

VICTORIA

This publication provides woolgrowers in Victoria with some of the results of AWI investment in **on-farm R&D and extension** that are benefiting woolgrowers in the state. It also provides **contact information** for Victorian woolgrowers who want to get involved.

ABOUT AWI

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) is a not-for-profit enterprise that conducts **research and development (R&D)** and **marketing** on behalf of Australian woolgrowers. AWI works along the worldwide supply chain for Australian wool – from woolgrowers to brands and retailers.

Research and development (R&D):

AWI invests in both on-farm R&D and off-farm R&D. This publication highlights some **on-farm R&D and extension** investments that are benefiting Victoria's woolgrowers.

Marketing:

Through its extensive networks spanning the international textile and fashion industries, AWI and its marketing arm, The Woolmark Company, highlight the premium, natural qualities of Australian wool to support global demand for the fibre – for the benefit of all Australian woolgrowers.

DO YOU WANT TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE FROM AWI WHO IS LOCAL?

While you can always contact AWI staff in the AWI Sydney office about an issue related to AWI, if you would prefer to contact someone more local, you are welcome to contact the AWI Industry Relations Officer, Victoria.



AWI Industry Relations Officer, Victoria: Holly Byrne

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Holly is based in Bendigo and has a background in farming and wool harvesting.

VICTORIA'S WOOL INDUSTRY

Victoria is the second-largest wool producing state in Australia. Wool production occurs across all regions of Victoria but is concentrated in the North West, South West, Hume and Bendigo regions.

SHEEP NUMBERS SHORN

million	NSW	Vic	WA	SA	Tas	Qld	Total
2021/22	24.6	17.2	13.3	11.7	2.6	2.2	71.6
2022/23	25.9	16.1	13.0	11.1	2.6	2.8	71.5
2023/24*	26.6 37.2%	15.6 21.8%	12.5 17.5%	11.4 15.9%	2.8 3.9%	2.7 3.8%	71.6 100%

Source: Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee August 2024

* Forecast

SHORN WOOL PRODUCTION

mkg#	NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Qld	Tas	Total
2021/22	113.3	73.9	56.1	61.2	8.9	10.3	324
2022/23	119.0	70.0	56.7	60.6	11.3	10.2	328
2023/24*	119.5 37.6%	65.6 20.6%	58.0 18.2%	55.0 17.3%	10.1 3.2%	9.3 2.9%	318 100%

Source: Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee August 2024

million kilograms * Forecast

VICTORIA'S WOOLGROWERS*

NSW	Vic	SA	WA	Tas	Qld
12,974 32.8%	10,893 27.6%	8,142 20.6%	5,446 13.8%	1,401 3.5%	654 1.7%

* Wool levy payers with voting entitlement at 30 June 2024; Australia = 39,510. Total wool levy payers = 75,336. NSW = NSW + ACT. SA = SA + NT.



AWI Extension VIC invests through BestWool/BestLamb, which is a partnership between AWI and Agriculture Victoria. It offers resources and activities including producer demo sites, workshops, webinars, online newsletters and more. All Victorian growers are encouraged to get involved.



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AWI CONSULTATION WITH WOOLGROWER REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

AWI formally consults with woolgrower representative groups about the industry's key R&D and marketing priorities, through the AWI Woolgrower Industry Consultation Panel (WICP) and its Woolgrower Consultation Group (WCG).

Woolgrowers wanting to provide feedback to AWI through the WICP or WCG are encouraged to contact their member organisation. As well as national member organisations, the state-based and regional member organisations in Victoria are:

- Birchip Cropping Group
- Mallee Sustainable Farming Group
- Victorian Farmers Federation
- Victorian Stud Merino Sheep Breeders Association

➔ www.wool.com/consultation

VICTORIA HIGHLIGHTS

WOOL HARVESTING



Participants learning best practice shearing technique on a five-day novice course at **Balmoral**.



Advanced/Improver fine wool Merino Shear n Gear workshop, held at Stoney Hurst near **Colac**.

SHEARER AND WOOL HANDLER TRAINING

In-shed training

AWI funds and supports hands-on, in-shed training in Victoria for shearers and wool handlers to attract and retain new workers, as well as increase workers' productivity, skills and professionalism. The training is provided by Shearing Contractors Association of Australia Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc.

