

Sheep eID: challenges, benefits and practical insights from an advisor

Producer case study: Luke Rolley



Image 1. Luke Rolley

Background

Luke Rolley is an agribusiness consultant with his own advisory business, Agri-Nomics. Since 2011, he has been advising clients on finance, business and strategic planning, benchmarking and project management, as well as consulting as an expert witness.

In addition to his advisory business, he also manages a 70ha farm, 'Shelwood', near Shelford in south-west Victoria, where he runs 200 Aussie White breeding ewes and 12 head of Angus cattle.

Prior knowledge

Luke's initial knowledge of sheep eID included:

- trading information and NLIS data
- trait records
- growth rate tracking
- breeding programs and progeny tracking

- weight tracking to monitor health and performance.

As he was still evaluating the technology, he did not have a full understanding of the benefits of sheep eID technology could provide to his farming business.

However, Luke firmly believed that “without the data we cannot measure performance” and getting some data behind the performance of the Aussie White breed was really important.

Due to the scale of his operation, his focus was on using the data to optimise his flock's performance by selecting for reproductive and growth rate performance. He also liked the ability to quickly draft-off small flocks of sheep with specific criteria.

Current application in 2025

In mid-2024, Luke purchased an auto-drafter which he uses to monitor the performance of his flock. He currently uses eID technology for:

- sales data/NLIS reconciliation, and
- monitoring/recording specific animals for use in breeding and performance of growth rates on pasture and in containment.

Luke found there was more time and expense required to use eID technology versus not using it. The value comes from the ability to use it for breeding selection, which is a long-term benefit.

The ability to use the technology for monitoring growth rates has allowed him to make better

management decisions, such as ensuring the lambs are getting adequate nutrition for growth.

Challenges to overcome

Luke experienced a few challenges, with the main one being learning the software.

He still experiences some glitches, for example, when drafting for a particular trait (using the eID database) and if there's a missed read, there's no option for secondary drafting criteria and allocating missed reads to a specific mob. Missing tags and tags that don't read each time are also a challenge.

The setting up of the sheep yards to get the optimal flow with the auto-drafter and eID system was also a challenge. Keeping the sheep flowing in an efficient manner can be challenging, especially for young sheep that aren't used to it.

Luke also found that purchasing the equipment was challenging. He ended up with a low-quality product at a high price due to the minimal options and difficult process of contacting with the supplier.



Image 2. Feeding sheep at 'Shelwood'.

More information

Refer to Integrity Systems Company's resources for further guidance on [Sheep and goat eID](#).

Use [this resource](#) to learn more about selecting the correct NLIS-approved sheep and goat devices.

Learn more about the Sheep and goat eID [National Implementation Plan](#).

For further information:

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