Practical Application of EID's in a Commercial Merino Flock

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“Congi Station” (Walcha, NSW)

- 10,000 Ha (Granite soils, 800mm Rainfall, 900M Elevation)
- 60,000 DSE Fine wool Merino enterprise (Av. 16.7 Micron)
  - Includes, 600 ewe nucleus flock as a Ram Multiplier.
- 20,000 DSE Crossbred beef enterprise

“Doughboy Mountain” (Wongwibinda, NSW)

- 1980 Ha (Basalt soils, 980mm Rainfall, 1400M Elevation)
- 20,000 DSE Beef fattening Enterprise

Why did I Adopt EID's?

- Manually collecting data for ram multiplier, using Indexing as a selection tool. (FD,CV,GFW, BWT)
- Errors in data recording were evident. 4% - 8%
    - Errors are compounded when collecting more than 1 trait
- Frustrated with staff reading tags incorrectly, including myself.
- Benefits of performance recording were obvious.
- The desire to expand this process to the commercial flock

What was our plan?

- Open Nucleus – Use the 16,000 head commercial flock to drive genetic gain
  - Initially used FD alone as an initial parameter for stud selection.
- Move away from single trait selection towards a totally indexed flock
- Make Objective selection decisions – “culling for economic fault”
- Use an index that drives positive commercial outcomes. Could not expand Indexing to the commercial flock without EID’s
  - Indexing approx. 14,000 animals per year
  - Collecting over 40,000 individual records (FD, GFW, BWT, CV, SS, WEC)

Understand the profit drivers in your enterprise.

- 25 years of benchmarking tells us that on average **68%** of our Merino Enterprise income comes from wool.
- Change our thinking, away from FD and CFW and think of

“Fleece Value”

- Adopt an Index that aligns with fleece value

How did we go about it

- Sample of 700 ewes (same age)
- Micron & Fleece weight data on each
- Applied 5 Yr Average wool price to each animal
- Fleece Value variance $107.63 - $24.37

Difference = $83.26

How do we retain the better performers?

“Use a selection index that aligns with our objective”