➔ To arrange training in your area, contact admin@swti.edu.au

Vic wool harvesting ambassadors

These young professionals are promoting the industry at workshops, shearing competitions and in the media: Jack King (shearer, Kaniva), Joseph Knoll (shearer, Wimmera) and Megan Etherton (wool handler, Bendigo).

BIOLOGICAL WOOL HARVESTING

AWI is funding promising research 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. AWI is also investing in the development of a way to harvest the weakened wool via a device that applies a force to separate the wool from the body of the sheep.

➔ www.wool.com/wool-harvesting-innovation

AWI SHEEP DELIVERY MODULE

The AWI sheep delivery units provide a system that delivers sheep directly to the shearer, eliminating the time and energy that shearers spend on the catch and drag and minimises the chance of injury to the shearer. The design focuses on a 'modular' concept in which portable singular shearing stands can be joined together. There are several companies manufacturing a sheep delivery system based on the AWI designs including, in Victoria, Kyabram Steel.

➔ www.wool.com/sheep-delivery

SHEARING SHED SAFETY

SafeSheds program

SafeSheds is a best practice self-assessment guide and checklists to help woolgrowers improve the safety and working conditions in their shearing sheds. It is available as an 80-page booklet, while the checklists are also available in a digital, interactive format.

Shed safety signage kit

The shed safety signage kit for woolgrowers to use in their woolsheds contains 36 safety signs that are printed on UV-stabilised polypropylene for durability, with pre-drilled holes for easy installation.

➔ www.wool.com/safe-sheds

SHEARING SHED DESIGN

AWI Shearing Shed Design

This 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. Dozens of sheds have now been built across the country using the AWI design.

Shed design considerations guide

This 32-page guide was produced by AWI to provide woolgrowers with an outline of considerations when renovating or designing shearing sheds. It covers (1) in-shed pens, (2) shearing board, (3) wool room, (4) general design and construction, and (5) equipment.

➔ www.wool.com/sheddesign

VIC SHEARING COMPETITIONS

AWI provides support to local shearing competitions in Victoria affiliated with Sports Shear Australia. The aim of the support is to promote excellence in the wool harvesting industry, encourage young people to join the industry, and encourage continued development of techniques in shearing and wool handling.

➔ www.wool.com/competitionsupport

SHEEP HEALTH



WormBoss worm control programs are available for winter rainfall and pastoral areas of **Victoria**.



ParaBoss is a suite of three web-based products – FlyBoss, WormBoss and LiceBoss – containing detailed management information to help sheep producers manage risks.

➔ www.paraboss.com.au

- **Worm Control Programs** for the winter rainfall and pastoral regions of Victoria are available online on WormBoss.

➔ www.wormboss.com.au

- **Flystrike Decision Support Tool** on FlyBoss is tailored for your location within Victoria.

➔ www.flyboss.com.au/tools

AWI'S FLYSTRIKE EXTENSION PROGRAM

The Program supports woolgrowers to improve the lifetime welfare of their sheep, reduce their reliance on mulesing and crutching, optimise chemical use and increase whole farm profitability:

- **It's Fly Time!™** Practical, just-in-time information in the lead up to, and during, high-risk flystrike periods.
- **DemystiFly™** Practical information about managing chemical resistance in blowflies.
- **SimpliFly™** A one-day workshop to develop a property-specific, strategic flystrike management plan.
- **ClassiFly™** A one-day workshop to increase understanding and skills in breeding for flystrike resistance.
- **StrateFly™** A one-day workshop to develop a property-specific strategy for moving to a non-mulesed enterprise.
- **AmpliFly™** One-on-one coaching and support from an accredited advisor to assist you prevent and control flystrike.

➔ www.wool.com/flystrikeresources

VICTORIA HIGHLIGHTS

GENETICS



The Merino Lifetime Productivity **Balmoral** site is run by Balmoral Breeders in Victoria.



