

Beyond the bale

ISSUE 97 DECEMBER 2023

PROFIT FROM WOOL INNOVATION

www.wool.com



04

WOOL HARVESTING
AMBASSADORS



32

SCHOOL MERINO
WETHER COMPETITIONS



44

BENETTON'S 50 YEARS
WITH WOOLMARK

Beyond the bale

EDITOR

Richard Smith
E richard.smith@wool.com

Australian Wool Innovation Limited
A L3, 24 York Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 4177, Sydney NSW 2001
P 02 8295 3100
E info@wool.com W wool.com
AWI Helpline 1800 070 099

SUBSCRIPTION

Each new edition of *Beyond the Bale* is available FREE via email. Subscribe at www.wool.com/subscribe

Beyond the Bale is published by Australian Wool Innovation Ltd (AWI), a company funded by Australian woolgrowers and the Australian Government.

COPYRIGHT

Material in *Beyond the Bale* is copyright. Reproduction of the material is encouraged. However prior permission must be obtained from the Editor.

DISCLAIMER

To the extent permitted by law, Australian Wool Innovation Ltd excludes all liability for loss or damage arising from the use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this publication.

The Woolmark symbol is a certification mark registered in many countries.

© 2023 Australian Wool Innovation Ltd.
All rights reserved.

ADVERTISING SALES

Justin Bowler, Pulse Hub Pty Ltd
P 0429 699 553
E justin.bowler@mmg.com.au
Advertising is subject to terms and conditions published on the ratecard, which is available from Pulse Hub and at www.wool.com/btb.

ISSN

1447-9680

FRONT COVER

This magnificent early morning image of lambs and red gums was shot by woolgrower, photographer and author Tracey Kruger on her property at Croxton East in the Southern Grampians of Victoria.

The photo is included in Tracey's 2024 *Our Magnificent Western District* calendar which is filled with some of her favourite images taken this year. The calendar is available to purchase (\$20 for A4 size, \$40 for A3 size, including Australian postage) from her website www.shearinginvictoriaswesternndistrict.com

Tracey also has available for sale on her website, high quality prints, cards and her popular collection of farm-related children's book, including her new 'The Farmer Twins' junior novels.



THE
WOOLMARK
COMPANY

AWI is the R&D and marketing organisation for the Australian wool industry



24 MLP PROJECT PROVING ITS VALUE



54 SAUL NASH'S JOURNEY WITH WOOL

ON-FARM

- 4 **Ambassadors promote wool harvesting**
- 6 Shearer and wool handler training
- 7 Local competitions help attract next gen
- 8 **ProWay shed with lane delivery system**
- 10 Perkinz Shearmaster race delivery system
- 11 Biological wool harvesting on show
- 12 **Case study: Nareen Station, Victoria**
- 14 **How to prepare for the effects of El Niño**
- 16 How do dry times affect worms?
- 18 ParaBoss certified advisors and providers
- 19 Workshop to improve ram performance
- 20 Breeding for flystrike resistant Merinos
- 21 Merino Superior Sires No 29 now available
- 22 **Assessing, classing and selecting sheep**
- 23 Breeding for improved Merino feet
- 23 AWI Flystrike Genomics Reference Flock
- 24 **MLP project proving its value**
- 26 Sustainable livestock on the global stage
- 28 **Pest animal monitoring using FeralScan**
- 30 Vital management of chemical residues
- 32 **Students learn about sheep management**
- 34 AWI Industry Relations Officers
- 35 AWI Graduate Training Program 2024
- 36 Judging championships foster young talent

OFF-FARM

- 38 **Wear Wool, Not Fossil Fuel campaign**
- 39 **Filter by Fabric campaign**
- 40 Q&A with the IWTO President
- 41 Campaign for Wool in the UK
- 42 Rise of sustainable fashion in China
- 43 Chinese brand's traceable collection
- 44 **Benetton's 50-years with Woolmark**
- 46 Woolmark collaboration with Prada
- 47 Formula E campaign's electric results
- 48 **Merino in new Mizuno base-layers**
- 49 IWTO Congress 2024 in Adelaide
- 50 Rodd & Gunn wool sneakers
- 51 New markets for Aussie wool
- 52 **Saul Nash's journey with wool**
- 54 **Woolmark brand backs quality**
- 55 **Fleece to Fashion gala**
- 56 **Incubation Lab skills up designers**
- 57 Student education initiatives
- 58 Biella students learn about wool
- 59 **Wool4School educates students**
- 60 Market Intelligence update
- 61 Made to measure in Japan
- 62 Eastern Market Indicator
- 63 **Readers' photos**

AWI INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

- Sheep Production
- Marketing
- Consultation
- Industry Development
- Market Analytics

CONNECTING WITH AWI

- wool.com
- feedback@wool.com
- wool.com/podcast
- twitter.com/woolinnovation
- facebook.com/AustralianWoolInnovation
- youtube.com/AWIWoolProduction
- Instagram.com/AustralianWool
- View Beyond the Bale online at <http://beyondthebale.wool.com>

AWI STATE-BASED GROWER NETWORKS

AWI-supported networks are present in each state.

- Sheep Connect NSW
- Sheep Connect SA
- Sheep Connect Tasmania
- BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB (VIC)
- AWI Extension WA
- Leading Sheep (Qld)

Find your grower network at www.wool.com/networks or call the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.

AWI E-NEWSLETTERS:

To subscribe to the free monthly AWI e-newsletter for woolgrowers, and the weekly wool market review e-newsletter, visit www.wool.com/subscribe

Each new edition of *Beyond the Bale* is available FREE via email. Subscribe at www.wool.com/subscribe

THE WOOLMARK COMPANY

- woolmark.com
- twitter.com/woolmark
- facebook.com/thewoolmarkcompany
- youtube.com/thewoolmarkcompany
- Instagram.com/thewoolmarkcompany

AWI WORKING FOR WOOLGROWERS



John Roberts
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Wool Innovation

AWI CEO John Roberts provides readers with an overview of how AWI is undertaking R&D and marketing to address some of the key issues faced by Australian woolgrowers.

Challenging times

It is a challenging time for Australian sheep and wool producers at the moment, with issues such as dry seasonal conditions, poor livestock prices, and potentially prohibitive legislation, all weighing heavily on their minds and influencing the commercial decisions they make on a daily basis.

Furthermore, the depressed economic conditions across the world mean that the prices that Australian growers are currently receiving for their wool are not at levels that fully reward them for the hard work that they put in to growing the fibre.

The issues and concerns that affect woolgrowers and their revenue also impact AWI. The nature of the wool levy system – based on price, volume and levy percentage – means that woolgrowers and AWI travel a similar journey. When the market and volumes are strong, we can deliver powerful and meaningful projects; when the conditions are less favourable, like now, we have to cut our cloth accordingly.

AWI's revenue has reduced significantly, which has forced us to refocus and fine tune our targets and activities. This has meant a number of projects have had to be discontinued as we redeploy funds to the areas that the business and the AWI Board see as most pressing.

Opportunities and threats

Investment in R&D and marketing is needed if the Australian wool industry is to take advantage of the opportunities and address the challenges that it faces. This is AWI's role.

In the on-farm area, there are plenty of opportunities, such as improving the genetic gain of sheep, increasing the reproductive efficiency of ewes, and on-farm automation. But there are also threats such as access to wool harvesting staff, climate variability, and invasive pests and diseases. These are all areas in which AWI needs to continue to invest on behalf of Australian woolgrowers.

In the off-farm area, the Australian wool industry operates in a dynamic and competitive global market. Opportunities include the trend towards sustainable fibres, the growing interest in the provenance of products, the increasing use of Merino wool as a high-performance fibre, and new product innovations such as wool footwear. Conversely, there are also challenges, such as the casualisation of apparel, changing consumer attitudes to animal husbandry, and environmental labelling regulations. Again, these are all areas in which AWI needs to invest on behalf of Australian woolgrowers.

Despite the company's decreased revenue and the challenging global economic circumstances that our markets face, AWI's three-year Strategic Plan for 2022/23 to 2024/25 remains very relevant and robust. The industry issues and concerns that are raised with AWI by woolgrower representative bodies through the Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel (WICP) still very much align with the Strategic Plan.

AWI marketing campaigns

The successful marketing of Australian wool has never been more important. There are two main types of marketing campaign undertaken by AWI's subsidiary, The Woomark Company: 'Kudos' campaigns where we look to defend the fibre or change misconceptions around the fibre, and 'Sell' campaigns where we can clearly illustrate and report on large volumes of sales of wool.

The Kudos campaigns don't always involve large volumes of wool product in the project, but they do change long-term buying patterns and have a very long tail. The Sell projects usually involve solid sales volumes and deliver more tangible outcomes in terms of kilos of wool sold.

A good example of a Kudos campaign was last year's 'Wear Wool, Not Fossil Fuel' consumer awareness campaign, which was a tremendous success – see page 38. This campaign highlighted to consumers that synthetic fibres are made from oil, whereas wool is a 100% natural, renewable and biodegradable fibre.

The campaign video has achieved a staggering 100 million views, and our post-campaign survey showed for instance that 80% of viewers in the US are more likely to wear more wool because of the campaign.

An example of a very successful 'Sell' project is the direct-to-consumer marketing campaign in China held during last year's Autumn/Winter 2022 season. It achieved an extraordinary \$156 million in wool sales during the campaign period, including \$41 million in just the first week. There were more than 120 brands participating, many of whom had not included wool in their product lines before.

AWI 2023 Annual General Meeting

AWI held its 2023 AGM on Friday 17 November in Sydney. At the AGM, I gave a presentation of the activities of the company during 2022/23. You can view a recording of the 2023 AGM and access our 2022/23 Annual Report on the AWI website at www.wool.com/agm.

At the AGM, Directors David Webster (15 years as an AWI director), James Morgan (10 years as an AWI director) and Noel Henderson (4 years as an AWI director) retired from the AWI Board. AWI shareholders elected South Australian woolgrower George Millington, CEO and Co Founder of AgriDigital Emma Weston, and Western Australian woolgrower Neil Jackson to fill the three vacancies on the Board.

On behalf of Australian woolgrowers, I thank the retiring directors for their tremendous contribution to the wool industry during their time on the Board and welcome the three new directors. Biographical details of the three new directors are available on the AWI website at www.wool.com/directors.

I wish you a happy Christmas and New Year and a safe and prosperous 2024.

AMBASSADORS PROMOTE WOOL HARVESTING

In another AWI initiative to attract and retain wool harvesting staff, a new Wool Ambassadors Program has been rolled out in all states across the country. The young shearing and wool handling ambassadors are tasked with promoting the wool harvesting industry at school and college workshops, shearing competitions and in the media.

The state-based ambassadors in the program are positive role models for the wool harvesting industry, thereby helping to attract a quality workforce, raise wool harvesting standards and improve the culture in shearing sheds.

The program is an extension of the training initiative that has been run for several years in South Australia and Victoria by SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc (SWTI) with support from AWI. The new program has seen wool harvesting ambassadors introduced into New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania as well as in South Australia and Victoria. They are selected annually by expert shearer and wool handler trainers.

AWI National Manager, Wool Harvesting Training & Careers Development, Craig French, says the ambassadors have been selected as role models in the industry.

"They have been chosen due to their leadership qualities, outstanding talent and potential to excel, and their high standard of presentation and conduct in shearing sheds and also out of hours," Craig said.

"They are mostly second- and third-year entrants to the wool industry, are team players, have a great work ethic, and have a willingness to learn and better themselves.

"As ambassadors for the wool industry, they will visit school and college workshops and industry events to highlight the successes and benefits of the working in the industry – and will be able to demonstrate to students a range of career pathways. During the year, they will also compete in a minimum of three Sports Shear competitions in their state."

Each state team of ambassadors is provided with clothing and personal mentoring from AWI or SWTI trainers; the shearer ambassadors are also provided with shearing equipment from Heiniger.

The ambassadors will receive from AWI a trip to New Zealand to compete at the Golden Shears and attend the pre shears course.

The Wool Ambassadors Program is an example of the multi-pronged approach that AWI is taking to help the Australian wool industry attract and retain shearers and wool handlers.

South Australia



The 2023/24 South Australian ambassadors **Ethan Tomney** (shearer, Cleve), **Hayley Brown** (wool handler, Mannum) and **Dylan Birmingham Lowe** (shearer, Mannum) being presented with their awards at the Adelaide Show by AWI Chairman **Jock Laurie**, also pictured with Heiniger's **Rick Chilcott** and SWTI's **Paul Oster** and **Glenn Haynes**. The awards were presented in front of the crowd of young people at the South Australian School Merino Wethers Competition (see pages 32-33) at which the ambassadors did the wool harvesting. This year's South Australian program is a joint industry effort between SCAA SWTI, AWI, Heiniger, Prime Super, and Shearing World.

Victoria



The 2023/24 Victorian ambassadors **Megan Etherton** (wool handler, Bendigo), **Jack King** (shearer, Kaniva) and **Joseph Knoll** (shearer, Wimmera), pictured here with AWI Victoria Industry Relations Officer **Holly Byrne** (left) and SWTI trainer **Sam Mackrill** (right). This year's Victorian program is a joint industry effort between SCAA SWTI, AWI, Heiniger, Fox & Lillie, and Shearing World.

New South Wales



The New South Wales ambassadors of **Jalen Ballard** (2022, shearer, Cootamundra), **Tess Woods** (2023, shearer, Parkes), **Charlie Baker** (2023, wool handler, Armidale), **Brent Hickey** (2022, shearer, Yass) and **Will Maguire** (2023, shearer, Leeton). The ambassadors are pictured at the New South Wales School Merino Wether Challenge in Dubbo (see pages 32-33). This year's New South Wales program is a joint industry effort between AWI, Heiniger, and NSW WoolTag.

Western Australia



The Western Australia ambassadors **Ethan Gellatly** (shearer, Boyup Brook) and **Ethan Harder** (shearer, Bruce Rock) being presented with their awards at the Perth Royal Show in September, pictured with AWI WA Industry Relations Officer **Jodie King**, WA WoolTAG Committee chair **Chris Patmore**, WA Shearing Industry Association president **Darren Spencer**, Heiniger's **Todd Wegner**, and AWI National Manager, Wool Harvesting Training & Careers Development, **Craig French**. Ethan Harder won the open shearing title at the Perth Royal Show (see opposite) while Ethan Gellatly came second in the intermediate competition. This year's WA program is a joint industry effort between AWI, WA WoolTAG, WA Shearing Industry Association, Heiniger, and Westcoast Wool.

Tasmania



The 2023 Tasmanian ambassadors are **Cally Spangler** (wool handler, Brighton), **Emily Spencer** (shearer, Perth (Tas)) and **Tom Pitchford** (shearer, Flinders Island). They are pictured here with trainers **Steve Rigby** (far left), **Petrissa Leckie** (second right) and AWI Industry Relations Officer **Shannon Donoghue** (far right). The program this year is made possible by the generous sponsorship of Primary Employers Tasmania, SCAA SWTI, AWI, Heiniger, IO Merino and Next Level Elite Mentoring.

Queensland



The 2023 Queensland ambassadors are all from the fantastic Schoff family of Chinchilla: **Grace Schoff** (shearer), **Alexander (Slim) Schoff** (wool handler) and **Karl Schoff** (shearer). They are pictured here in October at the National Shearing and Wool Handling Championships, at which Grace won intermediate shearing title, Alexander won the open wool handling title and Karl won the novice shearing title.



Gun shearer and role model Ethan Harder



Ethan Harder after winning the open shearing title at this year's Perth Royal Show, pictured here with Luke Harding (2nd), Richard Sturis (3rd), Damien Boyle (4th), Mark Buscumb (5th) and James Kirkpatrick (6th).

Western Australian Ethan Harder is not just a great ambassador for the wool harvesting industry, he is a gun shearer that broke a world shearing record and also won the top shearing title at the Perth Royal Show – all in the space of six days in September.

On the day that Ethan Harder was presented with the WA Wool Harvesting Ambassador Award (see opposite page), he also beat a host of very talented WA shearers to win the open shearing title at this year's Perth Royal Show. And if that wasn't impressive enough, the top gun shearer had six days previously broken the world record for shearing Merino lambs in eight hours, shearing 624 Merino lambs and exceeding the previous record by 20.

That's three exceptional achievements for the talented 24-year-old from Bruce Rock.

Ethan attributes his success to surrounding himself with good, positive people.

In addition to being inspired by his partner Regina and young daughter Leilah, Ethan credits his parents Paul (Boof) and Suzie who run Harder Shearing Contractors based in Bruce Rock, plus his brother Gauge, friends and workmates.

Ethan discovered his love for shearing as a child, thanks to his parents, and pursued it with unrelenting passion. Growing up in the shearing shed, he spent countless hours learning a great deal from his father. At the age of just seven, Ethan shored 100 Merino lambs in a day for the first time, followed by 200 at the age of 12, 300 at the age of 14, 400 at the age of 16, 500 at the age of 17, 600 at the age of 18 and 700 at the age of 19.

His parents' guidance, encouragement and support have played a significant role in shaping him into the person he is today. Ethan says he learned from his father the old-school ways of being compassionate, generous and respectful, as well as the importance of hard work. Equally, his mother has had a profound influence on him – Suzie is a former school teacher who successfully balanced homeschooling her sons along with her career as a shearing contractor and a wool classer.

For the world shearing record in September, Ethan and his support team are very appreciative of farmers Stephen and Binda Schulz from 'Woolakabin' in Williams for their warm welcome, invaluable assistance, and generous provision of access to their shearing shed, brand-new sheep yards and other facilities, and especially their meticulous care and attention to detail in preparing the sheep. Thanks also go to shearing contractors Mark and Sarah Buscumb of Crackers Contracting, who worked hard to make the record attempt a success.

With his love for shearing, his successful career, and his appreciation of teamwork, Ethan is the ideal person to be involved with the Wool Ambassadors Program, where he can be a role model and inspire others to join the wool harvesting industry and excel as he himself has done.

SHEARER AND WOOL HANDLER TRAINING

AWI funds hands-on, practical in-shed training for shearers and wool handlers across the country to attract and retain new entrants into the wool harvesting industry, build the capacity and longevity of existing staff, and increase returns to woolgrowers through improved clip preparation practices.

AWI regularly funds and supports hands-on practical in-shed training for shearers and wool handlers to attract and retain new workers, as well as increase workers' productivity, skills and professionalism.

Pictured below is a small selection of AWI-funded courses recently run across the country.

AWI-funded trainers carry out the wool harvesting training in New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. In Victoria and South Australia, the AWI-funded training is provided by the Shearing Contractors Association of Australia Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc (SCAA SWTI).

AWI thanks all the woolgrowers who provide their facilities and sheep, and all the other organisations and individuals that lend their time and resources to help run this training.

More information: To arrange training in your state, email craig.french@wool.com or swt@wool.com. Keep an eye on the Facebook channels of [@australianwoolinnovation](#) and [@shearerwoolhandlertraining](#) (Vic and SA) for the latest updates.



Bathurst, NSW



Ki Ki, SA



Wycheproof, Vic



Pinindi, SA



Ross, Tas



Boyup Brook, WA

LOCAL COMPETITIONS HELP ATTRACT NEXT GEN

PHOTO: Sheryn Lloyd

AWI provides support for shearing and wool handling competitions to help promote excellence and participation in the industry. Many competitions include a novice/learner section which encourages young people in a local district to participate. Competitions help promote shearing and wool handling as attractive professions.

AWI supports many local shearing and wool handling competitions to promote excellence within the industry and to encourage young people to join the industry's ranks.

Pictured below is a small selection of images from some of the competitions supported by AWI across the country this year.

AWI National Manager, Wool Harvesting Training & Careers Development, Craig French, says AWI is keen to raise the profile and status of the shearing industry by enabling participation in well conducted shearing and woolhandling competitions.

"Competitions help encourage better techniques in shearing and woolhandling, which is for the benefit of the wool-growing industry. AWI's support aims to encourage a quality workforce, an interest in wool, and an appreciation of the art and skill of shearers and woolhandlers," Craig said.

"Most local competitions have a novice or learner section, as well as intermediate and senior sections, which helps foster the enthusiasm of budding young shearers in the district."



PHOTO: Sports Shear NSW

Canowindra, NSW



Horsham, Vic



PHOTO: Robyn Wishaw

Campbell Town, Tas



PHOTO: Sports Shear SA

Yallunda Flat, SA



Perth, WA



Dubbo, NSW

SHEEP DELIVERY SYSTEM PROVES ITS WORTH

A new ProWay shearing shed that incorporates the lane delivery system developed by AWI was recently built at a property in the Central West of NSW and has proved to be a hit with the wool harvesting staff and the wool producers.

During the past couple of years, AWI has developed a lane delivery system that delivers sheep directly to the shearer, eliminating the time and energy that shearers spend on the catch and drag. It also minimises the chance of injury to the shearer from the dragging and twisting movements.

Several companies are now manufacturing a sheep delivery system based on the AWI designs, including NSW-based ProWay.

In October, the construction of a new ProWay shearing shed and sheep yards was completed at 'Malongulli', a property located between Mandurama and Canowindra in the Central West region of NSW. The enterprise is co-managed by Jim and his brother Harry and is run in conjunction with their farm in Coonamble. They run self-replacing Merino flocks at both properties.

"In our operation, the sheep are the core of the business, and we're heavily focusing on infrastructure of both properties. Priorities to date have been water and wire to better utilise our country, as well as keeping things easy to manage," Jim said.

Attracting and retaining contractors

Investing in a new shearing shed and yards at 'Malongulli' had also become a priority for the family run business.

"The past few years have had their challenges, particularly the wet years managing sheep and getting contractors and shearers on board," Jim explained.

"For us, having good facilities and getting the sheep right leads onto contractors being available, whether that's shearers or livestock contractors working in the yards. It goes a long way towards encouraging them to come back and help us out."

"If we look after our contractors, they'll look after us."

The new six-stand shearing shed, which utilises the lane delivery principles developed by AWI, was ready for their first shearing in mid-November.

"We are up for anything that makes sense when it comes to efficiency, so we were open minded to the idea of a lane delivery system and it's proving to be paying off and the shearers are happy," Jim said.



The new ProWay-designed shed and yards at 'Malongulli' in the Central West of NSW that incorporates the AWI lane delivery system.



The shearer simply opens a gate at the back of the board and collects the sheep directly from the race. This dramatically reduces the stress and labour required to catch and drag sheep for shearing.



General Manager, Jim: "If you plan to upgrade your shearing infrastructure, I think a lane system is definitely worth considering as an option. It's working well here, and I don't see why it wouldn't work anywhere else."

"They have been able to shear seven to eight more sheep per run, so there's obviously an efficiency gain. They're also keen to see that it's working well, and we've really only had positive feedback.

"From a budget perspective, we haven't had to spend a lot more to build a lane system like this, so it's not costing us more to take the load off the shearer. On top of that they're able to shear more sheep and feel better at the end of the day."

Consultative design process

Jim says he and his brother had been in discussion with ProWay about building a new shed and yards around the time that AWI started promoting its new lane delivery system.

"While we'd originally planned to build a conventional shed, ProWay put the idea forward to us to incorporate a lane delivery system into the design and it made total sense to us," Jim said.

"As soon as the design process was in motion, we were back and forth with designs and found the communication with ProWay was really good throughout the project. It was never an issue to change something.

"Throughout the construction of the project, ProWay were always checking in with us, the shed builder and their install contractors to help co-ordinate things."

Other facilities in the build

With professional and safe working conditions in shearing sheds and yards proven to help woolgrowers attract and retain staff as well as improve productivity and profitability, the brothers were keen on optimising the design of the rest of the shed and yards.

"It's not just the lane catch that we've focused on to make this facility good to work in. Putting in amenities like the toilets and kitchen, even little things like USB ports at the stands, the shearers have really appreciated it," Jim said.



The new ProWay-designed shed and yards.

"The yards that we've built are based on proven designs ProWay had built before, so it made sense to go that way as there's a lot of versatility. Whether you're going into the Bulk Handler, or an autodrafter with a five-way draft, it's a very flexible design.

"There's also a cover over the yard so people turn up and are excited to do a day or weeks' worth of sheep work here.

"We're very happy with the whole project. I wish that all projects were as seamless as this."

Together Jim, Harry, ProWay and AWI held a field day last month at 'Malongulli' during which the recently installed six-stand lane delivery shearing shed and sheep yards were showcased with a shearing demonstration.

More information: www.proway.com.au

ProWay
Livestock Equipment
The choice of livestock professionals

INDUSTRY LEADING:
STOCKYARDS, SHEARING SHEDS,
RAMPS & HANDLING EQUIPMENT

PROUDLY 100% AUSTRALIAN OWNED, DESIGNED AND MADE.

DESIGNING AND MANUFACTURING LIVESTOCK
EQUIPMENT THAT MAKES YOUR ENTERPRIZE
SAFER, MORE EFFICIENT AND PROFITABLE.



Ph: 1300 655 383
www.proway.com.au

Austshear •
Shearing
Contractors

We are a family
owned and
operated shearing
business with
over 30
years
experience in
the industry.

Quality Cost
Effective Professional
Shearing and
Crutching Services

Available for
immediate Start NSW,
Vic, SA, QLD, Tas.



AUSTSHEAR



Phone:
Brendan 0427 533 243
Jake 0438 942 579

SHEARING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A DRAG!

The innovative ShearMaster race delivery system from Perkinz not only delivers the sheep directly to the shearer, it also offers crutching cradles as well as traditional shearing all in the one unit.

The Perkinz ShearMaster is another new shearing system that eliminates the catching pen and instead delivers sheep to the shearer via a race delivery system, greatly reducing the distance the shearer needs to drag the animal and thereby making shearing faster, easier and safer.

A significant feature of the ShearMaster compared to other race delivery systems is the no-hands race latch that allows the shearer to remove sheep quickly and safely from the race just by leaning their hip against a flap. There is no latch to flick or gate to pull open; the shearer just has to lean over to get the sheep and the flap will unlock automatically allowing gravity to tip the sheep out of the race.

