

Beyond the bale

ISSUE 66 MARCH 2016

PROFIT FROM WOOL INNOVATION

www.wool.com



MERINO, AUSTRALIA'S OWN POT OF GOLD



04

INTERNATIONAL
WOOLMARK PRIZE



18

SPORTSWEAR
MARKET GROWS



30

WHAT THE TOP
FARMERS DO WELL

Beyond thebale

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Richard Smith

E richard.smith@wool.com

A AWI Marketing and Communications
L6, 68 Harrington St, The Rocks,
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

Beyond the Bale is available free.

To subscribe contact AWI

P 02 8295 3100 E info@wool.com

Beyond the Bale is published by Australian Wool Innovation Ltd (AWI), a company funded by Australian woolgrowers and the Australian Government. AWI's goal is to help increase the demand for wool by actively selling Merino wool and its attributes through investments in marketing, innovation and R&D - from farm to fashion and interiors.

COPYRIGHT

Material in *Beyond the Bale* is copyright. Reproduction of the material is encouraged. However prior permission must be obtained from the Executive 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 registered trademark of The Woolmark Company Pty Ltd. © 2016 Australian Wool Innovation Ltd. All rights reserved.

ADVERTISING SALES

Max Hyde, Hyde Media Pty Ltd

P 03 5659 5292

E max@hydemedia.com.au

Advertising is subject to terms and conditions published on the ratecard, which is available from Hyde Media.

ISSN

1447-9680

FRONT COVER

This wonderful image was taken by Annabel Lugsdin from Hay in NSW. Annabel was one of the participants at the Breeding Leadership course last month (see page 47). Annabel is also a keen photographer and has a website [Bel's Rural Photography \(www.belsruralphotography.com\)](http://www.belsruralphotography.com) from which this and many other great images (prints and cards) can be purchased.



Australian Wool
Innovation Limited



**6 IWP WINNER
WOMENSWEAR**



**30 WHAT TOP FARMERS
DO CONSISTENTLY WELL**

OFF-FARM

4 IWP 2015/16 menswear final

6 IWP 2015/16 womenswear final

8 IWP expands globally

8 AWI invests in leading fashion

9 IWP alumni continue with wool

10 Chinese Nanshan discovers superfine

11 Anthony Squires: an Australian first

12 Marks & Spencer: massive wool users

13 Ambassador's project with Savile Row

14 Korean sales boosted by campaign

15 ICICLE: all natural Chinese brand

16 The Berlin Wool Lab Project

18 Growth of wool in sportswear

20 Merino felt luxury bags

21 Promoting Merino wool in India

22 Wool4School in Girlfriend magazine

23 New York students visit Australia

24 Turkish students learn about wool

25 Mastering Merino with Missoni

26 Godfrey Hirst's wool carpets

27 Interest in wool interiors grows

ON-FARM

28 Sheep in the sheep/wheat zone

29 Woolgrowing proves its worth

30 What the top farmers do well

32 Fly and lice treatments

34 Footrot eradication requires dedication

36 Wild dog coordinator in WA

37 Wanted! Photos of exclusion fencing

38 Guardian dogs protect flocks

40 Portable electric shearing equipment

41 Shearing school at Rylington, WA

41 Aussies' shearing win at the cricket

42 Case study: fertility drives profitability

43 Mob size and lambing project

44 Drones monitor lambing ewes

45 Tom Tourle: Young Farming Champion

46 National Merino Challenge 2016

47 Breeding Leadership course 2016

48 IWTO 2016 Congress in Sydney

49 New World Merino Insight

50 Corriedales on show

51 Wool Selling Systems Review

52 Market Intelligence

54 Market insights from Peter Ackroyd

55 Readers' photos

AWI INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

	On-Farm R&D		Off-Farm R&D
	Marketing		Global Business Services

WOOL.COM

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



twitter.com/woolinnovation



youtube.com/AWIWoolProduction



MIX
From responsible
sources
FSC® C014916

WOOLMARK.COM

MERINO.COM



facebook.com/TheWoolmarkCompany



twitter.com/woolmark



instagram.com/TheWoolmarkCompany



youtube.com/TheWoolmarkCompany



View *Beyond the Bale* online with image galleries and video at <http://beyondthebale.wool.com>

GETTING ON WITH BUSINESS

We are continuing with initiatives to help increase the demand for wool through investments in marketing and R&D – from farm to fashion.



Stuart McCullough
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Wool Innovation

WOOL SELLING SYSTEMS REVIEW

The independent panel commissioned by AWI on behalf of Australian woolgrowers to examine the wool selling system has issued its final report which includes a number of substantial findings and recommendations. This very significant review was conducted at arms-length to AWI. It involved almost 100 submissions and many more issues raised from a wide variety of viewpoints and much discussion and debate. This review explores some great opportunities to reduce the cost of selling wool for growers, reduce the barriers for those wanting to buy wool and help bring the wool industry into the digital age.

NEW WILD DOG COORDINATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A wild dog coordinator has been appointed to help reduce dog predation in sheep producing areas of Western Australia. The position in Western Australia complements the AWI-funded wild dog coordinators currently operating in western NSW, north-eastern NSW, Victoria and Queensland. The purpose of wild dog control coordinators is to work with woolgrowers and other livestock producers, public land managers, industry bodies, government departments and other stakeholders in reducing the impact of wild dog predation on livestock.

THE NEXT GENERATION

AWI offers a range of professional and leadership development opportunities to young people who are following a career pathway in wool, through initiatives including the National Merino Challenge, the Breeding Leadership program, the Young Farming Champions program, and scholarships through bodies such as Nuffield Australia. Our funding in these programs aims to help improve the engagement of young people interested in the wool industry, thereby developing and retaining the knowledge and skills the wool industry needs to be innovative in response to new challenges.

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE

The womenswear award and the menswear award of the 2015/16 International Woolmark Prize were both held earlier this year. The interest in these awards from fashion communities and media globally continues to be phenomenal which is important to help increase the global demand for Australian wool. It is helping put wool back on the agendas of fashion designers across the world, and consequently into retail stores for consumers to purchase. The winners have the opportunity to be stocked in the most important retailers around the globe including David Jones in Australia.

PROVENANCE OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL

The provenance of Australian wool and the unique heritage we have with more than 200 years of growing the fibre continues to be of great relevance to industry partners and consumers. We have seen many brands use 'the farm to fashion story' as a core ingredient in a high-value end product. And there continues to be an increasing willingness of leading brands and key media in partnering with AWI to describe to their consumers the benefits wool brings to their apparel products.

INTERIORS

The woollen interiors sector remains strong, according to Woolmark licensees at this year's influential Heimtextil trade show. This is good news for growers of broader micron and crossbred wool. As in previous years at Heimtextil, AWI co-hosted the Wool Arena – a focal point for the industry to promote the fibre at the show – highlighting the superior natural benefits of all wool. New collections and product ranges for babies and children were seen this year at various bedding producers. Other trends include wool waddings for mattresses and wool balls for filled wool bedding which were in high demand.

WOOL IN SPORTS/ OUTDOOR/ATHLEISURE APPAREL

AWI continues to cement Merino fibre's presence in the sports and outdoor market, collaborating with leading manufacturers and brands to promote the natural benefits of wool as a performance fibre. A majority of the world's leading outdoor brands now incorporate Merino wool innovations in their collections – and brands' designers and developers continually seek our advice and assistance in incorporating or extending their product ranges with Merino wool. Merino wool's ability to combine comfort and flexibility with casual elegance, is also making it well placed to cater to the growing market for 'athleisure' – a term used for activewear that can be used for non-active and casual, everyday use – with a modern, comfy and stylish look.

2016 IWTO CONGRESS IN SYDNEY

The International Wool Textile Organisation's (IWTO) annual Congress will be held in Sydney next month, 4-6 April – with the theme of wool for future generations. There is still time to register your attendance and be part of this global get-together of the wool supply chain. Featuring presentations from local and international speakers, the program covers global consumer and retail trends for wool, market intelligence, trade, economic sustainability, woolgrower technology, education for future generations and much more.



INTERNATIONAL
WOOLMARK PRIZE

Emerging designer **Suket Dhir** (centre) flanked by models wearing the winning collection after his eponymous label won the menswear edition of the International Woolmark Prize in January.
PHOTOS: Studio Nonamephoto Firenze

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE MENSWEAR AWARD

Indian label **SUKETDHIR** has won this year's International Woolmark Prize menswear competition, presenting a Merino wool capsule collection that fuses classic western tailoring with elements of the designer's national dress. The International Woolmark Prize is designed to **generate long term incremental demand for Australian Merino wool** by connecting emerging designers, emerging markets and consumers.

India's status as a hub for emerging design talent has been boosted, with the country scooping its second International Woolmark Prize win, this time going to the New Delhi-based label SUKETDHIR.

Following Rahul Mishra's win in 2014 for the womenswear award, SUKETDHIR was announced this year's menswear winner at the prestigious Pitti Uomo menswear trade show in Florence during January.