Expected 10 Year response

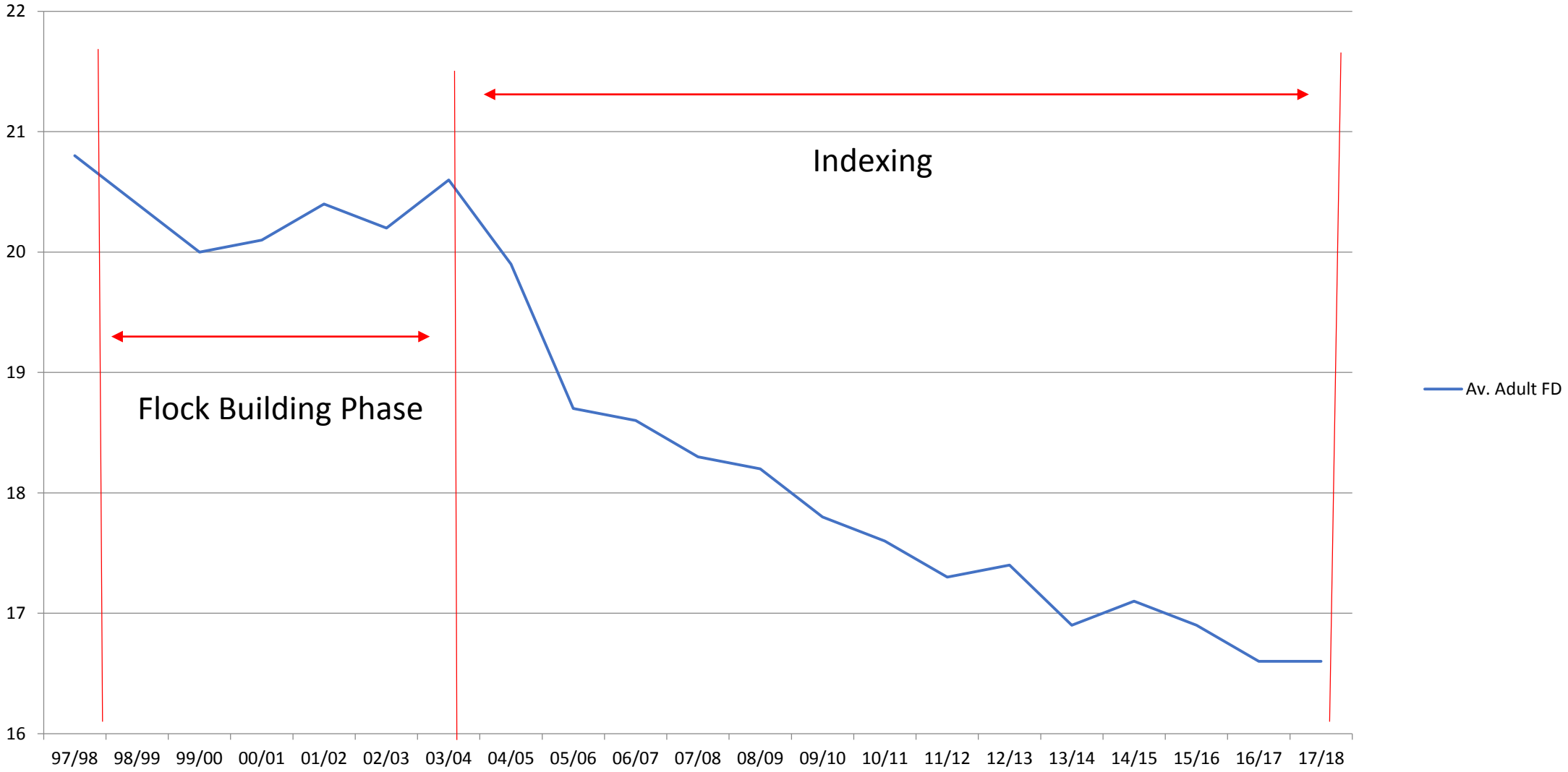
	FP+	MP+	DP+	Y7/15
CFW	+2.0%	+5.1%	+3.0%	+11.4%
FD	-0.7µ	-0.3µ	0.0µ	-0.8µ
BWT	+0.2Kg	+1.4Kg	+2.3kg	+0.8Kg
SS	+1.2Nkt	+1.4Nkt	+0.5Nkt	+0.8Nkt

What is the financial impact of these indexes?