But arguably the most innovative feature of the ShearMaster is the height adjustability of the shearing board which means when you lower it down, and attach the Perkinz CrutchMaster cradles, it becomes an upright sheep crutching system that eliminates not only bending over but the catch and drag as well, enabling the fast and easy crutching of sheep and lambs.

The ShearMaster uses a long race system that allows a decent number of sheep to be readily available, hence reducing how often the system needs filling from the forcing pens. A five-stand ShearMaster race can hold about 35 to 40 sheep which is about seven to eight

sheep per shearer. An added bonus of the long race is that it positions the sheep in the right direction, so the shearer does not need to turn the animal around once they have taken it from the race.

The ShearMaster requires less space than traditional shearing designs which allows for a smaller new shed to be built, or an older shed to be retrofitted. It also allows for a shed to become a multi-purpose shed in which farm equipment can be stored when the shearing system is not in use, making it a cost-effective option.

Rapidly growing customer base

Perkinz specialises in manufacturing sheep handling equipment. Based in New Zealand, but with a warehouse in Melbourne, the company has a rapidly growing customer base in Australia. The ShearMaster has gained particular attention, with set-ups having been recently installed in Victoria and Tasmania, and more currently under construction.

With fifteen years of shearing behind him and a solid farming background, Perkinz Manager Wayne Perkins has significant experience in the sheep industry.

"During my shearing career, I did five seasons

shearing in the United Kingdom, on race type systems that eliminated the traditional catch and drag, and I have always maintained that they were the best, fastest, and easiest shearing set-ups I had ever shorn on," Wayne said.

"The ShearMaster draws on that experience and the feedback from many other shearers. I believe it offers a much better and simpler solution for shearers and farmers than traditional woolsheds with catching pens."

A five-stand Perkinz ShearMaster has been installed at Formosa Estate at Cressy in Tasmania. Farm manager John Heard says he is very pleased with the result.

"Overall numbers through for the day increased when compared to our old traditional system, keeping the rest of the shed quite busy. The short little drag allowed things to be in the best position possible to shear the animal," John said.

"Working with Wayne and the team is something we couldn't fault – we wanted to make some changes to the release system and made this clear from the start – it wasn't a problem – in fact nothing ever was!"

More information: www.perkinz.com.au/collections/shearmaster



A five-stand Perkinz ShearMaster performing well at Formosa Estate at Cressy in Tasmania.

BIOLOGICAL WOOL HARVESTING ON SHOW

Woolgrowers in Western Australia had the opportunity to view biological wool harvesting at a demonstration held at Katanning at the end of October. A similar demonstration day was held at Conargo in NSW at the start of September.

As previously reported in *Beyond the Bale*, AWI is funding promising research by the University of Adelaide into a new opportunity for biological harvesting of wool that generates a weakened zone at the base of the wool fibre but, importantly, enables the fleece to remain on the sheep without a net until the wool can be mechanically removed.

With R&D into the innovation progressing well, woolgrowers attending the Sheep Field Day at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's (DPIRD's) Katanning Research Station on 26 October were able to talk to the University of Adelaide researchers and see the results, to date, on sheep.

"I think giving these demonstrations have been a real positive for us because we can feel the real excitement of the producers and the fact that they understand the need for what we're trying to do. We'll plow on now with some confidence," said chief researcher Professor Phil Hynd of the University of Adelaide.

The next phase of AWI's biological wool harvesting project is the selection and funding of proposals to develop manual/semi/fully automated technology to harvest the weakened wool, ie a device that applies a force to separate the wool from the body of the sheep. This could be in the form of a handpiece for manual wool removal through to a more comprehensive automated system.

AWI issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) world-wide in October for the purpose of obtaining responses from engineering companies, universities, entrepreneurs, start-ups and other organisations – see www.wool.com/on-farm-research. Applications close on 22 December.

Biological wool harvesting is an example of the multi-pronged approach that AWI is taking to make wool harvesting easier and more cost-effective for woolgrowers and the industry.

More information: www.wool.com/wool-harvesting-innovation



An example of a treated sheep that has had some of its wool harvested, for demonstration purposes.



Professor Phil Hynd of the University of Adelaide speaking to woolgrowers at Katanning, WA.

CrutchMaster



We specialise in mobile crutching systems, with one to three stand models available.
No bending, no dragging, *less swearing!*

Perkinz

ShearMaster



A cost-effective and shearer-friendly alternative to traditional woolsheds that eliminates the catching pen and can allow for a multi-purpose shed.

Perkinz

For more info, check out our website at www.perkinz.com.au

(e) wayne@perkinz.com.au
(p) 1-800-750-584

EFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE AND GREEN AT NAREEN

Based near Coleraine in the rolling redgum country of western Victoria, Nareen Station Pty Ltd is a family-owned business that invests in efficiently producing fine Merino wool from healthy, productive sheep, while building and protecting the natural resources of the landscape.

An icon of fine Merino wool-growing in the heart of Victoria's Western Districts, 'Nareen Station' was purchased by Gordon and Alexandra Dickinson in 1996.

They have since expanded the property to about 3,800 hectares and added the neighbouring 3,500-hectare 'Barrama' property, plus 2,000-hectare 'Boyong' near Robe in South Australia, to their family-owned Nareen Station Pty Ltd grazing business.

Across the three properties, the Dickinsons run commercial and stud Merino sheep, and beef cattle. Their sheep type is a plain bodied poll, with adults cutting 5.5 kg of 18-19 micron wool.

Nareen and Barrama are both breeding properties, each running 12,000 breeding ewes and joining 1,000 cows, and Boyong is used for finishing stock and growing out retention heifers. The commercial sheep enterprise usually achieves about 100 percent of lambs marked to ewes joined.

Commitment to the industry



Mustering the fine Merino sheep at Nareen in western Victoria.

"Clearly the industry is going through one of its occasional down swings this year, but we remain confident and committed to meat and wool production as the best use of productive agricultural land in our district, where winter waterlogging makes cropping a very challenging exercise," Gordon said.

Nareen and Barrama have a Mediterranean climate with hot dry summers and long wet winters with up to 200 wet days a year.

"The two properties have approximately 650mm of rainfall and have clay loam soils. Boyong has similar rainfall on a sandy loam but has the benefit of underground water allowing irrigation through two 50-hectare

pivots with lucerne pastures for lamb finishing," Gordon said.

"The business runs an average of 110,000 DSE through the year, with a near 50/50 mix between sheep and cattle."

The ewes of the Merino flock lamb onto the spring flush of feed.

"We have invested in genetics which allow that lamb to quickly reach a satisfactory weaning weight before going into a hot dry summer. Our business is then set up to sell surplus Merino wethers and ewes to other farmers who want to run them but not have to breed them. We have established long term relationships with many of these buyers," Gordon said.

"We run our own stud to produce the commercial rams required. The stud came with Barrama when it was purchased 25 years ago from the Learmonth family. We source external genetics from leading studs as well as our own retention sires. We invest heavily in the best genetics we can identify which we think are suitable for south of the divide with a long, wet winter."

Transformational new shearing shed



The new shed at Barrama that is based on the AWI Shearing Shed Design.

Gordon runs an efficient operation which means the business has installed and maintains good infrastructure – including fences, laneways, roads and water – across the properties.

"We have lane and road access to virtually all paddocks, and we aim to have each set of sheep yards servicing about 800 hectares, five

at each of Barrama and Nareen," Gordon said.

The good infrastructure extends to the business's shearing sheds.

"Nareen Station has a 10-stand shearing shed, with five stands either side of a central wool handling area and undercover capacity of a little over 2,000 woolly sheep," Gordon said.

At the Barrama shearing shed, Gordon was keen to invest in efficiency for staff and contractors as well as animal welfare.

"Barrama had an eight-stand shed with an undercover capacity of 1,100 sheep. But with the improvements in plain bodied sheep and wide gear, the shearers were consistently shearing 1,500 to 1,600 a day," he said.

"In addition, the holding and forcing pens were laid out in a traditional manner, meaning all the sheep required a lot of effort and persuasion from dogs to keep moving forward towards the catching pens.

"It had a long thin board with our wool handling team trapped in a small area at one end of the board with a wall of wool being rushed up the board towards them. Something had to change!"

So in 2021, Gordon and his team set about researching a design for a new shed that would best suit the operation at Barrama.

"We had a close look at a number of sheds that had been built in our general area, including some that had used the AWI Shearing Shed Design, albeit on a smaller scale. We had decided to sit the new shed alongside the old one to utilise the holding room and to be able to use the old board for crutching plants etc, so we were particularly focussed on improving the workflows in the new shed rather than having to build an enormous new holding area," he said.

"As we reviewed the alternatives to improve sheep and wool flows, we decided that it would make more sense to use the extensive work AWI had done in these areas rather than try and work it out ourselves."

AWI's Shearing Shed Design (www.wool.com/sheddesign) is a result of AWI and a working group of woolgrowers and shed staff in 2019 designing a shearing shed which addresses worker safety and animal welfare considerations, while also achieving improved shed efficiency and good wool quality outcomes.



Gordon Dickinson says the transformation of wool harvesting at Barrama has been "remarkable".

The design was developed following extensive industry consultation with some of the most experienced shearers, wool handlers, classers and woolgrowers from across Australia. Multiple trials led to refinements and a final design. Dozens of sheds have now been built across the country using the AWI design.

"Based on the AWI Shearing Shed Design, we last year built a nine-stand raised board in a horseshoe shape, with one of the nine for left handers," Gordon said.

"We first used the shed in March this year and the transformation has been remarkable. The penning up is now done by our contractor's father, who doesn't need to use his dogs to keep up.

"The wool handling has gone from a frantic process to a very calm one where we have stopped using wool bins and now have four presses sitting behind the wool tables, with three of them being the different fleece lines and one for a rotating oddment bale as wool packs bank up. This has meant the presser is putting out his 45 bales a day very easily and able to spend a significant part of his time helping with clip preparation.

"Shearers are now on a straight drag out of the pens with the let-out chutes working particularly well.

"The stress has gone out of the wool room and we now have total undercover storage for 2,000 sheep, which allows a full day and a run the next morning, which gives us a good chance to keep the shed working."

Staff are valued at Nareen

Just as a modern and efficient shearing shed makes it easier for a business to attract and retain wool harvesting staff, providing a good work environment across the broader farm business helps attract and retain good farm staff – as is the case at Nareen Station Pty Ltd.

"We can only make the business work with good people. We have a permanent team of 12 spread across the three properties," Gordon said.

All staff live on-farm in furnished housing. The company promotes a balanced social and work environment, encouraging local sport and involvement in other activities.

"We use contractors extensively for specialist tasks and spend most of our time managing animal health and nutrition and ensuring the infrastructure is maintained."

Nareen Station Pty Ltd also has 12-month jackeroo/jillaroo positions available to be part of its team. These positions suit young people preparing for a career in agriculture, including before and during tertiary study. Skills gained include livestock husbandry, fencing, small machinery use, working in a team environment, grazing management and animal welfare.

"For the past 20 years we have had two or three jackeroos and jilleroos as part of the team each year, with many of them then going on to study agriculture at a tertiary level. We have been able to put almost all of them through relevant training courses including the ones run with AWI support, such as the Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course," Gordon said.



Nareen runs its own 12-month jackeroo/jillaroo program for youngsters wanting to gain practical experience and skills.

The LTEM course (www.wool.com/LTEM) aims to increase producers' understanding of the influence of ewe nutrition and management on overall reproduction rates and lamb and ewe survival. Producers develop the skills to manage their ewes to achieve condition score targets and explore the economics of supplementary feeding and pasture management to review stocking rates.

Good environmental management



A tree planting program helps provide shelter for stock, stability for the soil, and a carbon sink.

Gordon says he takes great pride on being environmentally responsible with a 20-year history of tree planting, natural regeneration, enhanced biodiversity, waterway protection and low stress animal production on the three properties. Being in a relatively high rainfall area presents challenges for soil erosion and stock shelter.

"We now have approximately seven percent of our land area in shelter belts providing regeneration of flora, wind protection for stock and helping soil stability in the waterways. This work has been part of fencing to contours but also embedded in our laneways for efficient and attractive micro-environments," Gordon said.

"We have a significant number of original paddock trees, but we have supplemented this with significant blocks of trees in paddocks for shade and shelter. After a trip to New Zealand looking at farms, we have adopted their practice of agroforestry plantations in underutilised areas of the farms. These might be steep, or across waterways where animals and people tend not to go.

"With the additional pressure now for farmers to reduce their carbon footprint, we have expanded this agroforestry to be planting 20-30 hectares a year of *pinus radiata*. This has already had a significant effect on improving our carbon intensity and our medium-term objective to be carbon neutral feels achievable.

"The products we produce, high quality wool and meat, are largely sold into premium western markets where the buyers are becoming increasingly focussed on the production status of what they are buying. We have to go with it."

More information: www.nareenstation.com.au

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE EFFECTS OF EL NIÑO

PHOTO: Jamesbowyer

After a few years of good seasonal conditions across much of Australia, an El Niño climate pattern has been declared and drier weather has arrived. What can woolgrowers do to prepare for potentially warm and dry conditions to ensure the health of their sheep? Here Animal Health Australia provides some tips.

The Bureau of Meteorology officially declared in September that an El Niño event is currently underway for Australia. During El Niño, there is a higher chance of reduced rainfall for eastern Australia, warmer daytime temperatures for the southern two-thirds of Australia, increased risk of extreme heat, and increased bushfire danger in south-eastern Australia.

No two El Niño episodes, or their impacts upon Australia, are identical. El Niño events do not always guarantee a drought will take place. Winter and spring rainfall are typically the most severely impacted.

The Bureau of Meteorology has also declared that a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is underway. When a positive IOD and El Niño occur together, their drying effect is typically stronger and more widespread across Australia. Some areas of Australia already have drier than usual conditions.

The latest seasonal forecast provided by the Bureau, for December through to March, predicts below median rainfall for many wool-growing regions, as well as unusually warm temperatures for most of Australia. Woolgrowers should keep a regular watch on the Bureau's long-range forecasts and climate drivers, which are regularly updated and are available at www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/.

Management practices to consider

Dry seasonal conditions need to be planned for, and carefully managed if they eventuate. Woolgrowers can consider options such as:

- Reducing grazing pressure on their pastures by selling or agisting stock. If a drought were to occur, agistment options will become limited and more expensive.
- Prepare for the possible requirement of stock containment areas. The main purpose for using these is to preserve soil and pasture quality during dry times, as well as to better monitor animal health and feed intake. Containment feeding may also be a requirement, therefore producers should consider the biosecurity risks associated with bringing purchased feed and fodder onto the property, and check for signs of pests (for example, mouse droppings) and weed seeds, such

as annual ryegrass.

- Provide adequate shade and shelter to keep your animals comfortable and prevent heat stress in extreme conditions. Shade will also reduce the water requirements of the flock in hot weather. Some considerations for shade include:
 - Temporary or construction shade structures that can be made from materials such as shade cloth and corrugated iron.
 - Large shade trees and shelter belts are permanent solutions.
 - Consider the likelihood of sheep crowding the shelters and plan accordingly.
- Have a drought plan in place.

Actions such as these should be considered in terms of all other aspects of the farming operation and within the long-term plan for the farm.

Biosecurity considerations

Parasite management

The recent La Niña periods of higher-than-average rainfall saw favourable conditions for parasites and diseases such as liver fluke, flystrike, virulent footrot, and barber's pole worm. If dry conditions continue to worsen, then sheep may also be more susceptible to parasites due to impaired immunity (from poor nutrition and/or drought-related stress), and increasingly crowded conditions around shade, feed, and water sources.

Parasite management practices such as faecal worm egg counts and strategic drenching should be prioritised, even when the overall pasture parasite loads are reduced due to the dry weather. See pages 16-17 for how dry times affect worms. More information on the seasonal management of parasites affecting sheep can be found on ParaBoss (www.paraboss.com.au).

Disease management

Dwindling water sources can also lead to an increase in competition for water among wild and feral animals, bringing them into closer proximity with sheep and increasing the chance of disease transmission. Take the time now to check your fencing and consider management

controls to safeguard your water sources and your sheep from unwanted contact with wild and feral animals.

If your sheep require supplementary feeding, remember to abide by the ruminant feed ban by not feeding anything containing Restricted Animal Material (RAM) to ruminants. Always check for the RAM statement when purchasing commercial feed.

Pneumonia is another condition to be aware of and can occur in sheep of all ages throughout the year; however, summer pneumonia is frequently seen in weaners. While this condition is caused by a mixture of host, environmental and pathogen factors, dry and dusty conditions are a common causative agent. To reduce the risk of pneumonia in your flock, implement dust reduction strategies during your day-to-day husbandry practices. Examples include effective pasture management, mustering slowly and during cooler parts of the day, hosing down yards and avoiding the use of dusty feed.

Stress management is also crucial at this time, as lambs are particularly susceptible to disease during the stressful time of weaning.

Dry and dusty conditions also pose an increased risk of Q fever, a zoonotic disease spread to humans by a range of animals including sheep. Ensure that all staff, particularly new workers, are vaccinated against Q fever when working with livestock.

More information:

- Bureau of Meteorology long range forecasts and climate drivers: www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/
- Farm Biosecurity website: www.farmbiosecurity.com.au
- See the opposite page for a list of AWI publications and decision support tools available to help woolgrowers in the lead up to and during dry seasonal conditions.

Resources for dry seasonal conditions

AWI provides a range of resources to help woolgrowers plan and carefully manage their enterprises in the lead up to and during dry seasonal conditions, including:

Publications:

- **Feeding and managing sheep in dry times.** This publication provides producers with practical guidelines and examples on feeding and managing sheep during dry seasons and drought years. While it focuses on dry times and containment feeding systems, it also has useful information on getting through the normal summer/autumn feed gap period.
- **Managing sheep in droughtlots.** A best-practice guide that highlights the purpose, benefits and experiences of woolgrowers managing sheep in contained areas during drought.
- **Stock water – a limited resource.** A fact sheet that helps calculate stock water budgets, especially when droughtlotting sheep.
- **Managing fodder prices for droughts.** A guide to strategies that help manage fodder prices and supply risks during droughts.
- **Which sheep do I keep?** A guide to help determine whether to sell or supplementary-feed all, some or none of the flock.
- **Drought feeding and management of sheep (Agriculture Victoria).** A practical guide on sheep feeding and management during a drought to help producers break down into manageable steps the daunting planning phase, and see the plan realised as a successful way of combating the drought.

Decision support tools:

- **Cost of production calculator.** Cost of production (COP) is a key factor affecting the profitability of wool producing businesses. COP, measured in dollars per kilogram of clean wool, is an indication of the outlay required to produce each kilogram of wool.
- **Lifetime Wool feed budget tables.** Feed budgeting for ewe flocks in the dry season.
- **Feed On Offer library.** The Feed On Offer (FOO) library allows users to estimate FOO and nutritive value of grazed pastures.

More information: These and other AWI and state/national drought resources are available at www.wool.com/drought

LIVESTOCK SAFETY DURING BUSHFIRES

AWI also provides a range of information to help woolgrowers with bushfire preparation and recovery. See www.wool.com/bushfires



PHOTO: Jason Edwards

El Niños often lead to drier conditions over large parts of Australia. Woolgrowers need to plan for the possibility of such conditions to ensure the health of their sheep.



Your Perfect Shearing Shed Solution!

Our team specialises in designing and managing your once-in-a-lifetime animal handling facilities.



Australian Made with Australian Steel

ENQUIRE TODAY

Free Call 1800 655 033 www.commanderagquip.com.au

ECONOMICAL BULK STORAGE & LIVESTOCK SOLUTIONS

Delivery VIC, SA, NSW



Upgrade with

AG-CRETE

Swift-Lift Pins

Call (03) 5450 4400 Visit agcrete.com.au

HOW DO DRY TIMES AFFECT WORMS?

PHOTO: Vicki Smith

What actually happens to worms during dry periods? And how are they best controlled during these times in those (normally) moderate to high rainfall regions where worms are normally present?

Many livestock producers are surprised to find sheep severely affected by worms during long dry periods, or are dismayed when sheep succumb to worms soon after it rains.

In regions where drenching is normally required, worms will still be present during dry times, and lighter sheep will be far more susceptible. Regular worm egg counts indicate when drenches are required, preventing losses, especially of poorer sheep.

In the normally lower rainfall areas, regardless of long dry periods, it is usually sufficient to monitor worm egg counts about six weeks after there has been enough rain to generate a green pick (new green pasture). Recommendations for the moderate to higher rainfall areas are detailed below.

Worms in the sheep

The first source of worms is the sheep themselves; they carry worms into a dry period, and can suffer the ill effects many months after conditions have turned dry.

Worms on the pasture

The second source is worm larvae, which live for many months on the pasture, despite dry conditions. View a summary of the factors contributing to paddock contamination with worms on WormBoss at www.wormboss.com.au/roundworms-2/worms-on-pasture.

In the first six months after the rain stopped:

Larvae not ingested with pasture die, not because it is dry, but because they run out of stored energy, as larvae do not eat. The majority – about 90% – die in about six months under cooler conditions, three months under hotter conditions, and even faster when extremely hot. Very few survive more than one year.

Therefore, larvae that hatched in wetter conditions before the rain stopped may be on the paddock for many months despite lack of rain. When the sheep eat the contaminated pasture, especially as they graze lower and lower, the larvae are ingested and some establish in the sheep. Worm burdens in the sheep can rise quite quickly when they lose condition, because under-nutrition reduces their immunity to worms.

But by about six months from the last significant rain (10–15 mm or more over a few days) that source of larvae has declined to very low levels.

WormTest each 1–2 months, in both normal years and the first 6 months of a dry period:

- **Barber's pole worm areas: 4-weekly in warm months; 6-weekly in cooler months**
- **Non-Barber's pole worm areas: 5–6 weekly for young sheep; up to 2-monthly for adult sheep in good body condition on better feed.**

After the first six months since the rain stopped:

Once most of the worm larvae that developed prior to the dry times have died, new worms can only originate from new contamination, that is, from the worms living in the stock during dry times.

The question is: will the worm eggs being passed in dung that is landing on a dry paddock survive, develop to infective larvae, and become available for ingestion by the stock?

Generally, all nematode worm species will hatch and develop into larvae within a moist faecal pellet and then move out onto the pasture. However, the brown stomach worm (*Teladorsagia*) and black scour worm (*Trichostrongylus*) are able to survive within the faecal pellet for weeks during very dry times, except with extreme summer heat. Barber's pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus*) has less ability to do this and will generally die within a week or so if there has not been about 10–15 mm of rain.

If sufficient rain dissolves the dung pellet, any living scour worm larvae are released onto the surrounding ground and they can move onto the new pasture and be ingested by stock.

But while it remains dry the risk is low.

There is some concern that sheep eat dirt with pulverised dry dung when eating grain trailed on the ground and will gain a worm infection under these conditions. However, there is no evidence of significant pick up of these larvae from the ground when the paddocks are dry with little or no pasture. It's not until some green pasture has developed that the new larvae that were still in the faecal pellets start to move out. In practice, significant re-infection of sheep is usually some weeks later, once green pasture is well established.

When there has been no rain, but areas of green grass continue to grow along creekbanks, channels and drains, in soaks from springs,

or even where a trough or pipe is continually leaking into a large area, there is potential for eggs to develop to infective larvae. Stock will concentrate on this looking for any available feed, therefore there will also be a concentration of dung dropped there. The sheep that continue to graze there can then become infected with worms. Unless these areas are very extensive, they are not likely to lead to heavy worm burdens, however worm egg counts are a wise precaution.

After 6 months of no rain, if sheep have continued access to large moist areas with growing grass, continue to monitor worm egg counts about every 6 weeks. If there is no green grass and there have been no falls of 10–15 mm rain (over a few days) for more than 6 months, extend monitoring to 2-monthly in Barber's pole worm areas and 3-monthly in non-Barber's pole worm areas. Check earlier if you are concerned.

Worms after it rains

'Drought-breaking rain' is not required to cause a large increase in worms. Worm eggs develop and are released from the faecal pellets after about 10–15 mm of rain falling across a few days, although in hotter areas some follow up rain will be required.

Green pick resulting after rain is a good indicator that worm eggs have been able to hatch and develop, and larvae are available on pasture.

Monitor worm egg counts 5–6 weeks after rainfall that results in green pick, and continue monthly testing as the pasture comes away.

Summary

Extended periods of dry weather do decrease the ability of worms to develop on pasture. However, it does not afford sheep protection from worms, as they are likely to go into a dry period with worms and even moderate occasional showers can fuel worm hatching.

Stock that are poorer in condition due to long dry periods are more susceptible to worms. Worm egg counts are a simple and affordable method to monitor stock during dry periods to give peace of mind and the knowledge of when to drench.

More information: www.wormboss.com.au



Sheep that are stressed by prolonged periods of dry conditions may have reduced immunity and show the effects of worm infestation.



Tap into best practice parasite management

www.paraboss.com.au

Collectively, the three Boss sheep websites – WormBoss, LiceBoss and FlyBoss – promote best practice for the management of sheep parasites at the farm level.

They are sources of detailed management information and regional programs that will assist in managing the major parasite risks for sheep.

The websites have been developed by a community of veterinary experts and parasitologists from across Australia and supported by the sheep industry.

Subscribe to the free Boss Bulletin e-newsletter from ParaBoss for monthly updates and articles. Subscribe at www.paraboss.com.au/register and follow ParaBoss on Facebook at facebook.com/paraboss.com.au



THE TEAM AT STOCKPRO HAVE DESIGNED A

MODULAR SHEARING BOARD

THAT TICKS ALL THE BOXES...

- ✓ FRONT FILL
- ✓ REAR FILL
- ✓ RACE DELIVERY
- ✓ ANGLED CHUTE
- ✓ SLOPED FLOOR
- ✓ CATCHING PEN



KEEP YOUR SHEARING SHED SAFE WITH OUR SHEARING MODULES.



Built from experience!



PARABOSS CERTIFIED ADVISORS AND PROVIDERS

To ensure they receive the best guidance about sheep parasite management, woolgrowers are being encouraged to seek out and use advisors certified by ParaBoss. Woolgrowers are also urged to use ParaBoss certified worm egg count (WEC) providers to ensure they receive accurate WEC results.