Connecting the world's leading fashion designers with Australian Merino wool is extremely important due to the enormous influence these designers have in setting global textile trends for mainstream retail brands. The International Woolmark Prize

generates long-term incremental demand for wool by connecting emerging designers, emerging markets and consumers with Australia's versatile natural fibre.

Innovation is at the heart of designer Suket Dhir's winning collection, which cleverly fuses classic western tailoring with elements of the designer's national dress, such as oversized proportions and lightweight fabrics.

Using the traditional Indian technique of hand-tied and dyed yarn (ikat), the collection involves hand embroidery to create geometric, grid-like patterns in an update on the classic quilting stitch. The two yarns used to weave the fabrics were 18.2 micron and 16.5 micron Australian Merino wool.

"My collection explores the trans-seasonal aspects of wool and the alchemic transformation of the fibrous wool into smooth, silk-like yarn, which renders the fabric light, airy, fluid and yet full and supple," Suket Dhir said.

"This win is certainly very overwhelming. I've done what I could in India, and this is the best thing that could happen to me, for me to move in a bigger way. I think I'm ready for the world, and I also think the world is ready for me and for this kind of aesthetic. The look is easy and happy, and the world needs that right now."

This is the second year that the International Woolmark Prize has included a menswear



THE FINALISTS PRESENT THEIR COLLECTIONS TO THE JUDGES



SUKETDHIR (India, Pakistan & the Middle East)



Siki Im (USA)

category. More than 70 designers were considered for the award over the past year, with the finalists representing six different regions around the world.

SUKETDHIR will receive AU\$100,000 to help support the development of its business and ongoing industry mentor support, as well as the presentation and sale of the winning capsule collection in some of the world's most prestigious department stores. These include MatchesFashion.com (online), Isetan Mitsukoshi (Japan), David Jones (Australia), Saks Fifth Avenue (New York), 10 Corso Como (Milan) and Boon The Shop (South Korea).

The award was judged by a highly esteemed panel, including designer Haider Ackermann; founder and Editor-in-Chief of *The Business of Fashion*, Imran Amed; International Editor of *Vogue*, Suzy Menkes; Fashion Director of *Esquire*, Nick Sullivan; Editor-in-Chief of *GQ Japan*, Masafumi Suzuki; Director of Strategy and Vision at the Polimoda International Institute of Fashion Design & Marketing, Linda Loppa; Chief Executive of Pitti Immagine, Raffaello Napoleone; and AWI CEO Stuart McCullough, alongside representatives from the International Woolmark Prize's retail partners.



P. Johnson (Australia)



Jonathan Christopher (Europe)



AGI & SAM (British Isles)



Munsoo Kwon (Asia)

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmarkprize.com

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE WOMENSWEAR AWARD

British label Teatum Jones has won this year's International Woolmark Prize womenswear competition, presenting a Merino wool capsule collection that uses geometric foil prints and hand embroideries on skirts and jackets.



Catherine Teatum and Rob Jones (both centre, flanked by models), from **London-based label Teatum Jones**, won the 2015/16 International Woolmark Prize for womenswear in February. *PHOTOS: Billy Farrell Agency*

Teatum Jones was announced as the winner of the womenswear final of the 2015/2016 International Woolmark Prize during a special event as part of New York Fashion Week in February.

Given the central role wool has played in the development of both the UK and Australia, it is fitting for designers from the UK to win the award that champions the world's best wool from Australia.

Using a mix of 17.5 micron and 19.5 micron Australian Merino wool for the clothes, and 23 micron wool for the accessories, the UK design duo partnered with a specialist guipure lace mill in France, convincing them to use wool for the first time, to create innovative, vibrant geometric Merino laces. Catherine Teatum and Rob Jones then flew to Italy where they developed a stretch wool that feels similar to a scuba suit, upon which they bonded the Merino lace, creating a luxurious lace fabric that performed as a structured tailoring cloth.

"This is amazing, we are honoured and excited and it's just the beginning; we have only scratched the surface," said Teatum Jones after being announced as the winners. "This award lets us ignite the magic of wool, so the customer sees the romance in wool. This competition is the opportunity to be physically present at

store launches, and being able to pass on that experience to the customer is magical."

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said: "Teatum Jones has showcased wool in a unique but very commercial way. We are excited about their take on Australian Merino wool and it feels like something very new."

The UK is both an epicenter for fashion design and also a major apparel and wool consuming market – the fifth largest market for apparel and footwear in the world. Consumers in Britain have very established perceptions of wool and have a large interest in quality fabrics. British brands also have great strength and resonance overseas, especially in the USA and Asia.

More than 70 designers were considered for the womenswear award over the past year, with the finalists representing six different regions around the world.

Teatum Jones will receive AU\$100,000 to help support the development of its business. They will also receive ongoing industry mentor support, and their capsule collection created for the International Woolmark Prize, will go on sale in some of the world's most prestigious department stores. These include MyTheresa.com (online), David Jones (Australia), Harvey Nichols (UK), Boutique 1

(UAE), Isetan Mitsukoshi (Japan), Saks Fifth Avenue (USA) and new partner retailers Verso (Belgium) and Boon the Shop (South Korea).

The womenswear award was judged by a highly esteemed panel, including respected fashion author, editor and consultant, and former Editor-at-Large of *American Vogue*, André Leon Talley; Founder, CEO and Editor-in-Chief of *Business of Fashion*, Imran Amed; Editor-at-Large of *Business of Fashion*, Tim Blanks; Editor-in-Chief of *W Magazine*, Stefano Tonchi; fashion consultant and International Woolmark Prize mentor, Julie Gilhart; Chief Creative Officer of THAKOON, Thakoon Panichgul; AWI Director, Colette Garnsey; and AWI CEO Stuart McCullough; alongside representatives from the International Woolmark Prize's retail partners.

In the heart of Times Square, on some of the world's most expensive advertising billboards, The Woolmark Company Americas office negotiated video placement at no cost, to further generate hype for the International Woolmark Prize womenswear final in New York City. Showing twice every hour for 10 days, the short film showcased one key look from each of the six finalists along with strong placement of the International Woolmark Prize logo. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmarkprize.com



The winning **Merino wool collection of Teatum Jones** on show to the audience at the womenswear final in New York. *PHOTO: Jason Lloyd Evans*



Times Square advertising was organised by AWI at no cost. *PHOTO: Ric Budo*



Teatum Jones (British Isles)



Tanya Taylor (USA)



Taller Marmo (India, Pakistan and the Middle East)



Bianca Spender (Australia)



J KOO (Asia)



Nanna van Blaaderen (Europe)

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE EXPANDS GLOBALLY

The promotion of wool continues to cross continents and cultures with the **expansion of the International Woolmark Prize** in 2016/17 into **38 new countries**.

As the world's most prestigious award for rising fashion stars, the International Woolmark Prize has been very successful at showcasing the versatility of Australian Merino wool by outstanding designers from six regions: Asia; Australia; British Isles; Europe; India, Pakistan and the Middle East; Australia and the USA.

Broadening the scope of the search for the 2016/17 competition is the addition of new nominating body 'Not Just A Label' – the world's largest community of emerging designers – which will be responsible for nominating two designers from across **36 newly added European countries**. Not Just A Label will canvas its global network of 20,000 designers to select nominees from countries

including Ukraine, Iceland, Kazakhstan and Greece that fall within the newly introduced region of **Rest of Europe**.

The **Asia region is also expanding further to include Indonesia**, following the announcement of Jakarta Fashion Week as the official nominating body for Indonesia. Indonesian designers will join fashion talents from China, Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong in the International Woolmark Prize Asian regional finals, cementing Indonesia as dynamic new fashion capital.

The **Australia region is also broadening its boundaries with the addition of New Zealand**, in recognition of the vibrant creativity emanating from that part of the world. New Zealand Fashion Week will be elevated to an official nominating body, joining IMG Australia and the Australian Fashion Chamber in nominating emerging designers to participate in the award.

In the **Middle East**, the Dubai Design and Fashion Council is further unfurling its remit as a nominating body, with **Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar** joining the United Arab Emirates as fertile grounds to find fresh new fashion talents.



B

WHY AWI INVESTS IN LEADING FASHION

To achieve its mission of increasing the global demand for Australian wool, it is vital for AWI to reinforce the presence of **Australian Merino wool** in the international fashion industry.

The involvement of the world's leading fashion designers with Australian Merino wool is extremely important because of their enormous influence in setting global trends for the mainstream retail brands.

What we see on the world's catwalks this year quickly makes it into the mainstream fashion sector. The broader fashion industry looks to designers for the latest trends. Their work with fabrics like Australian Merino wool has a 'trickle down' effect which cannot be underestimated.

The International Woolmark Prize is the 'jewel' in AWI's fashion promotion activities. It is designed to generate long term incremental demand by connecting

emerging designers, emerging markets and consumers.

It is an award for the next generation, shifting the focus from glamour to true talent as a way to highlight the beauty of the Merino wool fibre at the hands of the future leaders of the industry.

New demand will come from the creation of increased knowledge of and lifetime loyalty to wool amongst designers, along with the immediate presence of Woolmark-branded Merino wool collections in the top boutiques and retailers across the globe.

