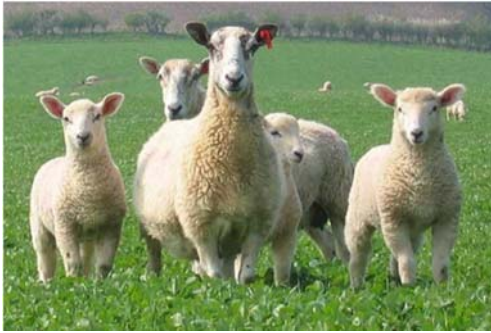


Sheep Ireland – MALP Meeting

Thursday 4th Novemebr 2010



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Agenda

1. MALP Objectives
2. MALP Results
3. MALP – ‘Extra Objectives’
4. Sheep Ireland Promotion
5. MALP – Future Role
6. Summary



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Recommendation 12 MALP – Objectives (Abacus – Bio Sep 2008)

- The Irish sheep industry requires an innovative new approach to show the real value of genetics in real farm situations.
- Thus the rationale behind the Maternal Lamb Producer group (MALP) scheme is to:
 - Provide a convincing demonstration
 - Across a range of commercial flocks
 - Of the range in genetic merit among a group of rams
 - In terms of the financial and management impacts of using rams with the appropriate traits to improve income and reduce costs.
- Thus the primary function of the MALP is to provide a demonstration.

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Recommendation 12: MALP – Methods (Abacus – Bio Sep 2008)

1. Year 1 - 1000 Ewes across 3 – 4 flocks recommended.
2. Transfer females between flocks.
3. DNA Parentage – Multi Sire Mating.
4. EID tag all lambs.
5. Retrieve carcass grades from factory.
6. Record traits: Growth rate, Mature rate, fertility, fecundity, foot health, dag score & Lambing Ease.
7. Crucial that each flock's own Rams are evaluated.
 - All Rams from Pedigree flocks
 - Rams from each main breed from Lambplus flocks included.

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MALP – Results

1. Breeding Value Demonstration

1. Do Genetic Indices work?

Yes

1. 5 Star Rams v 1 Star Rams:

1. Are 5 Star Rams more profitable?

2. Do they sire faster growing heavier lambs?

Yes

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MALP – Results

LAMBS BORN 2009 - 2010										
Group	1 STAR					5 STAR				
	Lambs	PTA Days to Slaughter	Acc %	40 Day Weight (kg)	Weaning Weight (kg)	Lambs	PTA Days to Slaughter	Acc %	40 Day Weight (kg)	Weaning Weight (kg)
KILKENNY	1713	3.5	0.48	15.1 Kg	25.5 Kg	1384	-3.5	0.49	19.8 Kg	34.5 Kg
KILDARE	2240	3.8	0.52	16.3 Kg	27.1 Kg	1474	-4.0	0.51	22.0 Kg	36.3 Kg
OFFALY	993	3.9	0.49	15.9 Kg	27.3 Kg	652	-3.7	0.50	21.8 Kg	37.5 Kg
MAYO	684	2.8	0.41	14.4 Kg	23.4 Kg	530	-2.3	0.44	18.2 Kg	29.8 Kg
PARTRY	681	3.0	0.46	13.7 Kg	20.9 Kg	612	-3.6	0.46	16.8 Kg	26.2 Kg
ALL	6311	3.5	0.49	15.5 Kg	25.7 Kg	4652	-3.6	0.49	20.3 Kg	33.9 Kg

- *MALP flocks demonstrate that lambs with higher genetic merit had better performance.*
- *Clearly demonstrates that genetic evaluation system works.*
- *Primary objective of MALP achieved.*

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MALP – Extra Objectives

1. Are there other uses we can make of the MALP data?

A. Include MALP results in genetic evaluations:

- Allow MALP farmers make better selection decisions.
- Increase accuracy of evaluations for pedigree & commercial sheep in same year data is recorded.