ParaBoss certified sheep advisors



The ParaBoss Certificate in Sheep Parasite Management is proving to be a much looked-for qualification by producers seeking sheep parasite management advice, as they know that advisors with this certification will give them the right advice.

"The management of sheep parasites is complex and requires an in-depth knowledge of available treatments and how and when to use them, pasture management, signs of parasite infection, monitoring strategies, regional variation and much more," said Executive Officer of ParaBoss Advisor Training, Dr Deb Maxwell. "The ParaBoss Certificate in Sheep Parasite Management is the only course of its kind world-wide and gives advisors and producers the opportunity to gain this knowledge."

The ParaBoss Certificate covers the core information from WormBoss, FlyBoss and LiceBoss, and graduates are confidently providing expert advice about effective integrated parasite management of sheep to producers across the country.

"Elanco has welcomed the opportunity to support 24 technical, marketing and sales colleagues to complete this training and earn a certificate in Sheep Parasite Management," said Elanco Brand Manager and veterinarian, Dr Kathryn Humphries.

"The knowledge and confidence in parasite management has improved immensely providing everyone with information they use daily when upskilling resellers, who in turn provide advice to their sheep producer customers, or when talking directly with producers.

"Being certified advisors adds to the credibility of the guidance offered by the Elanco team. It is rewarding to witness the valuable management advice learnt from such a practical course being used directly to help sheep producers improve their decision making."

The ParaBoss Certificate continues to rise in popularity with 330 enrolments and 270 graduates in the two years the course has been offered.

ParaBoss certified WEC QA service providers



With the ever-increasing development of drench resistance, and the rising cost of drenches, it is more important than ever to avoid unnecessary drenching. Knowing that your worm counts are accurate is essential to make the right drench decisions. By choosing a ParaBoss certified WEC provider, producers can be certain that their results are accurate.

The 2023 Worm Egg Count Quality Assurance Program has just been completed. Of the 42 businesses that participated this year, 26 immediately met the criteria for ParaBoss certification. A further 11 had minor issues that, if addressed, will allow them to be certified. Unfortunately, five participating businesses had major issues making them ineligible for certification in this round. The results, each year, highlight the ongoing need for certification, and that producers should be using WEC providers that have current ParaBoss certification.

"This was the first year we have participated in the WEC QA program," said Alexandra Morona, Livestock Advisor of Yenda Producers Co-Operative, Griffith in NSW.

"The WEC resources and support provided by ParaBoss Advisor Training were helpful in making sure our processes yielded both accurate and repeatable results. With both myself and our other Livestock Advisor, Duncan Pixley, also being graduates of the ParaBoss Certificate in Sheep Parasite Management, we now confidently provide both WEC results and associated treatment and management recommendations. We are delighted that our business has been certified and would encourage others to invest in this opportunity."



Alexandra Morona, Livestock Advisor of Yenda Producers Co-Operative, Griffith, NSW.

The ParaBoss WEC QA Program continues to demonstrate its value, according to Phil Stein, Laboratory Manager at Dawbuts, who said, "Our two experienced operators again demonstrated their proficiency, and we were also able to benchmark our three trainees' skills without it affecting the lab's overall certification. This ability to compare the results of those trainees against our experienced operators as well as over 120 operators nationally is so useful to highlight areas where we can further support our trainees."



Phil Stein and staff in their Dawbuts laboratory

More information: Sheep and wool producers can find the ParaBoss Certified Advisors and the 2023 ParaBoss certified WEC providers under 'Find an advisor' on the ParaBoss website www.paraboss.com.au

WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE RAM PERFORMANCE

RAMping Up Repro workshops give sheep and wool producers the skills to improve ram health, performance and longevity in their commercial sheep enterprises.

Rams are a considerable investment for a woolgrowers' business; with the rams' performance strongly impacted by management and preparation for joining.

To help ensure that woolgrowers get the most from their rams, AWI in partnership with Zoetis Australia five years ago developed the hands-on RAMping Up Repro ½ day workshop. The half-day workshop is available across the country, in conjunction with leading deliverers, via AWI's state-based grower extension networks.

AWI National Extension Manager, Emily King, says the RAMping Up Repro workshop is designed to give producers skills across the key components of what drives ram performance, to help improve the profitability of woolgrowers' enterprises.

"As we all know, rams have an important function, and they require careful management and preparation that starts a few months out from the start of joining. The workshop focuses on timing of preparation of rams, as well as the practical aspects of preparing rams for joining," Emily said.

"Topics covered include nutrition and body condition, animal health and management, checking the 4Ts (teeth, toes, tackle and testicles), managing shearing, assessing for structural soundness, and all things in between."

Each participant is guided through a thorough pre-joining ram inspection by an accredited workshop deliverer and given the opportunity to increase their practical skills to undertake this in their own operation. This workshop is designed to give attendees the confidence to incorporate these skills into their own routine management, thus improving the performance of their rams.

More information:

- For more information on the RAMping Up Repro workshop, visit www.wool.com/workshops
- If you'd like the workshop to be run in your region, contact your state AWI grower extension network and let them know. Contact details are available at www.wool.com/networks



AWI's Ian Evans delivering a RAMping Up Repro workshop to the Loddon Valley BestWool/BestLamb extension group in September at Serpentine in Victoria. The workshop was hosted at Willera Merinos, which also generously provided rams for the pre-joining ram inspections.

RAMping Up Repro online

If you can't get to a RAMping Up Repro workshop, don't worry. The recording of a special RAMping Up Repro webinar organised in April 2020 by AWI's grower extension network in NSW, Sheep Connect NSW, is available to view online.

The hour-long webinar recording is a condensed format of the usual ½ day hands-on workshop. The webinar was presented by leading sheep veterinarian Dr Matt Playford of Dawbuts, who was instrumental in setting up and piloting the original RAMping Up Repro workshops.

While the free webinar isn't a substitute for the hands-on workshop, it still provides good advice on how to improve your rams' breeding efficiency. The webinar is available to all woolgrowers across the country at www.sheepconnectnsw.com.au/tools/84

FLY OR LICE PROBLEMS?

The magic eye sheepjetter since 1989

QUALITY CONSTRUCTION AND OPTIONS
GET THE CONTRACTORS' CHOICE

FEATURING...

- Incredible chemical economy
- Amazing ease 1500+ per hour
- Unique self adjusting sides
- Environmentally and user friendly
- Automatically activated
- Proven effective on lice as well as flies
- Compatible with all dip chemicals
- Accurate, effective application



ELECTRODIP
Industry proven since 1989

5730296

1800 146 892 | dipping@electrodip.co.nz - www.electrodip.com

BREEDING FOR NATURAL FLYSTRIKE RESISTANT MERINOS - PUBLICATIONS

AWI makes available publications about breeding for flystrike resistant Merinos on its website at www.wool.com/flystrikelatest/#breeding

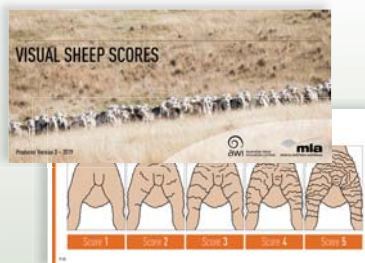
Here is a selection of the available publications:



PLANNING FOR A NON-MULESED MERINO ENTERPRISE

(March 2018)

This 16-page report outlines the key learnings from a number of wool-growing enterprises, from a diverse range of environments and Merino types, that have moved to a non-mulesed enterprise.



VISUAL SHEEP SCORES – PRODUCER VERSION

(Updated 2023)

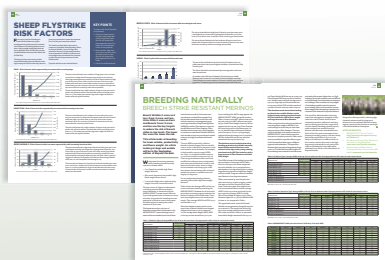
This 76-page pocket guide for commercial and stud breeders provides a standardised framework for assessing and scoring visual sheep traits, including breech and wrinkle traits.



AN INTRODUCTION TO MERINO VISUAL CLASSING & AN INTRODUCTION TO STOCKMANSHIP

(2015)

Two workshop packages comprising theory and practical activities that aim to develop participants' core skills.



SHEEP FLYSTRIKE RISK FACTORS

(March 2020)

BREEDING NATURALLY BREECH RESISTANT MERINOS

PART 1 – June 2020

PART 2 – September 2020

Each is a 2-page article from *Beyond the Bale*.

Plus an update in the June 2021 edition.

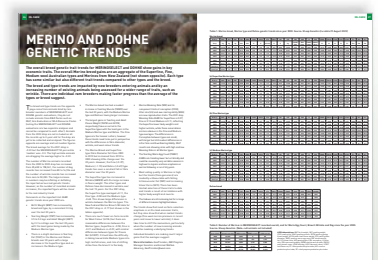


MERINO GENOMIC REFERENCE FLOCK

(June 2023)

One-page article from *Beyond the Bale*.

If you are a ram breeder and would like to be involved in the project (phenotyping and genotyping for flystrike), contact Ben Swain at ben.swain@bcsagribusiness.com.au



MERINO AND DOHNE GENETIC TRENDS

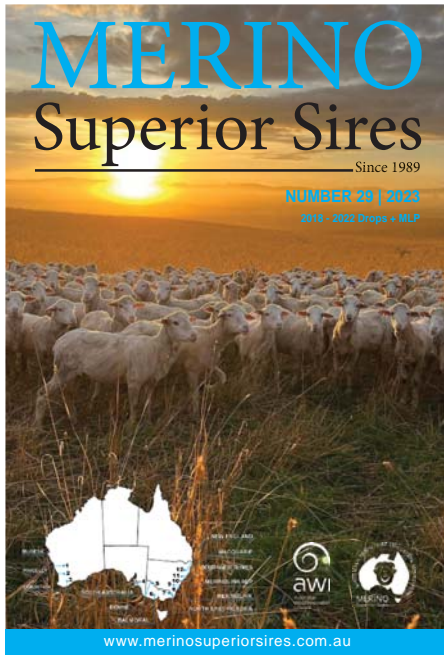
(Sept 2023)

Two-page article from *Beyond the Bale*.

The overall breed genetic trait trends for MERINOSELECT and DOHNE show gains in key economic traits..

MERINO SUPERIOR SIRES NO 29 NOW AVAILABLE

Results from 12 Merino Sire Evaluation sites operating around Australia, detailing the measured and visual performance of more than 430 of Australia's leading Merino sires, are available in the latest version of Merino Superior Sires.



Published annually by the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA), the current Merino Superior Sires is the 29th edition of this sought-after industry resource.

Merino Superior Sires publishes Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) for a wide range of both measured and visually classed traits that are collected as part of the rigorous and independent assessment program that AMSEA oversees through its network of industry managed sites. In addition, an independent Classer's Grade is also reported giving users an insight into the conformation and wool quality traits that are not expressed through an ASBV.

A key feature of Merino Sire Evaluation is that sites carry out assessments at the Hogget or Adult stage. This is significantly later compared to many on farm assessments and adds accuracy and robustness to the results published.

The current edition of Merino Superior Sires includes ASBVs and Classer's Grade for all sires entered in the Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project. These results have been informed by nearly two million data points from the 5,700 ewes collected in the MLP project so far. With the project having concluded at three of the five sites, and less than 12 months remaining at the final two sites, the results for these sires are of very high accuracy and demonstrate the genetics

of some of Australia's leading sires at the commencement of the project.

A key feature of Merino Superior Sires 29 is the Top 50 reports. These list the top 50 rams entered in Merino Sire Evaluation ranked for each of the current MERINOSELECT Indexes. In this year's Top 50 reports, close to half of the sires listed are young sires that are being published in Merino Superior Sires for the first time.

A number of additional reports have also been released exclusively via the Merino Superior Sires website in conjunction with the online and hardcopy Merino Superior Sires 29.

The Top 20 highly used sires has once again been published, along with a Top 50 for each of the five new MERINOSELECT Research Indexes. With the new Indexes currently in a consultation phase, the Top 50 reports are a great way for breeders to compare the old indexes to the new ones.

Merino Superior Sires No 29 is available for download at www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au or in hard copy by contacting merinosuperiorsires@bcsagribusiness.com.au

More information: Ben Swain, AMSEA Executive Officer, 0427 100 542, ben.swain@bcsagribusiness.com.au

AGRONOMY

RURAL MERCHANDISE

LIVESTOCK

FINANCE

INSURANCE

REAL ESTATE

WATER

WOOL

GOING FURTHER FOR WOOL

Nutrien Ag Solutions has the expertise and the resources to take your business further.

Visit your local branch today or discover more online at NutrienAgSolutions.com.au

Nutrien
Ag Solutions

GOING FURTHER®

ASSESSING, CLASSING AND SELECTING SHEEP

Assessing and selecting sheep to achieve optimal genetic gain involves a wide range of issues. This article works through the issues and breaks down some of the component topics that are often discussed.

Achieving optimal genetic gain involves issues ranging from understanding the impact the environment has on how sheep look and perform (phenotype), the need to reduce the impact of non-genetic variables so the phenotypic differences are due as much as possible to genetic differences (genotype), to having a breeding objective that is focused on what the market will be seeking in the next 10 years for a specific environment.

Some of the component topics regarding assessing, classing, and selecting sheep are outlined below.

Environment

- The environment plays an important role in setting the right breeding objective and sheep type.
- It is important for woolgrowers to understand how local conditions impact on their sheep and which sheep are best suited to it.
- Taking sheep from one environment to another may change how traits are expressed, ie fleece cut, micron, fleece rot, wrinkle, and worm resistance. Sheep bred for one environment may perform differently if moved to a different region, ie to high rainfall regions, high worm areas, or into wheat sheep and or pastoral regions.
- Growers may be better off buying rams that have been bred locally or are from a similar environment.
- What is fit for purpose in one environment or production system may not be fit for purpose for another.

Assessment protocols

- 44% of commercial woolgrowers class their own sheep and 25% of woolgrowers breed their own rams. A good understanding of the protocols and when to class sheep is important to optimising lifetime wool and lamb productivity.
- It is important to follow the protocols for good assessments; they are the same for both visual and objective assessments.
- Good protocols include tight lambing, identifying multiples and maiden progeny, maintaining as few management groups as possible for a drop/mob, the right

timing when to take each assessment, a good husbandry and animal health program, and maintaining best practice commercial condition scores.

- Evaluate within management groups as old as is appropriate.
- The older you class your sheep, the lower the impacts of confusing early life non-genetic effects.
- Rising 1-year-old assessments can be good for sire progeny testing, but when selecting individuals, rising 2-year-old assessments are better predictions of an individual's lifetime fleece productivity. Be cautious of post weaner or yearling fleece weights; think hogget or adult ages.
- Commercial reality often leads ram breeders to compromise on the protocols, so it is important to make informed decisions and be aware of the consequences.
- Breeders with good assessment protocols have breeding values that change less than breeders with poor assessment protocols. Over time, ram buyers work it out, it's buyer beware.

Assessments

- Visual assessments or raw data is the assessment of how an individual sheep looks and performs.
- Breeding values are an assessment of how that animal's progeny will look and perform.
- There should be a strong alignment between good visual and objective assessments when the protocols are followed. If not, something is amiss.
- The assessment method, be it visual, raw data or breeding value does not improve the quality of the animal, objective assessments are only a benchmark.
- Just because an animal has or does not have data does not make it a better animal. Data reduces risk at a cost.
- There are good sheep with figures and good sheep without figures. There are poor sheep with figures and there are poor sheep without figures.

- Visual assessments and classing require constant review, attention to the protocols, concentration, rechecking classing splits and staying consistent throughout the day.
- Objective assessments require constant review, attention to protocols' taring scales, choice of pregnancy scanner, choice of wool lab or WEC lab or consultants.
- Breeding values evolve with more data, that is how they work, changes are expected. The more data the more confidence that the estimated breeding value prediction is approaching the 'true' breeding value.

Classing

- Only 31% of woolgrowers use an external sheep classer.
- In MLP project analysis to date, there is a positive correlation between good structure and productivity.
- In some areas there are much higher restocker prices for sheep with good structure and frame.
- MLP project results show classers' overall grading is correlated with productivity which backs up results from the SARDI Selection Flock and QPlu\$ trial conducted in the 1990s.
- As 25% of woolgrowers don't class, a key message from the MLP project is to consider the merits of getting a sheep classer.
- Classers won't be replaced by data, people make good breeding decisions and sell rams, figures assist.
- Culling a moderate number of absolute culls before the main classing has little impact as they tend to be random across the other key economic traits.
- At the main classing, some woolgrowers believe in the need to get conformation and quality right first then productivity; others believe the need is to be productive first. Although the general view is that all traits need to be assessed together, one should not be ahead of the other.

- There is no perfect sheep, and every classing decision is a compromise based on the owner's or classer's overall objectives for the flock.

Benchmarking

- 25% of woolgrowers breed their own rams and there are a range of new ways to benchmark progress without collecting breeding values on a commercial progeny. They can include the DNA flock Profile and averaging the ASBVs of AI or purchased stud sires.
- Sheep with good figures doesn't mean they are good sheep, but sheep with poor figures are poor sheep.
- Sheep with good structure doesn't mean they are good sheep, but sheep with poor structure are poor sheep.

Breeding objectives

- Breeding objectives direct sheep selection decisions.

- A breeding objective defines what is predicted to be the most profitable future enterprise for a specific business and environment at an acceptable level of risk.

Indexes

- Indexes are a guide only and care is needed to get the production system and index assumptions right.
- Rarely do indexes include all the important traits.
- High indexing sheep can often have individual traits you want to cull.
- Indexes with highly heritable, highly visual traits should align well with visual assessments, however indexes with key traits that are lowly heritable and difficult to visually assess will not align as well. (These indexes are likely to include non-visual traits such as staple strength, worm resistance, weaning rate, genomics and soon to be footrot and methane.)

- If a trait is important enough to be in your index it is worth taking a direct assessment, rather than relying on indirect measures. Only when a trait is difficult or expensive to measure should correlations be the focus.
- There are woolgrowers that overly rely on objective assessments and indexes and others that don't rely on them enough.
- If there are too many high indexing 'culls' then the production system and index is not suited to your business. If the standard indexes don't match your enterprise or what is important in the next decade, check out custom indexes.

When the limitations of, visual assessments, raw data, objective assessments, breeding values and indexes are well understood, the fastest change can be made. The best long term breeding objective is then vital so that change is going in the right direction.

More information: Geoff Lindon, AWI Program Manager, Sheep Genetics & Animal Welfare Advocacy, Geoff.Lindon@wool.com

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT WOOLGROWERS CAN GET INVOLVED IN

AWI Flystrike Genomics Reference Flock



AWI has commenced a two-year project aimed at increasing the phenotypic and genomic information needed to establish a Flystrike ASBV, as well as adding data to the Merino Genomic Reference Flock.

The project aims to provide financial assistance to ram breeders collecting flystrike data on genotyped animals, so a genomically enhanced Flystrike ASBV can be established. In the short term, a Flystrike Research Breeding Value will be released, which breeders involved in the project will receive prior to the release of the ASBV.

The project is open until June 2025.

More information: Refer to page 26 of the June 2023 edition of *Beyond the Bale*. For further information and expressions of interest, please contact Ben Swain of BCS Agribusiness on 0427 100 542 or ben.swain@bcsagribusiness.com.au.

Breeding for improved Merino feet



Genetics of Foot health – calling for interested Merino ram breeders to participate in a new three-year research, development and extension project.

The project has three activities where woolgrowers can nominate to be involved:

Activity 1 - enter a semen sire into the central progeny test where progeny will be evaluated for foot traits including their susceptibility to ovine interdigital dermatitis (OID) and footrot (30 AI sires per year are being sought for 2024 and 2025).

Activity 2 - contribute eight cull rams per sire that will be challenged to OID and footrot at a research site in Victoria.

Activity 3 - 30 diverse ram breeders are being sought to take part in on-farm assessments of their 2023-, 2024- and 2025-drop progeny including, foot structure and shape, interdigital dermatitis and foot abscess.

The project aims to (i) generate heritability estimates for foot structure, footrot, ovine interdigital dermatitis and foot abscess, (ii) estimate the phenotypic and genetic correlations between all foot health and structure traits, and (iii) release a research breeding value and eventually an ASBV for resistance to footrot for Australian Merino sheep. Ultimately the project aims to develop guidelines for the Australian Merino industry on selection strategies to improve the foot health of sheep.

More information: For further information and expressions of interest, please contact Dr Amy Lockwood of neXtgen Agri International via amy@nextgenagri.com or Jarryd Krog, Murdoch University via jarryd.krog@murdoch.edu.au.

MLP PROJECT PROVING ITS VALUE



**Merino Lifetime
Productivity Project**

MLP QUICK FACTS

The AWI-funded MLP project is a \$13 million (\$8 million from AWI plus \$5 million from project partners), 10-year venture between AWI, the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA), nominating stud Merino breeders and site partners.

- Balmoral, Vic
Partner: Tuloona Pastoral Committee; Balmoral Breeders Association
- Pingelly, WA
Partner: Murdoch University/UWA Committee: Federation of Performance Sheep Breeders (WA Branch)
- MerinoLink, Temora, NSW
Partner: Moses & Son Committee: MerinoLink Inc.
- Macquarie, Trangie, NSW
Partner: NSW DPI Committee: Macquarie Sire Evaluation Association
- New England, NSW
Partner: CSIRO Committee: New England Merino Sire Evaluation Association

The MLP project is tracking the lifetime performance of 5,700 ewes as they proceed through four to five joinings and annual shearings.

A full suite of assessments will be undertaken including visual trait scoring, classer gradings, objective assessments of a range of key traits and index evaluations.

A unique and extensive dataset will result and be used to enhance existing Merino breeding and selection strategies, for both ram sellers and buyers, to deliver greater lifetime productivity and woolgrower returns.

To stay up to date with the latest MLP findings, visit www.wool.com/MLP. Subscribe to MLP updates via www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au/contact-us

While the data collection and analytical phase of the Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project is ongoing, the project has already provided substantial benefits to the Merino industry. For example, it has facilitated further research initiatives, improved genetic evaluation systems, provided early insights through project analysis, and encouraged positive social and practice changes.



Chris Bowman and Bill Walker, Wells Classer Trial, MerinoLink 2022.

The MLP project was initiated in 2015 with the aim of creating a unique Merino database that will be used to enhance existing breeding and selection methods at young ages, leading to increased lifetime productivity.

The data collection phase of the project spans from 2015 to 2024, while the analysis component commenced in 2022 and will continue until 2026. Once the complete dataset is available in 2024, the database will be used to address a wide range of both genetic and management questions for both commercial wool producers and their ram breeders.

However, the MLP project has already delivered significant advantages to the Merino industry. Read on for four of the immediate benefits.

Immediate benefit No.1: Enabler of additional industry research

The core MLP project has been instrumental in supporting various add-on projects funded by AWI and other entities. These additional projects involve a mix of MLP ewes and wethers, and the offspring of the ewes. Some notable projects include:

- The Murdoch University-led GEPEP project, assessing the viability of practical feed efficiency assessments using new ways of measuring and comparing feed intake, body composition and productivity.
- Through a GEPEP and a UNE-led MLA-funded project, four of the five MLP project sites will be assessed for methane production.
- The NSW DPI and MLA Donor Company project, evaluating Merino meat eating quality and its association with lifetime production traits.
- The CSIRO Birth Recording project, generating data to study neonatal fitness and survival.
- The Animal Health Australia, Murdoch University and Nextgen Agri project, focusing on the development of Australian Footrot Resistant breeding values.
- The CSIRO and AWI-funded Resilience project, spanning phases 1 and 2, understanding and predicting immune competence and its relationship to production traits.
- The Wells Classer Trial, exploring the effectiveness of sheep classers in predicting lifetime performance.



Macquarie 2017 Drop Super Ewe, weaned 13 lambs from 5 joinings, held here by AMSEA Executive Officer Ben Swain.

Immediate benefit No.2: A more robust genetic evaluation system for the Merino industry

The MLP project has annually collected data on visual and objective performance traits on 5,700 ewes that are the daughters of 134 industry AI sires. This data, combined with genotype information, has and continues to be routinely submitted to MERINOSELECT leading to enhancements in the estimates of breeding performance of all animals.

The substantial volume of data collected includes crucial yet challenging-to-measure traits such as reproduction, adult performance, and worm egg count. This wealth of data has significantly bolstered the Merino genomic reference population. With 40% of MERINOSELECT animals now undergoing annual genotyping, the advantages of higher accuracy breeding values are becoming more widespread. This has translated into greater rates of genetic improvement, which will have a significant positive impact across the industry into the future.

Additionally, the MLP reproduction data has played a pivotal role in the development of the genomically enhanced MERINOSELECT reproduction model, which was launched in 2022. And in 2023, the MLP dataset along with other key datasets was used to update the genetic assumptions such as heritability, genetic correlations and trait means used for calculating breeding values.

For index development, MLP has enabled a more evidenced based partitioning of emphasis between reproduction and adult wool production, leading to a more accurate evaluation system.

Immediate benefit No.3: Early analysis insights and data for development

During the data collection phase, MLP has provided early analysis insights from both the core and add-on projects. These insights have been shared through project newsletters, publications like *Beyond the Bale*, conferences, and various industry events. Some noteworthy insights include:

- The understanding that a one-size-fits-all culling approach for optimising reproduction in commercial flocks is unlikely.
- The renewed importance of including at least one late hogget or adult fleece record in a measurement program for predicting lifetime wool production.
- The variability in sire mating success rates among naturally mated teams of rams and the occurrence of twins born from different sires.
- That udder traits are heritable and are closely related to lamb survival.
- That selecting for eating quality has minimal impact on key production traits.
- The heritability of ewe survival is low but variable like reproduction. There is a moderate genetic relationship between improved survival and lower wrinkle.
- That skin pigmentation recorded at marking is highly related to lifetime skin pigmentation.
- Yields collected at the mid side reliably predict differences in fleece weight even under drought conditions.
- Whole fleece testing at two MLP sites showed that longer staple length at any fleece weight results in slightly higher yield.
- Trained pregnancy scan operators can reliably predict foetal age.