This program gives AWI the opportunity to work at three levels in the fashion apparel segment:

- At the jury level, there is the engagement with the world's leading influencers of fashion, all of whom have a shared and stated interest in the development of new talent and new markets.
- At the participant (and winner) levels, AWI imbues them with knowledge of wool fibre at an early stage in the commercial development and works with them to create a connection to wool which will stay with them throughout their careers.
- At a broader global fashion apparel audience level, through the creation of documentary style content distributed through digital and broadcast media. **B**

Models showing Merino wool apparel by 2013/14 International Woolmark Prize winner Rahul Mishra at Jakarta Fashion Week 2015 in October. The Asia region of the International Woolmark Prize is expanding in 2016/17 to include Indonesia, with **Jakarta Fashion Week** as the official nominating body for Indonesia. *PHOTO* Pacific Press



The winning Collection of 2014/15 International Woolmark Prize womenswear winner **M.PATMOS** at the 10 Corso Como store in Milan, Italy.

AN ENDURING RELATIONSHIP WITH WOOL

The **International Woolmark Prize** imbues the participating designers with a long-term knowledge and love of wool that is continuing throughout their professional lives, as shown by some of their latest collections on show at Fashion Weeks across the world.

STRATEAS CARLUCCI 2014/15 FINALIST

Melbourne label STRATEAS CARLUCCI, which won both the menswear and womenswear Australia regional final for 2014/15, presented its Autumn/Winter 2016/17 collection at Paris Fashion Week in January. This was the second time the brand was invited to present on the official Paris Fashion Week calendar – it made history in June when it became the first Australian menswear label to present there. Their latest collection features Woolmark-certified pieces, maintaining the brand's signature masculine/feminine aesthetic and utilising playful fabric innovations.



A design from **STRATEAS CARLUCCI** at **Paris Fashion Week** in January.



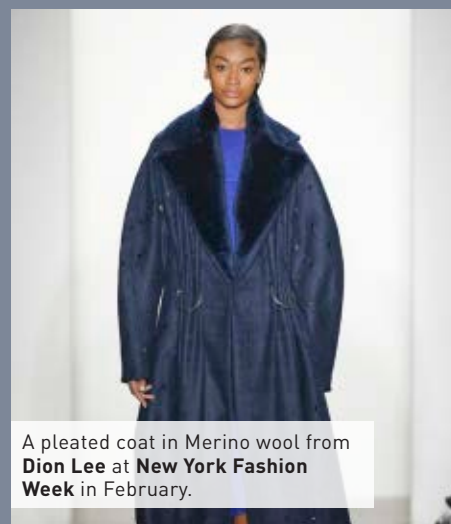
A hand-embroidered Merino wool design from **Rahul Mishra** at **Paris Fashion Week** in October.

RAHUL MISHRA 2013/14 WINNER

Since winning the 2013/14 International Woolmark Prize competition, designer Rahul Mishra has launched three collections, all showcasing Australian Merino wool. Mishra's latest collection is his Spring/Summer 2016 collection which he launched at the prestigious Paris Fashion Week in front of the world's fashion media. The collection highlighted exquisite hand-embroidered Australian Merino wool eveningwear that has fast become synonymous with the Rahul Mishra brand.

DION LEE 2012/13 FINALIST

Dion Lee who won the Australian regional final of the International Woolmark Prize to represent the country in the 2012/13 competition, travelled once again to New York Fashion Week in February to unveil his Autumn/Winter 2016 collection. Wool again was on show with Dion presenting a phenomenal showcase of designs that have received overwhelmingly positive praise. Highlights included Merino wool pleated coats, trench coats, dresses, tunics and polo-necks.



A pleated coat in Merino wool from **Dion Lee** at **New York Fashion Week** in February.

CHINESE GIANT DISCOVERS SUPERFINE

As one of the giants of the Chinese wool textile industry, it is somewhat surprising the fully vertically integrated **Nanshan Group** has to date used comparatively little superfine wool. That is about to change and a recent visit by Nanshan's top brass confirms the company's interest in the superfine end of the clip.

Nanshan, one of China's leading textile enterprises, is keen to diversify its product range and develop a series of products using superfine wool in womenswear, particularly accessories such as scarves.

The development in part stems from a stagnation in the demand for traditional men's suiting due to the global trend of casualisation as well as an easing in general economic activity in key northern hemisphere markets.

"Like all businesses we must continue to look for new opportunities and new textile innovations; this way we broaden the market," said Nanshan Fabric and Garment General Director, Cao Yiru, during a trip late last year to Australia.

For Mr Yiru and his chief designer it was the first time to Australia and so AWI took the opportunity to introduce the senior Nanshan personnel to a number of superfine woolgrowers as well as show them the wool auctions in Melbourne.

"This visit helps us understand the upstream production, how farms are managed and the history behind the fibre," Mr Yiru said.

AWI has developed a long-standing relationship with Nanshan over the years

The new President of the Australian Superfine Wool Growers' Association, **Simon Cameron** with the Head of Fabric Design & Product Development at Nanshan, **Liu Gangzhang**; Early Stage Processing Manager at Nanshan, **Wang Sheng**; AWI General Manager of Product Development, **Jimmy Jackson**; and General Manager Manufacturing at **Nanshan, Cao Yiro**.

– a close cooperation that resulted in the establishment of the Wool Development Center and the International Wool Education Center at Nanshan in Shandong Province, China. Both are helping drive the expansion of the Chinese wool textile industry and the consumption of Australian Merino wool.

The joint initiatives have fostered new fabric innovations – such as the premium and innovative NEULANA fabric collection made from Merino wool, launched in October last year – and with regular teaching courses for students there is a new generation of new wool textile specialists being created at Nanshan.

Tasmania was a natural place for the Nanshan visitors to visit and although suffering through one of the worst dry spells in living memory, the Tasmanian superfine industry welcomed Nanshan with open arms.

One of the properties visited was 'Kingston', near Campbell Town, owned by President of the Australian Superfine Wool Growers' Association (ASWGA), Simon Cameron.

"Like all woolgrowers we are very proud of our part of Australia," Simon said. "Properties like 'Kingston' have a great story to tell when it comes to traditional superfine wool

production and here it is integrated with managing the farm's natural values. It is an important message for visitors such as the Nanshan team to understand.

"New demand from the likes of Nanshan and new product ranges such as those seen in the sports and active outdoor market are helping to introduce more consumers to superfine wool. These increasing opportunities will reduce our reliance on the men's suiting market." **B**

ASWGA 2016 CONFERENCE

The state of the superfine industry and trends now driving this flagship end of the wool industry will be topics discussed at the annual ASWGA conference being held 8-10 April in Launceston in Tasmania, directly after the International Wool and Textile Organisation (IWTO) Congress in Sydney (see page 48).

The conference has two main days. The first will consist of a series of speakers. The second will be visits to three properties: 'Glen Stuart', 'Kingston' and 'Winton', each of which is contributing to our industry in a special way. Speakers will include:

- Stuart McCulloch, CEO, AWI
- Rob Langtry, Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer, AWI
- Peter Ackroyd, President, IWTO
- Mark Grave, CEO, AWEX
- Ian Ashman, GM, AWTA
- Lesley Prior, Council Member of the Campaign for Wool (the UK's only superfine woolgrower!)
- Brenda McGahan, CEO, Australian Country Spinners
- Jane Hutchinson, CEO, Tasmanian Land Conservancy
- Sandy McEachern, Holmes and Sackett.

For further information about the conference, visit **www.aswga.com**





The beautifully made **Anthony Squires Tempest trench coat** is both wind resistant and water repellent, without the use of chemicals or special finishes.



With a detachable warmer, also made from 100 per cent **Australian Merino wool**, the trench coat doubles as a lightweight coat.



The Tempest's fabric is made from **19-micron Australian Merino wool**.

AN AUSTRALIAN FIRST

TEMPEST TRENCH COAT FROM ANTHONY SQUIRES

Iconic Australian tailored menswear brand, **Anthony Squires** – which this year marks 50 years since it became a Woolmark licensee – is the first brand in Australia to launch a 100 per cent Australian Merino wool garment that is **wind resistant and water repellent**: the **Tempest** trench coat.

Since 1948, Anthony Squires has been one of Australia's most iconic tailored clothing brands. The skills and craftsmanship incorporated in each of its garments has been recognised by discerning customers including every Australian Prime Minister from Sir Robert Menzies to John Howard apart from Prime Minister Keating who preferred Italian suits.

Anthony Squires has had a long-standing relationship with AWI, with the brand becoming one of the first Woolmark licensees. This year will mark 50 years of close collaboration with the Anthony Squires brand. Enduring quality and style remain at the forefront of the Anthony Squires design team's objectives and Australian Merino wool continues to be an intrinsic component.

Making full use of the fibre's versatility along with technological innovation, AWI has helped Anthony Squires to produce an Australian first: a 100 per cent Australian Merino wool trench coat that is wind resistant and water repellent. The trench coat also doubles as a lightweight coat featuring a detachable warmer, also made from 100 per cent Australian Merino wool.