This 10-year project completed data collection in July 2024 with the aim of improving early in life predictions of actual lifetime productivity and profitability. The project has now moved to the formal analysis stage. The project has been run at five sire evaluation sites located across Australia in diverse climates with genetically diverse ewe bases, including one site in Victoria at Balmoral (partnered with Tuloona Pastoral).

➔ www.wool.com/MLP

MERINO SUPERIOR SIRES

This initiative identifies the genetic merit of industry AI sires by evaluating the performance of their progeny for a broad range of visual and objective traits, with an annual field day just prior to their second shearing. Site reports are produced each year. There are nine sites across Australia including one in Victoria at Balmoral.

➔ www.merinosuperiorsires.com.au

SHEEP SELECTION TOOLS BOOKLET

This 20-page booklet summarises a wide range of industry tools available to help woolgrowers achieve their breeding goals. Topics include shows, wether trials, flock ewe competitions, Merino Sire Evaluation, MERINOSELECT, Visual Sheep Scores, RamSelect, workshops, sheep classers and saleyards.

➔ www.wool.com/sheepselection

VISUAL SHEEP SCORES

This guide provides the Australian sheep industry with a common language for the visual description, recording and classing of all breeds of sheep according to important visual traits.

➔ www.wool.com/vss-2024

REPRODUCTION



Students from Marcus Oldham college on a **RAMping Up Repro** workshop held at Lal Lal Estate near **Ballarat**.

LIFETIME EWE MANAGEMENT

This course provides hands-on, on-farm training over a year for small groups of producers in the management and nutrition of breeding ewes to maximise reproduction rates and lamb and ewe survival. The average participant increases their whole-farm stocking rate by 9.3%, marking and weaning rates by 7%, and reduces ewe mortality by 25%. Nationally, more than 5,000 producers have undertaken the course. There are 15 LTEM trainers across Victoria.

➔ www.wool.com/LTEM

ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS

Picking Performer Ewes

This workshop available in Victoria for woolgrowers with commercial self-replacing Merino flocks places importance on the total lifetime productivity potential of the ewes.

RAMping Up Repro

This workshop available in Victoria is designed to give woolgrowers the skills to improve ram health, performance and longevity in their sheep breeding enterprises.

Winning With Weaners

This workshop available in Victoria is designed to give woolgrowers the skills to lift the lifetime performance of their young Merino sheep and achieve 95% weaner survival to one year of age.

➔ www.wool.com/workshops

PREGNANCY SCANNING HAS VALUE

New research shows that pregnancy scanning has a high return on expenditure for sheep producers, with scanning for multiples increasing potential profit by an average of \$5.75/ewe scanned, across 27 scenarios the researchers examined for winter rainfall areas. Scanning for multiples provided twice the value of scanning for only pregnancy status.

SUSTAINABILITY



AWI provides a range of drought planning and management resources for **Victorian** woolgrowers.

DROUGHT RESOURCES

For woolgrowers going into, enduring or recovering from drought, AWI provides a range of drought planning and management resources, plus links to useful external resources, including: Managing Sheep in Droughtlots; Stock water – a Limited Resource; Lifetime Wool Feed Budget Tables; Feeding and Managing Sheep in Dry Times; Managing Fodder Prices for Droughts; Which Sheep do I Keep?

➔ www.wool.com/droughtresources

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE

In response to market demand for evidence that woolgrowers are responsibly managing the environment on their farms, AWI is co-investing in the Farming for the Future program to demonstrate to woolgrowers the business case for improving their farms' natural capital (environmental assets such as soil, water and vegetation).

NATIONAL SHEEP METHANE PROGRAM

This Program is a collaborative and coordinated effort between AWI and departments of primary industries and universities in the main wool-producing states to implement practical and safe ways for producers to reduce methane emissions from Australian sheep grazing systems.

FEEDBASE OPTIONS

Choosing the right pasture mix for your enterprise and location is essential, particularly in a more variable climate. AWI invests in pasture breeding, selection and commercialisation to make available to woolgrowers a suite of high-performance feedbase options that support profitable, sustainable wool production. Information and resources cover legumes, grasses, shrubs, stubbles, Feed On Offer, weed and pest management, and grazing management.

➔ www.wool.com/feedbase

VICTORIA HIGHLIGHTS

PEST ANIMALS



Sheep producer Doug Cameron from **Mt Delegate** in Gippsland has benefited from new electric exclusion fencing.