Per Head Fleece Value Outcomes

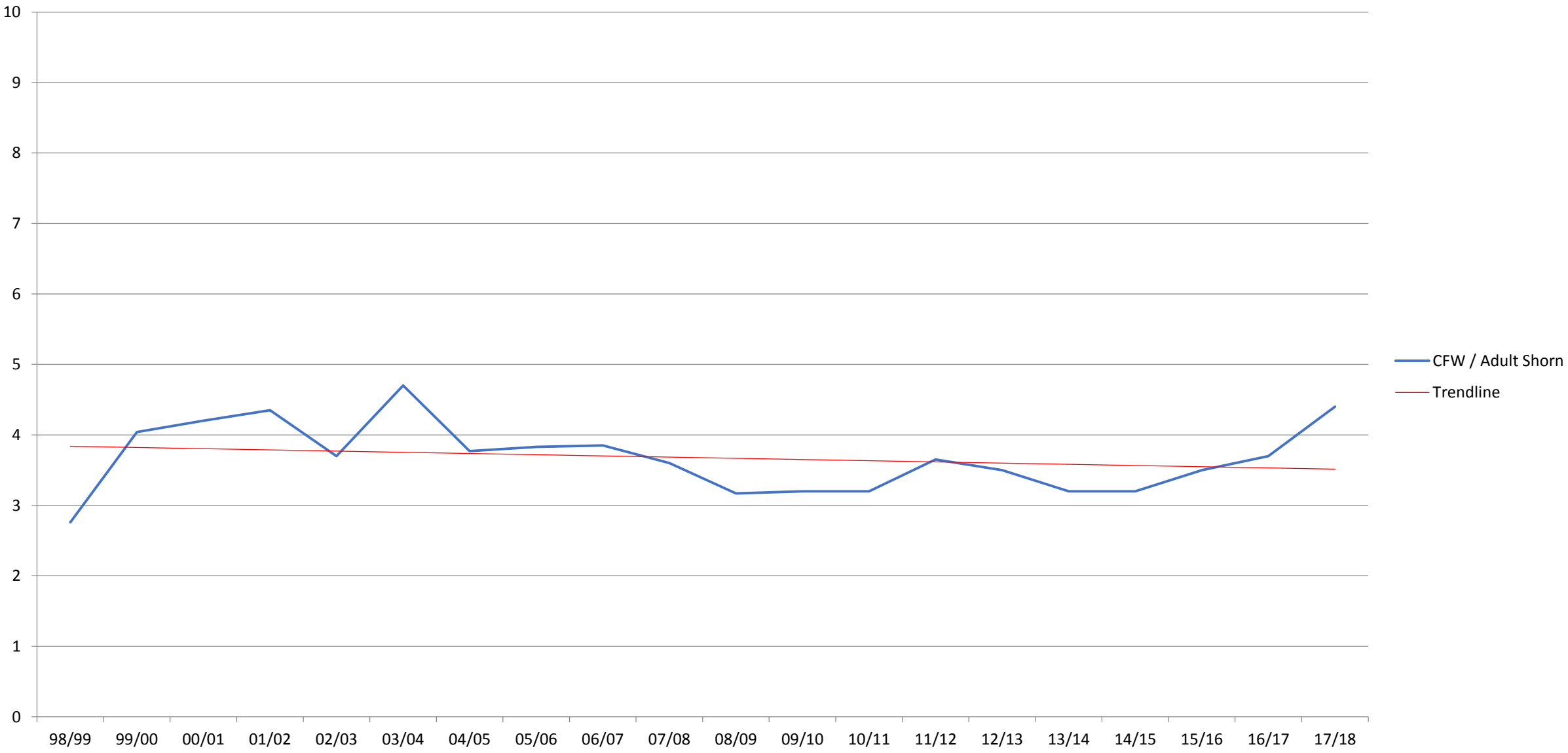
Index	Correlation to Fleece Value	10 Yr. Value Add
DP +	-	$1.26
MP +	0.58	$5.51
FP +	0.66	$7.92
Y7/15	0.72	$12.53