"In 2014 we met with Anthony Squires representatives at the Intertextile Shanghai Apparel fabrics trade fair and showed them a fabric we were developing with the Nanshan Group (see opposite page)," explains AWI Product Development and Commercialisation Manager Jimmy Jackson. "Their immediate interest in exploring the innovative properties of this new fabric sees Anthony Squires as the first brand in Australia to produce the Tempest trench coat – a 100 per cent Australian Merino wool garment that is wind resistant and water repellent."

During the manufacturing of the outer-layer of the trench coat, the 19 micron Australian Merino wool fibres are pre-stretched and then temporarily set. The fabric then super contracts during the finishing stage, with the end result being a higher weave density. This makes Tempest fabric naturally both wind resistant and water repellent, without the use of chemicals or special finishes, while keeping wool's natural luxurious touch and superb breathability. It is the first of its kind to be commercially available in Australia.

"We have always had a firm belief that Australia produces the best wool in the world and we have been proud to use it in all of our top-of-the-line garments", Marina Cherny, Product Development Manager, from Anthony Squires said. "We had been looking for an innovative fabric solution for a trench coat for a while and not seen anything that combined long-lasting weather resistance with the luxurious hand feel offered by Australian wool."

"When AWI showed me the product they were helping develop, I was absolutely stunned. I saw it as a revolutionary concept – extra fine quality pure wool with water repellent and wind resistant properties that will last for the life of the garment and without any chemical finishes or coatings! It was exactly what we needed for our exclusive brand."

The new Australian Merino wool Tempest trench coat is available in black and sandstone and is in stores now.

B

MORE INFORMATION

The trench coat is available at selected David Jones stores. For further information visit www.anthonysquires.com.au

MARKS & SPENCER

MASSIVE USERS OF WOOL

No trip to the UK is ever complete without a shopping trip to **Marks & Spencer**. With more than 850 stores across the country, it's not hard to find them – and there are plenty of Merino wool products on display for purchase.

Having started out as a Penny Bazaar at Leeds Kirkgate Market in 1884, Marks & Spencer has grown into a major multinational retailer with more than 1,330 stores in 59 countries worldwide and an annual revenue of GBP10.3 billion (AUD22.2 billion).

In the UK, the company has a 9.0% share of the womenswear market and 10.8% of the menswear market, with a significant amount of the apparel being made from wool. In 2014/15 the company used 1.5 million metres of wool or wool blend cloth, which is forecast to rise in 2015/16 to 1.7 million metres. In 2014/15 it sold 1 million units of wool or wool blend knitwear.

"We are by far the largest UK retailer in terms of wool usage," says M&S CEO Marc Bolland. "Wool remains very important across our clothing lines. In menswear, we use wool for our coats, suits and knitwear and we'll see more and more wool use in womenswear."

AWI has worked in collaboration with M&S for several years to help promote the use of Merino wool in its ranges. Last year M&S became a Woolmark and Woolmark Blend licensee to emphasise to customers – via point of sale collateral including swing tickets and labels – the high quality of its wool products.

"AWI supports M&S on product development, sourcing and marketing to help raise awareness amongst its customers of what wool can offer in terms of natural benefits and value," says AWI Country Manager for the UK Rebecca Kelley.

"M&S focuses on quality, and so Merino wool has long been a key fibre within their menswear and womenswear collections.

"Wool is well known in the UK as a cold season fibre, but there is opportunity for retailers to sell Merino wool apparel much more in the spring and summer seasons. M&S has started leveraging our Cool Wool sub brand to effectively stimulate sales during the warmer seasons, emphasising the natural breathability and thermo-regulating properties of lightweight Merino wool products."

For the UK's current (Autumn/Winter 2015) retail season, M&S introduced a new campaign – titled 'The Art of' – across TV, print and digital platforms designed to put a spotlight on the unique quality and style of Marks & Spencer products.

The campaign features plenty of wool products – plus the Woolmark brand, and a sheep to emphasise the provenance of the

fibre – and uses a stylish and cutting edge format to celebrate the craftsmanship and fashion credentials across M&S's product ranges. The campaign launched in the UK on 2 September last year and received wide acclaim, with elements used across international markets.

For the Spring/Summer 2016 season, Marks & Spencer will run another Cool Wool promotion across menswear and womenswear. For menswear, the retailer will utilise AWI's 'sheep in sunglasses' campaign swing ticket which will go on worsted tailored product. For womenswear, the company will use the Cool Wool sub brand logo on their own design swing tickets which will go on lightweight worsted knitwear. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.marksandspencer.com

M&S
EST. 1884



Screenshot from a **Marks & Spencer TV advert** that focuses on tailoring and features the Woolmark brand and the words Pure New Wool.



Screenshot from a **Marks & Spencer TV advert** that features a sheep and wool alongside its wool products, which demonstrates the important of the fibre to the Marks & Spencer brand.

AMBASSADOR'S PROJECT GOES BEHIND-THE-SEAMS

In an AWI-supported initiative, the bespoke tailors of **Savile Row** have partnered with high-profile European mills and merchants to craft exclusive Merino wool suits for project ambassadors that were showcased to the international media at the **London Collections Men fashion week** in January.

Ever since Henry Poole opened his tailoring residence at 32 Savile Row in 1846, the iconic sartorial strip for menswear has acted as a second home to Australian Merino wool. Go inside any of the iconic tailoring houses and you are guaranteed to see luxurious men's suits and separates in various stages of preparation, each crafted in the premium, natural fibre.

Menswear's prominence in the UK and further afield has risen greatly during the past few years, particularly since the creation of the London Collections Men fashion week in June 2012. AWI has a history of supporting various designers at the event including Lou Dalton, Christopher Raeburn and Sibling, ensuring that there is more Australian Merino wool in their collections and ultimately in stores.

This year however, AWI also teamed up directly with the tailors of Savile Row, going behind the scenes to highlight the skill and craftsmanship required to produce bespoke Merino wool suits.

Presented in a collaboration between London Collections Men, Huntsman owner Pierre Lagrange and AWI, the Ambassador's Project saw five Savile Row Bespoke houses each partner with and create a unique suit for an appointed ambassador: multi-talented Chinese creative Hu Bing; model David Gandy; *British GQ* editor-in-chief, Dylan Jones; television and radio presenter, and newly announced guest editor for *British GQ* Dermot O'Leary; and musician Tinie Tempah.

The behind the scenes process of kitting out the ambassadors began at the 'Inside Out' event during London Collections Men (Spring/Summer 2016) in June (see the September edition of *Beyond the Bale*), with the results showcased at London Collections Men (Autumn/Winter 2016) in January. The initiative laid bare the bespoke processes shaped by centuries of history and tradition, highlighting the tailoring techniques of yesteryear using the finest Merino wool cloth to make it relevant to the modern gentleman and aesthetics of today.

Hu Bing teamed with Huntsman to create a charcoal grey pick and pick single breasted three piece suit, with double breasted peak lapel vest with three show three buttons using Super 150s 8oz Merino wool fabric.

David Gandy collaborated with the prestigious tailor Henry Poole to create a Merino wool window-pane check suit, complete with waistcoat featuring the Jaguar logo as a reference to his love of vintage cars, whilst Tinie Tempah appropriately partnered with Edward Sexton – the tailor to the world's most famous musicians – to create a contemporary split-suit, with a Donegal texture wool-rich jacket and narrow-leg Merino wool flannel trousers.

Dylan Jones favoured the contemporary architecturally inspired design of Kilgour in a double-breasted travel performance Merino wool fabric, while in contrast Dermot O'Leary chose a double-breasted two show two, peak lapel with flat-front trouser suit from Hardy Amies in a lightweight Merino wool flannel.

The tailors and ambassadors partnered with some of the world's most high-profile mills and merchants to create the bespoke suits for the ambassadors; these included Scabal, Hunt & Winterbotham, Holland & Sherry, Loro Piana, Vitale Barberis Canonico and Caccioppoli Napoli.



Chinese actor, model and singer **Hu Bing**; model **David Gandy**; *British GQ* editor-in-chief, **Dylan Jones**; and musician **Tinie Tempah** were four of the ambassadors that each teamed with a tailoring house to showcase a bespoke suit (pictured here) made from Merino wool.

MORE INFORMATION
www.merino.com/ambassadors



The project demonstrated to the menswear fashion industry the versatility of Merino wool in **bespoke tailoring**.



Models wearing apparel from Korea's **GS Home Shopping's** premium 'So, Wool' brand at China Fashion Week in Beijing, helping to expand its presence in China.

TRACEABILITY CAMPAIGN BOOSTS KOREAN SALES

One of Korea's largest retailers, **GS Home Shopping**, has boosted its sales of Australian wool products thanks to a traceability marketing campaign that takes consumers on a farm to fashion journey.

Since the establishment of a marketing partnership in 2012 between AWI and GS Home Shopping – Korea's most popular online shopping destination – demand for the Korean company's Merino wool products has increased by 25 to 30 per cent each year. In 2015 the retail giant sold more than 240,000 Woolmark and Woolmark Blend certified apparel items.

