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I have been concerned about the lack of innovation within the on-farm R&D portfolio. More specifically our industry requires a balance of short, medium and long term research programs which address the big issues of the industry such as sustainability in the face of long term declining terms of trade. There seems to be a complete lack of long term (which must include some blue sky higher risk) strategies which address such things as:

1. cost of labour and other inefficiencies in wool harvesting
2. control of sheep blowflies and worms
3. breeding better pasture species which are pasture focussed, not a spin off from other agricultural pursuits.

The focus in these areas mentioned is shorter term, and lacking in vision and acceptance of risk. I would like to see AWI actively encouraging much more lateral thinking when developing the R&D portfolio. They should be seeking innovators with new and radical ideas to solve industry problems. Too often ideas are rejected by AWI management because they do not fit a tight mould known as their strategic plan. There has been little input from industry into the strategic plan. We need a controlled and robust processes for seeking ideas from industry, which are worked into a carefully conducted evaluation of RD&E projects. The process must be transparent, trusted, contains high levels of industry ownership and ultimately have acceptance by the board. This would be a nice balance against the rigorous oversight of approved projects by AWI management.