

Goat Genetic Improvement Strategies

Producer Demonstration Sites

Want to improve your goat herd performance by engaging with like-minded producers and an industry support network?

An MLA Donor Company Producer Demonstration Site (PDS) project could be for you.

Purpose and background

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is committed to partnering with producer groups to improve business profitability and productivity. Producer Demonstration Sites (PDS) aim to increase the rate of adoption of key management practices and technologies that improve business profitability, productivity and sustainability through livestock producers pursuing new skills, management practices in their own commercial livestock production systems.

The PDS program underpins MLA’s research, development and adoption (RD&A) programs by supporting groups of producers to demonstrate, adapt and validate the triple bottom line benefits of integrating new management practices, research and development outputs and associated skills within the context of their commercial production systems. The key outcome of a PDS is producer adoption of the demonstrated management practices resulting in improved business performance.

MLA is calling for applications for **MDC PDS projects** related to improving goat enterprise profitability and productivity through improvements to herd genetics.

Application deadline – 1st February 2021

Priority areas:

| Category | Priority |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Goat Herd Improvement Strategies | <p>Demonstration of the farm level benefits of improved genetic selection practices. Focus areas include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Benchmarking</u> of herd performance b. <u>Genetic improvement strategies</u> based on breeding objectives including identification of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ targeted traits (estimated breeding values (EBV’s) and heritability) ○ performance objectives ○ duration ○ matching strategies to environmental conditions c. Implementation of <u>practice change</u> to improve herd genetic performance d. <u>Evaluation</u> of the impact on herd productivity and profitability |

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| | Demonstration of the application of technologies and tools, which facilitate improvements to the effectiveness of current genetic selection practices, accelerating the rate of genetic gain. |
| | Demonstration of the application of remote animal management tools or technologies to support herd development |

What is funded?

MDC PDS projects

MDC funded PDS projects are funded as follows:

- 50% MLA Donor Company contribution
- 50% Producer contribution
- 8% access fee (Producer groups pay 8% on top of their cash contribution)

MLA funding can be used for:

- Facilitator time and expenses (for example reporting, coordination, group activity)
- Operational aspects of the demonstration
- Extension and communications activities
- Conduct and reporting of robust monitoring & evaluation plan

MLA funding cannot be used for:

- Purchase of capital items (applicants should investigate sponsorship, share or leasing arrangements)
- Items of significant private benefit
- Purchase of animals
- Fencing and infrastructure

What is a PDS?

- A project initiated by a producer group addressing a key adoption issue limiting enterprise productivity and profitability resulting in impact when adopted by producers.
- Of sufficient interest that it is demonstrated on a minimum of three different properties and at a commercially relevant scale. Flexibility is be offered for projects in extensive regions.
- Have a core group of a producers in the project (with a larger network of producers (observers) keen to attend workshops or field days to learn about outcomes. Flexibility in numbers is offered for projects in extensive regions i.e. smaller groups may be considered on a case by case basis.
- Core producers are responsible for much of the in-field activities (e.g. measurements, stock rotations etc.)
- Be based on known, scientifically proven technology/practices.
- Have a robust method designed to lead to an outcome, including controls for comparison
- Have a suitably skilled facilitator to guide group activity, coordinate extension activities, ensure protocols are implemented and provide reports back to MLA.
- Include extension and communication activities to extend key messages and learnings beyond the core group.

- Implement monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) processes to demonstrate producer engagement, knowledge and skill, practice change and benefit to the production businesses and wider industry. All projects will be required to develop a MER plan using MLA's standard framework within one month of commencing, and support will be available to assist facilitators with development. A copy of the MER plan guidelines is available on the [MLA website](#).

What is not a PDS?

- Based on an issue of limited interest to producers in the area or an issue that contributes only very marginal improvement in enterprise business performance
- Basic or applied research regarding a problem/issue (i.e. solution is not yet known)
- Demonstration of how commercial technologies operate and perform. Demonstrations involving commercial technologies must focus on the business / decision making value of the technology, not whether it works.
- Demonstrations not at commercial scale.
- A project where the facilitator does all the work including taking in-field measurements etc.

Who can apply?

Funding is available for goat producer groups to validate and demonstrate the business value of integrating new technologies and on-farm management practices into local production systems. All MLA contracts will be with a company or other legal entity excluding individuals/sole traders. For unincorporated producer groups, arrangements should be made for contracting through an affiliated company.

Where the intended contracted party is a Trustee (on behalf of a trust), MLA will require copies of ID for all Trustees along with a copy of the Trust Deed.

The tenderer must provide details of current insurance policies held by it and each proposed subcontractor and supplier as outlined in the preliminary and full applications.

Preparing and submitting an application

The following steps should be followed:

1. Establish a producer group, supported by a facilitator/lead producer (may be a partnership with an organisation that has a common purpose).
2. Define and describe what the PDS project intends to achieve. This should include:
 - a. What is the practical problem or need that the group aims to address?
 - b. What is the current level of adoption of the targeted management practice(s)?
 - c. How will the targeted management practices improve business profitability and productivity i.e. what will be the outcome of the project?
 - d. What is the potential scale of benefit to businesses?
3. Identify the PDS group facilitator and the producer Chair.
4. Submit an application outlining your proposed project. The application should be submitted on or before **1st February 2021**.

Important information regarding the tender process:

1. Tenders must comply with all requirements specified in this request for tender/terms of reference.
2. Please submit an electronic/ soft copy (Word) of the tender applications.
3. Annexure 1 – this document.
4. Annexure 2 contains the PDS application form
5. Annexure 3 contains the MDC application instructions
6. Annexure 4 contains the terms of the agreement, which MLA wishes to enter into with the successful tenderer for MDC PDS projects. While the final agreement may also take into account negotiations between MLA and the successful tenderer, MLA has certain minimum legal requirements that must be satisfied before it is prepared to enter into an agreement with a supplier.
7. Annexure 5 contains a tender declaration to be completed by the tenderer.
8. Annexure 6 contains an MDC cash contribution declaration to be completed by the tenderer when submitting an application for an MDC PDS.

Further information about PDS eligibility criteria, guidelines and Application Forms please contact Joe Gebbels – jgebbels@mla.com.au or Emily Litzow elitzow@mla.com.au

Selection Criteria & Review process

Selection of preliminary applications and full applications will be based on the following criteria

1. Alignment with the terms of reference
2. Number of producers in the core group and opportunity for broader scale engagement across the observer group / district
3. Potential impact on producer business profit drivers & industry profitability
4. PDS team capability to undertake the requirements of a PDS
5. A very clear and measureable objective(s)
6. Methodology to demonstrate the business value of the technology / practice / innovation(s) and achieve practice change.
7. Extension and communications plan and activities within the PDS group (core) and more broadly (observer group and nationally)
8. Proposed monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) activities
9. Value for money

For further information:

- Joe Gebbels, MLA Program Manager, Sheep & Goat Productivity Research & Development, Phone: 0407 002 928, email: jgebbels@mla.com.au
- Emily Litzow, MLA Project Manager, Sheep & Goat Productivity Research & Development, Phone 0428 917 047 elitzow@mla.com.au