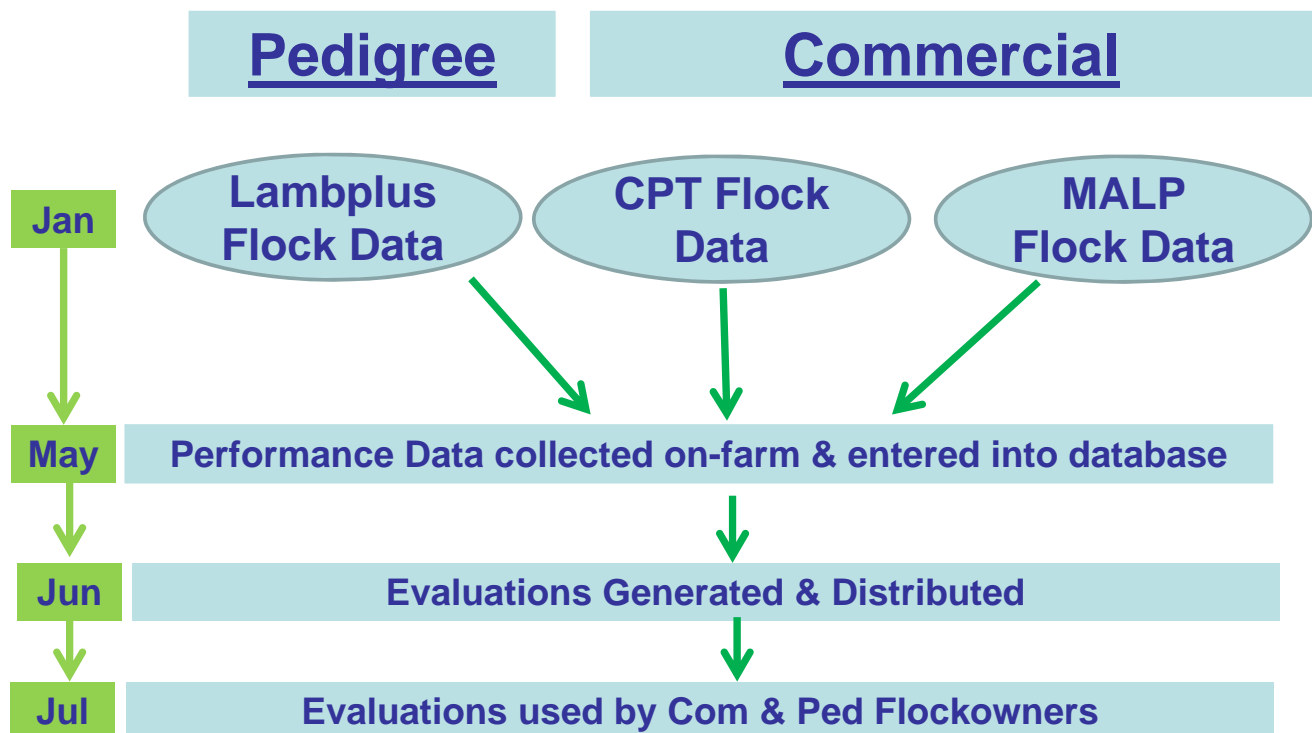
B. Develop on-farm recording reports:

- Beginning of a Flock Management Service.
- E.g. Weight reports developed in 2010

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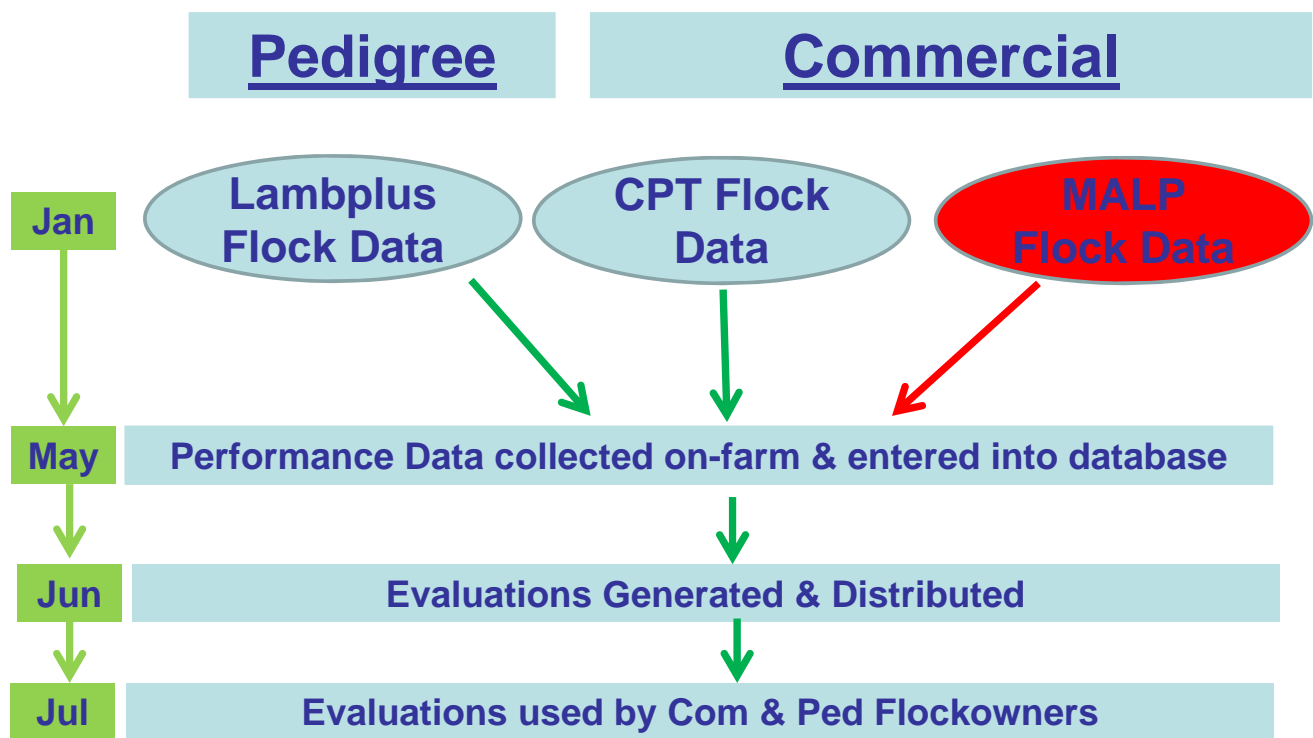
Include MALP Results in Genetic Evaluations



