

NZ - Silver Fern Farms and Marks and Spencer

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United Kingdom supermarket chain Marks and Spencer has not been able to source enough Primera-bred lambs to move towards becoming exclusively Primera.

This week, The New Zealand Farmers Weekly reported Marks and Spencer had "freed itself from the Primera lamb procurement preference with Rissington Breedline and Silver Fern Farms".

In a letter to Rissington Breedline, the chain's agricultural manager, Steve McLean, said it would not be pursuing a single-breed procurement policy for M&S core lamb supply in either New Zealand or the UK, the report said.

But when contacted, SFF chief executive Keith Cooper said it was "nothing really new".

The chain had been taking more than just Primera over the past couple of years and had never been exclusively Primera.

In 2007, SFF joined Rissington Breedline, a Hawkes Bay-based genetics company, in offering sheep farmers contracts to supply lamb to M&S.

The chain was working towards having Primera only but the bottom line was it could not get enough to meet requirements.

That was due to a combination of people not necessarily wanting to go on to contract terms, as they could see more money on the spot market, and the growth of Primera genetics not perhaps being as large as was necessary to service demands, Mr Cooper said.

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Rissington Breedline & LandCorp Genetics Division to Amalgamate

Sheep and cattle farmers throughout the country can look forward to even better genetics with the announcement today of the amalgamation of two of this country's top genetics businesses.

After working collaboratively for close to a year Rissington Breedline Ltd and LandCorp Farming Ltd's genetics division have agreed to a formal amalgamation.

The merger will allow the new entity to give customers significantly improved genetic gain by leveraging access to the largest available single database worldwide.

Customers of both entities will continue to be able to access genetics from both existing breeding programmes including Primera, Lamb Supreme, Highlander, LandMark, Romney

and Texel sheep breeds, Angus, Simmental and Stabilizer cattle breeds and Wapiti and Red deer breeds.

All existing staff will be retained – so customers will see no change in their day-to-day contacts when purchasing their genetics.

The amalgamation will mean increased short and long term genetic gain as well as the ability to share resources, skills, technologies and equipment.

LandCorp CEO Chris Kelly says the superior genetic gain in the dairy industry is mainly due to the development of a large scale co-ordinated genetic improvement programme, we require that same approach in the dry stock industry.

“The size of the new entity will increase its ability to invest in groundbreaking research and development technologies that are becoming more expensive and complex,” says Chris.

“This new entity will have access to the largest available single database worldwide allowing us to provide our customers with significant and sustainable genetic gain.”

Rissington Breedline CEO Graham Leech says the merger will drive faster genetic gain for overall industry benefit from behind the farm gate right through to the end consumer.

“This merger provides an opportunity to consolidate and focus the red meat genetics industry in New Zealand for the benefit of farmer customers and the industry as a whole,” says Graham.

The new entity, which will be owned 50/50 by the two companies, is expected to be operating by May next year, subject to final due diligence.

Rissington Breedline’s operations in the UK, Uruguay and Brazil will be transferred to the new entity.

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