critical role in delivering these benefits to commercial farmers. The session will also cover the role of B+LNZ in providing tools that support progress, and the future investment and funding models required to sustain long-term genetic gain.

10:00am Morning Tea

New Zealand Genetic Evaluation update

This session puts the spotlight on our national sheep evaluation system, providing an update on areas of work underway within the NZGE and nProve. Presenters will share progress across a range of projects and research areas, including parasite resilience, meat quality, facial eczema, feed efficiency, and shedding sheep traits.

12:00pm Lunch

Interactive breakout workshops

Delegates will rotate through three 30-minute interactive workshops designed to encourage discussion and hands-on engagement.

3:00pm Afternoon Tea

Open mic: Q&A session

This final session brings everyone together for an open-mic Q&A, providing an opportunity to explore topics not covered in the programme, or dig deeper into themes from earlier presentations and workshops. It's a chance for open discussion, shared perspectives, and practical conversation to close out the event. With questions expected to flow thick and fast in both directions, we've allowed generous time for discussion.

5:00pm Sheep Breeder Forum ends

6:00pm Pre-dinner drinks for forum attendees

7:00pm Evening networking dinner (combined with B+LNZ Farmer Council and Kāhui)