- The MLP project sheep have contributed to the development of new industry visual scores, such as teeth eruption, leg and feet scores, and udder scores.

Immediate benefit No.4: Social and practice change impact

The MLP project has played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration, networking and the exchange of ideas within the Merino industry. This industry is known for its diverse breeding philosophies, sometimes leading to scepticism and rivalry among advocates. MLP has brought together various viewpoints through site committees and an Industry Steering Committee, fostering greater understanding, mutual respect and collaboration.

Field days have been important gatherings where ram breeders, ram buyers, researchers and advisors can connect and gain firsthand insights into Merino production over time.

These events have attracted substantial support, with both in-person and online participation. Attendees have found the content valuable, and surveys conducted during these events have shown increased confidence in utilising MLP site results, which encompass raw data, adjusted sire means, breeding values, classer grades, visual scores, and indexes.

MLP has also introduced several ram breeding operations to sire evaluation for the first time, further enriching the genetic diversity of Merinos involved in across flock genetic evaluation.

Wrap up

Although the full dataset for the MLP project won't be accessible until 2024, it's important to acknowledge the substantial benefits that have already emerged during the project's progress. The database, its analysis, along with collective industry knowledge sharing will lead to strategies to improve Merino lifetime productivity.

We're excited to announce that on 29 May 2024, the MLP New England site will be hosting the project's final field day displaying MLP ewes. We wholeheartedly encourage industry stakeholders to attend this event, as it marks the completion of the lifetime dataset and the commencement of comprehensive project analysis. We look forward to welcoming you and celebrating this milestone together. We hope to see you there!

FINAL MLP New England Field Day

Save the Date

Wednesday 29 May 2024

Sheep displays, presentations, MLP
celebration dinner and more...

SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

PHOTO: FAO/Cristiano Minichiello

Australia's sustainability credentials and strong investment in R&D were highlighted at the first-ever Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation, which was hosted in September by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at its headquarters in Rome.

The purpose of the important three-day conference was to explore ways to address the global need to produce more livestock-sourced food and fibre with less environmental impact, while at the same time supporting rural livelihoods and providing more economic return.

Innovative projects and advances in knowledge from right across the world – Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania – were showcased at the conference.

Highlighting the many ways that 'sustainability' can be interpreted, the conference proceedings were organised and aligned with the 'Four Betters' of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31:

- **Better production:** encompassing management and use of feed and animal genetic resources, animal health and welfare, digitalisation and precision livestock farming.
- **Better nutrition:** presenting the state-of-the-art knowledge on the contribution of animal source food to food security and nutrition and healthy diets.
- **Better environment:** sharing information about good practices and initiatives to make optimal use of natural resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Better life:** including how to support small-scale livestock producers to improve their livelihoods and income through inclusive services and policies.

It was acknowledged that sustainable livestock systems play important roles in achieving each of these four aspirations.

Strong Australian representation at the conference

The interests of Australian livestock producers were strongly represented at the conference, with Acting Deputy Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Nicola Hinder PSM, speaking on behalf of the Australian Government at the main plenary sessions and several side-events.

Australian delegates at the conference also included representatives from AWI, Meat & Livestock Australia, CSIRO, the Department of



Australian delegates at the Sustainable Livestock Transformation conference.

Agriculture and Fisheries (Queensland), and the Australian National University.

During the main plenary sessions, Ms Hinder encouraged conference participants to look to the great work being done in livestock sustainability by the Australian Government, industry and producers.

"We look to adopt land management practices that manage water, soil, nutrients, waste and emissions; we establish grazing systems that incorporate pastures that are resilient to hotter and much drier or more variable climates; and we also drive innovation via genetic improvements," she said.

"Australia heavily invests in innovation, research and development because we recognise that it is important to improve livestock production, so that we can continue to produce more with less.



PHOTO: FAO/Giuseppe Carotenuto.

"Australia heavily invests in research and development because we know it is a powerful driver of production."

Nicola Hinder, Deputy Secretary of DAFF

"We are also continuing to focus on making our industries even more sustainable and that's by ways of investing in low emission feedstock technologies through the Methane Emissions Reduction in Livestock (MERiL) Program, and all of our livestock industries have set targets or have plans in place to further reduce emissions."

The FAO conference included several side events. Of note was an event at which panellists representing science and industry agencies (including CSIRO and MLA) outlined the challenges and opportunities of emerging technologies for livestock methane mitigation and productivity gains in grazing systems.

There are five projects involving AWI that have received funding under the Australian Government's MERiL Program. The projects are part of a broad strategy by AWI in collaboration with other industry bodies to accurately identify and assess ways to reduce and offset greenhouse gas emissions from grazing sheep.

Australia's approach to agricultural sustainability

Throughout the conference, Ms Hinder highlighted Australia's outcomes-based, commonsense approach to agricultural sustainability that is supportive of environmental, economic and social outcomes and is underpinned by science- and risk-based policies and regulations.

She recognised that all countries have diverse circumstances and that there is 'no one-size-fits-all' to agricultural sustainability; and

highlighted the role trade plays in delivering sustainable outcomes, particularly focusing on transparent, predictable, open and fair markets.

Ms Hinder said there was a need for governments across the world to reassess the role of subsidies in agriculture.

"We genuinely believe that there is a global need to reconsider approaches and repurpose environmentally harmful supports such as subsidies to greater investment in innovation, research and development," she said.

"Between 2019 and 2021, support towards the agricultural sector from 54 major economies reached US\$817 billion and that figure is steadily increasing. And while the support might be well intended, we do believe it doesn't deliver the intended results and instead stifles innovation, harms efficient farmers, decreases prices and causes environmental damage including through the overuse of inputs such as herbicides, fertilizers and water."

New FAO report on potential ways to reduce methane emissions

An important and comprehensive FAO report on methane emissions from livestock was launched at a side event during the conference.

Under the Global Methane Pledge, launched in 2021, 149 countries including Australia are

seeking to reduce their methane emissions by more than 30% by 2030, compared to 2020 levels. Importantly, the FAO report acknowledges the short-lived nature of methane in the atmosphere – with a lifespan of roughly a decade. Unlike other greenhouse gases, methane does not need to reach 'net zero' to achieve the Paris Agreement targets.

The report focuses on both the sources and sinks of methane gas, outlines how emissions can be measured, describes a broad sampling of mitigation strategies, and evaluates the kind of metrics that can be used to measure both emissions and their mitigation on the climate system.

The report lists 28 strategies, under the following four headings, that have the potential to decrease enteric methane emissions from ruminant production systems: Animal breeding and management; Feed management, diet formulation and precision feeding; Forages; and Rumen manipulation. Some of the strategies have been well researched while others are considered experimental. In all cases, the adoption potential of a given strategy depends on the production system and the regional conditions.

The 316-page report was put together by a multidisciplinary team composed of 54 international scientists and experts of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance (LEAP) Partnership hosted at FAO since 2012.

More information: www.fao.org

AWI's new Environmental Sustainability program

An important investment focus for AWI's on-farm research portfolio is in the company's new Environmental Sustainability program, which commenced at the beginning of this financial year.

Building on previous and on-going research by AWI, this new program will address both the industry's Wool 2030 plan and the Sheep Sustainability Framework, with a focus on environmental management and climate change adaptation.

"Sustainability on farm is complementary to the business of wool-growing, and addressing environmental sustainability issues such as biodiversity, soil health and pasture management, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation go together with increased productivity and profitability," said AWI General Manager, Research, Bridget Peachey.

"Woolgrowers are stewards of their land. Investment in this area is designed to solidify the eco-credentials of wool while maintaining animal productivity and ensuring the long-term profitability and sustainability claims of the wool industry."

Priority investment areas for this new program of investment will be in assisting woolgrowers to monitor, measure, and improve on-farm natural capital, projects to address increased drought resilience, and supporting woolgrower understanding and access to new income streams such as carbon and biodiversity markets.



Nicola Hinder speaking at the launch of the new FAO report on methane emissions.



Back Up Charlie – Flexible Sheep Movement System



Adjustable race width



BUC hock bars

Flexible BUC panels, that lengthen and shorten



New strap panels

What is Back Up Charlie?
Back Up Charlie is a flexible dual lane lead up race for sheep handling applications requiring consistent forward flow of sheep.

- Easily transportable
- Flexible to any sheep yard scenario
- Eliminates physically handling sheep into sheep handlers
- Can be assembled in a straight line or curved bugle format
- Creates a safe low stress environment for you and the sheep
- A labour saving system that increases sheep yard efficiencies
- The lightweight hock bars stop sheep turning around or backing up
- Proudly Australian owned, designed and made in Lockhart NSW
- Henty Machinery Field Days – 2016 Machine Of The Year WINNER!



PEST ANIMAL MONITORING USING FERALS SCAN

PHOTO: Matt Hoover Photo

FeralScan™ is a free, purpose-built, digital resource that Australian woolgrowers – plus other landholders, community groups and professional pest animal controllers – can use to record and access information about pest animal populations and their management in their local area.

Fast facts

- FeralScan™ is a community-designed, national, online platform that enables people to record and monitor pest animals (such as wild dogs, foxes, rabbits and feral pigs) in their local area.
- The platform provides a local area map of pest activity which can help woolgrowers and others collaborate to implement effective pest animal control.
- Free to use, FeralScan™ consists of an easy-to-use mobile phone app (which can be used without phone reception) and an interactive website map.
- The use of FeralScan™ is growing, with more than 46,000 individuals and 690 local groups across Australia registered to use the platform.
- FeralScan™ securely hosts pest monitoring and control data for thousands of farmers, land managers, pest controllers and biosecurity groups across Australia.
- It can rapidly send alert notifications to group members to quickly inform them of pest animal threats, such as a nearby wild dog sighting or attack.
- FeralScan™ offers the greatest benefits when it is used regularly, by lots of people, and when linked with relevant local groups.

“When we record wild dog activity in FeralScan™, the map shows where the problem areas are, and what time the wild dogs are coming through. FeralScan™ also notifies our landholders, and this helps people to be more aware of wild dog activity and helps them decide when to undertake control.”

Helen Lawson, Secretary of the Hargraves-Hill End Pest Control Group

Trusted app with proven benefits to the community

FeralScan™ national coordinator and invasive species specialist with NSW DPI, Peter West, says FeralScan™, which was launched nearly 13 years ago, is a robust and secure platform, now widely used to assist woolgrowers and others with pest animal monitoring and control.

“Continuous input from farmers and other users has delivered an important resource which informs pest animal management programs across the country. It is being used by farmers, land managers, communities, landholder groups, local government, pest control professionals and biosecurity groups, amongst others,” Peter said.

With more than 46,000 registered users across Australia, FeralScan™ is the nation's largest and most popular community platform for monitoring and recording pest animal activity and management.

Farmers, landholder groups, professional pest controllers and others use FeralScan™ to map sightings and evidence of pest animals, document attacks on livestock and other damage, and keep a secure record of on-farm pest control activities.

FeralScan™ is available as an interactive website and mobile phone app, both of which have been designed to be simple to use. Alert notifications (by email or through the app) can be sent to user groups to inform them quickly about local pest animal threats.

FeralScan™ is free to use and receives funding from AWI, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) through the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS).

AWI Program Manager Vertebrate Pests, Ian Evans, says FeralScan™ is a collaboration tool that can help woolgrowers and other local stakeholders monitor and stay informed about pest animals in their area, thereby assisting them to apply best practice control.

“Used effectively, FeralScan™ can provide woolgrowers and other community decision

makers with accurate and timely information about the distribution and problems associated with pest animals. This information is very valuable for guiding local management decisions on how and when to control pest animals,” Ian said.

“The more people in a local area that use FeralScan™, the more useful it becomes.”



The FeralScan™ platform comprises 14 species-based websites and a user-friendly phone app (in Apple and Android formats) that can be downloaded in the Apple or GooglePlay stores.

Recording pest animal activity using FeralScan™

FeralScan™ is a free resource that has been designed by landholders and is very easy to use. There are 14 sections covering invasive pest species in Australia, including sections for the key pest animals that affect woolgrowers: WildDogScan, FoxScan, RabbitScan, FeralPigScan and DeerScan.



What to record:

1. Sightings and evidence of pest animals (eg wild dog footprints, rabbit warrens)
2. Damage caused by pests, such as attacks (ie livestock predation) or soil erosion around rabbit warrens)
3. Control activities (eg baiting or trapping for wild dogs and foxes, rabbit warren ripping)
4. Photos of any of the above from a smartphone or a monitoring camera.

The FeralScan™ app uses the inbuilt GPS receiver in a smartphone to calculate the user's current location, enabling the user to obtain precise location data to accompany their observation; users can choose an alternative location using an interactive map. Information can be recorded using the app even in areas that have no mobile phone coverage.

"The number of users of FeralScan™ has increased markedly during the past two years, from 23,400 people in 2020/21 to 47,000 people by September 2023. This demonstrates a high demand for FeralScan™, which has become an increasingly essential resource for communities and pest managers."

The FeralScan™ database currently contains more than 415,000 reports and photos of pest animals across Australia, with the largest datasets being for the key pest animals that affect the businesses of woolgrowers: wild dogs, rabbits, foxes, feral pigs and feral deer.

Managing data securely and privately

FeralScan™ manages data from people securely and responsibly. It gives people a choice to share data with others, or to keep data private, and all sensitive information is kept secure.

"This gives people confidence in recording pests and pest control in their local area knowing that sensitive data is not disclosed to others," Peter said.

"Where FeralScan™ can also provide great benefit is when private groups are set up that include all land managers across a district.

"This ensures that people are able to record pest animal activity, and share information with their private group or community, to help guide pest management at the landscape scale.

"More than 690 private landholder, community and biosecurity groups across Australia have currently registered to use FeralScan™ for their local pest monitoring and management activities. The number of groups is steadily increasing."

How alert notifications happen:

1. Someone sees a pest, or evidence of a pest (eg an attack on livestock) in the paddock.
2. That person records that information into the FeralScan™ app while in the paddock.
3. That information is submitted and enters a secure database.
4. An alert notification is sent to the person's landholder group, professional pest controller, and a biosecurity officer.
5. Those people receive the alert, and can then act appropriately on it.

Support aids adoption

Peter has travelled across Australia since the platform's launch to consult with and support landholder and community groups to ensure they are getting the full benefits of the resource.

"We have helped communities use FeralScan™ across all states and territories, and will continue to assist anyone wanting to use this free resource," Peter said.

To increase the uptake and use of FeralScan™, there have been more than 350 workshops, online webinars, information sessions, field days and training events to major stakeholder groups across Australia, during the past five years alone. A series of short videos, including 'farmer-teaching-farmer' style videos has also been made available on the CISS YouTube channel to provide instruction and guidance to users and stakeholders.

More information: www.feralscan.org.au

Use of WildDogScan in the NSW Hunter region

Professional wild dog controllers operate throughout the Upper Hunter region of NSW in partnership with the Hunter Local Land Services (LLS) and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. They operate across private and public lands, using the WildDogScan component of the app to document their control activities.

Information they record is managed securely and is shared with the relevant local wild dog control associations operating in the area. Information recorded by landholders within those associations is also instantly shared with the professional wild dog controllers to alert them to recent wild dog activity, or attacks on sheep. As a communication tool, WildDogScan is becoming increasingly helpful.



AWI-funded North East NSW wild dog coordinator **Dave Worsley** demonstrating the use of the FeralScan™ app to record evidence of wild dogs on a farm.

VITAL MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICAL RESIDUES

It is critical that woolgrowers understand and comply with the regulatory limits when using chemical products on their sheep. Following the rules not only optimises the welfare of the sheep, but it also maximises the safety of the operator, the health of the environment and the positive eco-credentials of Australian wool in the marketplace.

Woolgrowers rely on a range of animal health products to protect their sheep from internal and external parasites such as worms, lice and blowflies. One consequence of using chemical products is the potential presence of residues in body tissues and wool for a period after the product's application.

For all registered veterinary products in Australia, there are in place regulatory time periods following the chemical's application that indicate when the residue that remains in or on meat and wool products will not exceed the maximum residue limit (MRL).

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) sets MRLs for all registered veterinary chemicals in agricultural produce. To find out the time constraints, always read the product label or view the APVMA or ParaBoss websites (see the 'More information' section below).

AWI Program Manager, Animal Wellbeing and Industry Resilience, Carolina Diaz, says the mandatory time constraints have been set to ensure lamb and sheep meat is safe to eat, wool and sheep are safe to handle, and wool scour effluent is safe for the environment.

"It is extremely important that woolgrowers comply with the mandatory time constraints following the application of chemicals to their sheep," Carolina said.

"As well as minimising any harmful impacts of chemicals on farm workers, it also helps establish the fibre's positive eco credentials amongst environmental rating agencies, governments, the textile trade and consumers.

"It's especially critical for woolgrowers to take extra care if they treat their sheep outside of their usual timetable or have had to change their shearing schedules."

"Effective chemical residue management ensures the wool is suitable for sale into markets that are increasingly concerned about the provenance of their products, including residues remaining on fibres."

Carolina Diaz, AWI Program Manager

What are the time constraints?

Sheep rehandling interval (SRI)

The SRI is the time between treatment and when wool or sheep can be safely handled without the need for protective clothing. If an SRI is included on a product label, this must be observed to protect those handling the sheep or wool, and to protect the environment in the case of wool processing residues. For some products, the SRI is short, only requiring the product to become dry on the sheep.

Wool harvest interval (WHI)

The WHI (equivalent to wool withholding period) is the time from application of a chemical to when the wool can be harvested (this includes crutching) to satisfy Australian environmental requirements. Most chemicals used to treat external parasites, such as sheep lice and sheep blowflies, bind to the wool grease rather than the fibre itself. The scouring process removes wool grease and most other contaminants at the same time, which can result in contaminated scour effluent and lanolin if the WHI is not adhered to.

You can estimate the pesticide residue levels on wool at shearing caused by lice or flystrike treatments by using the ParaBoss Wool Residue Tool at www.flyboss.com.au/flystrike-tools/woolres-tool

If a lice or fly treatment does not state a WHI or a SRI, then a default one-month period applies for mob treatments or for wound dressings. Flystrike treatments for individual sheep have a default withholding period of at least one month for wool.

Meat withholding period (WHP)

The meat WHP is the time from chemical application to when an animal may be slaughtered for domestic consumption. Although lice control and flystrike products are applied to the skin or wool of the sheep, the skin absorbs some of the product, or in the case of jetting or dipping for lice control, the sheep may ingest or inhale small amounts of the chemical. The specified WHPs are in place to ensure no detectable levels of these chemicals are left in muscle, fat or other body tissues.

The wool withholding period is equivalent to the wool harvest interval (WHI), see above.

Export slaughter interval (ESI)

In addition to the meat WHP, sheep producers need to be aware of the ESI. The ESI is the time from chemical application to when an animal may be slaughtered for export. Some products have a relatively long meat WHP or ESI. Take care when treating lambs to ensure this will not delay their planned sale.

A trade advice statement (such as an ESI) may not appear on labels of older registered veterinary products, however all new products now include a trade advice statement. If you cannot find the ESI on a product label, use the ParaBoss Products Search tool available on FlyBoss or LiceBoss (see 'More information' below).

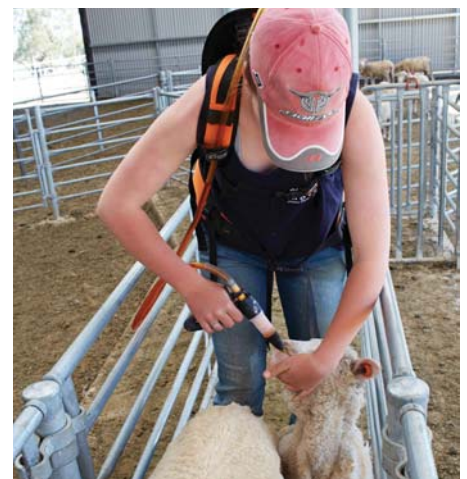
More information:

Find the SRI, WHI, WHP and ESI for registered parasite treatment products using the ParaBoss 'Product Search' tool, available at: www.paraboss.com.au/tools

APVMA website (Pesticides and veterinary residues): <https://apvma.gov.au/node/10806>

APVMA PubCRIS database search (chemical registration information): <https://portal.apvma.gov.au/pubcris>

Best practice information for applying flystrike chemicals: www.wool.com/demystify



When administering veterinary and agricultural chemicals, always read the label before use and follow the instructions exactly.

Best practice product application

To achieve the correct application of chemicals, woolgrowers should read product labels closely (and the material safety data sheet, if necessary) and take care with the preparation and dispensing of the product.

Equipment must be suitable and set up correctly. Ensure correct calibration of the delivery tools and apply the product to well-prepared and contained sheep. Operators must take time and care with every sheep.

To ensure the safety of the operator:

- Follow the safety direction on the label.
- Store chemicals correctly and securely.
- Wear protective gear.
- Carefully pour and mix chemicals.
- Have water, soap and towel ready to wash splashes off.
- Have clean-up equipment ready for spills.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Wash and store equipment straight after use.
- Change your clothes when you have finished chemical work.



Effective chemical residue management on farm underpins worker safety and helps maintain the clean reputation of Australian wool.

For all your wool,
livestock and
property needs



Contact your local AWN specialist by scanning the QR code, or visit awn.net



STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT SHEEP MANAGEMENT

This year for the first time, students from schools across Tasmania and Queensland joined their counterparts in South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia to gain practical hands-on sheep management experience by looking after teams of Merino wethers as part of state competitions.

Merino wether competitions were held this year in five states across the country with their aim to educate high school students about the commercial production of Merino sheep. The initiatives provide the students with a memorable 'hands on' experience covering a broad range of sheep and wool production skills.

Each school team looked after several wethers (from studs in their state) for about six months, with the students forming a close relationship with their wethers. This provides a unique and practical experience for the students, much different from classroom learning. Each school team then showed their wethers during a competition later in the year and were judged according to their meat and wool quality.

By attending training and the judging events, and by looking after their wethers, the students gain:

- practical, hands-on skills in sheep management
- a better understanding of sheep and wool production as a business
- contact with many aspects of the Merino sheep industry
- a chance to network with industry participants and other students
- an enjoyable experience with Merino sheep and the industry
- a positive perspective on a career with sheep and wool.

This year, a special set of learning resources was made available on AWI's Learn About Wool website to help teachers deliver an engaging and educational 10-week program about sheep and wool production to their students. The program is ideal for those taking part in the Merino wether competitions and it has been very well received by ag teachers.

The Merino wether competitions were initiated 13 years ago in South Australia by the SA Stud Merino Sheepbreeders Association (Merino SA), with similar competitions having since been introduced in New South Wales and Western Australia. Following the success of these three initiatives, this year students in Tasmania and Queensland were given the chance to take part in their own state competitions. A similar program is planned for Victoria next year.

All the competitions are supported by AWI, as well as individual studs, schools, teachers and students.

South Australia



The winning team (top) from Unity College from Murray Bridge and the judging of the competition (above).

There was a large turnout of the next generation of woolgrowers – about 400 students from 39 schools – who participated in the 13th annual **School Merino Wethers Competition** organised by the SA Stud Merino Sheepbreeders Association (Merino SA) and held in September. 75 teams of three wethers (225 wethers) were brought into the Stud Sheep Pavilion at the Adelaide Showgrounds during the Royal Adelaide Show.

It was a hugely successful event with all the students providing a fantastic display of professionalism and dedication to the industry. As well as providing the students with a hands-on experience of commercial sheep and wool production, the competition enabled the students to have contact with many aspects of the Merino sheep industry from stud and commercial breeders, stock agents, wool buyers, through to processors. Unity College of Murray Bridge was the overall winner.

New South Wales



During judging at this year's NSW event in Dubbo.

In NSW, 58 schools from across the state participated in the **School Merino Wether Challenge**, which was organised in partnership with the NSW Stud Merino Breeders Association, the Dubbo National Ram Sale Association and Bralca. There were more than 500 students from right across NSW and 348 wethers involved in the program this year. The challenge involved each school being allocated six wethers from the same age drop from Egelabra Merino Stud.

Training days were held throughout the course of the six-month challenge to provide ongoing assistance to school staff and students in caring for their team of wethers, as well as helping to develop industry skills and knowledge. At the end of the six months, in August, students converged on the Dubbo Showground where they presented their wethers for judging on commercial value. Deniliquin High School won the overall prize, followed by Parkes High School and Coleambally Central School.



The winning team from Deniliquin High School and during judging at this year's NSW event in Dubbo.

At the event, students also had the opportunity to participate in activities to learn more about sheep handling, scanning and nutrition, and wool harvesting, while also hearing from a careers panel about the wide range of opportunities in the industry. A young judges' competition also enabled students to put their skills to the test.

Western Australia



Western Australian College of Agriculture Harvey was the overall winner.

Now in its eighth year in WA, teams from five schools and colleges took part in the AWI Future Sheep Breeders Challenge that was organised in partnership with the Stud Merino Breeders' Association of WA (Merino WA). The judging took place at the end of September at the Perth Royal Show, with support from the Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia. Teams looked after six wethers but showed four at judging. The overall winning team of the Future Sheep Breeders Award was WA College of Agriculture Harvey.

Tasmania



The winning Scottsdale High School team and during judging of the Tasmanian event.

The inaugural School Merino Wether Challenge in Tasmania was established by AWI this year in partnership with the Stud Merino Breeders Association of Tasmania. The Challenge kicked off in March and the response and engagement from schools across Tasmania was overwhelming. There were 13 schools from across the state that participated during the six months. During that time in which the students looked after the wethers, experts visited the schools to provide knowledge about the care of the sheep and share their expertise on the Merino breed.



The sheep in the competition were donated by 13 separate woolgrowers from across the state, with the grand champion team donated by Roger Bignell of Kananga Pastoral at Waterhouse.

Eleven of the schools participated in the program's concluding competition which was hosted by the Midland Agricultural Association at the Campbell Town Showgrounds at the end of September. It was a great day due to all the hard work and support of students, teachers and sponsors. There were three categories being judged on the competition day: Lilydale High School were awarded the highest carcass value, Scottsdale High School were awarded the highest fleece value, and the best presented group went to Bothwell High School. Scottsdale High School were also awarded the Grand Champion prize for the highest scoring team overall.