GS Home Shopping, which introduced TV shopping to Korea for the first time in 1994, provides an online shopping experience to customers through its TV, catalogue, internet, mobile, satellite and IPTV services. It is also the world's fourth largest e-com retailer, after expanding its business into China, India and South East Asia.

The marketing partnership has involved a traceability campaign for GS Home Shopping's premium fashion brand, 'So, Wool', showcasing NSW wool-growing property 'Athelington' – a campaign that has resonated with customers with them paying particular attention to the farm to fashion story.

The campaign follows the 'So, Wool' supply chain, from Athelington's fleece to its spinning at Lana Gatto in Italy, through to knitting and finishing at Appeal Korea – a Korean-based Woolmark licensee.

The Autumn/Winter 2015 retail season also saw superfine Tasmanian Merino wool coats produced in Korea by fabric producer Aztech

through a Tasmanian wool collaboration supported by Roberts.

"The promotion by GS Home Shopping focuses on the authenticity behind a product, which sits perfectly with AWI marketing strategy," said AWI country manager for Korea, Hyunwon Lee. "Korean consumers are becoming increasingly concerned with where a product originates and the story behind the product."

The Korean retailer last year also produced a short film to advertise its wool collection, as well as engage consumers through giveaways, social media activities and digital marketing via its website, blog and web magazines. VIP customers also received a catalogue showcasing the Autumn/Winter 2015 wool collection and highlighting the benefits of Merino wool.

"In addition, staff from AWI's Korean office conducted two training seminars at the end of 2015 for GS Home Shopping retail staff and merchandisers," said Mr Lee. "Topics included the latest innovations in Merino wool, The Wool Lab sourcing guide and AWI's marketing highlights."

GS Home Shopping also sent its leading fashion brands to China last October. 'So, Wool' staged a runway show during China Fashion Week in Beijing – an initiative that supported the company's partnership with leading Chinese online retailer Huimai.

"The move into China had positive effects on the premium fashion market within China,"

said Mr Lee. "GS Home Shopping will continue to enhance the premium wool collaboration campaign through the Huimai online channels in the 2016/17 Autumn/Winter seasons."

MORE INFORMATION
www.gsshop.com

Advertising by **GS Home Shopping** in Korea using the Woolmark brand and the provenance of Australian wool to help sell a higher volume of products made from Australian Merino wool.



ICICLE

ALL NATURAL

In a time when consumers are all too often caught in a flood of fast fashion, leading Chinese premium brand **ICICLE** fully embraces its eco-conscious philosophy, providing quality products made from natural fibres that appeal to savvy consumers.

Established in 1997 and now one of China's leading eco-luxury brands, ICICLE, has grown into an all-in-one eco-fashion supply chain and is changing the way consumers think about purchasing clothes.

Its 'all-natural' brand philosophy is proving successful with the company now having 40 retail stores and 180 franchise stores in more than 120 cities across China.

"During the time when the brand was first founded, the trend was for man-made fibres, but ICICLE persevered in using natural fibres, because we simply have a love and passion for it," says ICICLE founder Ye Shouzeng.

"I am very happy to be described as an environmental advocate. My design philosophy and process has always been about 'humans and nature in harmony'. In this industry, the more sustainable and environmental your approach is upstream on the supply chain, the more you stand to benefit and develop downstream.

"I always tell our marketing department to convey to our consumers the message 'accept natural materials, because they are good for the environment'."

ICICLE proudly takes part in the AWI-supported Campaign for Wool – which educates consumers about the fibre's

unique natural benefits. With AWI support, marketing staff and designers from the company have also visited Australia to see the natural environment in which Merino wool is grown and be inspired to use the fibre in their collections.

"Our autumn and winter collections cannot exist without wool; our last season included a significant 40 per cent of double-faced woollen fabric," Mr Shouzeng says. "Handcrafted double-faced woollen fabrics can elicit an emotional connection with consumers; not only is it light but it also has very good thermal properties.

"We've acquired a factory that specialises in double-faced fabrics and has approximately 500 employees. For the spring/summer collections, our wool garments are mostly flatbed knitted. We are also experimenting with double-faced woollen fabrics for spring/summer; the fabrics are sourced from Italian mills and we will still focus on using the best natural superior wool for production. Although there is a price premium for such fabrics, I believe that there is a market for this in China.

"We ensure that from sourcing to production, our operation standards are that of a luxury level, and in the end you can still purchase garments of exceptional quality at a price cheaper than luxury brands."

ICICLE has regular suppliers, meaning it has supply chain transparency of what they do, which is very important due to ICICLE's stringent environmental standards.

"The lifestyle that brands want their customers to lead is reflected through their designs, so I hope that through the entire length of the ICICLE supply chain, from sourcing and design to production and marketing, we can uphold the concept of eco fashion.

"In terms of the way forward, ICICLE is positioned as more than just a brand – we are aiming for more supply chain transparency and extended quality control, by increasing our investment in sustainable production processes and continuing our focus on environmentally-aware design.

"I believe consumers are getting savvier, they can see the difference in our fabrics and understand the craftsmanship involved, and with sharing through word-of-mouth, our loyal customer base continues to grow rapidly."

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.merino.com/icicle
www.icicle.com

One of **ICICLE's** stores, which are located in 120 cities across China.

An image of an **ICICLE** sweater, photographed in a NSW shearing shed, from a Campaign for Wool promotion that featured in **Vogue China**.





Window displays at Berlin's **KaDeWe** store are showcasing wool-rich apparel created as part of **The Berlin Wool Lab Project**.

THE BERLIN WOOL LAB PROJECT

AWI's 'The Berlin Wool Lab Project' has helped connect some of the most exciting up-and-coming design talent in Germany with the world's top Merino wool spinners and weavers, inspiring the designers to use the premium fibre in their collections for Spring/Summer 2016.

Since the launch in 2011 of The Wool Lab – AWI's biannual sourcing guide to the world's best commercially available wool fabrics and yarns – hundreds of textile and fashion professionals across the globe have been informed about the premium quality of Australian Merino wool.

A recent complementary AWI initiative – The Berlin Wool Lab Project – has seen 12 of Germany's top emerging design talents be inspired by The Wool Lab and choose

innovative Merino wool fabrics for outfits in their Spring/Summer 2016 collections.

The designers were selected to participate in the project in February last year, under the guidance of leading fashion journalist Melissa Drier. AWI offered its support in connecting the designers with the spinners and weavers to obtain their preferred fabrics from the Spring/Summer 2016 edition of The Wool Lab – an edition that demonstrates the trans-seasonal properties of Merino wool.

The chosen designers developed their Merino wool fabrics into outfits which were showcased in the windows and in-store at Berlin's KaDeWe – the largest department store in Continental Europe – for three weeks in February 2016. The outfits are available for purchase through the designers' own websites and retail channels.

"Independent designers often have difficulties sourcing high quality textiles," Melissa Drier said. "The Wool Lab for Spring/Summer 2016 not only excited me with its innovative wool developments, but it has been a great vehicle to connect designers to top mills and help get more wool on the Berlin runway."

"The Wool Lab makes it clear that modern Australian Merino wool is just that: modern!"

Innovative weavers and spinners all over the world have been stretching the technical limits of Merino wool via new finishes, blends, and exciting, out-of-the-box thinking."

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said The Berlin Wool Lab Project has been successful in connecting the design talent with top spinners and weavers, allowing them to access and discover the best of Merino wool.

"This is very much the mission of The Wool Lab, particularly as we see a significant number of designers and brands seeking to reference both weavers' archives and their latest innovations, as provenance and authenticity play an ever increasing role in men's and women's fashion," he said.

"The Wool Lab ultimately aims to increase the demand for Merino wool, which is to the benefit of Australian woolgrowers."

"AWI was proud to have support for The Wool Lab Project from KaDeWe which kindly offered the store as a promotional platform for Merino wool to reach an enormous consumer audience."

B



KaDeWe Managing Director Nico Heinemann with **AWI Global Strategic Advisor** Peter Ackroyd.

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com/thewoolab

WHAT THE DESIGNERS SAID ABOUT THE WOOL LAB

"The Wool Lab project made me fall in love with wool all over again. It is inspiring to see the latest ideas that manufacturers have and put them to work. Wool has always been an essential part of our collections but to pair it with modern technology to this extent is new for us. The Wool Lab is a fantastic opportunity to work one on one with wool companies, get to know them and understand how they operate today. It is wonderful to have the possibility to connect and learn from each other."

Mira von der Osten, CRUBA
www.cruba-berlin.com

"I have always been obsessed with wool, but The Wool Lab broadened my view on wool with regard to soft falling, very elegant, modern fabrics. I feel that both styles I designed for the project are very much in line with my general design aesthetics: a fusion of traditional materials and crafting techniques with a very modern, contemporary look."

RIKE FEURSTEIN
www.rikefeurstein.com

"It was a pleasure seeing in The Wool Lab very diverse materials created through outstanding techniques, making the wool appear very non-traditional and contemporary. Developing looks from a structured, yet lightweight and rich wool allowed me to practice some of the main aspects of my design, the merging of traditional and sports elements against a backdrop of classic menswear."

