



Getting Started with On-Farm Software in a Wool or Lamb Enterprise

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The right software can be a powerful tool for a wool or lamb producer. The ability to gather and store data, then generate reports from that data can assist greatly with decision making and streamlining on farm operations. However, the wrong software can be frustrating, expensive and disheartening, so look carefully at the enormous range of software products available and make sure what you are getting is the right package for you and your enterprise.

Before you purchase any farming software, think about what you want the software to do for you. Consider the information you wish to collect and how you want to utilize the information in your operation. You should also consider the method you intend to use to collect that data – are you planning on using Electronic Identification (EID) tags or will you collect the information manually? If you are looking at EID, refer to Agnote ‘*Will an Electronic Identification (EID) system benefit my sheep production enterprise?*’ for further information

Electronic Identification – Subsidies and Grants.

There has been considerable producer interest for some time in the use of electronic identification technology for flock management purposes because of the significant limitations of tags that can only be read visually. However tag prices in the order of \$2.50 per tag have discouraged uptake. DPI has recently introduced attractively priced electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags that are available to producers at a subsidised retail price of \$1.35 per tag.

In addition, wool growers and sheep meat producers are able to apply for a Victorian Government dollar for dollar grant of up to \$2,500 to assist with the purchase of readers, software and technical support.

Victorian producers who choose to purchase electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags will not be required to also attach a visually readable NLIS (Sheep) tag. Each electronic tag will be printed with a visually readable Property Identification Code (PIC) and serial number.

For information on electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags, producer grants and the use of electronic technology for flock management purposes, visit DPI’s web site at www.dpi.vic.gov.au/nlis, or call NLIS Helpline on 1800 678 779 during business hours.

Things to consider –

- Ease of data input
- Method of data entry – Manual or EID compatible?
- Ease of generating suitable reports,
- How are you going to use the information?
- Will you use the information?
- Is the program formatted to suit your information and enterprise/s?
- Is the program compatible with other software, hardware and equipment that you are currently using or are considering purchasing?
- Will the software allow you to share information with organisations you currently work with in a straight forward manner? (ie. LAMBPLAN, NLIS Database, QA Programs)
- Are you comfortable with the program and will you use it regularly?

A good method of summarizing your requirements of a software package is by answering the following questions about your enterprise and how you work. You can then apply the information to the software package you are considering purchasing to assess whether it will actually fill your needs:-

- **Decisions** – understand what decisions you make in your enterprise, why and where – eg. In yard decisions versus in office decisions.
- **Information** – you can’t make a decision unless you have the required information, so based on your key decisions, what information do you require?
- **Reports** – this is where your information comes from. What do the reports need to look like? Does the system give you the reports you need?
- **Data** – Data fills the reports. Ensure that the software has the ability to capture and report on the data you need to make the decisions crucial to your business.

The majority of software companies will give you free demonstration discs on request, or you may be able to download a demonstration copy from the internet. This

allows you to 'try before you buy'. Test any software package thoroughly before purchase to ensure that it will meet your requirements and is a program you are comfortable using.

Remember that software packages are only as powerful as the operator using them and the level of accuracy of information that has been inputted into the system. The initial set up of the package may take some time in order to use the package to its full potential. Once this is done,

however, the analysis of this data, made possible by the right software package, can impact significantly on your business and may help clarify some of those difficult on-farm decisions.

Below is a list of software providers. The list is by no means exhaustive. Speak to your neighbours and friends to see what has worked for them. Your local DPI representative is also a great resource.