Average Adult Fibre Diameter



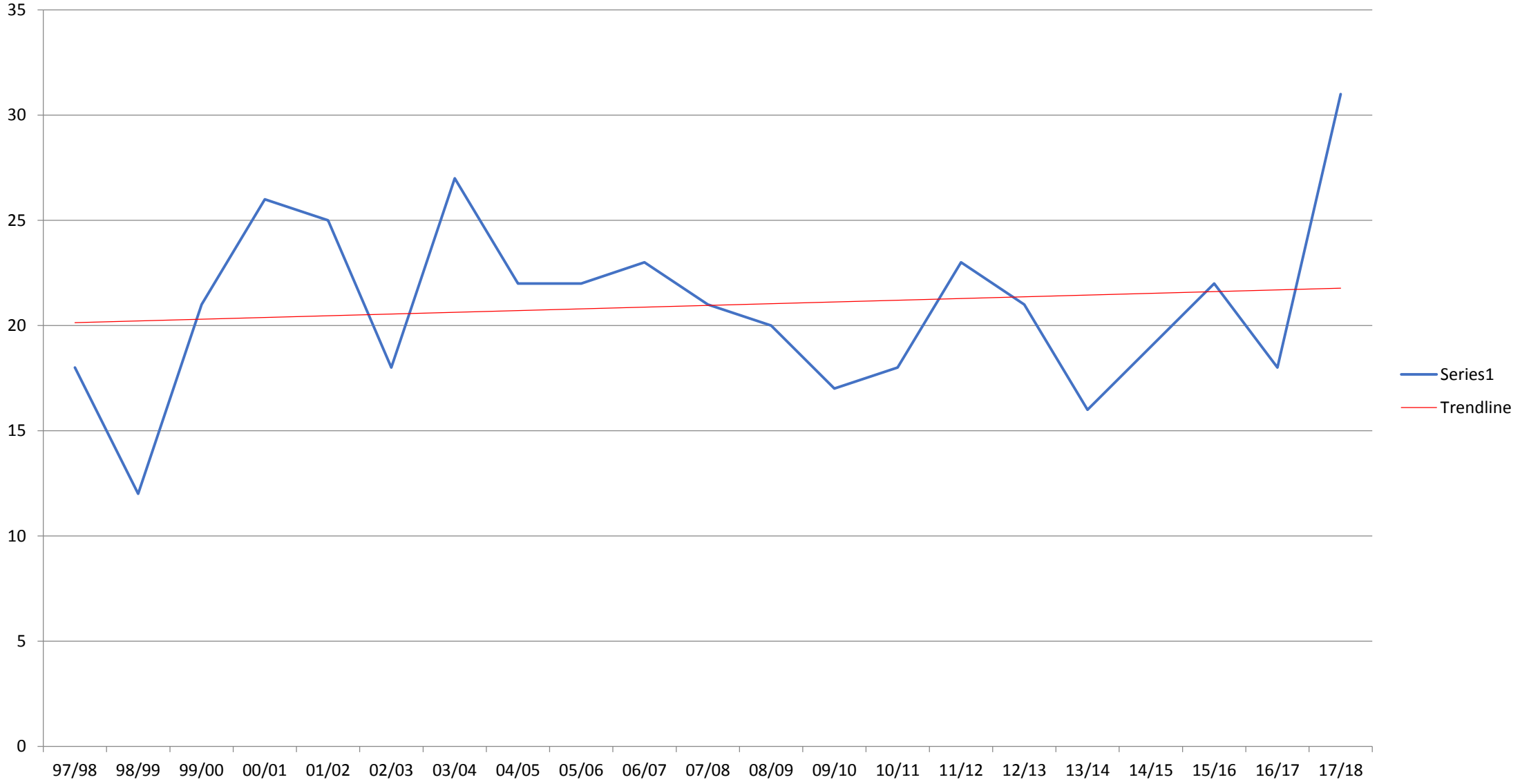
Source: Holmes Sackett, Benchmarking Report