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Include MALP Results in Genetic Evaluations



MALP Data arriving too late for Genetic Evaluations



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Include MALP Results in Genetic Evaluations

Year 1 (2009)

Action

- 8000 Ewes & 22 Flocks involved.
- 10,500 lambs EID DNA tagged & weighed twice.

Results

- 5,500 Lambs (50%) eligible for genetic evaluations & useable for 'Breeding Value Demonstration'.

Problems

- Lambs outside required 'Age at Weighing' criteria.
- DNA Parentage problems.
- Dates of Birth unknown (Spray Codes).
- Data recorded on paper.
- Data tidy-up caused delay.
- Evaluation results not available until September.



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Include MALP Results in Genetic Evaluations

Year 2 (2010)

Action

- 6939 Ewes & 24 Flocks involved.
- 9,400 lambs EID DNA tagged & weighed twice.

Results

- 5,000 Lambs (53%) eligible for genetic evaluations & useable for 'Breeding Value Demonstration'.
 - Lambs weighed in correct Age Window tightened.
 - Spray Codes recorded more often & accurately.
 - Paper recording removed – Handhelds released.

Problems

- DNA Parentage problems.
- Re-run of DNA analysis caused delay.
- Evaluation Results not available until November.



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DNA Parentage Problems

- **60% Matchrate**
 - First release of DNA results (August)
- **80% Matchrate**
 - Second release of DNA results (October)
 - Updated Ram List improved matchrate
- **Other 20%**
 - 10% - lambs out of females with no sex recorded in 2009
 - Lambs sired by 'unknown' Rams.
 - 10% - samples – DNA could not be processed
 - Samples 'too pure' (no blood/hair, all ear cartilage).
 - Samples wet.



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Reduce DNA Parentage Problems

Meeting held with DNA Lab – Medigenomix – 27/10/10

Agreed Actions for 2011:

- 1. Provide Complete flock inventory for each farm January 2011.**
- 2. Provide Complete Ram list for each farm January 2011.**
- 3. Send Lamb DNA samples in Smaller batches earlier.**
- 4. Agree timetable to ensure results make the evaluation.**
- 5. DNA Lab to upgrade software & develop database.**

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Develop On-Farm Recording Reports

- 1. Weight Report designed & distributed to all MALP farmers in 2010.**
- 2. Reports sent out immediately after all weight data received.**
- 3. Four Sections to each Report**
 - 1. Overall Summary.**
 - 2. Breakdown by 'Week of Birth'.**
 - 3. Graph showing Distribution.**
 - 4. Individual Animal Listing**

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Weight Report

40 Day Weighing Summary Table				
Across all birth weeks				
Sex	Number	Average Age	Average Weight (kg)	Average Gain (g/day)*
Males	282	48.5	16.05	228
Females	314	50	16.2	224

* Assumes birth weight of 5 kg

•Overall Summary Section.



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Weight Report

40 Day Weighing (1)					
Birth Week	Weighing Summary Table Date of Weighing: 5 May 2010				
1	Birth Week	11/03/2010			
	Sex	Number	Average Age	Average Weight (kg)	Average Gain (g/day)*
	Males	79	55	17.4	225
	Females	74	55	17.6	229
2	Birth Week	18/03/2010			
	Sex	Number	Average Age	Average Weight (kg)	Average Gain (g/day)
	Males	90	48	16.1	231
	Females	93	48	16.2	233

