In the following pages there are articles sourced from the latest editions of AWI’s quarterly Beyond the Bale magazine. If you would like to be put on the distribution list for Beyond the Bale (free), please email your name and postal address to richard.smith@wool.com, or visit http://beyondthebale.wool.com to view online versions.

AWI produces several free online publications:
- Weekly wool market review
- AWI woolgrowers’ newsletter (monthly)
- Beyond the Bale e-newsletter (quarterly)
- Daily price reports (via sms)

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WoolQ is an online platform that allows all types of woolgrowers and industry participants to easily harness digital efficiencies across the wool-growing and selling cycle. It offers a suite of digital tools to facilitate more informed decision-making and enable digital communication and exchange.

WoolQ has been delivered to industry in stages since last year. The first phase of WoolQ was the launch of the Industry Network and eSpeci tool in March 2018. The WoolQ eSpeci is an alternative to the current paper speci and allows woolgrowers and wool classifiers to efficiently capture their in-shed clip data at the time of shearing. With growing numbers of WoolQ eSpeci’s being submitted across Australia since its launch, it is clear there is an appetite within the Australian wool industry for the introduction of such digital tools. Since launching in 2018, more than 10,000 bales of wool have been captured and processed using the WoolQ eSpeci.

In August 2018, WoolQ launched My WoolQ, a central mailbox and storage point for all data relating to a woolgrower’s clip, with simple comparative tools to see what’s happening from one season to the next. Broker integration is required to access the full suite of My WoolQ tools.

Having this rich data set available, a woolgrower can use the new WoolQ Ready Reckoner, a simple calculator with two tools: the ‘Market Analysis’ tool allows growers to get an instant estimate of the value of their clip from up-to-date market pricing. The ‘Market Results’ tool also allows growers to view recent sale prices to benchmark and evaluate their clip performance against similar wool in the market.

The August launch also included the addition of the WoolQ Industry Network Forum. This is Australia’s first online wool industry discussion forum where woolgrowers, classifiers, brokers and buyers can connect to share ideas, experiences and learnings. This could be especially useful for non-Merino woolgrowers and breed associations (see box right).

The final piece of WoolQ functionality, the WoolQ Market, will be delivered to industry within the next couple of months. WoolQ Market will be a centralised, online marketplace for Australian wool. The two-tiered platform will provide both a bulletin board of buying and selling information accessible on a 24/7 basis as well as an efficient, easy to use online auction operating outside the Open Cry Market hours. With extensive benefits for buyers, brokers and growers, the WoolQ Market will serve as a complement to the current Open Cry auction markets.

All components of the WoolQ platform undergo extensive and ongoing user engagement and testing to ensure the tools are user-friendly, intuitive and deliver value. We also have field officers who can visit you on-farm to ensure you are set-up and ready to make the most of the WoolQ tools.

Feedback from woolgrowers, classifiers and brokers using the platform has been very positive. Anna Cotton of Kelvedon Estate in Tasmania commented: “I found the eSpeci really user-friendly. It is extremely logical as it’s a step-by-step process. It prompts you along the way and removes the margin of error as everything is pre-set.”

WoolQ can be accessed by any member of the wool industry, from woolgrowers to classifiers, through to brokers, buyers and industry associations. Users first need to register at www.woolq.com. Easy-to-follow video tutorials and user guides are available on www.woolq.com along with a customer assistance service.

** MORE INFORMATION **
www.woolq.com

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**WoolQ enables promotion of broad wool breeds**

Are you an executive member of a breed association? The WoolQ Industry Network Directory will provide your group more visibility within the industry and the Industry Network Forum would be a great addition to your current communications.

The WoolQ group function allows grower associations, like-minded woolgrowers or woolgrowers with a similar breed of sheep to present a singular profile, through which they can showcase their unique interests to a global audience and share ideas, education, industry updates etc.

Group profiles are housed in the Industry Network Directory with all the other industry participants. This makes being found quick and easy as the directory is searchable using common requests such as wool type, geographical location or quality scheme.