Kg’s Clean Fleece Per Adult Shorn



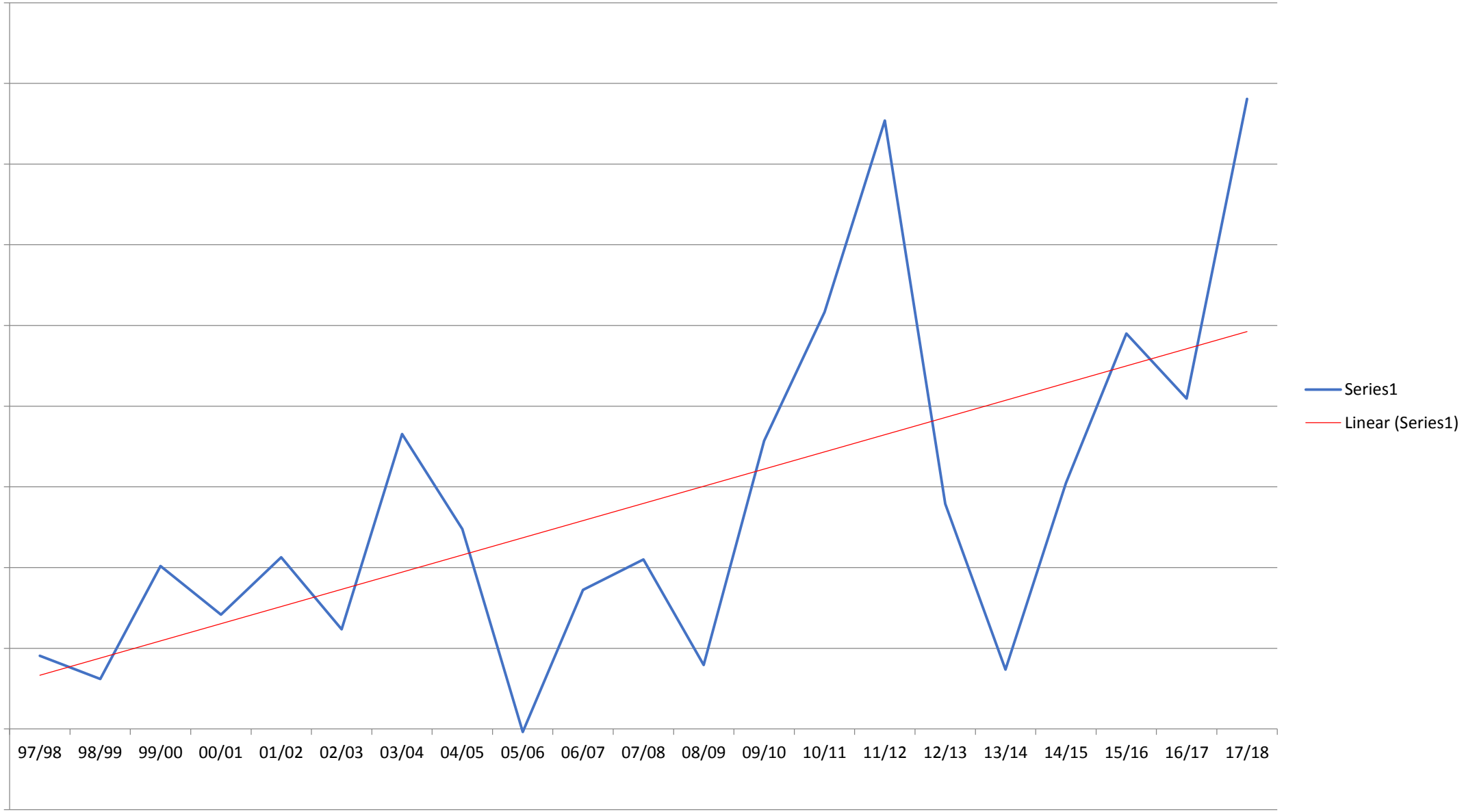
Source: Holmes Sackett, Benchmarking Report