Queensland



The winning Oakey State High School wethers.

The inaugural School Merino Wether Challenge in Queensland was held this year in partnership with the Queensland Merino Stud Sheepbreeders Association. The sheep were supplied by Peter and Linda Hacker of Roselea Merino Stud at Muckadilla. The schools looked after the sheep from late March until mid-August when the program's concluding competition was held at the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka), attended by five schools (with one school taking two teams). The competition gave the students and teachers valuable insights into Merino sheep and their wool because, previously, most of the students had only interacted with British breed type sheep. At the Ekka, the students learnt more about Merinos at an information session organised by Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries at which Michael Allpass from Agforce presented, and from competition judge Peter Sealy of Elders. Oakey State High School was the grand champion of the competition. During the program, AWI provided valuable resource material for the teachers to implement in their Ag programs.

AWI INDUSTRY RELATIONS OFFICERS: HERE TO HELP

Meet the four AWI Industry Relations Officers that operate in Australia's largest wool-growing states. They each manage AWI's on the ground relationships and engagement with woolgrowers and wool industry networks in their state. You can contact them if you want to share your thoughts or need some input regarding wool-related activities and events in your state.

New South Wales



Kristen Frost

Based near Crookwell, Kristen commenced in the role in April. Kristen grew up in Crookwell and has been around sheep and wool her whole life. She is a woolgrower and a partner in a Merino Stud. Kristen also has a background in rural and agricultural communications, most recently as National Sheep and Wool Writer at Fairfax Agricultural Media.

kristen.frost@wool.com
0427 393 601

Victoria



Holly Byrne

Based near Bendigo, Holly commenced in the role in July. Holly grew up on her family's sheep and cropping property near Axedale, where her family still farms. She undertook a wool-classing certificate during her final years at school, starting her career in wool with a short stint in a bulk wool handling facility before then continuing a decade long career working in shearing sheds across central Victoria and Southern NSW.

holly.byrne@wool.com | 0459 326 091

South Australia



Shannon Donoghue

Based near Jamestown, Shannon commenced in the role in April. Shannon grew up on a sheep farm at Naracoorte. She went straight into the sheds after finishing school and has a background in wool classing and wool handling training with SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc. Shannon also completed AWI's Breeding Leadership course in 2022.

shannon.donoghue@wool.com | 0459 293 919

Western Australia



Jodie King

Based in Darkan, Jodie commenced in the role in September. Jodie has a family background in Merino wool and sheep studs. With her husband Nathan, Jodie helped set up the successful Darkan Sheepfest event. She and her husband have a small property at Darkan where they are setting up a Poll Merino stud for their teenage daughters.

jodie.king@wool.com
0474 875 222

AWI GRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAM 2024 UPDATE

PHOTO: skodonnell

After another successful year for graduates in the AWI Graduate Training Program, AWI has selected the next graduate for the 2024 Program who in March next year will embark on their career in the Australian wool industry with AWI.

First launched in 2018, the AWI Graduate Training Program provides the successful applicant with the opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the wool supply chain from fibre to fashion.

Beginning in March each year, the 18-month program enables the graduate to gain experience in all areas of the AWI business including on-farm and off-farm R&D through to marketing, including global exposure to the wool supply chain through international rotations to pivotal markets in Asia and Europe.

Welcoming the new graduate for the 2024 program



Oskar Mitchell, who joins the AWI Graduate Training Program in March 2024

The sixth intake of candidates saw competition for the 2024 program at its highest. The calibre of candidates that applied were once again outstanding. AWI hopes to see those who weren't successful in this recruitment process thrive in other areas of the industry in the future.

Congratulations go to Oskar Mitchell who was the successful candidate for the 2024 program.

Growing up on the family farm at Cowra in the Central West of NSW, Oskar was exposed to all things sheep from an early age. His passion for agriculture carried through to high school and onto the University of Sydney where he studied a Bachelor of Science/Advanced Studies – Agriculture, majoring in Animal Production and Resource Economics.

While completing his degree, Oskar worked on developing his professional experience in agriculture, spending time working with Advantage Grain as a Junior Analyst, and more recently he has been completing an internship through the Tertiary Pathways program at Rabobank's Sydney Office.

Program provides valuable international experience



George Lehmann and Chris Watt (far right of picture) with other AWI staff members and consultants at The Woolmark Company stand at the ITMA textile and garment technology trade show in June in Milan, Italy.

Two graduates from previous intakes into the program, George Lehmann from the NSW Riverina and Chris Watt from Central West NSW, have been completing their international rotations with AWI during the past five months.

They have worked in the offices of AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company in China, Japan and Europe, immersing themselves in the global wool supply chain. George and Chris have reflected on their time overseas.

George Lehmann:



George Lehmann speaking at the Congress of the International Wool Textile Organisation in May in Kyoto, Japan.

"It has been a great honour to represent AWI and Australian woolgrowers on the global stage during my international rotations as part of the Graduate Training Program. The opportunity to engage with the international offices and markets has proven invaluable for my learning and professional development," George said.

"I will take back with me a significantly enhanced knowledge base compared to when I first arrived. Perhaps the thing that I am most proud of is just how well our international teams are representing our great fibre. Across borders, they demonstrate an unwavering commitment to advancing our industry's interests, keeping our fibre front of mind for brands and consumers alike.

"I think the future is very bright for wool."

Chris Watt:



Chris Watt at knitwear manufacturing giant Xinao Textiles in China with AWI technical officer Olina Wang (left) and Xinao general engineer Mr Lu Weiguo (right).

"My time in the AWI Graduate Training Program has been an incredibly rewarding experience," Chris said.

"Through rotations in each of AWI's major business units and in international markets including Italy, France, England, China, and Japan, I have had the opportunity to learn and work throughout the wool supply chain.

"This experience has been an invaluable professional development opportunity, and I'm excited to take what I've learnt and continue working in and contributing to the Australian wool industry."

The graduates on the 2023 intake into the program, Kate Rice and Harrison Dunning, this month finish up their third rotations within the company in Australia, before they head overseas early next year to complete their international rotations.

JUDGING CHAMPIONSHIPS FOSTER YOUNG TALENT

AWI supports the National Merino Fleece and Merino Sheep Young Judges Championships to help bring through the next generation of young judges and Merino breeders.

Continuing its backing of previous years, AWI was once again the national supporter of both the National Merino Fleece Young Judges Championship and the National Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship, run by Agricultural Shows of Australia and held this year at the Launceston Royal Show in October.

"AWI sponsors the events to support young people within the industry to further their skills through visual selection and appraisal of wool and sheep. By providing the opportunity to broaden their experiences and knowledge base through competition, the finalists become ambassadors for the wool industry," AWI CEO John Roberts said.

The Young Judges Championships are for people aged between 15 and 25 and help to train the next generation of young judges and livestock breeders. To participate in the National Championships, the competitors must first have won their own state finals.

Participants demonstrate their skills in communication, public speaking and breed and industry specific knowledge. They also get a chance to strengthen career opportunities through networking with colleagues and key industry stakeholders.

Chairman of Agricultural Shows Australia, Dr Rob Wilson, underscored the competitions' significance: "These young talents represent the future of agricultural shows, crucial for the continual enhancement of Australia's food and fibre. This national competition offers an invaluable chance to hone skills against the best in the field," he said.



Concentration and skills on show during the Merino Fleece Young Judges Championship.

National Merino Fleece Young Judges Championship



Winner Tess Runting from Victoria.

The National Merino Fleece Young Judges Championship was won by Tess Runting (24) of Mount Eliza in Victoria, ahead of Monte Barnes (22) from Hay in NSW in second place, with Cody Jones (19) of Leighton in South Australia in third.

The other finalists were Libby Hardingham (16) of Murradup in WA, Sym Hood (20) of Longford in Tasmania, and Angus Hacker (20) of Roma in Queensland.

Competitors were required to judge two classes of four fleeces each (eight in total) and then explain their placing of one of the classes.

"The win is pretty special as it's my last national finals. I am proud that I can take the win home to inspire more young people," said Tess Runting representing Victoria.

"My journey into agriculture started in high school where I had some great mentors and it's come full circle as I'm now a farm manager at Flinders Christian Community College where I'm so lucky to be involved and help students in the same way I was.

"As a kid, junior judging can seem nerve racking, but I'm able to say to my students, 'I've done it and it's taken me all over the country and given me amazing opportunities'. It's also allowed me to bring back ideas that I now use in my local shows, Pakenham and Red Hill."

National Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship



Winner Lindsay Brown from NSW.

Lindsay Brown (22) of Armidale in NSW won the National Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship ahead of runner-up Zoe Wilson (20) from Ouyen in Victoria, and James Hillier (22) of St George in Queensland in third place.

The other finalists were Cody Jones (19) of Leighton in South Australia, Sym Hood (20) of Longford in Tasmania, and Tamara Keens (18) from Wembley in WA.

Competitors were required to judge four rams and four ewes. They then had to explain their placing of either the rams or ewes.

"Being given the opportunity to compete at this elite level in another state is an honour. I'm just grateful to be a part of it and learn so much along the way," said winner Lindsay Brown representing NSW.

"I've been involved in junior judging since high school and building towards winning at [the state championships at] Sydney for a few years so that was amazing, but the biggest thing I've gained is public speaking skills and the confidence to help me refine where I want to go in the sheep and wool space."

More information: www.agshowsaustralia.org.au



AWI WORKING TO INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN WOOL

The Woolmark logo attached to a wool product provides customers with an assurance of quality for the product, thereby helping persuade shoppers to purchase it. In this way, the **Woolmark Licensing Program** is helping to support and increase the demand for wool – see page 54 for details.

'WEAR WOOL, NOT FOSSIL FUEL' CAMPAIGN RETURNS

Following the success of last year's powerful 'Wear Wool, Not Fossil Fuel' marketing campaign, AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company is rerunning the campaign to amplify and reinforce to consumers the message that synthetic fibres are made from oil, whereas wool is a natural, renewable, biodegradable and the most recycled apparel fibre.

HIGHLIGHT RESULTS FROM LAST YEAR'S CAMPAIGN

92 million
video views (156% of goal)

643 million
impressions (181% of goal)

542,000 clicks
to the Woolmark website

"Excellent"
score for ad effectiveness

The rerunning of The Woolmark Company's environmentally focused global campaign 'Wear Wool, Not Fossil Fuel' follows the amazing reception and strong and positive results that the campaign achieved last year.

The campaign video was watched an incredible 92 million times during period of the campaign and many more since. The digital campaign received 643 million impressions (which is the number of times the campaign advert was seen online or on outdoor advertising such as on billboards, bus shelters and 3D digital screens) and there were 542,000 online click-throughs to the campaign page on the Woolmak.com website.

Research shows that the campaign has been successful with surveyed consumers saying that it was very impactful:


- 79% said that the advert made them think twice about the environmental impact of their clothes.
- 78% said that, because of the advert, they would consider materials/fabrics when making a purchase decision regarding clothes.
- 80% said that, because of the advert, they believe wool is gentle on the environment.

Given these impressive results, The Woolmark Company is rerunning the campaign in key Northern Hemisphere markets during their winter.

The aim of the campaign is to educate the public about the harmful impact of synthetic fibres on the environment, and that choosing a natural fibre such as wool can help reduce the fashion industry's environmental footprint on the planet.

Featuring a series of powerful visual messages that highlight the link between fabrics made from synthetic fibres and the crude oil used in its manufacture, the campaign centres around a 60-second hero film.

The impactful film shows people struggling to escape an oil-filled swimming pool, which is a dramatic visual based on the insight that every 25 minutes an Olympic pool's worth of crude oil is used to produce synthetic clothing (which amounts to almost 350 million barrels a year). The video then sees the people wearing wool clothes, wandering with



WEAR
WOOL

NOT
FOSSIL
FUEL

WOOLMARK

SYNTHETIC CLOTHING IS MADE FROM FOSSIL FUEL.
MERINO WOOL IS A NATURAL, RENEWABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE FIBRE.

freedom through forests, streams and meadows – a natural paradise – which emphasises the natural attributes of the wool they are now wearing.

This time around, the campaign is being promoted via digital and social media, including high attention video environments such as YouTube and connected TV (CTV) ie delivered to a smart TV via a streaming service, along with outdoor advertising in the US, UK and France such as at stations on the New York City Subway, London Underground and Paris Metro.

More information: www.woolmark.com/wear-wool

WOOLMARK ENCOURAGES ALL TO 'FILTER BY FABRIC'

To help shoppers to easily identify authentic wool products, The Woolmark Company has launched a new initiative to encourage brands and retailers to include clear and honest product names that accurately communicate fabric composition, and to incorporate a filter on their online stores that allows shoppers to easily search for apparel by fabric type.

A recent YouGov survey showed that ambiguous terms – such as 'fleece' and 'silky' – confuse consumers and make it difficult for them to readily identify what a fabric is really made from, especially when synthetic materials are used to mimic natural fibres in clothing.

In response, AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company has launched the 'Filter by Fabric' campaign to help end this confusion, urging all fashion brands, retailers and publishers to commit to clear, honest product names that accurately communicate fabric composition.

The initiative also encourages them to modify the functionality of their online stores so that consumers can search for apparel by fabric type (eg wool) when shopping.

The YouGov study – comprising 4297 adults in UK, US and France – revealed 77% of people believe clothing brands and retailers should clearly disclose fabric composition. However, this vital information is often hidden, misrepresented, or undisclosed.

The same research found that 60% of respondents would find sustainable choices easier if stores included fabric in the product name or allowed customers to filter by fabric.



Online stores often enable the shopper to filter the available products by options such as colour and size; the Filter by Fabric campaign encourages retailers to enable online shoppers to also filter by fabric.

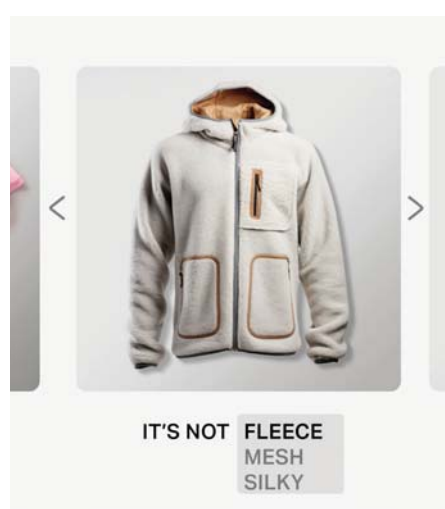
Sign the pledge

The Woolmark Company is encouraging people to sign a pledge (at www.filterbyfabric.com) that urges the fashion industry to take action, in the following ways:

1. **STOP** using misleading language on product names.
2. **START** adopting accurate descriptions that cite full fabric composition for all product listings.
3. **OFFER** a filter to allow shoppers to easily sort by fabric type.

Fashion brands, retailers and publishers can also take a pledge at www.filterbyfabric.com, by expressing their commitment to add honest fabric descriptions to all apparel product names and adopt a Filter by Fabric option.

Global fashion giants such as Benetton (see page 44) and leading international designers such as Saul Nash (see page 52) have already joined the Filter by Fabric campaign, as have leading Australian brands Iris & Wool, Merino Country and Albus Lumen, amongst others.



Ambiguous terms, such as 'fleece' and 'silky', applied to product descriptions by brands and retailers can make it difficult for consumers to understand what fibre the product is actually made from.

Choosing natural fabrics should be easier

AWI CEO John Roberts says by focusing on fabric consideration as a vital aspect of consumer purchases, the Filter by Fabric initiative aims to accelerate the fashion industry's movement toward transparency and sustainability, which will also benefit the wool industry.

"We know wool is natural, sustainable and biodegradable but it is also important to call out the fossil fuel-derived fabrics to prevent consumer deception," John said.

"This simple, lasting action could initiate a significant transformation in the industry, encouraging transparency, responsibility, and mindful consumerism. Educating consumers is crucial for them to understand the importance of the information on apparel labels, similar to how they interpret food nutrition labels or appliance energy ratings."

More information: www.filterbyfabric.com

SIGN THE PLEDGE

The Filter by Fabric initiative aims to help consumers focus on the environmental impact of a product's fabric and make more informed and sustainably conscious purchasing decisions.

Consumers and retailers can sign their pledges at www.filterbyfabric.com

The consumer pledge: "I believe in the power of informed choices to create real change. I urge all brands and retailers to step up to adopt a Filter by Fabric option and add honest fabric descriptions to all apparel product names."

The retailer pledge: "We commit to offering a Filter by Fabric option and including clear fabric descriptions in product names. Together, we can drive positive change, help consumers make more informed choices and reduce the fashion industry's environmental impact."

IWTO PRESIDENT: WOOL'S ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY

Klaus Steger was elected President of International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) in May. In this interview for *Beyond the Bale*, Mr Steger outlines the challenges and opportunities for the wool industry in promoting wool as a sustainable fibre.



IWTO President, Klaus Steger.

What is the foremost challenge that the global wool industry faces over the next few years?

Wool products risk receiving 'D' or 'red light' type labels for environmental impact, if we do not work now to counteract the issues in measuring sustainability. European Union (EU) textile legislation is currently being developed which could lead to a situation in which consumers will be told that synthetic, fossil fuel-based fibres are good for the environment, and natural fibres are not.

This textile legislation, and the measurement assessment underpinning it, is a global first and is driven by the EU's well-intentioned desire to put fast fashion out of fashion. It is due to be finalised in 2025. Other countries often follow what the EU puts in place, to continue trading within the common market. So what happens in Europe could well spill over elsewhere, in the near future.

How are the natural fibre industries addressing these regulatory challenges in the EU?

The Make the Label Count (MTLC) coalition, whose founding members include AWI alongside IWTO and other global natural fibre organisations, is tackling the measurement methodology that underpins the developing sustainability legislation in the EU. This methodology, the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF), is flawed and disadvantages natural fibres, and MTLC is working to improve this with lawmakers in the European Commission, European Parliament, European Council and with representatives of EU member states.

Lawmakers are under pressure to make major changes, and without the messages from MTLC,

they will only hear what the big retail, chemical, and plastics lobbies want them to hear. As you can imagine, all of these are incredibly well-funded and powerful, and have no concern for wool or any other natural fibre.

What problems do synthetic textiles create in the environment?

The world is awash in microplastic pollution, directly related to synthetic textiles. Landfills are filling with unsold and second-hand clothing – the vast majority of which is cheap synthetics. Most of this is shipped outside of Europe into India or African countries, the equivalent of sweeping it under the rug. Microplastic pollution threatens marine life, and has been linked to the potential for human health risks such as lung inflammation, metabolic disturbance, endocrine disruption, and brain development.

Wool offers a natural, proven biodegradable alternative to synthetics.

How important is it that the wool industry markets its eco-credentials?

It is absolutely vital to ensure a sustainable future for all parts of the wool pipeline, from farm to retail floor.

A key part of this is counteracting the negative perceptions surrounding agriculture and livestock. Today's largely urban consumers will rarely if ever set foot on a farm. On the contrary, they hear many negative stories about 'industrial farming', the negative impacts of fertilisers, the loss of bees. Yet sheep farms can, among other things, store carbon, provide a renewable raw material for clothing and other natural textiles, and increase biodiversity. Not to mention that sheep may also provide meat and milk.

Consumers are at the front line of change. As with the slow food movement, once consumers are more aware of the benefits of wool and the consequences of choosing synthetic textiles, the shift back to natural will gain more traction.

What challenges and opportunities are there for wool industry marketing?

Wool is up against massive marketing budgets, delivering an avalanche of very well constructed messages to people – even those within the fashion and textile industry – who don't want to understand the fundamental differences between mined and farmed products.

Wool marketing needs to leverage its inherent 'natural, sustainable' messages – often brands

without an ounce of wool use pastoral imagery, even with sheep, in their marketing. Or, as the recent Woolmark Filter by Fabric campaign points out, they use terms that bring to mind natural fibres ('silky', 'fleece', etc). There can only be one reason for this – because natural sells. That is why the work to reconnect farms with nature is so important.

Every actor in the wool supply chain has a role to play in promoting wool – starting with the woolgrower measuring and promoting their environmental credentials. Wool must punch above its 1% market share to get its messages heard. The Woolmark Company is leading the charge for the wool industry globally with its marketing efforts. We need everyone involved with wool to engage wherever possible.

What role does IWTO have in addressing these challenges and opportunities?

As an industry body, IWTO is uniquely positioned: it is the only organisation representing the global wool industry, and the only organisation representing any natural fibre at the global level.

IWTO began to do its homework on wool sustainability 10+ years ago, when the issue first became apparent. This work is now paying off: thanks to the diligence of IWTO members, including substantial support and investment by AWI, the wool industry has a catalogue of scientific evidence in support of wool's sustainability – and more to come. The science alone, however, does nothing on its own: it must be brought to the attention of policymakers, legislators, and other stakeholders. This is very likely the most important task IWTO has faced in its 93 years.

IWTO is firmly committed to supporting marketing partners like The Woolmark Company and the Campaign for Wool and amplifying their marketing efforts to business and consumers. IWTO will continue to back the Make the Label Count campaign to improve PEF and ensure just regulations for natural fibres.

Mr Steger is also Chief Executive Officer for Hoftex Group AG, and Chief Executive Officer of ERWO Holding AG, owner of Südwole Group GmbH. IWTO elects a new President every two years.

More information:

www.iwto.org

www.makethelabelcount.org



CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL PROMOTION IN THE UK

The Campaign for Wool's Wool Month in the UK returned this year during October to promote the natural and sustainable benefits of the fibre to consumers.



Campaign for Wool window display in London.

The Campaign for Wool, initiated by the then HRH The Prince of Wales in 2010, continues to raise awareness amongst consumers about the unique, natural, renewable and biodegradable benefits offered by the fibre.

Since its inception, the Campaign has been instrumental in educating consumers about the versatility of wool, and reconnecting them with its myriad uses – from luxurious fine Merino wool apparel through to beautiful hardwearing interior products for the home.

Each year, the Campaign for Wool in the UK uses Wool Month to amplify wool's eco and environmental messages, collections, product launches, events and activities from brands, retailers and crafters.

Extending Wool Month projects to Italy and Japan saw the Campaign collaborate with Vitale Barberis Canonico to celebrate its 360-year anniversary along with Isetan Mitsukoshi in Tokyo, launching a new celebratory fine Merino wool cloth. Canada, once again, supported Wool Month with their own series of events and retail activities.

With utility bills expected to rise again this winter and governments advocating for energy-saving measures, the ability to keep yourself warm by wearing wool, sleeping under wool, and insulating the home with wool – as well as the availability of the wide range of wool products to buy – were highlighted during Wool Month.

More information: www.campaignforwool.org

SNIPPETS FROM WOOL MONTH UK



Wool Month launch in London

Wool Month kicked-off with a two-day pop-up event, hosted by Chairman of the Campaign for Wool Sir Nicholas Coleridge (pictured), showcasing beautiful wool products available in stores. There were more than 100 brands on display at the event, highlighting how truly versatile wool really is.



Brands promoting wool at retail

During Wool Month, brands and retailers across the UK promoted wool in their stores and on their digital and social channels. Pictured here is British menswear brand Charles Tyrwhitt which promoted its Woolmark-certified Merino wool knitwear in its 32 stores across the UK.



Brora's Campaign for Wool jumper

UK slow fashion brand Brora held a jumper design competition for students at the University of Dundee. The winning student Isobelle Brogan designed this 100% pure new wool jumper crafted in seafaring shades of indigo and aquamarine, which is available to buy from Brora.



AW Hainsworth's 8 benefits of wool

British textile manufacturer AW Hainsworth, visited at the start of Wool Month by the Princess of Wales, created and shared on social media eight short videos that each highlighted a benefit of wool: 100% natural, biodegradable, a natural insulator, renewable, slowing down fast fashion, breathable, good for sleep, durable and resilient.

THE RISE OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION IN CHINA

PHOTO: d3sign

Sustainability continues to be a dominant trend for textile and fashion industries across the world as they seek to improve the environmental and social impacts of their sourcing and manufacturing. This trend very much applies to China, the largest customer of Australian wool, which has made positive steps to be more sustainable.

As one of the world's largest textile and apparel producers, China plays a crucial role in shaping the future of sustainable fashion. This is especially relevant to the Australian wool industry because China is its most important customer, buying about 80% of all Australian wool for processing, with about half that wool subsequently being bought at retail in China.

AWI Country Manager for China, Jeff Ma, says there continues to be a growing interest in sustainable fashion in China, like in many other parts of the world, and Australian wool is well placed to take advantage of this trend.

"In recent years in China, there has been more and more attention paid to addressing the environmental challenges in the textile and apparel industry," Jeff said.

"The emergence of sustainable fashion and consumption in China can be attributed to a combination of the Chinese Government's shift in economic policy and textile industry strategy, and manufacturers and brands responding to growing consumer concerns for the environment.

"Collaborative efforts between the Chinese Government, industry stakeholders and a growing mass of conscious consumers is playing a vigorous role in driving sustainable fashion's success in China."

Jeff Ma, AWI Country Manager for China

Chinese Government shift in economic focus

In recent years, China has shifted its emphasis away from *quantity* of economic growth towards *quality* of growth as a key guiding policy principle. The country's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) focusses on "high-quality development" which it defines as innovation-driven, balanced, green, open and inclusive growth.

China aims to establish an economic system of green, low-carbon and circular development, which will be the priority of China's policy makers for the foreseeable future. The country has set ambitious goals of peaking carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality before 2060.

Chinese textiles and apparel industry going green

China intends to continue to develop a greener and more sustainable textiles and apparel industry. However, instead of simply reducing pollutants and water usage, China plans to develop a sustainability-led growth model, emphasising areas including the circular economy and creating new value-added products based on recycled material.

In line with the Government's 14th Five-Year Plan, the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) has introduced guidance and policies to achieve the goal of becoming "the main driver of the world's apparel technology, an important leader of global fashion, and a powerful pioneer of sustainable development" by 2035.