Once a group has a profile, members can communicate through the Industry Network Forum. The Forum is a meeting place to connect to share ideas, experiences and learnings. For groups, this enables them to virtually gather in one place to discuss and trade information directly within WoolQ.

Members can post information and photos or comment on another member’s post. This is a great way to increase communication and generate debate between group members in between physical meetings. The group discussion can be open or closed, but it could be a great way to attract new members.

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**THE BROADER VIEW**

WoolQ can be used on any mobile phone, tablet, laptop or desktop – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When no Wi-Fi or internet connection exists, the WoolQ App ensures users can still access the tool.
In this edition of The Broader View, we look at the current market situation in the broad wool segment. Average monthly prices have been consistently on the rise over the past two years, and as at the start of March 2019, the 28 and 30 micron price indicators sit at all-time record high levels. Two years as at the end of February 2019, both of these micron price guides are sitting at all time high price levels. 28 micron has experienced a tremendous growth of 69.4% from 678ac to 1108ac within the period. The 30 micron types and micron price guide have also experienced exceptional gains to record levels and have risen from 538ac to 891ac representing a 66.2% gain within two years. This wool type is the best performer across all wool sectors, bar none during the two-year reporting period.

Australia is considered the most reliable of suppliers of volumes available globally of ‘good white’ wool types within this 27 to 31 micron product area so we are fortunate to be able to obtain premiums of near 100ac over other producing nations of similar microns. This is why it is imperative that clip preparation is adhered to stringently to protect that market premium. Reliable supply and reliable high quality are what is selling alongside the products that consumers demand. Other competing nations, including New Zealand, simply don’t achieve the same price levels as that of Australia. Almost all deliveries are destined to and reliant upon China within this group with just a small fraction of middle eastern and European business assisting in demand levels.

Whilst by no means neglected, the 32 micron and broader wools have also fared reasonably well and gained around 24% in the past 24 months. Prices have risen from 405ac in February 2017 to 503ac in February 2019. As more volume of this wool is grown by other producing nations, prices have not appreciated to such lofty heights of $474ac was recorded, but price gains have also outstripped other global producers.

The rising prices are obviously indicative of growth in demand but also equally being alongside supply becoming scarcer. Drought is one of the predominant reasons within Australia, but primarily high sheep meat prices, and more relevantly, high lamb prices are the factors in determining the lower supply. With a continued growth in global trends moving towards choosing to use natural fibres, even in bedding and interiors as well as fashion wear, wool is clearly positioned as the premium fibre and a fibre of choice.
WOOL WEEK
AUSTRALIA

Retailers, shopping centres and consumers across Australia threw their support behind its annual Wool Week, promoting wool products including those made from wool of a broader micron.

An initiative of AWI and its subsidiary The Woolmark Company, Wool Week arose from the global Campaign for Wool that aims to educate consumers about the natural benefits of wool products – from beautiful interior products for the home through to wool apparel – and increase sales of wool products.

Last year’s campaign was joined for the third year running by shopping centre giant Westfield which aligned its own Winter 2018 retailer campaign with Wool Week to champion the natural fibre.

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough says Wool Week is an annual celebration which puts wool at the forefront of shoppers’ minds.

“Thanks to the support of leading brands and retailers, along with educational activities, Wool Week aims to reconnect consumers with the versatility and natural benefits of all Australian wool and encourages conscious purchasing decisions,” Mr McCullough said.

“I applaud all retailers, brands, woolgrowers and consumers who have once again thrown their support behind our annual campaign and are ultimately increasing demand for this premium fibre.”

Westfield returned as a major partner, with about 40 centres across Australia and New Zealand promoting the fibre, the woolgrowers who produce it and the retailers that sell it. The centres also hosted exclusive wool-focused activities, workshops and installations to generate retailer and consumer interest in Wool Week. Wool Week advertising was promoted via smart screens in Westfield centres, playing short video content a total of more than 12 million times.

Westfield’s website and e-newsletters also had a wool takeover, with six articles published highlighting the Woolmark brand and innovative uses of Australian wool.

“Following the success of the previous year’s campaign, which strengthened the Westfield-Woolmark partnership, we are once again celebrating wool this winter,” Westfield Senior Brand Experience Manager Tanya Green explained at the time.

