

EBVS – WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

EBV	What is it measuring?	Example	Performance benefits
GROWTH			
Eight weeks	An indication of the growth potential at eight weeks of age	A ram with an EBV of +6kg is estimated to produce lambs that are 3kg heavier at eight weeks of age compared with a ram with an EBV of 0	Increase weight of lambs sold
Scan weight	An indication of the breeding potential for growth at 21 weeks of age	A ram with an EBV of +4kg is estimated to produce lambs that are 2kg heavier at 21 weeks of age compared to a ram with an EBV of 0	Lower cost of production by reducing the number of days to slaughter
CARCASS QUALITY			
Muscle depth	An indication of ram muscling across the loin	A ram with an EBV of +4mm is estimated to produce lambs with loin depths 2mm deeper at 21 weeks than a ram with an EBV of 0	Improved carcass conformation, improving the number of carcasses meeting market specification
Fat depth	An indication of fatness across the loin	A ram with an EBV of -1mm is estimated to produce lambs with 0.5 less fat across the loin at 21 weeks of age compared to a ram with an EBV of 0	Improve the level of fat cover and enable lambs to be finished quicker
MATERNAL PERFORMANCE			
Litter size	An indication of female prolificacy	A ram with an EBV of +0.20 is estimated to produce ewes with 10% more lambs than a ram with an EBV of 0	High litter sizes can increase lamb numbers therefore increasing potential profit
Maternal ability	An indication of mothering ability – eg milkiness	A ram with an EBV of +1 is estimated to produce lambs 0.5kg heavier at eight weeks than a ram with an EBV of 0	Ensuring ewes have sufficient milk to rear lambs can reduce labour requirements and bought-in feed costs
SIZE			
Mature size	An indication of size at maturity	A ram with an EBV of +8kg is estimated to produce ewes which are 4kg heavier at maturity than a ram with an EBV of 0	Increased cull ewe value and superior growth rates, however larger ewes will require more feed and increased labour
HEALTH AND WELFARE			
Lambing ease	Gives an indication for ease of lambing	A ram with an EBV of 6+ is expected to produce 3% more unassisted lambs compared to a ram with an EBV of 0	Reduces labour and vet bills and more ewes going back to the tup
Birthweight	Guide of lamb weight at birth	A ram with an EBV of -1 is expected to produce lambs 0.5kg lighter at birth than a ram with an EBV of 0	Smaller lambs result in fewer assisted lambings
Faecal egg count	Indication of breeding potential for worm resistance	In this instance negative values are superior. E.g. A ram with an EBV of -2 will produce progeny that shed less worm eggs than a ram with an EBV of 0	Cost savings made through reduced worm treatments and healthier lambs that finish sooner
CARCASS			
CT lean weight	Indication of the weight of muscle in the carcass	A ram with an EBV of +2kg is estimated to produce lambs with 1kg more muscle in their carcass than a ram with an EBV of 0	Improved product quality and ultimately increased profits
CT fat weight	Indication of the weight of fat in the carcass	A ram with an EBV of -1kg is estimated to produce lambs with 0.5kg less fat in their carcass than a ram with an EBV of 0	Allows producers to avoid using over-fat sires
CT gigot	Indication of the width of gigot	A ram with an EBV of +4mm is estimated to produce lambs with 2mm wider gigots than a ram with an EBV of 0	Produce lambs that grade better at slaughter

Source: EBLEX Better Returns Programme