

Farm^{IQ} Programme Quarterly Progress report summary, July to September 2014

The Farm^{IQ} programme took its farm management system to a wider farmer group during this quarter.

Version 5 of the Farm^{IQ} System was released in August. It is being presented as five product packs offering a range of feature and pricing levels. This enables customers to select the pack that best suits their specific business needs. The packs all offer upgrade paths, meaning a farmer can start at the level that is right for them now and add additional functionality when they are ready.

Farmers who have taken subscriptions report they are using the System for a range of purposes.

They are using it to record farm information in a form that is easily accessible. They say it can be used to meet assurance requirements, for example animal health treatments and fertiliser applications. They are also recording the locations of systems such as water and electric fencing, so that it will be available to staff in future.

Farmers are setting up on-farm studies to examine aspects such as the value of a forage crop for liveweight gain, and also using the System for analysis, for example to help select ewe lamb replacements.

Many users value rich, interactive farm mapping, which gives them a useful visual of their property and their farm operation.

Farmers like the mobile app, which means they can capture information as they go and are not office-bound.

A further upgrade of the System occurred in September that made the Farm^{IQ} Mobile App available to iPhone users and introduced a new Tasks feature to the System.

Development of Version 6 was completed by the end of the quarter, ready for final testing and preparation for release in early November.

The IQ Farms went through winter planning meetings with their steering teams this quarter. During these sessions annual data capture plans, project protocols and budgets were completed. The annual data capture plans give the farmers a clear road map of the relevant data that needs to be captured and entered into the Farm^{IQ} System. This gives them the confidence that at the end of the production season they will have the right data to identify best management practices.

The Genetics workstream is continuing to investigate genomic selection and the accuracy of predicting from DNA alone. This would be much cheaper than progeny testing, especially for meat quality traits. The proposal is to integrate with DNA parentage testing in ram lambs.

The programme is on track with phenotyping and genotyping of the animals that have been used to provide interim prediction equations to produce breeding values (DNA-based) for the meat quality traits. A wider group of ram breeders is becoming involved. In addition,

validation of meat quality traits against eating quality tests (that is the physical measurements compared to sensory evaluation) are also required.

Farm^{IQ} has published its Annual Insights report, which reflects on the year to September 2014 and is available from the Farm^{IQ} website.

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