Sissi Goetze, GOETZE
www.goetze.xyz

Luxury department store **KaDeWe** is showcasing the Merino wool apparel created by Germany's top emerging design talent.



For three weeks **Berlin's KaDeWe** will exhibit the designers' outfits as part of **The Berlin Wool Lab Project**.

"The Wool Lab is a perfect way to find new manufacturers which offer an amazing knowledge and skill in making fabrics. It is a robust compendium that showcases the possibilities behind the material. We found many of our suppliers through The Wool Lab."

Antonia Goy and Bjoern Kubeja, ANTONIA GOY
www.antoniagoy.com

"I created a graphic garment for The Wool Lab project, combining different wool structures in one garment. Working with high quality fabric is always a big inspiration to my collections and an important part of the working creative process."

VLADIMIR KARALEEV
www.vladimirkaraleev.com

"The Wool Lab offered an insight into wool for summer! Regardless of the season, tailored pieces are always at the forefront of all collections at **BOBBY KOLADE**. The pieces on display in The Wool Lab are a summery and playful take on suiting."

BOBBY KOLADE
www.bobbykolade.com

"The Wool Lab showed me, and confirmed, how great it is to work with wool and how multifaceted the fibre can be. Wool has always been classic yet modern and timeless, always in step with the time. But now to me it's even more promising."

HIEN LE
www.hien-le.com

"What is important to my company is the origin of the fabric and fibres we use. We specifically focus on Merino wool, which has helped **IVANMAN** retain its unique high-end look."

Ivan Mandzukic, IVANMAN
www.ivanman.com

"The Wool Lab project made me think differently about the possibilities of wool. The opportunity to be connected with new wool manufacturers brought us up to a new level, as well as giving us the potential to create our own textile designs in wool."

Malaika Raiss, MALAIKARAIS
www.malaikaraiss.com

"We love to play with elegant and fresh combinations. The green of this wool evoked to us spring, vacations, pleasure, and sunny cityscape. We created from that inspiration an elegant but nonchalant look for the city."

Johanna Perret and Tutia Schaad, PERRET SCHAAD
www.perretschaad.com

"As is typical with my work, I approached the material through draping it on a dress form. The material's suppleness made an elegant and, at the same time, casual look possible. Wool is a natural material with cooling and warming qualities. It has a beautiful fall and is crease resistant."

MICHAEL SONTAG
www.michaelsontag.com

"I've always loved wool and used it in my collections. In particular, wool crepe is one of my favorite materials because of its structure. The resulting pieces suit me and my work well. I'm pleased that through The Wool Lab, wool is again very much in the forefront, because for me, it's an indispensable fabric."

DAWID TOMASZEWSKI
www.dawidtomaszewski.com

Fashion journalist **Melissa Drier**, who mentored the designers throughout the project, is pictured here showing a page from **The Wool Lab** to the crowd at the launch at **KaDeWe**.



WOOL CLIMBING TO NEW HEIGHTS IN SPORTSWEAR



Merino wool apparel from **ORTOVOX's** 2016 summer range being worn during a climb on Mount Tyndall in Tasmania. PHOTO: ORTOVOX/Franz Walter.

Technological innovations and **Australian Merino** wool's natural performance benefits are helping cement the fibre's presence in the **sports, outdoor and athleisure markets** – for base-layer, mid-layer and outer-layer apparel.

“**M**erino wool is currently enjoying a never-before-seen phase of innovation and development in performance apparel,” reports AWI's Sports and Outdoor Manager Lars Ulvesund, who attended this year's ISPO sports and outdoor trade show in Germany.

“Innovative developments in wool fabrics and yarns for base-, mid-, and outer-layer apparel have triggered a widespread uptake of Merino wool by major global companies through to niche brands. Merino wool has enjoyed a strong history in base-layers, but more and more we are seeing the fibre in mid- and outer-layer clothing.”

One such major development showcased by AWI is MerinoPerform™ WP, ideal for

outer-wear. Made from 100 per cent Australian Merino wool, MerinoPerform™ WP delivers a unique, high-performance machine-washable fabric that is resistant to wind and rain. Using the latest Optim technology, the wool is pre-stretched and spun into yarn before being woven into MerinoPerform™ WP.

Held in January, ISPO attracted more than 80,000 visitors from 120 countries, with AWI in co-operation with trade show organisers once again arranging ‘Wool Street’: an indoor boulevard flanked with trade stands from major sports and outdoor apparel brands promoting the latest and very best in wool.

“From our point of view, this year's ISPO was the best one yet,” Mr Ulvesund said. “We had

a constant flow of designers and developers coming to the AWI stand seeking our advice and assistance in incorporating or extending their product ranges with Merino wool.

“The Wool Lab Sport (see box opposite) proved to be an important tool that we could provide to help brands source the world's best commercially available wool performance fabrics and yarns.

“Also of great interest on our stand was a ‘virtual reality farm tour’, where visitors could wear virtual reality headsets and be ‘transported’ to an Australian sheep farm to visually experience first-hand the source of Merino wool.”



A packed **AWI** stand at the **ISPO** sports and outdoor trade show in Germany.



Visitors to the **AWI** stand at ISPO using **virtual reality headsets** to view and experience an Australian sheep farm.

MANUFACTURERS REPORT INCREASE IN DEMAND

Key manufacturing partners at ISPO reported an increase in demand for wool, saying that brands new to the wool industry are also showing an increasing interest in wool.

"There has been a very significant amount of interest in fine wool," said Jo Dawson of one of the world's leading international wool suppliers, H. Dawson Wool. "I think Merino wool continues to grow as a category in the sporting and active outdoor area. Many brands that had been considering other avenues are ensuring that they put Merino into their collections.

"There is growth in wool usage in all areas, including the garment insulation area that we are working on, because of the fibre's performance attributes. It is pleasing to note that the market is starting to understand the benefits of wool to outdoor consumers."

USA-based textile manufacturer Global Merino has recently introduced a group of lightweight laminates, starting at 175g/m², catering to high aerobic athletic categories such as running. And as the use of wool in activewear continues to evolve, brands that have traditionally worked with synthetics are starting to turn to wool, blending it with other performance fibres to produce lightweight apparel.

"In the past few years we've been able to do things with a fabric's construction and

blend – to achieve fabrics optimally suited for runners," says Global Merino President Jose Fernandez. "I think the category will continue to evolve. If we find new and different ways to use wool as a technology, we'll be able to expand markets and find new applications."

NEW TRENDS FOR MERINO WOOL

Merino wool has the ability to combine comfort and flexibility with casual elegance, which makes it well placed to cater to the growing market for 'athleisure' – a term used for activewear that can be used for non-active and casual, everyday use – with a modern, comfy and stylish look.

A greater emphasis is being placed on Merino wool to make further inroads into this athleisure market – a market that The Merino Company CEO Andy Wynne refers to as 'recreational apparel'.

"People want to wear performance-looking Merino wool product to a barbecue or out for a coffee, but not necessarily run or exercise in it," Mr Wynne says.

"There's a really exciting shift in consumer behaviour. We are also seeing a big difference in the summer markets. Historically we'd been mainly a winter producer, but we are seeing a shift in people in the cycling and running sectors – high-end performance wear areas – into Merino wool because of its natural characteristics and our ability to produce lighter weight fabrics."

AWI UNVEILS THE WOOL LAB SPORT

In response to industry demand and to complement the success of The Wool Lab – AWI's seasonal sourcing guide to the world's best commercially available wool fabrics and yarns – AWI has unveiled a new guide completely dedicated to sport, emphasising wool's unique technical performance benefits for this market.

Exhibited at the world's most important trade shows, including ISPO, The Wool Lab Sport helps designers source performance fabrics and yarns from the top manufacturers across the world. Extensive research has been undertaken by AWI's global network to develop two themes dedicated entirely to sportswear, suitable for all seasons. Both themes feature a mix of 100 per cent pure wool fabrics along with blends with other technical fibres.

SPORT ACTIVE

The Sport Active theme presents the most technically performing wool fabrics and yarns which ensure the best results during physical activity. Fabrics for this theme highlight technology enriched with the most innovative finishing and treatments, suitable to match every climate and discipline, both indoors and outdoors.

SPORT STYLISH

The Sport Stylish theme expresses the role of Merino wool as a fundamental element to the classic wardrobe of the most refined and exclusive sports such as golf, horse riding, sailing and polo. This theme perfectly combines performance with elegance, highlighting the natural benefits and technical features guaranteed by the fibre mixed with comfort and style.

The Wool Lab Sport provides a guide to the world's best wool fabrics and yarns for activewear.



There is a growing 'athleisure' market. Pictured is an image from the HBFIT blog (www.hbfit.com) post: 'Everyday luxury with Merino wool activewear'.



BAGS OF QUALITY

MERINO WOOL FELT

Daniel Lantz and Holger Gräf making Merino wool felt bags in their workshop in Los Angeles.