In June 2021, CNTAC launched its '30:60 Carbon Neutrality Acceleration Plan' to support 30 key brands and 60 key manufacturers to carry out carbon neutral activities and set an example to its peers in the industry. As of September 2023, 21 brands, 42 manufacturers and three key textile hubs have joined the Plan and are actively promoting low-carbon technologies and products, while also jointly promoting industry climate action.

"There are many emerging and established fashion brands that have integrated sustainable development into their corporate values and long-term strategic planning. At an operational level, the consumer education and awareness campaigns of many brands are encouraging consumers to embrace more sustainable, healthy, green lifestyles," Jeff said.

Growth in Chinese conscious consumers

Although sustainability is still a relatively new concept to Chinese consumers, a notable driving force is the younger generation in China. With higher education and income levels, young Chinese individuals are notably inclined to buy products they regard as sustainable.

Furthermore, people in the growing upper-middle and high-income classes are not only choosing to buy eco-friendly fashion products, they are also actually willing to spend more for them.

"Amidst a recovering post-COVID economy, conscious consumers are prioritising quality over quantity, and are more curious and willing to spend on items that will last and tell a compelling sustainability story," Jeff said.

"Chinese consumers are digitally savvy and know how to educate themselves about the provenance and specifications of products – and, compared to the average consumer globally, the Chinese are more likely to choose brands with traceable sources and transparent origins."

AWI marketing strategy

AWI's marketing strategy in China is closely aligned to the shift towards sustainability in this important market for Australian wool.

For example, AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company continues to develop collaborations with brands, such as Edition (see opposite page) and NEIWAI (see below), that showcase to consumers in China the farm to fashion journey of Australian wool.

In addition, The Woolmark Company's consumer marketing campaigns in China highlight the eco-credentials of wool: the company's Spring/Summer 2023 campaign highlighted wool's biodegradability, and the current Autumn/Winter 2023 campaign highlights the regenerative and healing nature of wool-growing.

"As a natural, renewable and biodegradable fibre, Australian wool has a great story to tell. As long as Australian woolgrowers continue to ensure that their on-farm practices align with the sustainability expectations of its customers, the wool industry can be on the front foot in promoting the fibre's eco-credentials," Jeff added.



Marketing collateral by Chinese apparel brand NEIWAI for a Woolmark-certified Merino wool collection that was fully traceable through the supply chain back to the specific farm in Australia that produced the wool.

TRACEABLE COLLECTION FROM FARM TO FASHION

To help build demand for its Merino wool apparel, Chinese womenswear brand Edition is showcasing to consumers one of the wool-growing properties in Victoria from which it sourced the fibre for its latest collection.

In collaboration with AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company, Chinese brand Edition launched in August its first traceable Merino wool collection. The collection uses premium superfine Merino wool from Australia and showcased Gerard and Sabrina Watt's 800-hectare 'Woodbine' property in Balmoral, Victoria.

Edition is owned by EPO Fashion Group, which has a strong market share and influence in China.

The new Woolmark-certified collection features a range of ready-to-wear items – such as sporty jumpers, nautical striped tops, deconstructed suits, shirts and coats – that are simple yet fashionable, reflecting the values and complementing the lifestyle of modern, independent women in China.

Back to the source

As sustainable fashion becomes increasingly popular with female consumers in China, the new collection utilises QR code technology to provide supply chain transparency and traceability. Each product in the collection has a swing ticket with a QR code for consumers to trace and check the authenticity and origins of the products.

By scanning the QR code, consumers gain access to the Woolmark Mini Program where they can find information on the production process, the origins of the Merino wool, and the stories behind each design and product.

The new collection is also being promoted through Edition's website and social media channels. In an accompanying video featuring the Watts, Gerard explains that the family produces a quality product as well as it possibly can.

"The country here is really well suited for Merino sheep. With the climate and the management, we can create a good balanced diet to keep the fibre soft, consistent and sound. Producing quality wool without compromising the welfare of the animal is really important to us," Gerard said.

In the video, Sabrina added, "There is nothing more beautiful than parting the wool on the sheep and seeing the spectacular fibre that has a beautiful colour and softness – that's something really special."

Another video shows the apparel being



modelled back at its source, at 'Woodbine' where the Watts produce their high-quality wool sustainably. The video emphasises the deep bond between the fifth-generation family, the land and their sheep. It shows that by living in harmony with nature, the woolgrowers provide their 7,000 sheep with quality feed, care and comfort.

Traceability aids marketing

AWI Country Manager for China, Jeff Ma, says Chinese brands are very keen on marketing their products' sustainability, and supply chain traceability is an important component of this.

"Edition was the first Chinese brand to visit an Australian wool-growing property in more than three years (due to COVID travel restrictions) for the purpose of collaborating on this traceable Merino wool collection," Jeff said.

"AWI and Edition together strive to provide high-quality, environmentally friendly wool clothing that reflects the fashion and lifestyle of contemporary Chinese women. We appreciate Edition's efforts in aligning with sustainable fashion and our philosophy."

"Partnering with this leading Chinese fashion brand helps promote the natural quality and origin of Australian Merino wool, driving new demand for the fibre in womenswear."

Jeff Ma, AWI Country Manager for China

AWI thanks Sabrina and Gerard for their support with this project, as well as the team at Nutrien Wool who helped make the connection.

More information: www.edition.com



Back to the source: apparel from the new collection in a photoshoot on the very same farm that grew the wool in the garments.

BENETTON'S 50-YEAR WOOLMARK PARTNERSHIP

Fashion giant Benetton has launched more than 1.5 million, Woolmark-certified, 100% Merino wool knitwear garments in its Autumn/Winter 2023/24 collection. The knitwear was launched alongside a marketing campaign that commemorates a half century partnership between Benetton and The Woolmark Company and the enduring legacy of Merino wool.

1.5 million

Merino knitwear products in the Benetton collection

The United Colors of Benetton is one of the best-known fashion companies in the world, with stores in the most important global markets. In October, the brand launched 1.52 million items of Woolmark-certified knitwear in more than 1,500 Benetton stores across the world as part of its Autumn/Winter 2023 collection, plus a further 180,000 Woolmark-certified accessories.

The knitwear in the collection benefits from the natural attributes of extra fine Merino wool – including softness and comfort, and its colour fastness which ensures the bright colours that are an iconic aesthetic of the Benetton brand.

Marking the launch of the collection, Benetton introduced a campaign that celebrates both the quality of its Merino wool apparel and the historic 50th anniversary of it becoming a Woolmark licensee. Since 1973, Benetton has been certified to attach the famous Woolmark logo on its wool garments as an independent guarantee of quality.



A Benetton historical advert from 1977 in which the Woolmark logo featured.

"We were among the first brands in the world to affix the Woolmark logo to our wool apparel. Fifty years later, we are proud to celebrate a partnership that is synonymous with respect for the environment and total quality for our customers," said CEO of Benetton Group, Massimo Renon.

AWI CEO John Roberts says it is a natural collaboration between the two brands that

is based on a fibre that embodies quality, durability and care for the planet and its inhabitants.

"We consider it an important part of Merino wool's ongoing legacy to renew partnerships with iconic brands like Benetton. It remains a key priority for us to connect high quality Australian Merino wool with beloved brands that span generations," he said.

"By building reputation and trust around the Woolmark logo as a quality brand, this campaign promotes retail sales to increase Merino wool consumption."

Never-Ending Wool marketing campaign

The marketing campaign utilises the slogan 'Never-Ending Wool', which not only refers to the enduring 50-year collaboration between the two brands, but also highlights the durability of Benetton's pure wool products, enabling them to last for many years and be handed down from generation to generation.

A key visual of the 'Never-Ending Wool' marketing campaign is a video showing a group of 50 women – one woman for each year of the 50-year collaboration – standing next to each other wearing Benetton knitwear. As the camera pans out to reveal the whole group, we see that the women's outfits and hair are styled to match the different decades of the past 50 years, and that the women are actually

the same person, which is a reference to the durability of Benetton wool clothing that has been worn by individuals throughout the past half century.

The 'Never-Ending Wool' slogan is also a reference to Merino wool as a natural and renewable fibre which can help safeguard the health of the planet long into the future. Benetton's commitment to sustainability is a philosophy that has permeated the brand's culture for decades. This continues today with environmental protection initiatives involving various activities, from the selection of raw materials to improving the efficiency of processes along the entire supply chain.

Marketing campaign's touch points

The campaign used a mixture of in-store and digital initiatives in European markets.

Benetton store windows and in-store displays utilised the campaign's messaging to generate interest and highlight the Merino wool knitwear to customers.

To support the launch of the campaign, The Woolmark Company also supplied educational content about the benefits of Merino wool and Woolmark certification for Benetton staff's e-learning platform, available in multiple languages. This enabled store managers and sales staff to expertly advise in-store customers about the knitwear to increase purchases.



Benetton's 'Never-Ending Wool' marketing video.



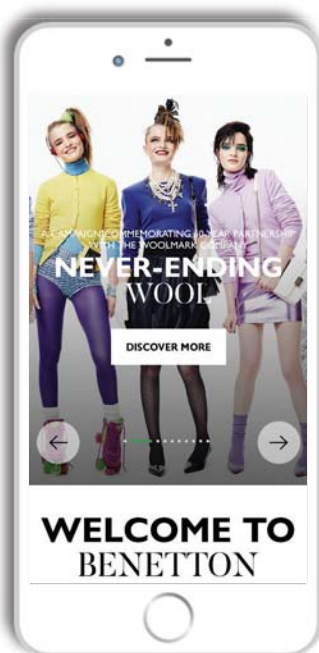
Benetton store window in London highlighting the campaign.

In selected stores, customers who purchased a Merino wool garment received a gift package of Woolmark Apparel Care-certified bio-detergent suitable for washing wool garments, together with a booklet providing instructions for the care and storage of wool clothing.

The digital component of the campaign included a landing page on the Benetton website that explained the benefits of Merino wool and Woolmark certification and, importantly, pointed customers to where they could make online purchases of the knitwear. An e-newsletter sent to Benetton subscribers similarly highlighted the campaign and pointed where to make purchases.

A massive social media, influencer and digital advertising campaign was also undertaken to increase the collection's visibility and sales.

More information: www.woolmark.com/benetton50



The home page of the Benetton website highlighting the campaign.

Benetton CEO praises woolgrowers on visit to Australia



Benetton Group CEO on a visit to Rugby Station at Boorowa on the Southern Tablelands of NSW.



Benetton Group CEO Massimo Renon (second from right) at Rugby Station, with (left to right) AWI CEO John Roberts; woolgrowers Georgie, Michael and Belinda Kelly; and AWI Strategic Advisor Fabrizio Servente.

Benetton Group CEO Massimo Renon visited Australia in September to see first-hand how Australian wool is grown.

Mr Renon visited two properties in southern NSW: Rugby Station at Rugby, owned and operated by Michael and Belinda Kelly and their daughter Georgie, and Willawong Pastoral Company at Murringo, owned and operated by Tony and Annabelle Wallace. Mr Renon was impressed with what he saw.

"When I think about what I've seen in the past two days, there is a huge potential. I told the woolgrowers you should be proud of what you're doing because you are putting this passion and this pride into a product. So that is very fruitful," Mr Renon said.

During his visit, Mr Renon commented that wool has a great story when it comes to sustainability, which is important to Benetton.

"Wool represents one of the hopes of this planet. We strongly believe cooperation between companies like Benetton and farmers and all the new operators in this sector will be one of the keys for the future sustainability of our sector," he said.

"Sustainability has been one of the fundamental pillars of the company. We have been the pioneer of sustainability as a global company and we feel very proud of this.

"Wool will be a key factor in our success. We're not interested in fast fashion.

"But wool is ideal not only for a company like Benetton, because you can use wool for different purposes, different material for different uses and different product categories. It is a unique fibre that has such a versatility. It will 100% be at the centre of this transition [by the industry towards sustainability].

"It will mean more wool. Not only because it's a part of our product strategy, not only because it's increasing the demand, but also because of the quality. Consumers are appreciating this much more than in the past ... It's not solely something that is fashionable, but it's something that's to be coherent with their values. Young consumers now are getting into the store and looking at the label and see what the material is made of."

Mr Renon's business trip included meetings with AWI.

"Benetton is an iconic brand that AWI and The Woolmark Company are proud to partner with," said AWI CEO John Roberts. "Their commitment to wool is a shot in the arm for the industry. It also reinforces our belief that the long-term future of wool is bright. Wool has so much to offer as a fibre. It is natural, sustainable, versatile, breathable and comfortable. The fact we produce the best wool in the world also helps."

SHOWCASING AUSTRALIAN WOOL ON THE HIGH SEAS

The Preliminary Regattas of the 37th America's Cup have got underway with new wool sailing uniforms being worn by the Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli team in a showcase of the performance benefits of Australian Merino wool.

As reported in the March edition of *Beyond the Bale*, The Woolmark Company has returned as the official technical partner for the Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli sailing team for the 37th America's Cup to be held in Spain next year. This collaboration follows on from the highly successful showcase of Australian wool during the previous America's Cup.

After months of dedicated preparation and training in high-performance Merino wool garments, the Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli team in September took part in the eagerly awaited first Preliminary Regatta of the 37th America's Cup in Vilanova, Spain.

The Woolmark Company co-developed the sailing team's Merino wool-rich performance-driven training uniforms. The new custom-made training kit includes Merino wool-rich T-shirts, hoodies, shorts, leggings, a cycling suit, a waterproof jacket and a revolutionary ultralight windbreaker for training activities. At just 60gsm, the 55% Merino wool windbreaker is wind-proof thanks to the density of the weave, and the presence of Merino wool ensures superior breathability.

The iconic Woolmark logo, owned by Australian woolgrowers, again proudly adorns the sail of the Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli AC40 boat.

"The continuation of this partnership further cements the strong link between the world of sport and the world's original performance fibre, Merino wool," said AWI CEO John Roberts.

What benefits does the partnership deliver to woolgrowers?

- Increased consumer awareness** of Australian wool's technical and environmental benefits amongst a global audience.
- Product sales** of Woolmark-branded sailing apparel and other activewear.
- New business opportunities** for global performance brands to work with The Woolmark Company's teams on product development with Australian Merino wool (see opposite page for an example).

More information: www.woolmark.com/americascup



The Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli team crossing the bow of the Italian Navy's 19th century Amerigo Vespucci in the waters off the Italian island of Sardinia in June.

Prada embraces wool in its new Linea Rossa collection

Utilising the expertise of The Woolmark Company, the latest Prada Linea Rossa collection was developed with innovative and multi-functional wool-rich materials to cement a strong link between fashion and performance.

Founded in 1913, Prada is a well-known and influential leader in luxury fashion. The iconic Italian brand's ground-breaking sportswear-inspired Linea Rossa label was founded more recently in 1997 and is named after the Luna Rossa yacht in the America's Cup which shares the distinctive 'red line' of the Prada logo.

While the Prada brand has a wide product range of wool apparel, its Linea Rossa label has in the past been known for its heavy use of technical synthetic fabrics such as nylon and GORE-TEX®. However, for this Autumn/Winter 2023, Prada's Linea Rossa label introduced Australian Merino wool into its collection as a 100% natural 'techno-fibre' with benefits such as breathability, thermoregulation and elasticity.

A selection of five garments underwent rigorous testing through the Woolmark certification process to ensure enduring excellence, signified by the iconic Woolmark logo.

Four of the selected garments were crafted with 100% wool from Zegna Baruffa, including a zipped sweater, trousers, a neck warmer and beanie. The fifth garment, a pile fleece jacket, consists of a wool-rich blend.

The garments feature innovative treatments, from dyeing to finishing, exploring the combination of wool yarn with chlorine-free colours along with finishes to improve elasticity that reflect the needs of movement-intensive wear.

More information: www.woolmark.com/prada



The Woolmark-certified zipped sweater made from 100% Australian Merino wool.

FORMULA E CAMPAIGN RESULTS ARE ELECTRIC

The Woolmark Company this year teamed up with Nissan to create wool-rich apparel for its Formula E racing team to showcase, and help build demand for, Merino wool as a sustainable and high-performance fibre.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

\$4.2 million

earned media value

628 million

reach (seen campaign content)

16 million

campaign video views

\$2 million

value of Woolmark logo exposure



The Nissan Formula E team all wearing their Merino wool team kit.



The Nissan team's Merino wool apparel displaying the Woolmark logo.

First held in 2014, Formula E is a single-seater motorsport championship for electric cars. It is the fastest growing and fourth largest motorsport in the world. This year, it had a series of races held in 11 cities across the world; in Europe: England, Italy, Germany and Monaco; in the Americas: USA, Mexico and Brazil; as well as in Saudi Arabia, India, South Africa and Indonesia.

Nissan's wool-rich racing team kit

For Season 9 (2023) of the Formula E World Championship, The Woolmark Company joined the Nissan Formula E Team as its technical partner and developed an innovative Merino wool-rich team kit. The kit was made in Europe using Australian Merino wool and featured Merino wool blend base-layers, mid-layers and outer-layers: T-shirt, polo shirt, shirt, softshell jacket, ¼ zip jumper, rain jacket, cargo pants, shorts, and cap.

The Nissan Formula E team, which hadn't previously worn a wool kit, connected with The Woolmark Company because it had seen the results of the company's partnership with the Luna Rossa Prada Pirelli sailing team (see opposite page) and identified Merino wool as a technical and durable fibre suitable for its own team.

Soft on the skin, Merino wool's unbeatable moisture management, thermoregulation and anti-odour properties are perfectly matched to performance-led environments – and with Formula E races held across the world, Merino wool provided the versatility to be suitable for a range of climates, from hot to cold.

The Woolmark logo, owned by Australian woolgrowers, was displayed on the racing team apparel. The logo was also very visible throughout the season on the side of the Nissan racing cars, on event infrastructure and on all communication touch points (broadcast, digital, social media, PR events). It is estimated that this exposure alone was worth \$2 million.

Campaign raised awareness of Merino wool's benefits

The race series, which spanned January to July, provided an opportunity for The Woolmark Company to engage all season long with an international audience comprising millions of sports fans, as well as businesses and media. For Season 9, the championship had a viewership of 344 million across 197 countries.

A huge PR and media campaign was undertaken to highlight the partnership between the two companies and promote Merino wool as a sustainable and high-performance fibre.

The campaign included videos and other engaging content distributed through a paid social media campaign that was rolled out by The Woolmark Company in the target markets of France, Germany, Monaco, UK, USA and Japan. Nissan Formula E also highlighted its partnership with The Woolmark Company and the benefits of Merino wool on all its social channels, and both companies created landing pages on their websites to promote the partnership and the fibre.

The campaign was assisted by influencer and press trips to visit the Nissan team at races which bolstered, via social and other media, visibility of the benefits of Merino wool to a wider international audience, generating an estimated value of \$1.6 million in publicity. The Woolmark Company also entered into direct media partnerships with Gen Z media HyperBeast and Brut to amplify the campaign further.

Promotion of the campaign at consumer and trade events was also undertaken, most notably at the Première Vision Trade show in Paris in February.

As well as promoting the benefits of Merino wool to an international consumer audience, the campaign also helped The Woolmark Company to connect with other sports and automotive brands which could lead to further business development opportunities for wool.

"By aligning itself with a leading motorsport team competing in zero-emission electric vehicles on the global stage, AWI and The Woolmark Company have helped build the international reputation for Merino wool as a sustainable, technical fibre for performance apparel."

John Roberts, AWI CEO

More information: www.woolmark.com/formula-e

MERINO INTRODUCED INTO MIZUNO BASE-LAYERS

For the first time, Japanese sporting goods giant Mizuno has included Merino wool in its popular Breath Thermo performance base-layer range, thanks to R&D and marketing support from The Woolmark Company.

Established in Japan in 1906, Mizuno has grown into a major global manufacturer and retailer of sporting apparel, footwear and equipment. The company sells products for a wide range of sports, from running to racket sports, from football to golf, and has annual sales worth approximately A\$2 billion.

Although the company has a global presence, about two-thirds of its sales are in Japan where it is now the second largest sports brand.

One of its best-selling ranges is its Breath Thermo apparel, which the company first developed 30 years ago. Breath Thermo is a moisture-absorbing, heat-retaining fabric which was initially developed by Mizuno for winter sports apparel, but it has evolved into a common sporting and everyday use material. Up until now, it has been made entirely from synthetic fibres.

Mizuno's introduction of Merino wool

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of Breath Thermo, Mizuno has introduced Merino wool into its Breath Thermo product range for the first time, as a premium series sitting at the top-end of the popular base-layer range.

The new apparel contains 60% Merino wool which helps keep wearers warm without overheating during exercise and helps prevent them becoming cold after exercise.

"The introduction of wool into the Breath Thermo fabric was a perfect way to elevate and add premium value to this popular range that everyone knows and loves," said Ogawa Akira, Senior Advisor at Mizuno, who has worked for the company for 40 years.

"Merino wool is the fibre that brings out the best in Breath Thermo. It is a premium fibre with a reputation for luxury. Its performance benefits include its natural odour resistance, breathability and moisture management that only a natural fibre can provide."

"Mizuno is very grateful to The Woolmark Company for its support with development and marketing and we hope to further strengthen the relationship in the future."

Ogawa Akira, Senior Advisor, Mizuno



The new wool-rich Breath Thermo base-layers include long-sleeved thermal tops and leggings for men and women.



Research and development of the apparel at Mizuno's new Innovation Center in Osaka, Japan.

Collaborative research and development

The apparel was developed by Mizuno with support from The Woolmark Company. Mizuno first met representatives from The Woolmark Company at the Fashion World trade show in Tokyo where Mizuno was introduced to new wool fabric trends and opportunities for marketing support.

"Thanks to The Woolmark Company, our development and marketing teams have learnt more about Merino wool and how to develop products with it and how to promote it. The collaboration has been most beneficial for us," Mr Akira said.

All the new products display the Wool Rich Blend logo, having been certified for fibre content and quality by The Woolmark Company.

"The fabric of course underwent rigorous testing to meet Mizuno's own strict quality standards, but we are proud that the new fabric surpassed The Woolmark Company's rigorous standards at an independent testing facility," Mr Akira said.

"We did exhaustive monitoring and testing to ensure that the stretchy comfort, the thickness of the fabric, and the silhouette of the product are all ideal for the wearer."

20,000 pieces of the new products have been launched for the current Autumn/Winter season in Japan, with the wool-rich apparel set to remain as part of Mizuno's key seasonal product offering in future years.

As a result of the collaboration, Mizuno is also developing other new wool-blended products.

"We are planning an all-season, easy-care, all-in-one line for next year, and we plan to develop more products with a focus on everyday comfort, and expand the series in a separate line," Mr Akira said.

Marketing of the premium base-layers

The marketing campaign of the new wool-rich Breath Thermo base-layers, which launched in September, uses a mixture of digital and in-store initiatives in the Japanese market.

The digital component of the marketing includes a campaign landing page on the Mizuno e-commerce website pointing to where customers can make online purchases of the apparel, banner adverts by Mizuno on the largest Japanese portal Yahoo and Amazon, an e-newsletter sent to Mizuno subscribers highlighting the campaign, and a social media campaign to increase the collection's visibility and sales.

"By collaborating on both R&D and marketing with the second largest sports brand in Japan, Mizuno, we have been able to build awareness of Merino wool as a performance fibre and, importantly, help increase the sales of Merino wool-rich products in the Japanese market."

**Samuel Cockedey, AWI Regional Manager
Japan & Korea**



Prominent marketing of the new wool-rich base-layers on the Mizuno website.

A new page highlighting the benefits of wool as a naturally performance-friendly fibre will remain permanently on the Mizuno website.

The campaign is also highlighted in Mizuno stores and outlets across Japan to generate interest and highlight the Merino wool base-layers to customers.

More information: www.woolmark.com/mizuno

2024 IWTO CONGRESS IN ADELAIDE

SAVE THE DATE! 15-17 April

Registrations open soon for the International Wool Textile Organisation's (IWTO) annual Congress, which is taking place on 15-17 April 2024 in Adelaide, South Australia.

The IWTO Congress is the annual gathering of the entire wool industry, connecting farm with fashion and attracting the most influential players within the global wool and textile industry.

The theme of the 2024 Congress is an 'An Industry Interwoven' which is reflected in the wide range of speakers and attendees, including woolgrowers, spinners, weavers, garment manufacturers, designers and retailers – all united to discuss the opportunities for wool in an evolving global economic and social landscape.

Co-hosted by Wool Industries Australia (WIA), the 2024 Congress will be held at the Adelaide Oval, one of the most picturesque sporting grounds in the world.

Featuring presentations from local and international speakers, the program will cover a broad range of topics including manufacturing insights, product innovations, market intelligence, retail trends, marketing innovation, sustainability and traceability. AWI is a proud sponsor of the 2024 congress.

"The Congress is a wonderful opportunity for Australia to showcase its wool industry and many success stories," AWI CEO John Roberts said. "We're hoping that many woolgrowers will attend the Congress and take the opportunity to connect with the rest of the global wool supply chain."

More information: Further information will be available at www.iwto.org. A discounted rate of

\$500 + GST has been negotiated for Australian woolgrowers. If you are a wool levy payer and are interested in attending the Congress, please use this link <https://info.wool.com/iwto> or the QR code below and enter your details to register your interest. There is a maximum of 100 places available at this discounted rate, so you are advised to register early for a chance to access this lower rate.



GUNN RUNNER IS FULLY LOADED READY TO FIRE

New Zealand-based menswear brand Rodd & Gunn has introduced Merino wool into its footwear range, with the launch of its Gunn Runner model. The sneaker is certified for quality by The Woolmark Company.



Rodd & Gunn's new Gunn Runner sneaker incorporates Merino wool in its upper.

Making timeless, quality menswear garments and accessories since 1946, Rodd & Gunn is a New Zealand brand that has an ever-growing global presence.

As well as having stores in its native New Zealand, Rodd & Gunn has stores across Europe and North America, and has recently opening its first store in Asia, in Singapore. The brand also has about 100 stores in Australia, including concessions at David Jones and Myer.

The natural environment is in the bones of Rodd & Gunn's philosophy, which is reflected in the fact that the brand chooses to source premium, natural, biodegradable fabrics, from renewable resources such as wool, cotton and linen.

