

## Livestock Breeding and Genetics Forum

Brisbane, 21 February 2018

### Feedback summary

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MLA's Livestock Breeding and Genetics Forum covered four sessions:

- Session 1: Data platform
- Session 2: Linking genetics to the product and consumer
- Session 3: Disruptive technology and the future of genetics
- Session 4: Culture change (including presentation of MLA's genetics adoption strategy).

The following is a high-level summary of feedback provided by attendees.

#### **Session 1: Data platform**

Most attendees saw value in the development of a data platform that is accessible across the value chain. Likewise, many saw benefit in looking for commonalities with how other countries had achieved this, though understanding our differences in production systems. The development of an accessible data platform would require clear guidelines and agreement across the value chain regarding data ownership, integrity of the data and how it is collected, who funds it and the need to address issues with current traceability/NLIS.

#### **Session 2: Linking genetics to the end product and consumer**

There was widespread agreement on the importance of aligning consumer demands along the value chain to genetic direction and objectives on farm. An accessible data platform is essential to drive this connection, with value based marketing being the first step to create market signals to facilitate on farm genetic and management change. Whilst the theme of this session focused on eating quality, the importance of other factors in breeding programs, such as reproduction, is acknowledged and is accounted for in the NLGC and MLAs strategic R&D. This will be highlighted through various channels such as regional forums/programs and within the adoption strategy.

#### **Session 3: Disruptive technology and the future of genetics**

There was consensus of the need for a beef multi-breed analysis. There was interest in future technology opportunities for the industry – including crush-side genotyping and genotyping for potential feedlot performance and the benefits it may provide for hard to measure traits such as fertility – and the need to value phenotype data collection.

#### **Session 4: Culture change**

The livestock genetics adoptions strategy received widespread support. Most tables agreed with the four pillar approach to increase the adoption of genetics. It was pleasing to see that much of the feedback captured during the earlier sessions such as using standardised commercial language, incentivising the commercial industry to drive genetic and production change, proactively extending messages to a wider group of commercial livestock stakeholders, and demonstrating the value of genetics/genomics – all aligned with the livestock genetics adoption strategy.

Attendees at some tables were unsure the genetics adoption strategy could successfully increase the adoption of genetic tools in the commercial livestock sector. We have addressed some of these concerns below:

- **Timeline** – whilst the adoption plan will underpin and help achieve the NLGC goal of “doubling the rate of genetic gain by 2022”, there are components that will take greater than 10 years to achieve
- **Monitoring and evaluation** – the strategy will be monitored a number of ways including:
  - national and local market research, using existing market research as a baseline
  - adoption metrics measuring use and confidence of genetics
  - the number of animals registered in evaluations and genetic gain, and
  - where possible, productivity improvements as the result of improved genetics
- **Not new or innovative** – whilst elements of the plan may not seem new, it is believed that these have not been executed in a coordinate or impactful manner in the past, particularly with a focus on the commercial sector. By having monitoring and evaluation guidelines, the efficacy of the strategy can be evaluated and adjusted as required.

For those of you who wish to review [a more detailed version of the feedback click here](#), or have any further feedback regarding the forum or adoption strategy, please contact David Packer [dpacker@mla.com.au](mailto:dpacker@mla.com.au)

**Figure 1: MLA’s proposed genetics adoption plan**