“For Westfield’s 2018 winter campaign, we are shooting a series of vibrant moments that showcase the different ways in which wool can be a part of our customers’ lives. We will capture this through still photography and motion, which will be promoted across all of Westfield’s channels.

“We have a breadth of retailers who sell and promote wool in fashion, activewear and homeware and it’s something our customers look for; so this collaboration with The Woolmark Company is perfect for our customers as well.”
WOOL WEEK
BRITAIN

The Campaign for Wool’s annual Wool Week in the UK marked its ninth year with an extended program of events spanning a fortnight in October – with a key message being ‘careability’, showing consumers that caring for wool is easy.

Wool products on display during Wool Week in the UK.

The global Campaign for Wool marked its ninth successful year in the UK with its annual ‘Wool Week’ held 8-21 October.

The Campaign was initiated in 2010 by its patron, His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, to raise awareness amongst consumers about the unique, natural, renewable and biodegradable benefits offered by the fibre.

The Campaign has been instrumental in educating consumers about the versatility of wool, and reconnecting them with its myriad uses – from furnishings and floor coverings to apparel of all microns.

Highlighted at this year’s Wool Week UK, were ‘Five Wonderful Wool Facts’ that show consumers why wool should be their first choice for the home and the workplace:

1. Wearing and sleeping with wool products helps you sleep
2. Wool is environmentally friendly
3. Wool is good for your skin and can even help with adult and children’s eczema
4. Wool can be invisibly repaired
5. Wool is replacing leather for seats in luxury automotive brands and first-class cabins in planes.

Key retailers and designers threw their support behind the Campaign for Wool through in-store activities and shop window displays across the UK, including Brintons, Axminster, Alternative Flooring, Headlam Group, Brockway Carpets and more.

Centring around an interactive pop-up in London’s iconic Covent Garden, Wool Week showcased retailer collaborations and educated consumers about the ease of owning, caring for and cleaning wool products. It highlighted that the purchase of a wool product is an investment that will stand the test of time to look as good as the day it was bought.

The wool care installation consisted of two fitted-out containers – decked with wool furniture, carpets and garments – highlighting the versatile and innovative ways in which wool is used across different industries and applications. The public could enter on a wool carpet and then see the products with a different perspective – wool furniture, wool sneakers, hand knitted jumpers, sleep wear, wool wadding and much more.

There were live stain removal demonstrations for both carpets and garments, at which the public was encouraged to get involved.

Visitors also had the opportunity to meet 15 retail and industry experts through a ‘Meet the Wool Gurus’ series, including experts from the bedding and carpet sectors.

In addition to retail consumer promotions and events taking place around the UK, there were also a series of craft workshops taking place at various locations across the country.
One of the biggest talking points at last year’s Geneva International Motor Show was the announcement by Aston Martin that Lagonda aims to be the world’s first zero emission luxury vehicle brand, powered only by electricity.

At the Geneva show, Aston Martin presented its Lagonda ‘Vision Concept’, which showcases the design themes—including wool upholstery—that could potentially be seen in production models as soon as 2021.

“We see no limits for Lagonda,” said Aston Martin President and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Andy Palmer. “It will produce cars that exploit technology ... and it will enable Lagonda to redefine the concept of luxury within the automotive and other spheres.”

With no need to package a vast internal combustion engine, gearbox and transmission, Lagonda’s designers can optimise the interior down to the smallest detail and then build up the exterior of the car around it. For the interior, wool will be used.

In its 1930s heyday, Lagonda was capable of producing V12-powered limousines fit for royalty, and sports cars strong and quick enough to win Le Mans. Bought by Aston Martin in 1947, Lagonda continued to innovate – and never more so than today...

The Lagonda Vision Concept was launched at the Geneva International Motor Show; Aston Martin President and CEO, Dr Andy Palmer; interiors designer David Linley, 2nd Earl of Snowdon; Aston Martin EVP and Chief Creative Officer, Marek Reichman.