The result is clothing and accessories that are completely modern, yet firmly grounded

in the brand's core values of authenticity and quality. Rodd & Gunn's wool garments, such as jumpers and jackets, are certified for quality by The Woolmark Company.

In October, Rodd & Gunn expanded its range of wool products by launching its first footwear product incorporating wool. Made in Vietnam, the Gunn Runner is the brand's bespoke designed hybrid trainer.

The upper of the shoe is knitted from a Merino wool blend that provides a supportive sock-like fit. The shoe has The Woolmark Company's Wool Rich Blend certification which means the product contains more than 50% pure new wool and meets a range of performance standards.

Rodd & Gunn's imagery used in the marketing of the new shoe sees the Gunn Runner

positioned amongst beautiful Merino wool, highlighting to consumers the natural origin of the shoe's fibre.

"We selected Merino wool for our blend because of the premium nature of the product. Merino wool is breathable, moisture wicking, temperature regulating and odour resistant, which are all great benefits to have in footwear," said Footwear and Accessories Designer at Rodd & Gunn, David Gordon.

"The addition of the Woolmark certification logo is easily recognisable and understood by consumers; it delivers a quality assurance adding even further credibility to Rodd & Gunn's already elevated standards of fabrication and our strict testing requirements."

More information: www.roddandgunn.com

POTENTIAL NEW MARKETS FOR AUSSIE WOOL

AWI has identified several countries that could potentially be new processing and manufacturing markets for Australian wool. This will help reduce the risk of the Australian wool industry relying on a limited number of markets and ensure that Australian wool remains competitive.

AWI has worked for several years to increase the number of markets that process Australian wool and manufacture it into products. This strategy has been driven by the desire to diversify Australian wool's supply chain and to avoid the rising costs in developed markets.

Whilst these factors are still important, global supply chain dynamics have shifted in recent years due to the COVID pandemic, the global textile industry's push towards sustainability, and international trade tensions.

AWI Regional Development Manager, Trudie Friedrich, says the Australian wool industry needs to ensure that it adapts to these changes to remain relevant and accessible.

"The effects of the pandemic meant delays in the global supply of goods, meaning onshoring and nearshoring have become important goals for many retailers and brands as they move to simplify their supply chains and lessen lead times as well as risks," Trudie said.

"In addition, the textile industry's focus on sustainability and traceability has meant that brands are increasingly examining the eco-credentials of their supply chains and ways to lessen their impact on the environment.

"As part of its updated Emerging Markets Strategy, AWI has identified several countries whose textile industries benefit from these changing dynamics and have the potential to increase their processing or manufacturing of wool."



AWI's Emerging Markets Strategy has identified several countries around the world that could potentially be new or larger processing and manufacturing markets for Australian wool.

In the past two years, AWI has worked and will continue to work extensively in Bangladesh and Cambodia to develop their wool processing and manufacturing capabilities. However, the company has recently identified further key emerging markets for Australian wool, in particular Portugal, Mexico, Peru and parts of Africa.

"Our analysis of potential markets has enabled us to gauge these particular markets as those best suited to introduce wool or support more wool in their supply chains," Trudie said.

"In each market, we have researched the types of manufacturers in the market, which companies are already working with wool, what wool (yarn, fabrics, garments) is being produced there, who wants to work with wool and how AWI could help them to do so.

"We have also analysed key data for each market, including their economic status, textile sector size and growth, current political status and information such as free trade agreements.

"For each of these newly identified markets, we will begin or continue to develop collaborations with companies, textile associations and government bodies to boost their awareness of Australian wool, generate leads for technical and/or knowledge transfer activities, and connect new suppliers to potential customers through our international network."

AWI's Emerging Markets Strategy aims to replicate the success that the company has had in helping develop new manufacturing supply chains for wool products in Vietnam. Since identifying Vietnam in 2012 as a potential manufacturing hub for wool textiles, the country has grown a robust wool supply chain including spinning, weaving, knitting and whole garment manufacturing.

Identified emerging markets for Australian wool

Portugal – Portugal already has established access to the Northern European market, where wool is consumed in high volumes. Brands in the region are increasingly seeking the security of proximity sourcing from Portugal. The country has a strong circular knitwear sector as well as highly skilled labour for technical garments.

Bangladesh – Bangladesh has emerged as a powerful garment manufacturing country, with it being highly ranked as a hotspot for sourcing potential. Bangladesh is a growing source for traditional wool knitwear for many big-name brands across the world that have established sourcing offices there.

Latin America – Besides offering excellent market access to the USA, textile manufacturing in the Latin America region also includes established wool manufacturing due to wool being grown in this region. Out of all the countries analysed in the region, AWI has identified Mexico and Peru as having the best potential for an increase in use of Australian wool.

Cambodia – Cambodia has a growing knitwear sector and Chinese knitting manufacturers are continuing to move their operations across to Cambodia due to its low cost and improving productivity. It has a skilled labour market and high manufacturing standards capable of producing premium garments.

Africa – Africa offers many countries with small to large-sized textile industries. The continent cannot be ignored as a region of interest for wool. AWI will continue to support and build its established relationships with suppliers in the region as well as foster new contacts.

DESIGNER SAUL NASH'S JOURNEY WITH WOOL

Since winning the 2022 International Woolmark Prize, UK fashion designer Saul Nash has continued to embrace Merino wool, exemplified by his latest wool-rich collection launched in October this year.



2022 International Woolmark Prize winner **Saul Nash** with Merino wool fibre during a visit to Chris and Margot Shannon's 'Talmo' property at Bookham in NSW.

The International Woolmark Prize (IWP) generates long-term demand for Australian Merino wool by increasing the lifetime loyalty to the fibre amongst the award's designers and alumni across the world.

Since the relaunch of the IWP in 2012 by AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company, more than 400 fashion designers have been involved in the illustrious talent development program. The program's alumni are building strong businesses and taking leading roles within the industry.

One of the most interesting alumni is London-based designer Saul Nash who won the 2022 IWP where he was praised for his modern use of Merino wool in activewear and technical garments, using the natural fibre in place of traditional synthetics.

"Using wool, it's a lot more positive than using a hundred per cent synthetic fibre. For me it

was a step towards a better use of materials within my design process," says Saul, who is drawn to Merino wool's benefits such as its elasticity and ability to wick moisture.

"In the world of activewear, there's a lot of plastic in garments and I think what wool offered was an amazing natural fibre."

Since being crowned the 2022 IWP winner, Saul Nash has continued to invest in product development and the commercialisation of wool, ensuring the fibre stays a prominent part of his brand story and product mix.

"When you look at wool as a renewable material and then also the fact that it's biodegradable ... I think it's embedded in parts of my work that I can't ever see leaving again."

Saul Nash

Saul Nash's global IWP retail launch



Saul Nash on stage winning the 2022 International Woolmark Prize.

Since winning the IWP award in April 2022, Saul has had a busy 18-months during which he has helped keep Australian Merino wool in the fashion world's spotlight, which shows the enduring value of the IWP.

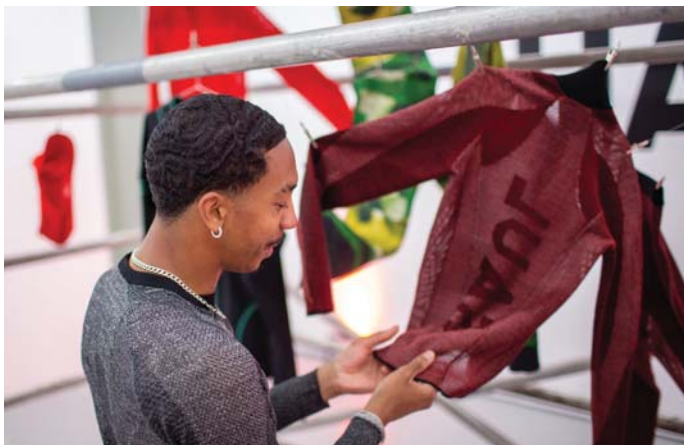
After the 2022 IWP event, all the finalists had the opportunity for their IWP collections to be stocked in some of the world's leading stores, via the IWP Retailer Network.

For Saul Nash, a retail highlight was a special six-week long, pop-up space at leading luxury store Selfridges in London which launched in September 2022. The pop-up featured messaging about wool's benefits, alongside an explanation of Saul's recent IWP win. Saul also partnered with Selfridges to host a launch event that was presented as part of the official London Fashion Week schedule. Attendees of the event included media, VIPs and influencers.



Saul Nash's winning IWP collection featured in a special pop-up area of Selfridges in London.

Saul's visit to Australia



Saul Nash at the IWP collection launch in Sydney.

Two months later, in November 2022, Saul travelled to Sydney for an event to launch his collection in Australia. The event, held at the COMA gallery in Darlinghurst, generated much positive media coverage about Merino wool.

Saul had a busy schedule while in Sydney. Earlier in the day, Saul had met with fashion and textile students from the University of Technology and Whitehouse Institute of Design to share his experiences as a rising star in the industry. Saul took students on his journey from studying fashion at the Royal College of Art in London through to the design process behind his IWP winning collection.

Saul tells of a visit to The Woolmark Company when he was younger to explore what the company does. "I was really intrigued because on that visit I discovered that wool could be used in so many other ways than your traditional knitted sweater or your traditional wool coat," Saul said.



Saul Nash with woolgrower Chris Shannon at Bookham in NSW.

Two days later, Saul's itinerary switched from fashion to the farm when he visited a wool-growing property to see for himself where Merino wool originates. He travelled to the 1,440-hectare Merino wool-growing property 'Talmo' at Bookham in the Southern Tablelands of NSW to meet enthusiastic and passionate Australian woolgrowers Chris and Margot Shannon.

"It was such an educational visit to their magnificent wool-growing property and so insightful to see the start of Merino wool's journey into our clothes," Saul said.

VIP judge of Wool4School UK

Back in the UK, Saul Nash was delighted to be reunited with The Woolmark Company in 2023 as the VIP judge of the 2022/23 Wool4School student design competition.

"As the International Woolmark Prize winner and someone who is truly passionate about Merino wool, it was wonderful to be a part of this year's Wool4School competition. As a designer I think it is important to inspire the next generation and it is great to be able to meet these designers at such a pivotal moment in their lives," Saul said.

As part of the competition, Saul was featured in an exclusive video at his London studio talking about his inspiration, design process, journey as a designer, experience and passion for wool. As part of their prize, both the junior and senior winners of the Wool4School competition got to meet Saul in his studio.

Saul's new wool-rich collection



Saul Nash's technical knitwear continues to profile Merino wool in unexpected ways. Pictured in the centre of this shot, which is taken from his new campaign film, is a 100% Merino wool knit top with body-mapped panelling.

With a focus on expanding and diversifying his Merino wool category, Saul Nash launched his Autumn/Winter 2023 collection in October. It is the result of a continued partnership with The Woolmark Company and centres around three, Woolmark-certified wool-rich hero pieces.

The collection features a generously draped Merino wool sweater created by knitting a double-faced jacquard into a single jersey, a Merino wool-rich tracksuit with performance-inspired wool mesh panels around the arms, along with a high-performance Merino wool blend seamless compression top designed to stretch across various body types.

Saul Nash joined with The Woolmark Company's development partners Studio Eva x Carola to create his first seamless knitted compressive performance-wear.

"This was a great development for us and through Woolmark we have been able to build a continued partnership. Through this partnership we were able to produce garments which not only fulfilled the style element within the collection but also create a fully functional performance garment that is built to last," Saul said.

"This season we also worked with [IWP supply-chain partner] Knitwear Lab, through which we were able to continue to push our knitwear."

Saul says the collection, titled Juxtaposition, utilises skiwear designs to push the functionality of his garments, championing technical design for city streets.

"When you grow up in London, you wear a lot of ski outerwear, but you never learn to ski. It's a symbol of aspiration that's juxtaposed with the realities of inner city living. For me the collection is like a dreamscape, a place between where I come from, and where I'm going," Saul added.

More information: www.saulnash.co.uk

WOOLMARK BRAND BACKS QUALITY WOOL PRODUCTS

When AWI acquired The Woolmark Company in 2007, AWI became the owner of the Woolmark brand. During the past five years, there has been an increase in the number of brand and retailer Woolmark licensees. By providing quality assurance to more customers, the Woolmark Licensing Program is helping to support and increase the demand for wool.



The Woolmark logo attached to a wool garment not only helps persuade shoppers to purchase the garment, but 68% of surveyed consumers believe clothes with the Woolmark logo are worth paying more for.

The Woolmark logo is the world's best-known textile fibre quality brand. When attached to a product, such as on a sewn-in label or a swing ticket, the logo provides customers with guaranteed wool fibre content and an assurance of quality for the product.

Since the logo was created in 1964, more than five billion wool and wool care products have been Woolmark-certified. The logo's use is administered through The Woolmark Company's Woolmark Licensing Program.

The Woolmark Licensing Program covers clothing, fabrics and yarns, as well as bedding, carpets, accessories, sheepskin, furnishing fabrics and footwear. In addition, The Woolmark Company certifies products for apparel and home care such as wool detergents and cycles on washing machines, dryers and irons.

The majority of Woolmark licences that are currently in operation have been issued for clothing products – knitted apparel (48%) and woven apparel (21%) – followed by

"Introducing Woolmark-certified wool blend fabric into our car line-up is an important step in our journey to redefine automotive luxury."

Cecilia Stark, Senior Design Manager, Volvo Cars

"The Woolmark brand certification is a trusted and reliable trademark that our customers recognise and support."

Haylie Sullivan, General Manager, Sportscraft

bedding (18%), yarns (11%) and woven fabric (10%). Only licensees, who have met strict performance and quality standards, can use the Woolmark logo on their products – see box below.

AWI CEO John Roberts says the Woolmark Licensing Program has been updated in recent years to give retailers and brands greater access to the program, ensuring the iconic Woolmark logo is seen by a greater number of global customers.

"The licensing program will continue its recent focus on building upon and strengthening the Woolmark licence along the supply chain, by encouraging spinners, weavers, knitters and garment makers to pass on their Woolmark licence to retailers and brands, as a value add to the sale of their wool products," John said.

There has been an increase in the number of brand and retailer Woolmark licensees during the past five years.

The Woolmark Licensing Program operates globally. Almost half (48%) of Woolmark licensees are based in Asia, and about a third (32%) in Europe.

John says AWI will support Woolmark licensees and the broader wool industry further in the future by improving wool supply chain transparency and data access, so as to capitalise on the market's interest in traceability and provenance.

"Linked to AWI's Traceability Program, we aim to incorporate a chain of custody tool into the Woolmark Licensing Program, thereby creating the ability for licensees to trace and validate the supply chain journey that the wool has travelled to reach a finished garment. This will help them maintain and increase market competitiveness," John added.

More information: www.woolmark.com/certification



PURE NEW WOOL



WOOL RICH BLEND



WOOL BLEND PERFORMANCE

The three main logos in the Woolmark Licensing Program. They indicate that a product contains (left to right) 100% pure new wool, 50%-99.9% new wool, or 30%-49.9% new wool, in addition to meeting a range of performance measures.

Woolmark quality standards

To ensure quality standards are maintained, The Woolmark Company has a comprehensive set of specifications that products must meet or exceed to gain Woolmark certification. Independent laboratories, authorised by The Woolmark Company, rigorously test the wool products to ensure they meet the Woolmark specifications. These are the core test areas:

- Wool content** – we assess the fibre content, to verify that the ingredients of the product are what they claim to be.
- Durability** – we subject the product to extreme pressures – we push, pull and stretch it to its physical limits – to measure its strength.
- Laundry testing** – we wash the product in hard, unforgiving machines to ensure no shrinkage and no loss of shape.
- Colourfastness to light** – we expose the product to the harshest light – for up to 10 hours – to check its colours are lasting.
- Colourfastness to liquid** – we test the product intensely against the very liquids it would normally meet over its lifetime.

A Quality Assurance program is also used to ensure that quality is maintained after the initial approval of a product and over time.

FLEECE TO FASHION GALA AT DEEARGEEO WOOLSHED

Deeargee Pastoral Company near Uralla, NSW, lit up its iconic octagonally-shaped woolshed last month for the Fleece to Fashion Awards gala dinner and presentation, welcoming black-tie clad patrons through the gates and into the pens to witness a unique wool fashion parade featuring emerging designers.



Young designer *Chelsea Mitchell* being presented with the Supreme Award by AWI Chairman *Jock Laurie* and event host *Catriona Rowntree*, on stage at the Deeargee woolshed with models wearing her winning designs.

Based in the New England region of NSW, the Fleece to Fashion Awards is an annual competition that promotes the unique, versatile and sustainable qualities of Merino wool, while celebrating upcoming fashion designers from across Australia who embrace the fibre in their collections.

The Awards are run by Fleece to Fashion, an Armidale-based not for profit company that aims to educate and inspire the next generations of designers to continue to experiment and explore the many qualities Merino wool has to offer.

Located in the New England hills behind the township of Uralla, the Sutherland family's Deeargee woolshed played host to this year's Fleece to Fashion Awards gala dinner and presentation on the evening of 25 November, plus a celebratory preview of the designs the previous afternoon for a High Tea in the Woolshed event. Deeargee Pastoral Company is known for producing some of Australia's finest wool and is home to a unique, octagonally-shaped woolshed built in 1872.

This year's Fleece to Fashion Awards was hosted by wool lover Catriona Rowntree and was sponsored by AWI along with a raft of local businesses and woolgrowers.

There were eight categories in this year's awards: Secondary School, Developing Designer (Tertiary), Special Occasion, Inspired Menswear, Wearable Art, Celebrating Global Cultures, Wool Re-imagined, and The Wedding Party. As the (welcome) rain pounded the historical Deeargee woolshed on the evening of the gala dinner, the vast array of spectacular designs hit the runway.

The Awards were judged by Australian fashion icon Akira Isogawa, fashion journalist and media personality Melissa Hoyer, and former designer for RM Williams and Country Road Jonathan Ward. As well as awards for each category, there were also special awards for Most Marketable Design, Innovation in Wool, Encouragement Awards (celebrating three young designers), a Wool Producers Pick, and an Akira Isogawa Mentorship Award.

The highlight of the night was the presentation of the Supreme Award, sponsored by AWI, which provides a developing Australian designer with a wool industry tour to Italy, designed to foster their ambition for a career in the industry and strengthen their understanding of the industry from fleece to fashion.

The Award was presented by AWI Chairman Jock Laurie to Chelsea Mitchell who graduated last year with a Bachelor of Design in Fashion from Whitehouse Institute of Design in Sydney.

The Award will provide Chelsea with an opportunity to gain global exposure to the wool supply chain through an 'industry immersion' at AWI's office in Milan, Italy, and will include a visit to a trend forecasting and design studio in Tuscany plus a tour of the mills that process Australian wool in Biella. Chelsea will also receive ongoing professional training and development opportunities from AWI in Sydney.

Fleece to Fashion Chairman and fourth-generation woolgrower Lachlan Fulloon of Armidale said this year's event in Uralla was a hugely successful gathering for woolgrowers, fashion designers, the New England community, and wool industry stakeholders.

"Connecting the next generation of designers with the New England wool-growing community fosters deep appreciation for how farming and fashion can work together to showcase this remarkable fibre and keep it on the world's catwalks," he said.

More information: www.fleecetofashion.com.au



The unique woolshed of Deeargee Station at Uralla hosted this year's Fleece to Fashion Awards. PHOTO: David Waugh

AUSTRALIAN DESIGNERS SKILLED WITH WOOL

AWI's marketing arm The Woolmark Company has relaunched its Incubation Lab education program for emerging and established Australian fashion designers to upskill their knowledge of Merino wool, thereby helping to increase use of the fibre in their collections.

Australia's fashion and textile industry

- Diverse and globally connected.
- Contributes \$27.2 billion to Australia's GDP (more than 1.5%).
- Provides more export value than the Australian beer and wine industries combined.
- Employs more than 489,000 people, from fibre suppliers through to retail staff.

First held in 2019, but put on hold during COVID, The Woolmark Company's Incubation Lab education program consists of a series of one-day educational workshops that provide Australian designers with in-depth information and inspiration about the properties and benefits of Merino wool.

The Woolmark Company's aim of the program is to encourage the designers to continue to use wool in their designs as they progress through their professional lives.

The Incubation Lab was relaunched last month in Sydney and was attended by a leading group of Australian designers, decision makers, heads of design and sustainability managers from the following brands: Alemais, Bassike, Beare Park, INTACT, Hyde and Stone, SIR., Iris & Wool, Christopher Esber, and Venroy.

At the Incubation Lab workshops, the designers heard from industry experts about wool from on-farm to off-farm and covered topics including sustainability, circularity and traceability, global legislation, product innovations and future forecasting.

The Woolmark Company aims to replicate the successful workshop format in different countries across the world.

AWI CEO John Roberts says the Incubation Lab program ultimately aims to drive new opportunities for designing with wool, and put more wool apparel in retailers' stores for consumers to purchase.

"As the industry's research, development and marketing company we want more designers to value and use wool in what they do," John said.

"Wool is a natural, renewable and biodegradable fibre that is perfect for use in so many different things. The Incubation Lab program is about sharing with designers the knowledge of The Woolmark Company and international guest speakers, so the designers can increase their use of wool."

"Initiatives such as the Incubation Lab are helping position The Woolmark Company as the leading fashion body in Australia that supports, educates and fosters emerging and established designers through product and business development and global networking support."

John Roberts, AWI CEO

Gabby Neal of INTACT

Gabby Neal, founder and creative director of Australian lifestyle brand INTACT made the journey to attend the Incubation Lab in Sydney from Condobolin, where her parents Rob and Belinda, along with middle sister Louise and her husband Alex, run Merinos with 19-20 micron wool.

INTACT was launched in April 2022 with a range of everyday wardrobe essentials that can be worn all year round, for work and play. The staples in the capsule collection are knitted with Woolmark certified yarn of 100% Australian Merino wool.

Gabby's take home from the Incubation Lab was the importance of fostering local fashion industry networks to drive awareness of wool benefits.

"Working with Woolmark has been integral to the success of INTACT, keeping our business up to date with the latest in wool trends. The Incubation Lab was an incredible day, connecting with peers, and learning about the latest industry insights and innovations and how designers on a global scale are weaving wool into their new collections," Gabby said.

"I come at it from a woolgrower and designer background, and it's exciting to see leading Australian and New Zealand brands getting behind Merino wool as part of the global shift towards natural fibres."

"The Woolmark Company does an incredible job sharing their knowledge with the fashion industry, and more events like this will be key to growing demand for this homegrown fibre."

Gabby Neal, founder of INTACT

Sean Venturi of Venroy

Founder and creative director of premium leisurewear brand Venroy, Sean Venturi, was another designer that attended the Incubation Lab in Sydney.

Launched in Bondi in 2010 with 'above the knee' swim shorts that quickly garnered a



Designers that attended the Incubation Lab workshop held last month in Sydney. Pictured left to right are: Jemyma Kavanagh from Hyde and Stone, Gabby Neal from INTACT, Shona McAlpine and Sean Venturi from Venroy, Alex Rost and Jennifer De Leon from SIR., Emma Scott from Iris & Wool, Shanelle Simpson from Alemais, Sophie Pinzone from Christopher Esber, Eliana Godoy from Bassike, Ellie Rackemann from Beare Park, and Clementine Hurley, Business Development Manager – Fashion and Product for Australia and New Zealand at The Woolmark Company.

global following, Venroy has since evolved a complete lifestyle offering for men and women. Natural fibres – including wool, linen, cotton and silk – are integral to the brand's timeless, breezy, and easy-to-wear pieces. Venroy has eight stores across Australia, Italy and the US.

"The Woolmark Company put on an amazing day that was truly insightful. Speakers throughout the day covered many very important and relevant aspects of our industry – including upcoming global legislation movements that will impact us all," Sean said.

"The support we receive from the team at Woolmark is unrivalled from any other organisation in Australia. There is a constant

and genuine care for the Australian wool industry, and through Woolmark's work with us we are inspired to explore and continue to use wool – not through direct encouragement but through a more aligned, mutually beneficial approach which feels like a true partnership."

"The support we receive from the team at Woolmark is unrivalled from any other organisation in Australia ... and through Woolmark's work with us we are inspired to explore and continue to use wool."

Sean Venturi, founder of Venroy



AWI General Manager, Processing Innovation & Education Extension, **Julie Davies**, deepening the designers' understanding of the world's most sophisticated natural fibre, Australian Merino wool.

Other designer support initiatives

The Woolmark Company also offers other year-round guidance and development opportunities to Australian and other fashion designers from across the world, including via:

- **The Wool Lab** – A seasonal sourcing guide that contains swatches of a selection of the most innovative and quality wool fabrics, yarns and processes commercially available on the market from the best spinners, knitters and weavers in the world. See www.woolmark.com/the-wool-lab
- **Technical team** – The Woolmark Company has a dedicated technical team of experts that have specialist knowledge in all areas of the supply chain and are available to assist its partners with technical transfer, troubleshooting, and process and product development.

- **Supply chain optimisation** – The Woolmark Company partners with designers, brands and retailers to commercialise new wool product lines. The company offers design team support with supply chain assistance, quality assurance, product innovation and marketing.
- **Woolmark Learning Centre** – This is a free web-based hub that houses world-class educational resources about wool for learners at all levels, including those entering the global textile industry as well as those already in it. See www.woolmarklearningcentre.com

In addition, the **International Woolmark Prize** is an illustrious fashion award and talent development program that provides the world's best emerging designers with education, mentorship, networking opportunities, early-stage funding, global wool supply chain access and commercialisation. See www.woolmarkprize.com

Student educational initiatives



Students at a Naturally Inspiring seminar in Melbourne.

Through The Woolmark Company, AWI also fosters the wool education and development of students, from primary through to tertiary.

AWI offers students a range of educational initiatives including:

Woolmark Learning Centre – See the middle column on this page.

Naturally Inspiring seminars – These seminars not only offer tertiary textile and fashion students from across the world the chance to learn about the natural benefits of wool and the variety of ways to work with the fibre, but they also give the students an insight into working in the fashion, textile and retail industries.

