

Date: August 2, 2016

To: **Ram Test Cooperators**

You are invited/requested to attend a meeting at the Texas A&M Agriculture Research and Extension center (7887 US highway 87 N) on September 12th at 1:30 pm.
The 12th is also delivery day for the 2016-2017 ram test.

The purpose of the meeting is to have a discussion with all concerned breeders about the future of the ram test and alternative methods of effective genetic improvement for economically important traits.

The Texas A&M ram test has helped breeders select for large-framed, fast growing, heavy-fleeced rams that have excellent fleece quality.

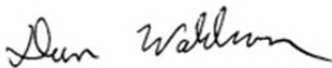
Other strategies are needed to make a difference for traits that can't be measured in the ram test environment, such as ewe reproduction, parasite resistance, lamb survival, and other traits. Pedigree records are an important part of genetic improvement. There are now methods available to match lambs to ewes without having to be there when the lambs are born, or spend hours trying to match them up in a pen.

There is a group of US breeders in the Finewool Consortium that are developing plans to adopt modern tools to advance their breeding programs. There are advances in DNA technology that may change the landscape in genetic improvement of livestock.

We want to inform breeders about recent developments and available options for genetic improvement. We want to consider the appropriate use of all strategies to help sheep breeders make genetic improvement.

This meeting is open to all breeders, but the discussion will mostly pertain to Rambouillet sheep.

Sincerely,



Dan Waldron
Professor
Texas A&M AgriLife Research Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



Reid Redden
Associate Professor