While the global market for bags is an enormous one, leather tends to have been the dominant luxury material of choice. However, designers such as the **Gräf & Lantz** brand – based in Los Angeles – use Merino wool felt, crafting it in modern and unexpected ways.

Merino wool has long been a favourite for apparel, but the use of felted Merino wool for luxury bags is opening up a new market for the premium fibre.

Designers Holger Gräf and Daniel Lantz, with their namesake brand Gräf & Lantz, are changing the way people think about accessories – using one of the world's oldest fabrics: wool felt. They have created a modern and intelligent collection of handbags, accessories and home-ware items for men and women that have captured the attention of affluent urbanites worldwide.

"We have been working with Merino wool felt from day one and it has become our signature material," says Daniel Lantz.

"Merino wool felt is the best quality felt on the market and it is a fascinating material. It is very durable, very structural, doesn't fray when it is cut and is amazing to the touch. In designing our shapes we are taking advantage of these unique properties to create bags that wouldn't be possible in any other material.

"All our felts are custom manufactured to our specifications in Germany by one of the world's best manufacturers with a 150 year history. For Gräf & Lantz products, we choose 100 per cent Merino wool for its fine fibres and soft feel. Merino is also unexpectedly tough and pill resistant and can take a lot of wear and tear while maintaining its colourful look and structure. Best of all, wool felt is a natural, sustainable and biodegradable material.

"The only challenge for us in using wool in the handbag space is that wool in general is

perceived to be a cold weather material, which makes it a bit harder to use in our spring/summer collections. However, by using seasonal colours and innovative shapes we are designing felt bags that are wearable and sell throughout the year."

Holger Gräf has a PhD in structural engineering from his studies in Germany, while Daniel Lantz led an adventurous life and grew deep roots in Japan. Truly at the intersection of opposites, they came together in Los Angeles to create their brand Gräf & Lantz.

"Starting out of our apartment with a prototype of a wine carrier we ran into the

problem many start-ups face – trouble finding quality production and not being able to meet manufacturing minimums. The only way moving forward at that point was to buy a sewing machine and try doing it ourselves.

"With the growth of our line we expanded our workspace, added machines and were able to hire and train skilled workers. The benefit of in-house production enables us full control over the quality of our products and flexibility for small to larger runs."

MORE INFORMATION
www.merino.com/graf-lantz
www.graf-lantz.com



A **Gräf & Lantz** custom designed felted Merino wool bag created for the participants at the **International Woolmark Prize**.

PROMOTING AUSTRALIAN MERINO WOOL IN INDIA

- **AWI's Key Account Managers (KAMs) around the world work on behalf of Australian woolgrowers to build and maintain relationships with significant industry stakeholders and inspire them to work with Australian wool.**
- **Arti Gudal from AWI's India office has been selected as the 2015 KAM of the Year, for excelling at developing direct business relationships with global brands, retailers, textile manufacturers and fashion designers, and demonstrating leadership within the Indian team.**
- **With more than 120 active Woolmark licensees, India is both a key manufacturing and consumer market for Australian wool.**

Establishing and maintaining strong and healthy relationships with important textile partners including Woolmark licensees is vital for AWI in its promotion of Australian wool to global markets. To this end, AWI has Key Account Managers (KAMs) strategically located across key markets in Asia, Europe and the Americas.

AWI's senior management has selected AWI's Country Manager in India Arti Gudal as the 2015 KAM of the Year, based on an assessment of each KAM's performance and leadership qualities.

Beyond the Bale caught up with Arti to find out about her work as Country Manager for India and neighbouring countries and what she loves most about her job.

HOW DO YOU HELP INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN WOOL?

We implement AWI's global strategy in the region based on what suits this market best. We collaborate with manufacturers, retailers, buying houses and major brands, and work

closely with fashion designers to support them in creating Merino wool collections.

Our prime manufacturing focus in India in coming years will be to develop the market for wool in Tiruppur, which is known as the knitwear capital of India. We also aim to expand into other emerging markets in the region, such as Bhutan.

From a brands' perspective we will work with local apparel brands owned by Madura, Arvind and Reliance who cater to 1.2 billion Indians, as well as major international brands including Brooks Brothers, Tommy Hilfiger and Zegna to educate the luxury Indian consumer.

WHAT SORT OF MARKETING DO YOU DO IN THE REGION?

Given India's warm climate, our focus has been on Cool Wool for the past few years, collaborating with brands including Raymond, OCM and Reliance. We have communicated our key messages through runway shows, point-of-sale collateral and extensive media coverage.

For instance, we worked closely with famous fashion designers Timothy Everest, Rajesh Pratap Singh and Suket Dhir to create a Cool Wool collection for Raymond – one of India's largest fabric and fashion retailers and an important Woolmark licensee.

And of course, with SUKETDHIR winning the coveted International Woolmark Prize for menswear and becoming the second Indian label to take out the award, luxury wool fashion has been a great talking point.

WHAT DOES PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT INVOLVE?

We work closely with AWI Head Office in Sydney on product developments suited to the Indian market, such as Wool Denim, circular knit T-shirts and flat knits.

We also work alongside brands such as Blackberrys and Raymond to develop or introduce wool and wool blend collections and make them commercially available.



Arti Gudal, AWI Country Manager for India, who has been selected as **AWI Key Account Manager of 2015**.

WHAT EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

We connect with brand owners and staff, hosting seminars to explain the benefits and versatility of wool and we plan to do this for all our key accounts. In conjunction with the brands, we are then able to educate the end consumer, through in-store activations, brochures and window displays.

The Wool Lab sourcing guide remains a key tool which we not only present during one-on-one meetings, but also at India Fashion Forum where we are exposed to new brands and can introduce them to Merino wool. We also participate at fashion weeks through designer collaborations and support both upcoming and emerging designers.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR ROLE?

I like working across the entire wool supply chain on behalf of Australian woolgrowers. I enjoy working with brands to introduce wool into their collections. I am supported from AWI head office in Australia when challenges arise and I look forward to continuing the development of markets within India. **B**

WOOL4SCHOOL IN GIRLFRIEND MAGAZINE

- The winner of AWI's 2015 Wool4School student design competition starred with model Alex Hayes for a shoot in *Girlfriend* magazine's February edition.
- Wool4School offers a complete fashion design experience in the classroom, introducing a new generation of Australians to the versatility and benefits of wool.
- The challenge has now been set for 2016, with students across the country set with the task of designing an outfit for an Australian sports team.

It's not every day a 16-year-old boy gets the chance to star in a *Girlfriend* magazine photo shoot. Most days, Ben Colvin is thinking about rugby or wishing for winter so he can hit the ski slopes. Yet late last year, the student at Redlands in Sydney received a phone call that changed the way he was thinking about his future.

"I actually haven't been interested in design and textiles that long," said Ben. "We went to an information evening about all the subjects and I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do and I'd never really thought about textiles. But I talked to one of the textiles teachers and everything she said sounded interesting; it just kind of seemed like I could be all right at it."

And "all right at it" he was. Ben became the first male student to win AWI's Wool4School design competition, topping more than 1100 entries from hundreds of schools Australia-wide. His military-inspired Merino wool outfit

won over the judging panel, and was recently brought to life by leading Australian fashion designer Jonathan Ward.

Ben, Jonathan and teen social influencer-turned-model Alex Hayes have now been photographed for *Girlfriend*, with the exclusive photo shoot published in the magazine's February edition. Alex modelled Ben's design, called 'Something Missing', which was a tribute Ben's late grandfather and an outfit which Ben thought could be worn when visiting the battlefields in France.

Sourcing the outfit's fabric, AWI selected a 21 micron herringbone charcoal grey cloth, produced by Woolkhara Pty Ltd in Narrabri, NSW, and owned by ex-woolgrower Ray Jones. The jacket's bright red lining is also 100 per cent pure Merino wool, made from a lightweight plain weave fabric.

A lightweight plain weave pure wool fabric was also chosen for the cream shirt, with fabric sourced from Botto Giuseppe. The khaki green trousers are made from a 100 per cent wool Gabardine fabric, from Tollegno, with the waistband, detachable back pockets and diamond leg patches trimmed with a charcoal grey twill weave wool.

"The competition is a wonderful way of introducing Australia's beautiful Merino wool to the next generation of consumers and potential fashion designers, and encouraging them to think about the fibre source of clothing and how it is made" says AWI Wool4School project manager Ashley Hollis. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool4school.com



Social influencer **Alex Hayes** (left) models the 2015 **Wool4School** winning design by **Ben Colvin** (right), which was brought to life by leading Australian fashion designer **Jonathan Ward** (centre).

ENTER THE 2016 WOOL4SCHOOL COMPETITION

Registrations are now open for the 2016 Wool4School competition. Students are asked to design an outfit for their favourite Australian sporting team and one which conveys the Aussie team spirit.

The outfit, complete with a wool accessory, should be designed from at least 70 per cent Australian Merino wool and suitable for the team to wear during their match or medal ceremony.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

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 7-11 TEACHERS

Simply register your school and year groups at www.wool4school.com to receive a free teachers' resource pack including Merino wool samples, videos and lesson plans for the classroom.