Company	Contact	Phone	Website
AgInfoLink Australasia AgInfoLink's product suite range covers many production systems.	Tom Newsome	1800 787 800	www.aginfolink.com.au
Agtrac	Paul Gavagan	+64 3 977 3617	www.agtrac.co.nz
Allstock Technology WoolPak software for sheep data recording. Can use with electronic tags.		02 6887 3883	www.allstock.com.au
Creative Logistics Product and packaging security plus animal management systems.	Paul March	02 3382 1194	www.creativelogistics.com.au
Cousin's Merino Services	Michelle Cousins	08 8892 2108	
eAgribusiness Developers of iFarm software for farm mapping and all crop, pasture and livestock production recording. iFarm is QA compliant for crops and livestock enterprises, and the iFarm Livestock module is suitable for recording livestock activities on both an individual and group basis.	Tim Nielsen	08 9227 1699	www.eagri.com.au
Elynx Software Suppliers of StockAID, Feedlot 3000 and BMS software packages.	John Bailey	07 4659 6999	www.elynx.com.au
TOPSTUD Topstud is a practical, flexible, easy to use software designed specifically for merino stud breeders	Marion Gibbins	03 5381 1866	www.topstud.com.au
Tru-Test Supply Pinnacle software that will interface with the XR scale head	Gregg Blatchly	1800 641 324	www.trutest.com.au
Vantage Point Solutions MacroStock® software	New Zealand	64 3 307 8053	www.macrostock.com
Fairport Technologies Farm planning, production recording, farm management, mapping and machinery fleet management software.	Roger Wiese	08 9367 5814	www.fairport.com.au

Hutchinson Software Web, database and e-business custom software solutions	Chris Hutchinson	02 6775 1988	www.hutchinsonsoftware.com
Interactive Wool Group (IWG) Distributes OFDA2000	Richard Manning, NSW Bill Johnston, WA	02 6766 3077 08 9418 8500	www.iwgofda.com
Livestock Exchange Pty. Ltd.		07 3264 6685	www.livestockexchange.com.au
Livestock Recording Australia Livestock recording and feedback system	Phil Wooster	02 6772 0038	www.livestockrecording.com.au
Macro Stock New Zealand MacroStud pedigree and performance recording, MacroWeigh to monitor production throughput of the finishing or feedlot enterprise, MacroFleece program to record, analyse and sort fleece data	Bob Girvan	64 3 307 8053	www.macrostock.com
Practical Systems Farm management software products for sheep producers Farmbook and Stockbook	Hugh Beattie	02 6772 6672	www.psystems.com.au
Possum Gully Software	Richard Conibear	0408 669 697	www.possumgully.net
Red River Solutions	Kim King	02 6366 8262	www.redriver.com.au
Sheep Software Solutions	Ian Hingeley	03 51580706 0428 580 706	www.sheepsoftwaresolutions.com.au
Saltbush Agricultural Software Farm management software	Cory Wilson Conrad Mertons	1800 111 637	http://saltbush.une.edu.au
Sapien Technologies Farm software and readers	Robert Wyld Russell Cranston	03 9808 7119	http://www.sapien.com.au
Silverleaf Solutions	Susan Brant	07 4987 7577	www.silverleafsolutions.com.au
Wilbase Software	Ron Wilson	07 4697 6577	www.wilbase.com.au
Telstra Country Wide Telecommunications and data transfer	Elise Munsie	02 67749900	www.telstra.com/countrywide

Source: Sheep CRC www.sheepcrc.org.au

Where can I find more information?

Department of Primary Industries NLIS Extension Team

	Phone	Email
Kate McCue	03 5561 9902	Kate.mccue@dpi.vic.gov.au
Erica Schelfhorst	03 5430 4560	Erica.schelfhorst@dpi.vic.gov.au
Fiona Baker	03 5624 2234	Fiona.baker@dpi.vic.gov.au
Gary McLarty	03 5735 4344	Gary.mclarty@dpi.vic.gov.au
Annemaree Docking	03 5430 4808	Annemaree.docking@dpi.vic.gov.au

General Information:

The following are useful contacts for further information:

NLIS Queries in Victoria

For the NLIS in Victoria call DPI's toll-free NLIS Helpline on 1800678 779 during business hours.

DPI Website:

www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Sheep CRC Website

www.sheepcrc.org.au

Ordering NLIS Devices Online

You can order NLIS devices on-line using a credit card by going to the DPI web site

www.dpi.vic.gov.au and following the prompts to *Livestock Tags Online*.

The advice provided in this publication is intended as a source of information only. Always read the label before using any of the products mentioned. The State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.