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Breeding

The development of a highly successful stud is what your sheep breeding objectives should be all about. In a commercial situation rams are placed with a mob of ewes and if you have selected a group of rams that have the genetics to produce lambs that satisfy your market or selection criteria, then, regardless of which ewes they join, the end result will be lambs that are close to what you had hoped for. The major difference between this commercial situation and stud breeding is the approach you take toward breeding objectives. As a stud breeder, you have to think further than just the next generation and what it means financially in the short term. Stud breeding is comparable to predicting the future. The direction and selections you undertake in your breeding program one year will be the base you have to work from for the next generation of your stud breeding program. These genetics, however, will not have any impact in the commercial market for around three to four years. This means that if you are selecting stud genetics to supply flock rams for today's market preferences, by the time the rams you supply to your commercial clients actually have progeny for sale, the market preferences may have changed. Market preferences are always changing and what suits the commercial buyers today may be unsuitable tomorrow.

The challenge in stud breeding is to be progressive and use all the information you can find to determine which direction your stud breeding operation should be taking. It may sound difficult but, in reality, if you are listening to those within both the stud and commercial industries and following the trends of those who have been successful in this industry for many years, chances are you will not go too far off track. The first and perhaps most important lesson when starting a stud is ask lots of questions and be a good listener. Most stud breeders within all sheep