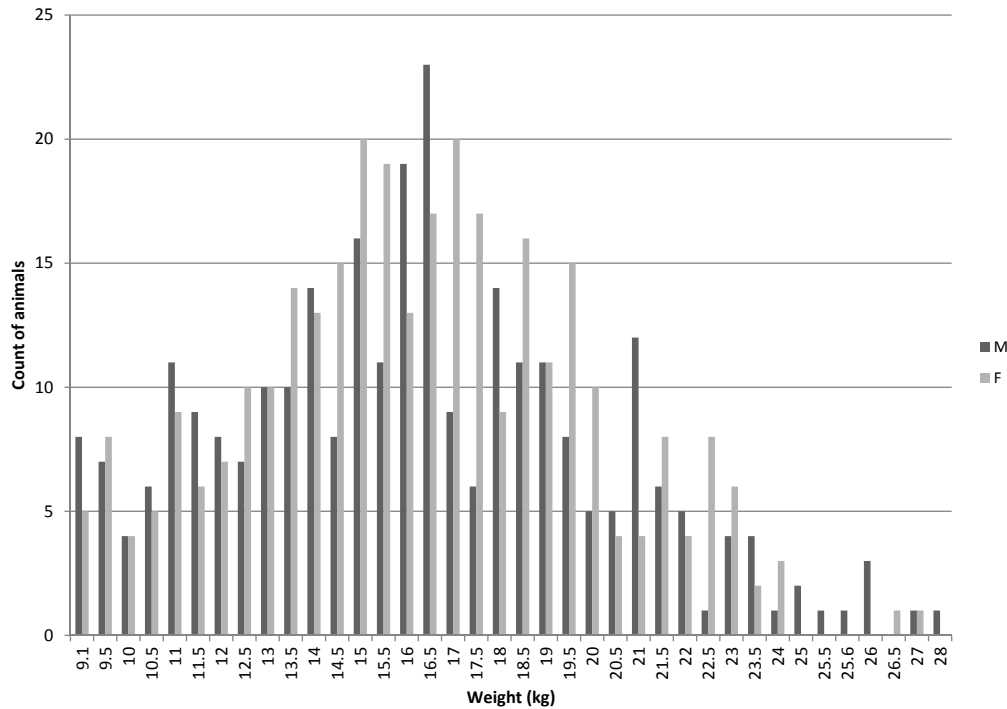
•Weight data broken down by sex & week of birth.



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Weight Report

Distribution of 40 Day Weights



•Distribution Graph also included

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Develop On-Farm Recording Reports

1. Beginning of a Flock Management Service?

1. Desirable that such a service commences.
2. Not to be confused with original objectives of MALP.

2. Not in original MALP Objectives (Abacus Bio et al. Sept 2008)

3. Included in new MALP Objectives (Abacus Bio Oct 2010)

4. Opportunity now to develop this area.

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Sheep Ireland Promotion (Current)

1. Website created & constantly updated with latest information.
2. Euro-Stars distributed to all Pedigree Flockowners.
3. New Pedigree Sales Euro-Star Catalogue designed.
4. New Pedigree Sales Euro-Star Insert designed.
5. Sheep Ireland Program:
 1. Promoted in Pedigree Flockbook Yearbooks
 2. Reported in IFJ.
 1. Breeding Supplement - Euro-Stars
 2. 2 Page article on success of CPT
 3. Explained at Teagasc Breeding Seminars.
 4. Featured in IGA Sheep Conference.
 5. Promoted at Sheep 2010 in Lyons.
 6. Promoted at Ploughing Match & Tullamore Show.

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Sheep Ireland Promotion (Future)

1. Continue with current PR initiatives:
 1. Press, Publications, Website, Shows
2. Results from MALP flock shows that 'Genetic Indices Work'.
3. Communicate this message to a wider audience:
 1. Pedigree Breeders:
 1. Current number involved in Sheep Ireland is static - @120.
 2. Recruitment impossible while Flockbook data not available.
 3. Sheep Ireland hopeful this will be resolved soon.
 2. Commercial Flockowners:
 1. Vast Majority currently unaware of Sheep Ireland & MALP Results.
 2. Contact all Producer Groups.
 3. Contact Factories & Marts.
4. Multi – Organisation Approach Required



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MALP – Future Plans

1. Continue with MALP Program – Demonstration Flocks
2. 4 Flocks was original requirement. 22 now involved.
3. Objective of MALP can be achieved with 4 flocks.
4. Restructure – Pedigree & Commercial Flocks.
 - Lambplus, CPT & MALP terminology confusing.
5. Future role of current MALP Flocks open for discussion.
6. Make better use of MALP Flocks:
 - Develop Flock Management Service.
 - Establish link up with Teagasc.
 - 28 B&T Advisors involved in Sheep.



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MALP – Summary

1. Primary Objective of MALP Achieved.
2. Restructuring of MALP Flocks role now required.
3. Abacus Bio Recommendations – October 2010.
 1. Enhancement of Performance Recording Culture.
 2. Develop Commercial Farm Services.
 3. Restructure MALP Flocks into:
 1. Flocks with a linkage & genetic evaluation role.
 2. Test flocks for commercial farm services.
4. Budget Constraints do exist.
5. Application form is start of this process.



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