AWET grants – Through grants provided by the Australian Wool Education Trust (AWET), which was established by AWTA in 1997, AWI promotes the use of wool by leading Australian fashion design students. See www.woolwise.com

Woolmark Performance Challenge – This is a competition and educational program for tertiary students from across the world to develop innovative new product applications for Merino wool within the sports and performance market. See www.woolmarkchallenge.com

Wool science and technology program – These courses have been delivered for many years to tertiary textile students in China to help ensure that the country's mills can manufacture quality products made from Australian wool. The courses have now been extended to India.

Wool4School – This design competition enables secondary school students in Australia, the UK and Italy to not only learn the fundamentals of fashion design but also explore the benefits and versatility of Australian wool (see page 59). See www.wool4school.com

Learn About Wool – These classroom resources help teach primary and secondary students about the unique and natural benefits of Australian wool. See www.learnaboutwool.com

BIELLA STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT AUSSIE WOOL

Five Italian postgraduate students on a global study tour recently visited Australia to increase their knowledge of the Australian wool industry and how the fibre is produced.



The five Italian postgraduate students – Giulia Masciangelo, Ilaria Pennacchini, Jehona Lutfija, Asya Locche, Matteo De Giambattista – at Thalabah Merino Stud at Laggan with Thalabah's Anthony Frost and AWI Industry Relations Officer for NSW Kristen Frost.

AWI supported the visit in September by the five Italian students on the Biella Master Noble Fibre postgraduate course to help them learn more about the production and natural attributes of Merino wool in Australia.

During their year-long course, which is based in Biella, the students examine the entire textile supply chain, from the raw materials through to the final product. In addition to their studies in Italy, the students undertake an overseas tour, including to Australia.

The Woolmark Company has supported visits to Australia by Biella Master students since 1989 which demonstrates the long-standing relationship between the two organisations.

This year, the students began their trip by visiting the AWI office in Sydney where they learnt about AWI's R&D, marketing, sustainability and education activities.

The students then visited the wool auctions at Yennora, before travelling to the Southern Tablelands of NSW to visit several wool-

growing properties, Hillcreston Park Superfine Merino Stud at Bigga and Thalabah Merino Stud at Laggan, where the students were shown shearing, fleeces, stud sheep as well as lambing ewes.

Rounding off their trip to Australia, the students visited AWH's wool store at Goulburn and the family owned and operated Lindner Quality Socks at Crookwell where they were given a demonstration of manufacturing socks by owner Andrew Lindner.

The students said they found the tour very informative, and they came out of the experience with positive feedback.

"I feel grateful for having participated in this wool tour because, so far, during my training in Italy I have visited many mills processing Australian Merino wool. This tour allowed me to track the early steps of the Merino wool supply chain in Australia, from farms to wool auctions, to wool handling," said student Ilaria Pennacchini, who is a graduate in Fashion

Studies at La Sapienza University of Rome.

"It has been interesting to discover the complex network supporting Australian farmers in selling their wool. For this reason, I was very excited to see wool auctions in Yennora and to visit the wool handling facility at Goulburn."

Ilaria said the students' knowledge of and appreciation for Australian wool increased during the tour.

"Absolutely. During the tour, we had the opportunity to ask farmers questions about sheep welfare, wool quality, land management, and Merino visual classing. We found that there are many aspects to consider in sheep farming and that pastures and the weather play a significant role in producing high-quality wool. The passion of the people working in Hillcreston Park and Thalabah farms is what I appreciated the most on the tour.

"What I like about wool is that its production brings together different knowledge such as agriculture, animal farming, technical processing skills, and textile engineering. In terms of sustainability, the interconnection with so many areas of expertise makes the wool industry an excellent model for further improvements in the textile sector towards a fairer and more responsible production."



Italian student Ilaria Pennacchini: "Wool is an extraordinary natural fibre, suitable for a wide range of products due to its many properties."

WOOL4SCHOOL INSPIRES AND EDUCATES STUDENTS

Wool4School is an annual student competition that offers a complete design experience in the classroom while introducing a new generation of students to the versatility of Australian wool.

Wool4School is an annual competition that has been running for more than a decade and involved more than 150,000 students worldwide, not only learning the fundamentals of design but also exploring the benefits and versatility of wool and the fabric it creates.

AWI Program Manager - Education Extension, Kelly McAvo, says Wool4School invites students to think about the versatility of various wool fabrics as part of a creative design of their own.

"The aim of the Wool4School design competition is to teach school-aged students the benefits of Australian wool so that these future designers and consumers understand wool's benefits and are more likely to use Australian wool as their fibre of choice," Kelly said.

On the back of the success of Wool4School in Australia, AWI also currently runs the student design competition in the key markets of the United Kingdom and Italy.

2023 Wool4School competition winners

The theme of the 2023 competition was 'Repair, renew, repurpose, and innovate'. Students were asked to redesign and restore a vintage, retro or pre-owned garment to give it new life with wool. The winners were:

2024 Wool4School competition now open

Registrations are now open for the Australian edition of the 2024 Wool4School competition. For this year's competition, students are asked to create a design made from wool, taking inspiration from the earth's natural elements: earth, water, fire and air.

In a new initiative for this year, students not only have the option of creating a fashion design, they can alternatively create a design for a different application such as interiors, accessories, or textile art.

The competition closes on 25 July 2024, with winners announced on 22 August 2024. There are a host of amazing prizes on offer.

- **Woolgrowers and parents:** Contact your local high school and encourage them to get involved in the Wool4School program. Information for schools and teachers is available at www.wool4school.com
- **Year 7-12 students:** Learn more about the exciting competition and prizes at www.wool4school.com.

1. Junior designer category (Year 7-8)
Jessica Nguyen, Killester College (Vic)
2. Mid designer category (Year 9-10)
Nadia Yang, Glen Waverley Secondary College (Vic)
3. Senior designer category (Year 11)
Xiang Chen, North Sydney Girls High School (NSW)
4. Aspiring designer category (Year 12)
Lille Osborne, Camberwell Girls Grammar School (Vic)

MARKET INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Wool production up

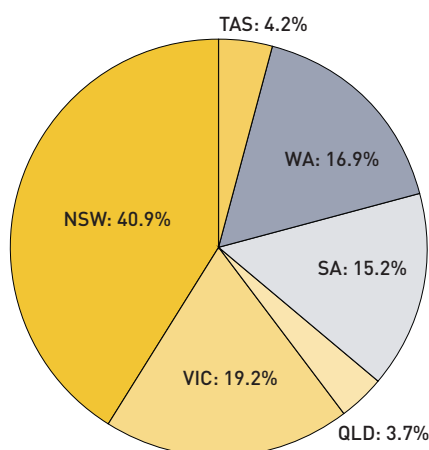
The conclusion of the first four months of testing for the 2023/24 season has seen an increase in production. Based on the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA) key test data as at the end of October 2023, the weight tested for the current season is 2.6% above the weights tested at the same point of last season.

The current increases go against the industry forecast of a 1.1% decrease for the season, but given the very wet conditions last year delaying shearing throughout the first half of the season, the dry of this current season has allowed shearing and therefore testing data to flow more freely, largely without weather interference.

AWTA has tested 107.7 mkg (million kilograms) so far this season, compared to the 105.0 mkg at the same point in time last year.

The most significant changes have occurred to the positive. Both South Australia (+8.7%) and New South Wales (+4.5%) have registered early gains in the cumulative weight of wool presented to the test house so far this season. All other states are within +/-3% of last year's figures. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: 2023/24 wool production by state as at October 2023



Auction statistics

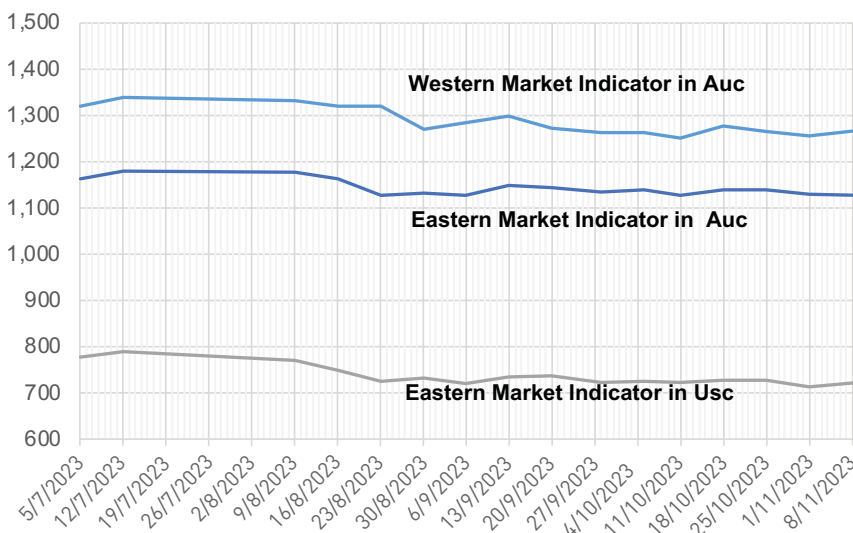
At auction, the first 16 weeks of selling at the end of week 19 (10th November 2023) of the 2023/24 selling season has:

- Offered 650,511 bales (approx. 116.4 mkg greasy) at auction compared to the 614,602 bales (approx. 110.0 mkg) offered at the same point of the selling season last year. That is 35,909 bales (approx. 6.4 mkg) more or 5.8% more wool offered, or an average of 2,244 bales more wool offered per sale week.
- Sold 595,023 bales (approx. 106.5 mkg greasy) at auction this season compared to the 531,122 bales (approx. 95.1 mkg) sold at the same point of last year. That is 63,901 bales (approx. 11.4mkg) more or 12.0% more wool sold, or an average of 3,993 extra bales sold per sale week.
- Clearance at auction rates this season are at 91.5% nationally of all wool offered compared to the 86.4% cleared over the same period of the 2022/23 season. Whilst offerings are also up, the predisposition of growers willing to sell is also far greater and an improvement rate of 5.9% of wools offered being sold.
- Raw wool value of wool sold this season is A\$811 million which is A\$23million less than the A\$835 million sold by the end of the same week last year. This is a 2.75% year on year reduction of raw wool value sold so far and an average of A\$1.44million less value of wool sold each sale week thus far. This must be viewed with the 12.0% more wool having been sold, which indicates the lesser values of the overall wool income/kg.

Wool price steady

- The 2023/24 season has seen the Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) in AUD basically in stalemate - see Figure 2 below. The 1126ac/clean kg which started the selling season has shifted by just 2ac to 1128ac/clean kg by the end of week 19 (10th November 2023) This is an intra seasonal gain of 0.2% in Australian dollar terms.
- The USD EMI has fallen 24usc/clean kg from 748usc/clean kg at the start of the season in July to close week 19 (10th November 2023) at 724usc/clean kg. This is a seasonal loss in USD of 3.2%, underperforming the Australian dollar values and bringing in less GDP value.
- The 2023/24 season has seen the Western Market Indicator (WMI) in AUD lose 4ac from the season opening price of 1271ac/clean kg to be 1267ac/clean kg by the end of week 19 (10th November 2023). This is an intra seasonal loss of 0.3% in Australian dollar terms.

Figure 2: 2023/24 wool market price indicators



ONGOING TREND IN JAPAN FOR MADE TO MEASURE

AWI Global Strategic Advisor Peter Ackroyd reports on healthy demand in the men's and women's made to measure market in Japan. Mr Ackroyd is a former President of the International Wool Textile Organisation and is Chief Operating Officer of the Campaign for Wool.



AWI Global Strategic Advisor, **Peter Ackroyd**.

Reports from reliable sources in Japan suggest the boom in the made to measure (MTM) market is far from the 'dead cat bounce' that some had mischievously predicted it would be, and many feared it might be, as the more affluent world emerges from the horrors of 'sweat pants' and 'lounging around wear' during Covid and beyond.

At the IWTO Congress in Kyoto in May of this year, Mr Tatsunori Yamamoto, General Manager of the Product Division of Aoyama Trading Co Ltd in Hiroshima, once the world's largest manufacturer of suits when most middle management dressed 'off the peg', confirmed the company's commitment to MTM in its 700 stores across Japan, once exclusively reserved for ready to wear, cut and sewn across the East China Sea. Aoyama's acquisition 18 months ago of the prestigious Azabu Tailor adds significant weight to the company's commitment to MTM.

Further encouraging reports from Japan, where sales directors from all the Merino weaving companies that matter in Europe are currently converging, suggest predicted sales of branded *finer* worsted qualities are expected to be the best in a decade. This comes at a time when the Japanese Yen remains persistently weak against most currencies, particularly the US dollar.

"Were it not for Japan, a number of UK and a good few Italian worsted mills would have gone to the wall in the 1990s," noted the late Gordon Kaye, an old Japan hand who was in Tokyo when the market began to open up to foreign fabric imports after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

Once seen as doomed dinosaurs of the retail sector in a world of online frenzy, Japanese department stores are enjoying a post-Covid boom that few would have thought possible in

a country that has always been at the leading edge of e-commerce, technological progress and innovation. Several, more seasoned, observers of the fashion scene saw a return to the visual and the tactile in the quality clothing market as a natural segue to the move towards MTM and the return to smarter appearance as a semblance of normality returns to the workplace.

The resemblance of Tokyo's majestic department stores to well-known retail palaces such as Macy's, Harrods, David Jones or Selfridges is striking.

As sales at all 167 department stores across Japan report record revenues, it is perfectly reasonable to ask which demographic is the driving force behind the +29% rise in sales at Isetan to ¥327.6 billion, and the +30% rise in Hankyu Department Store sales to ¥261 billion, both iconic fashion venues that have transformed themselves in the past four years. Venue is perhaps the operative word here, as a visit to both these competing stores will confirm a unique retail experience that combines fashion with lifestyle, art, music and culture. The answer, according to Nikke Asia (that acquired the *Financial Times* in 2015) is Japan's urban wealthy, mainly male high-income earners in metropolitan areas.

A Japanese employee of a leading UK supplier to Japan, with close links to Isetan Shinjuku in Tokyo noted, "consumers in their 40s or younger accounted for 33% of sales via the store's personal shopping service, up a clear +10% over 2022".

Many of the merchandisers, buyers and fabric selectors being visited by the posse of sales directors from European mills this autumn in Tokyo and Osaka will be from a style of modern apparel retailing unique to Japan.

Select stores, a sector in which the main players are United Arrows, Beams, Ships and Tomorrowland, specialise in an immaculately assembled selection (from whence the name 'select') of coordinated merchandise ranging from shirts, ties, knitwear, shoes, leather goods, bags, watches and, more importantly, ranges of suits and jackets. The carefully curated racks of sports jackets all carry sleeve labels from mills in Italy and the UK (never China), as do the suits, still mainly in blues, greys and charcoal. The 'select' stores reflect a peculiarly Japanese obsession with the didactic, as seen in

a series of glossy style and fashion magazines, particularly *Men's Ex*, *Leon* and Japanese *GQ* where page after page is devoted to teaching both young and old how to dress for specific occasions and the art of mixing and matching separates and accessories.*

Reports that these uniquely Japanese retail concepts are again performing well, adds to the general mood of optimism among suppliers of quality cloth from UK and Italy.

The rise in MTM and happier days for department stores is good news for some, but not for all. Quite the contrary. Ready to wear, once a significant percentage of global sales for bulk Italian and Chinese weavers, is dead (sic) and its revival is not even visible on the horizon, noted one cloth agent, adding a cautionary note to the euphoria around tailored apparel in Tokyo recently. The key question is: "Will volume MTM ever compensate for the demise of ready to wear?"

Samuel Cockedey, AWI Regional Manager Japan & Korea, added a salutary word of caution: "The welcome optimism around premium MTM in the exclusive retail market, must be seen in the context of ongoing poor performance of the middle market for suits that is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future, and certainly not until the Yen strengthens against the US dollar and the Euro".

Spending by well-off shoppers is the driving force behind the current good fortune of several premium Woolmark licensees in Japan. The Nomura Research Institute estimates Japanese affluent individuals with assets of ¥100m to ¥500m and an elite group of high-net-worth individuals with assets of ¥500m or more increased by +17% from 2017 to 2022.

"High-net-worth consumers and the cash rich are attracted to brands and weavers who have invested in their own brand equity in this market and will benefit accordingly. It was ever thus in the latter part of the last century, just as it is today," noted Richard Boidé, Managing Director of Dormeuil, a merchant manufacturer of fine Merino whose records show their first shipment of cloth to Japan was in 1914.

* Paragraph from 'Wool in Japan: A Very British Story' by R Peter Ackroyd, *Britain & Japan: Biographical Portraits Volume X*. Available from AWI via Peter.Ackroyd@wool.com

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON

The chart opposite provides a snapshot of how the AWEX monthly Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) and a range of microns have performed for the past three months (August 2023 – October 2023) in Australian dollar terms compared with the previous five years August 2018 to July 2023 (circles) and the decade previous to that, August 2008 – July 2018 (squares).

During the past three months, the monthly EMI averaged at \$11.41 which is a 62c decrease from the average monthly EMI for the previous three months, and is tracking at the 14th percentile against the previous five-year monthly EMI. This means that in the previous five years the monthly EMI has recorded a lower price than the current \$11.41 (August 2023 – October 2023) for 14% of the time.

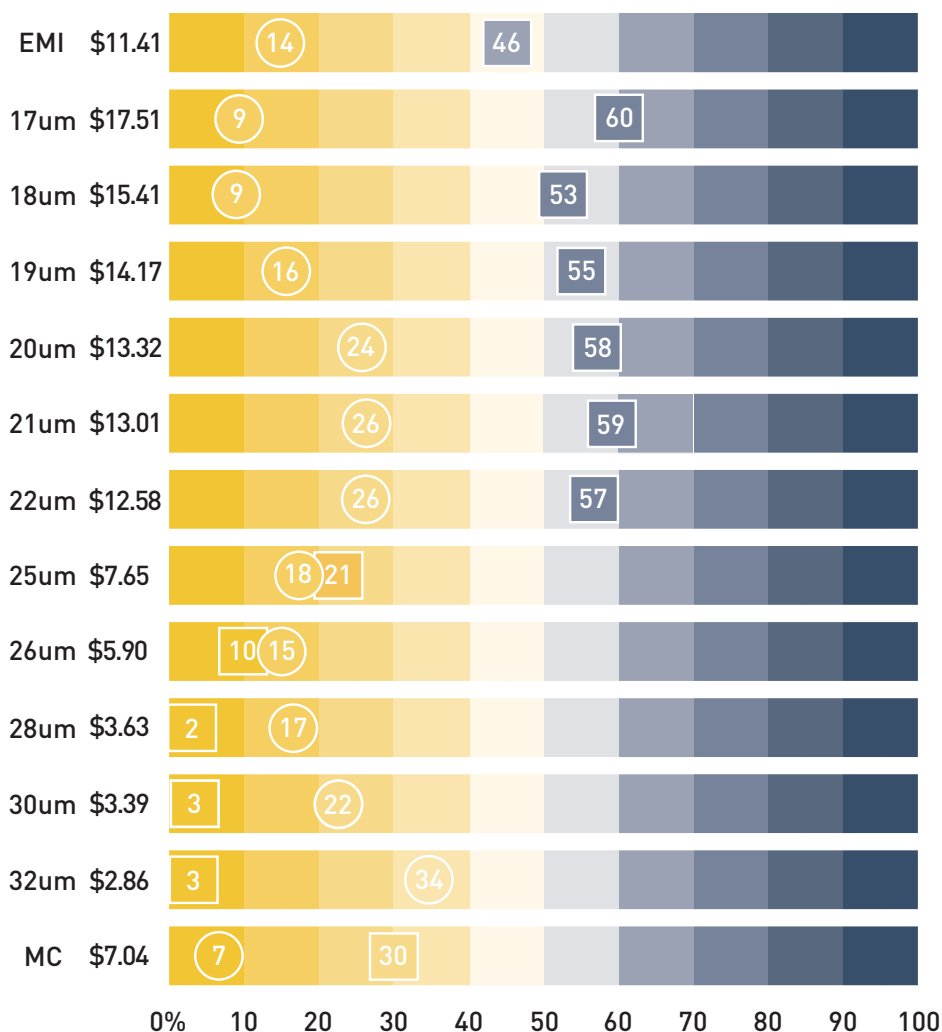
While the EMI is tracking at the 14th percentile over the previous five years, it is tracking at the 46th percentile when compared to the decade August 2008 – July 2018. This means the current EMI of \$11.41 (August 2023 – October 2023) is higher now than it was for 46% of that decade.

18 micron averaged at a monthly value of \$15.41 (9th percentile for the previous five years and 60th percentile for the decade before that), 21 micron averaged at \$13.01 (26th percentile for the previous five years but 59th percentile for the decade before that), and 28 micron averaged at \$3.63 (17th percentile for the previous five years and 2nd percentile for the decade before that).

For the past three months, Merino Cardings averaged at \$7.04, operating at the 7th percentile for the previous five years and at the 30th percentile for the decade before that.

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI FOR AUGUST 2023 – OCTOBER 2023 COMPARED WITH

- PREVIOUS 5 YEARS AUGUST 2018 – JULY 2023
- THE DECADE AUGUST 2008 – JULY 2018



Market intelligence at wool.com

An important part of AWI's Wool.com website is market intelligence information for woolgrowers.

As well as the Weekly Price Reports and Monthly Market Intelligence Reports, there is a graphical display of:

- Eastern Market Indicator – you can select to display AUD, USD, CNY or EUR.
- Offering – displays bales offered and bales sold.

- Currency movements – you can select to display AUD/USD, AUD/CNY or AUD/EUR.
- Forecast of bales sold – displays previous season, current season, current week and forecast.

For the first three categories above, you can select to display data from 3 months to 3 years ago.

AWI also continues to send wool prices and market intelligence direct to about 6,700 woolgrowers' mobile phones. If you would like to subscribe to the free SMS service, visit www.wool.com/subscribe where you will be asked to input your name and the mobile phone number to receive the SMS. You can unsubscribe from the service at any time.

More information: www.wool.com/marketintel

READERS' PHOTOS!

PHOTO: Maksym Belchenko

Have you got any interesting photos that you'd like to share with other readers of *Beyond the Bale*?

If so, please email the image and a brief description to the editor of *Beyond the Bale* Richard Smith at richard.smith@wool.com, or you can tag us #beyondthebale on Instagram.

If you email or tag a photo that gets published in Readers' Photos, you'll receive from us a paperback copy of the Kondinin Group's *The Story of Wool*.



Recognise me?

The photo of **Georgia Bain** at the very top of this page was originally shot to promote *The Story of Wool* book, shortly after it was published in 2010, and has been used on the Readers Photos page of *Beyond the Bale* for several years. Fast forward to today and the Bain family of **Stockyard Hill** in the western districts of **Victoria** has sent in the photo above of Georgia, now 21 – and still learning about wool! “We always get a smile on our face when we turn to the back page of BTB and see our daughter, Georgia, as the face of Readers' Photos,” the family said.

Calling all woolgrowers with a flair for content creation

AWI's marketing arm, The Woolmark Company, is seeking expressions of interest from Australian woolgrowers who are keen to collaborate with the company in showcasing on social media how they are stewards of the land and their love for their flock.

With consumers across the world increasingly interested in learning about the source of the fibre in their clothing, The Woolmark Company is on a mission to demonstrate the incredible work Australian woolgrowers undertake on their properties and connect the farm-to-fashion storyline.

The Woolmark Company's social media channels on which content might be posted during the collaboration include Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

Register your interest now by emailing marketing@wool.com



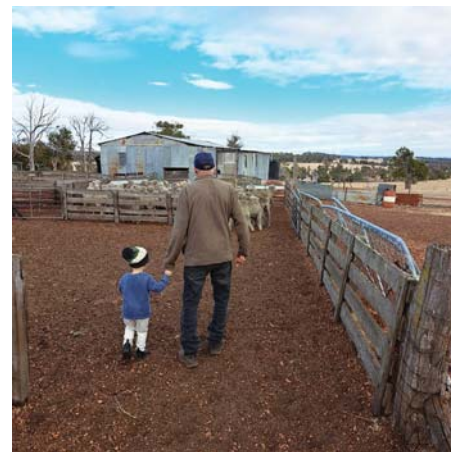
I've got your back, mum!

Jaz Hobbs of **Bendemeer** in the New England region of **NSW** wool classing in her shed last year, with daughter **Reigny** on her back and son **Archie** “helping out”. Jazmine says, “I'm glad I have images like this to share what it looks like to raise children while being responsible for animals and a business, and showcase what many women do every day in rural Australia.” Thanks for tagging this and other photos #beyondthebale on Instagram, @jazhobbs.



Sentry duty

Ram lambs from **Connewarran Merino Stud** at **Mortlake** in **Victoria's** Southwest take a moment to survey their surrounds, which they share with a flourishing abundance of wildlife. **Connewarran** is a thriving Merino wool-growing property built by **Richard and Jenny Weatherly** and now the next generation, **Hamish and Eli Weatherly**, on respect for the land and its natural inhabitants.



Next generation

The grandson of farmers **Martin and Debra Carroll** of **Kulikup** near **Boyup Brook** in the South West of **Western Australia** being shown the ropes in the yards.

Shearwell Data

Livestock Systems



EID & VISUAL TAGS



INDUSTRY LEADING RETENTION

- ✓ NLIS Accredited
- ✓ Lightweight, one-piece design
- ✓ Tried & Tested on farm
- ✓ Easy to use applicator
- ✓ Multiple print options available
- ✓ Covered pin - liked by Shearers!

*FREE SET Tag Applicator
for first time Shearwell
customers ordering
200 tags or more.



Additional applicators
\$22.00 incl GST



Ideal for single or double tagging

Turbo Tagger

STARTER PACK

\$137.50 inc GST



Includes five unfilled drums
Additional drums \$2.00 each

From tags, to EID readers, weighing equipment & handling systems, Shearwell have the complete solution for stud breeders and commercial producers alike.

PRODUCTS YOU CAN TRUST




★★★★★
EXCELLENT
CUSTOMER
SERVICE

MANAGE YOUR LIVESTOCK SMARTER!  **1800 998 934**

 sales@shearwell.com.au

 www.shearwell.com.au

