



Felix Farm

LOCATION

Ariah Park, NSW

FARM

1250 Hectares

1800 Breeding ewes

600 Hectares - Cropping

EQUIPMENT

KoolCollect

Panel Reader

Scales



“Efficient weight gain is critical to getting animals off the property sooner and realising maximum profits.”

Felix Farm, an hour north of Wagga Wagga at Ariah Park is managed by Matt Dart and is a 1250 hectare cropping and first cross lamb operation run by the numbers. The property is part of the DB Ag business which runs 20,000 hectares in the south west of NSW as part of a collaborative farming enterprise.

Going back five years the sheep component of Felix Farm was only approximately 30% of the business. DB Ag engaged Anthony Shepherd from Sheepmatters to address issues with his flocks' nutrition, genetics and scheduling. They also identified that he was not seeing sufficient gains from traditional classing. On Anthony's recommendation EID tagging and Sapien Technology's KoolCollect software was

adopted for monitoring pregnancy status, weight gain and fleece value of individual animals.

The implementation project was tackled starting with one mob of maidens to ensure it was a manageable process but has now been extended to all animals. Matt is now able to weigh 1500 lambs and draft them 3 ways in a 3-hour period with no assistance. Lambs are first weighed at weaning and then are weighed at least twice more in their first year when they are brought in for shearing or drenching. They are joined at 12 months and then pregnancy tested with dry ewes culled.

The original 2,200 head of breeder stock was reduced down to 1,500 using the data collected. Animals that produced the best weight gain and fleece value results were then selected to build the breeding

For more information, please contact:

Sapien Technology Limited
22 Harker Street, Burwood VIC 3125
T (03) 9808 7119
E info@sapien.com.au
www.sapien.com.au



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“KoolCollect also helps ensure animals are retained based on production value, rather than age.”

stock back up. This reboot has enabled weight gains of in excess of 300g per day to be realised, allowing late March lambs to be turned off at 20-24kg dressed in July. In addition to this the annual sales are now being completed in early September. This has flow on benefits for preparing the land for Spring and contrasts sharply to the year round efforts in cropping.

The data from KoolCollect has enabled Matt to market his animals with confidence, with accurate timings of when they should reach target weights.

KoolCollect also helps ensure that animals are retained based on production value, rather than age. This year Matt has retained tried and tested seven-year-old ewes in his breeding stock in favour of less productive younger animals.

Importantly the entire project has demonstrated the value of breaking with the tradition addressing genetics through rams. Addressing the ewe side of the equation is something that has only been possible through EID and data collection. Matt has witnessed productivity gains in the sheep business outstripping what can be achieved with his cropping which has resulted in sheep now making up 80% of the operation.

Outside of pregnancy, weight gain and fleece data Matt also stores treatment data, withholding periods and other data for Sheep CRC projects through Sapien's software.

Matt sees the software delivering further efficiencies in the future by enabling auto-drafters in the paddock attached to walk over weigh technology meaning more remote management would be possible.



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