NATIONAL WILD DOG COORDINATOR

AWI co-funds the National Wild Dog Management Coordinator position which has led to significant progress being achieved in community-led wild dog management programs across Victoria.

➔ www.wilddogplan.org.au

WILD DOG EXCLUSION FENCING

Information and photos of successful exclusion fences are included in AWI's free 36-page 'Wild dog exclusion fencing: a practical guide for woolgrowers'. AWI also makes available the 14-page Kondinin Group Research Report 'Exclusion Fencing, Fighting Ferals'.

➔ www.wool.com/exclusionfencing

FERALSCAN™ DIGITAL TOOL

FeralScan™ is a free, purpose-built, digital resource that Victoria woolgrowers can use to record and access information about the population of pest animals (such as wild dogs, foxes, rabbits and feral pigs) and their management in a local area.

➔ www.feralscan.org.au

RABBIT BIOCONTROL OPTIMISATION

Currently, there are four strains of the rabbit calicivirus (RHDV) present in Australian rabbit populations, two of which are exotic. RHDV2 has become and remains the dominant strain in the landscape and continues to suppress wild populations by an average of 64% compared to levels before its arrival. Although seroprevalence of the non-pathogenic, endemic RCV-A1 was initially depressed by competition with RHDV2, this virus now shows stronger evidence of coexistence with RHDV2.

➔ www.wool.com/rabbits

THE NEXT GEN



Students at Goroke P-12 College in the **Wimmera** with some of the wethers in the 2024 School Merino Wether Challenge.

SCHOOL MERINO WETHER CHALLENGE

Run in conjunction with the Victoria Stud Merino Sheep Breeders Association, the School Merino Wether Challenge provides students with a practical, hands-on experience covering a broad range of sheep and wool production skills. Each school team looks after several wethers for about six months and shows them during a competition later in the year.

YOUNG JUDGES CHAMPIONSHIPS

AWI sponsors the National Merino Fleece and Merino Sheep Young Judges Championships to support young people within the Victorian industry to further their skills through visual selection and appraisal of wool and sheep.

BREEDING LEADERSHIP

Victorian participants in AWI's five-day Breeding Leadership professional development course in February 2024 were: Amy Byrne, Wangaratta; Emily Foss, Upper Lurg; and Kate Methven, Branhholme.

➔ www.wool.com/breedingleadership

MAKING MORE FROM SHEEP

This is a best practice package of information and tools for sheep producers. Ideal for young people in Victoria starting out in the wool industry, the 12 modules contain useful information about the 'must dos' of managing a successful wool enterprise.

➔ www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au

INFORMATION



Beyond the Bale, AWI's quarterly magazine for wool levy payers, is available to woolgrowers across **Victoria**.

Victoria's growers can keep up to date via regular communications from AWI:

- **Beyond the Bale** quarterly magazine ➔ www.wool.com/btb
- **Woolgrower monthly e-newsletter** ➔ www.wool.com/subscribe
- **The Yarn** podcast ➔ www.wool.com/podcast
- **Woolgrower representative groups** National, State and regional groups (see front page)
- **wool.com** website
- **Social media**
Facebook: @AustralianWoolInnovation
X (formerly Twitter): @woolinnovation
Instagram: @australianwool
- **Events** AWI attends many sheep and wool field days and events in Victoria
- **AWI HQ** 02 8295 3100 info@wool.com

MARKET INTEL

- **Daily Wool Market Reports** are available via SMS to Victorian woolgrowers' mobile phones.
 - **Weekly Wool Market Reports and Prices** are available each Friday via SMS, email and at wool.com.
 - **Monthly Market Intelligence Reports** are available as part of AWI's monthly e-newsletter for woolgrowers.
 - **Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee Reports** are available three times each year.
 - **AWI and MLA Sheep Producer Intentions Survey** are conducted three times each year.
- ➔ www.wool.com/marketintelligence

AWI is grateful for its funding, which is primarily provided by (1) Australian woolgrowers through a wool levy, and (2) the Australian Government which provides a matching contribution for eligible R&D activities.