A MODERN, LUXURIOUS INTERIOR WITH WOOL

For the interior, Aston Martin EVP and Chief Creative Officer Marek Reichman and his team turned to the most traditional of households for the most visionary thinking: the Queen’s nephew and renowned English craftsman David Linley, 2nd Earl of Snowdon.

Mr Reichman said the Earl’s ability to marry materials – some very modern, others very established – in ways that are never predictable held the key to the interior of the Lagonda Vision Concept.

“When we first started working with David we showed him all these ideas we’d had for marquetry and leather on the inside and he said, ‘Let’s use different materials, materials people won’t expect even in isolation, let alone together’, which is why the interior of the Lagonda Vision Concept uses not only ultra modern materials like carbon fibre and ceramics but also some of the oldest and finest.”

The result is a cabin in which hand woven wool upholstery lives in perfect harmony with carbon fibre trim and functional ceramic tiles that open and close to alter the ventilation and adjust the volume of the music.

As well as working with David Linley, Mr Reichman enlisted the support of Savile Row tailors Henry Poole, for their expert knowledge in tailoring luxury materials.

Henry Poole said it was honoured: “When the decision was made to use hand woven wool, our master tailors were able to assist in creating the patterns, cutting the material and the detailed finishing to ensure that a perfectly trimmed seat was achieved.”

Lagonda is not the only luxury car brand to recently introduce wool in its interiors. For example, BMW uses wool in its i3, Range Rover uses wool in its Velar, and Toyota uses wool in its Century. Continuing the royal theme, Bentley also uses wool in its State Limousine, which is an official state car for the Queen.

MORE INFORMATION
www.lagonda.com
Woolstar is a long-term Woolmark licensee that produces high quality woollen bedding such as quilts, underblankets, mattress toppers and pillows. Company founder and managing director Graeme Kerr says its new traceability model provides its customers, especially in Asian markets, with reassurance knowing that the filling in the products is Australian wool which is well known for its quality.

"By simply scanning a QR code and then entering a product key displayed on their product, customers will be able to see pictures, information and a location of the farm which the wool in the product came from," Graeme said.

Woolstar’s new ‘Farm 2 Shelf’ traceability model of Australian premium bedding brand Woolstar enables its customers to learn about the specific Australian farm that produced the wool in their Woolstar product.

"Export sales of our high-quality Australian made, 100% Australian wool products continue to grow," he said. "Many of our products are exported to countries as diverse as Argentina, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey, the UK and USA – but China is increasingly important, and we should be seeing more of our products on the shelves of Chinese retailers during the coming years."

Woolstar was invited to the first ever China International Import Expo trade event in November 2018, organised and supported by China’s Ministry of Commerce. "Australian wool and manufacturing are extremely favourable amongst Chinese consumers, and the people at the expo were especially pleased to see our Farm 2 Shelf traceability feature which provides them with assurance that Woolstar is an authentic product of Australia," Graeme said.

"We were very proud to be invited to this event and raise the flag high for the whole Australian wool industry."

**Woolstar’s Export Growth**

The Woolstar brand was established by Graeme 23 years ago in south west Sydney. The company invested in high quality textile machines which provided the opportunity to focus on developing innovative products for both the domestic and export markets.

Graeme says the overseas market as well as the domestic market loves Australian wool products.

"The Woolmark logo is one of the world’s most recognisable textile symbols, and it indicates that a product bearing the mark is made from 100 per cent Pure New Wool," he said. "Consumers recognise that Woolmark certified products meet key performance standards - providing confidence that a quality product is being bought."

Graeme says Woolstar’s traceability program complements the Woolmark certification of Woolstar products.

"The wool is 28 to 33 micron, and that’s the micron we want because it’s essential for bedding. It has the perfect mix of natural performance, strength and softness, providing excellent loft and comfort for bedding. It’s just a beautiful fibre to work with."

"Our ultimate vision is to have a direct working relationship with Australian farmers that produce downs wool that meets our specifications – and share their stories and hard work with our customers through our products, thereby ensuring the woolgrowers receive the recognition which they deserve for the amazing wool which they produce.

"Poll Dorset sheep produce downs wool of..."
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