Kg’s Clean Wool Per Ha



Source: Holmes Sackett, Benchmarking Report

Net Profit per DSE



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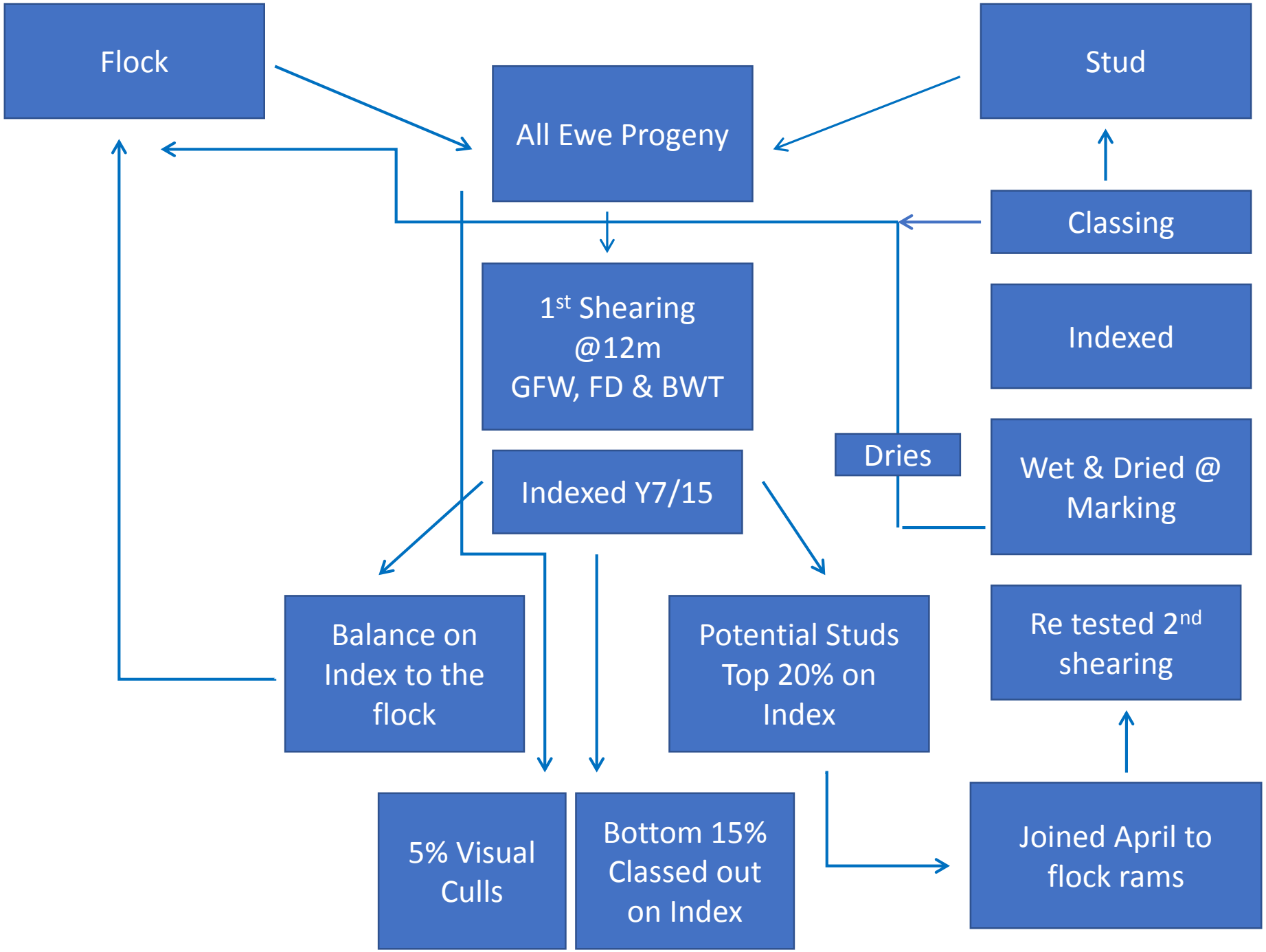
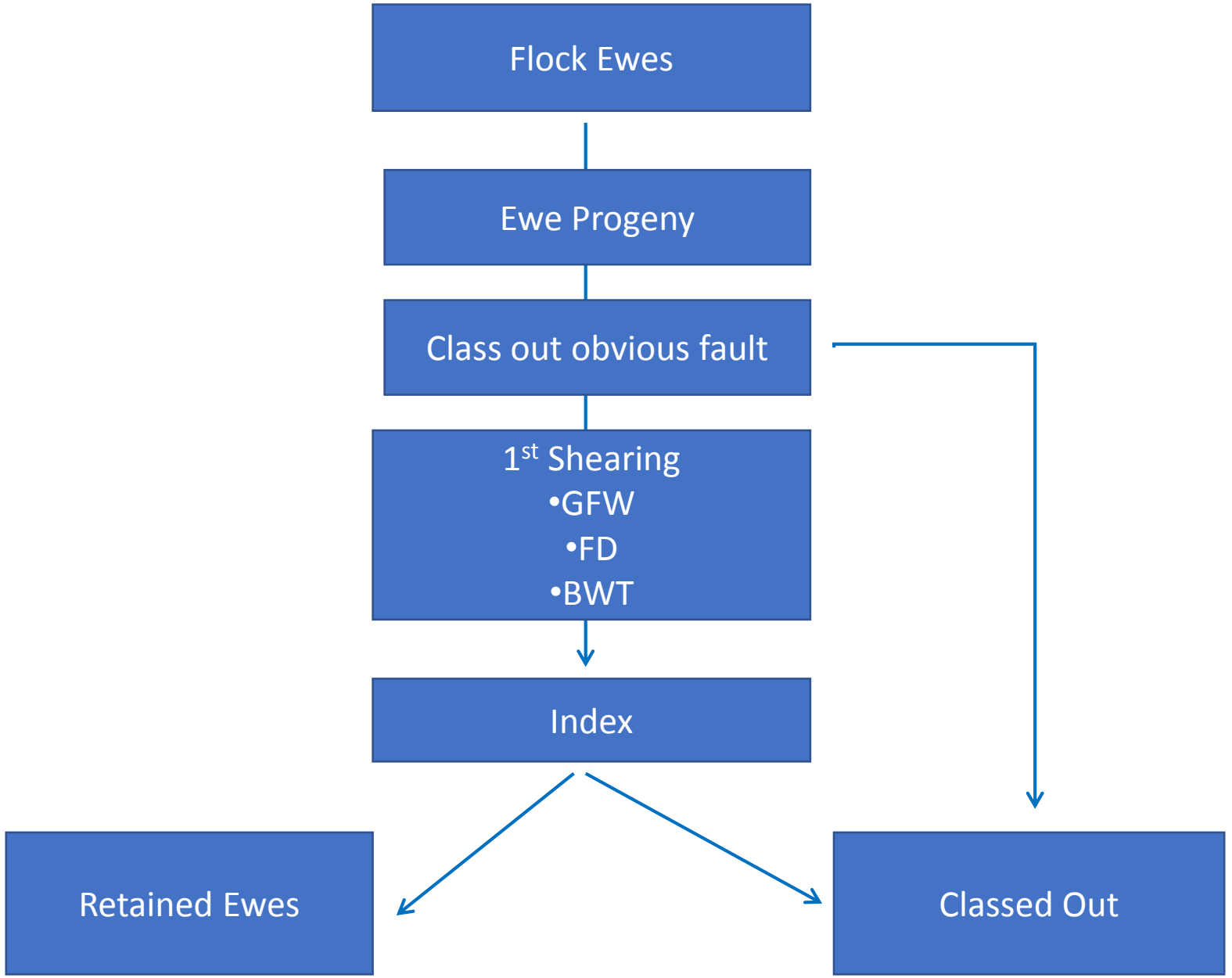

