



# The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP Minister for Primary Industries

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### MERINO RESEARCH TO DRIVE PRODUCTIVITY

Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, today announced that a new report, *Merino Bloodline Performance*, has delivered vital information to stud breeders, which will have significant implications for the future profitability of 71 Merino bloodlines.

“Genetic data from a 10-year study of Australian wether trials show a significant variation in production and performance between bloodlines,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

“Merino breeders can now use the *Merino Bloodline Performance* information to identify the relative performance of bloodlines and finetune their breeding programs.”

The report outlines important determinants of Merino profitability, 11 traits and two measures of financial performance.

“The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) analysis of 22 wether trials in NSW, Victoria, Western Australian and Tasmania, reveals that the bloodlines varied across a range of 3.5 microns in fibre diameter, 30 per cent in clean fleece and 23 per cent in live weight.

“These production differences translate into significant differences in bloodline profitability, and the bloodlines can be compared on the profit per head or profit per dry sheep equivalent (DSE).

DPI research scientist, Sue Hatcher, said Merino producers can confidently use the data from *Merino Bloodline Performance* to assist in selecting bloodlines that best suit their breeding objectives.

“One ewe productivity trial and 22 wether trials have each run from between two to four years, ensuring high accuracy in the data collected,” Dr Hatcher said.

“This information gives a very reliable indication of potential profitability from the bloodlines.”

Genetic data has been isolated from seasonal and geographic environmental differences by grouping multiple bloodlines into teams of wethers across the trial sites.

The NSW wether trials ran from 2004 to 2014 in the Central Tablelands, Central West, Northern Tablelands, Southern Tablelands and the Monaro.

Australian Wool Innovation and DPI funded the Merino Bloodline Performance project. More information and copies of the report are available online, [www.merinobloodlines.com.au](http://www.merinobloodlines.com.au)