Appendix D – Top Ten FAQs and their answers

1. I found out that I made a typo in the data on one of my lambs. How do I correct it? The quickest and easiest way to correct most data input errors is to click on Pedigree Display at the opening menu and then on **Carcase** if the error is not regarding fleece data. If it is an error regarding fleece data, click on **Fleece**. The data you input will be shown and you can easily make the correction. When finished with the correction, click on **Close** and the situation is corrected.

2. I made an error in one of my IDs. How do I correct that? To easily correct an ID error, click on **Reports and Utilities** at the opening screen and then on **Data Files** and finally on **Main Database.** Make the needed change and click on **Close window.** Close the screens to go back to the opening screen and the change is completed.

3. If I am just beginning to put in data, how far back should I go? First it is important to note that all "historic" data needs to be submitted on the first data submission in order to not be billable. If you later submit additional historical data, you will be charged for it. So it's good to think about things a bit and get all the data you want in the first submittal. In general, the more data you submit, the better things will be as the accuracy value will be higher due to having more records per individual and having more animals involved that are related to those you currently have in the flock. At a minimum, you should certainly at least submit data for all lambing season that include the first lambing for any ewes you have in the flock.

It is important that ALL lambing records be included for those years. In other words, don't just include the lambing records of ewes that you currently have in the flock. The lambing records of their contemporaries must be included as well. This is because the basis of this type of genetic analysis is in comparing how an animal performs relative to the others in its group. Thus as you input historical data, if you only include lambing records on ewes you currently have and not on other ewes that lambed at that time, you will have a much poorer and somewhat biased comparison between the ewes.

If you have data on a spreadsheet, it can easily be input into Pedigree Master as explained on page 22, thus speeding up the process. If you are inputting the data from written records, remember that the first records you put on will take the longest as you will have limited use of the drop-down menus for sire and dam inputs. As the sires and dams are input, they should appear on the drop-down menus and speed the process up. This can be sped up even more by inputting the sires directly into the sire drop-down menu as described on page 28. Plus, in many cases, the first 10-13 digits of most IDs can be preset on one of the function keys as described on page 26, which speeds things up even more.

As with many things in life, the input process gets faster with each animal as the process becomes more routine. People who don't enjoy working with computers may tend to put in very little historic data as the work becomes tedious. However, it is much better to put the work aside if it becomes tedious, and input more data at a later date, than to give up because you're tire and submit what data you have. As you get data back from LambPlan, the benefits of putting in more historical data will become obvious. So, in summary, a) the more the better, b) be sure to input all historical data in the first run, and c) don't forget to use all of the

available aids such as function keys and drop down menus, or spreadsheets, to make the process a lot faster.

4. How often do I need to update this software? Not working with the latest version of PedigreeMaster is one of the main reasons that people encounter an unexpected problem. Software updates come up somewhat irregularly, depending on the number of problems that are encountered and how long it takes to fix them or to make general improvements. So the best rule-of-thumb on updating the software is that each time you add data or download EBVs, first see if an update is available and install it. Download and install the software **before** making any other changes. It is quick and easy to check for updates. Just click on the Help button on the opening screen and then on PedigreeMaster on the screen that follows. Then you will see a page that lists the recent updates, including the one that is available. Updates are cumulative, so don't worry about the past ones – just get the one that is available. Before downloading any update, make sure you have a current backup of your data. Also, when downloading, make sure your current version of Pedigree Master is closed and only open it once the download is completed. It is also a good idea to reboot the computer after you have loaded an update, just as it is with a software update for any program.

5. I ran the validation procedure and some errors showed up. The deadline to submit data is close, however, and I really want to get new EBVs. How important is it to clear up the validation errors? If you have severe errors in your data, LambPlan may not be able to process your data and you will have missed the processing deadline anyway. Plus, even if the error is smaller and will allow processing, the EBVs you get back may not be too meaningful. The error will not go away on its own – it will show up each time you validate. So while it will take some extra time to track down, the best thing to do, without a doubt, is to take the necessary time to correct the errors before you submit the data. Otherwise, it will be a constant problem for you.

6. I'm going to a sale next week and want to print out some performance pedigrees to help promote my sale sheep. How do I do that? This process is described in a little more detail on page 10 but the general procedure is to click on Pedigree Display, then on Breeding Values and then on Pedigree. Select your favorite pedigree format from the three types and then click on the printer icon that shows up in the Print Preview window. With some printers there is a pdf option. By using that option and saving the pdf file, you can later send the pdf file via email to a prospective buyer.

7. I would like to have my EBVs in Excel so that I can sort and work with them. Is it possible to do that? There are several ways to do this, however the handiest way is to click on **Reports and Utilities** and then on **Data Files.**   Next click **Copy** that is by **EBVs database.** From the popup screen that next appears, input the flock number for the animals you would like to see. This is the first six digits of the NSIP ID of your animals. If you want animals from every flock that is in your data base, leave the value set to **ALL.** Then select the year of birth for the animals you want included, the sex if you want only males or females, the status (normally this is **current**) and then on **Copy.** If you do not set the status **to current**, animals that are no longer in your flock will appear. This assumes that you have previously set the status of all animals in your flock to **current.** By doing this, you won't have to deal with animals no longer in your

flock, if that is what you want.   A message will then appear telling you that the process is completed, and click on OK. If you next click on **Open Export/Copy folder**, you will see the file that has been saved for you: Exp_ebv. If you do not see it, be sure that you have "All files" listed as the file type, not just Excel files. Double click on it and it should open in Excel. This file is saved as a .dbf file, a database file, and not as an Excel file., although it can be opened by Excel. If it does not open in Excel right away when you double click it, open Excel, and click "open". Then find the "SheepGenetics" folder on your C: drive, then click "PedigreeMaster" then "Export". Then, to the right of the "File name" dialog box, click the dropdown menu that says "All Excel Files" and select "dBase Files". Then your exports should appear in the selection box.

8. I don't have any data to submit but would like to see if my EBVs have changed due to data submissions from people who have animals with genetics similar to mine. Do I have to submit data to get updated EBVs? No, you can send an email to LambPlan at database@sheepgenetics.org.au requesting updated EBVs without having to submit data. In the subject line of the email, and in the body, print "EBV update only requested" and include your six-digit flock ID. You will get a link to new EBVs after the next data run and follow the normal procedure for downloading them to your computer.

9. I have a new computer. How do I copy everything from my old computer to the new one. The procedure for this is given in Chapter 7 on page 37. The most important part of the procedure is to back up your file, as explained there, and store the backup somewhere other than on your old computer. For example, attach it to an email to yourself or copy it onto a flash drive. That way, if the old computer would crash and burn in the process of transfer you still have a copy of your data.

10. From reading through this manual, it looks like PedigreeMaster is designed for a PC. I have a Mac. Does that mean I can't use PedigreeMaster? You can use PedigreeMaster on a Mac but will need to incorporate some software such as Bootcamp or Parallel to allow it to run in a PC environment. Producers are doing this. See Appendix B for more details on this.