Flock
All Ewe Progeny
Stud
Classing
1st Shearing @12m GFW, FD & BWT
Indexed
Dries
Wet & Dried @ Marking
Indexed Y7/15
Balance on Index to the flock
Potential Studs Top 20% on Index
Re tested 2nd shearing
5% Visual Culls
Bottom 15% Classed out on Index
Joined April to flock rams


Flock Ewes
Ewe Progeny
Class out obvious fault
1st Shearing
•GFW
•FD
•BWT
Index
Retained Ewes
Classed Out

eID's & Data Collection Hardware

Pro's of using EID's

- Speed in data collection and retrieval
- Improved data accuracy – (especially on large no.'s animals)
- Classing decisions become Objective not Subjective
- Ability to use additional tools such as DNA Parentage, Autodrafter, Pedigree Matchmaker, walk over weighing.
- Lifetime Traceability
  - A positive for quality assurance programs

Con's of using EID's

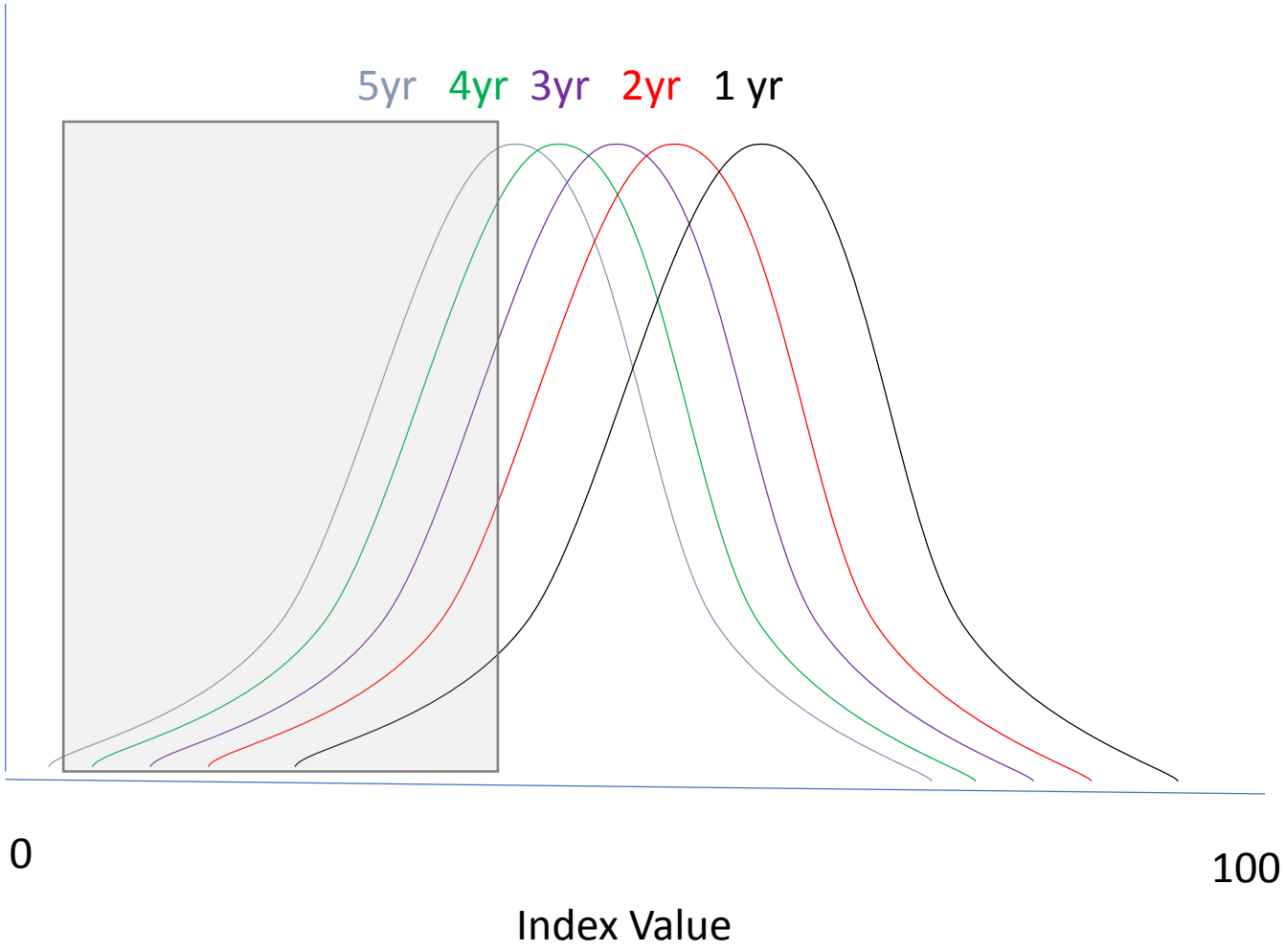
- Additional costs
- Need to maintain data integrity
- Computer literacy and data management software
  - Only use 1 to 2 times per yr. (How did I do that last time?)
- While quick to collect data, setup etc. does take time.
- Technology will let you down, generally when under pressure

Should you adopt EID's in your flock?

- Do you have a concise plan?
- Estimate $9000 (assuming buying everything)
  - Wand Reader - $1900 (Share with cattle enterprise)
  - Indicator - $3000 (Share with cattle enterprise)
  - Load Bars - $1500 (May have for weigh crate)
  - Barcode Reader - $700
  - Barcode Printer - $1700
- Moving from a printed flock tag $0.45 to and EID tag $1.85

"Can you get a return for that Investment?"

Things are tight, I cant afford to start now !!!!



Tips & lessons Learnt.

- Start with a single cohort, Start small.
- Consider using a service provider before investing in hardware
- 1st data collection time, do at a less stressful event - **NOT SHEARING**
- Use of scale Indicator and spreadsheets are fine to start with.
- Before purchasing equip. talk to neighbours and see what they are using. (gives backup when a breakdown occurs)
- Find out about tech support prior to purchasing equip. (you're going to need it)

Questions?