YEAR 7-11 STUDENTS

Learn more about the exciting competition at www.wool4school.com and talk to your teacher about getting involved.

KEY DATES

Registrations close: 31 May 2016
Submissions open: 1 June 2016

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE

Years 7 & 8: 19 July 2016
Years 9 & 10: 26 July 2016
Years 11 & teachers: 2 August 2016

And #wool4school your progress!

The **Wool4School** spread in *Girlfriend* magazine.

BIG APPLE STUDENTS

GET A TASTE OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL

AWI recently hosted a study tour of the Australian wool industry by tertiary students from **New York's Fashion Institute of Technology** – educating them about the wool supply chain and inspiring them to use Australian wool in their future careers.

Globalisation. More than a buzzword, it's a reality in today's fashion industries. It's more complicated than just selling products around the world. It's about planning, strategising, sourcing, shipping, and marketing – often throughout countries with different trade policies, currencies, laws, infrastructures, and cultures. And now, sustainability – environmental and social responsibility – has entered the mix, as companies recognise that they can build brand value by becoming good corporate citizens.

These are all issues which tertiary students on the International Trade and Marketing program at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) are studying – and in January this year, 18 of the college's students on this and related programs visited Australia to learn more about Australia's wool industry and fashion markets.

Organised by the college as an elective course for its students at their own expense, AWI hosted the group as part of the company's continuing commitment to nurturing the education of future fashion, textile and interior designers.

The aim of the tour was to educate the students about Australian wool, and inspire them to use more of the fibre in their designs and encourage them to continue exploring this industry as they enter their careers. Equally however, the Australian woolgrowers and companies



The students learning about the Australian wool pipeline – at **Lal Lal Estate** and **David Jones** (below left).

that the students visited were able to learn about the key market of the USA and the thoughts of the next generation entering the workforce.

Australia's wool supply chain was showcased to the students, with the tour including visits to the Lal Lal Estate wool-growing property near Ballarat, the National Wool Museum at Geelong, the testing labs of Deakin University and the CSIRO, Merino undergarments manufacturer Ktena Knitting Mills in Fitzroy, the David Jones marketing team, the US Consulate for a briefing on the US-Australia Trade Agreement, a visit to a wool auction, and AWI's office to meet with key representatives from the industry.

A major component of the students' visit was to each present their findings on a topic of choice. From researching Australian fashion trends and exploring the global wool supply chain, through to the role of Australian wool in activewear, all students reported they were amazed by wool's properties and were keen to continue their exploration into this fibre and industry when they returned to New York.

Home Products Development student Olivia Arata explored the future of wool in the home products industry, by studying innovations in wool and how this will impact the interiors industry. She said the trip had inspired her to consider using wool within her degree and that her meeting with AWI and learning about wool's UV resistance has encouraged her to consider creating wool curtains or outdoor cushions.

"Prior to my trip to Australia my knowledge of wool did exist, however not to the extent that I gained in Australia," Olivia said. "The trip has significantly changed my outlook on wool. Being able to physically see and experience the manufacturing process wool goes through from start to finish was eye opening. Although I understood the manufacturing process prior to my trip, I never realised the extent of work that went into producing wool as an end product.

"Wool has so many versatile uses too, such as using Cool Wool fabrics, and this was probably the most significant thing that sparked my mind into thinking of all the great opportunities wool could have within the home textiles sector."

B





Students from the **Istanbul Fashion Academy** visiting one of the world's largest wool fabric producing companies in the world to learn about Merino wool fabric and apparel production.



EDUCATION PROGRAM INSPIRES BUDDING **TURKISH DESIGNERS**

FAST FACTS

- A group of students from the **Istanbul Fashion Academy** visited the **Altinyıldız** factory in Turkey to gain insights into the production process that transforms Merino wool fibre into finished product.
- The project is part of a broader training and education program run by **AWI**, which aims to increase supply chain engagement with university level students worldwide.
- Through partnerships with and visits to top Turkish manufacturers, the project hopes to inspire the students to work with Australian Merino wool.

Not your average field trip, a group of students from the Istanbul Moda Akademisi (IMA) visited one of the world's largest wool fabric producing companies in the world to take a behind-the-scenes look at the process – from spinning and weaving to dyeing and fabric finishing – that transforms Merino wool into luxurious fashion apparel.

Co-organised by AWI, the students visited Altinyıldız's factory at Çerkezköy, 100km north-west of Istanbul in Turkey, to not only further develop their education with Merino wool, but

also be inspired to continue to work with the natural fibre after they graduate.

Active in the wool fabric industry since 1952, Altinyıldız – which is a Woolmark licensee – produces close to 10 million meters of fabric each year. The company also entered the ready-to-wear sector in 1995, and by 2014 was producing about 1.2 million units.

Accompanied by specialist staff from Altinyıldız, the students' visit was part of a broader training and education program run by AWI, which aims to increase supply chain engagement with university level students worldwide.

As the future designers, creators and decision makers of the fashion and textile industry, students within the program are educated, at this early stage in their career, about Merino wool's provenance, benefits and possibilities, along with its subsequent place in contemporary fashion and textiles.

"Through partnerships with and visits to top Turkish manufacturers, this educational project aimed to inspire these young designers to treasure the fibre for its luxurious qualities and natural advantages, leading them to choose and promote Merino wool in future endeavours," AWI's Business Development and Licensing Coordinator in Turkey, Gülay Gökbayrak said.

"It further aims to broaden their understanding of professional opportunities within the fashion and textiles industry."

Student Gökçe Kömürcü said of the visit, "It was good to see wool transformed from raw material to fabric and from fabric to finished clothing". Classmate Şule Gül echoed this sentiment, saying "I was really impressed by the transformation from top to fabric. I really enjoyed this experience".

For the prestigious Turkish manufacturers, the educational program offers the opportunity to showcase their production process and fabric collections, creating new relationships with some of the best up-and-coming talent in the region.

"As an Altinyıldız company, we are pleased to be a part of this program with The Woolmark Company," explains Altinyıldız Corporate Communications and Human Resources Specialist, Ekin Gül. "Through this program we get a chance to have contact with students and lecturers within the sector. For us, it is very worthwhile to meet with students and let them know our product before they graduate. It is also important for them to have an opportunity to see the production, to see the processes in terms of cause and effect relationships and engage with materials." **B**

MASTERING MERINO WITH MISSONI

AWI and luxury fashion label **Missoni** joined forces to show Italian design students how Merino wool can be used in **knitwear for all seasons**.



A selection of the Merino wool knitwear pieces produced by the students as part of their course assignment.

A talented group of Italian students and textile professionals have undertaken a Master's course in Knitting Design at the prestigious Politecnico di Milano – and in the process have learnt about the versatility of Merino wool, a knowledge that should remain with them throughout their careers.

Held from October through to February, the course was taught in collaboration with leading Italian knitwear brand Missoni and AWI.

A major component of the course involved students forming groups to design and produce a knitwear collection, suitable for Missoni's Spring/Summer 2017 range. It had to be made with a minimum of 70 per cent Australian Merino wool – highlighting the trans-seasonal benefits of the natural fibre.

At the beginning of the course, many students said they felt it would be a challenge to design a Spring/Summer collection using wool, admitting they traditionally associated the fibre with winter and cooler months. However, after various presentations and seminars conducted by AWI about Merino wool, and with mentoring by Luca Missoni, the students began to explore the unexpected innovations and properties of the fibre.

"We have to say that it was challenging to create a collection based on a 70 per cent of wool, but the results – the amazing

garments – speak for themselves," said one group of students. "I think many people will be surprised to learn they are made from wool and we are all very proud to have succeeded in this challenge."

The course enabled the students to explore Merino wool's possibilities and think about the fibre in a different way, explained Giovanni Maria Conti PhD, the Assistant Professor in Fashion and Knit Design at the School of Design.

"Some groups of students proposed new ways of using different yarns. For example, one group created a multi-yarn fabric using a series of tubular stitches, resulting in a colourful knitted fabric. Another group combined the Merino wool in metallic threads to create an iridescent fabric.

"By working closely with AWI and leading Italian mills, we can show how design can be of great importance to develop innovations for this specific sector of the Made in Italy industry." **B**

AWI Country Manager for Italy **Francesco Magri** educating the students about Merino wool.



WOOL CARPET THE NATURAL CHOICE FOR GODFREY HIRST

The strength of the Woolmark logo and the inherent benefits of wool give leading Australian carpet brand and Woolmark licensee **Godfrey Hirst** the edge when customers are looking to replace the carpet in their home.

Can we make wool carpets sexy and fashionable again? That's the question posed by David Mitchell, Residential Wool Product Manager and his team at Godfrey Hirst, Australia's favourite manufacturer and exporter of residential and commercial carpets.

Having been in the business for more than 140 years, Godfrey Hirst knows a thing or two about carpet.

"We follow international and local trends very closely," David says. "These trends may not come as quickly as those in the fashion industry, but it means they don't leave us as quickly either."

Whilst Australian wool is widely heralded for its soft, next-to-skin luxury in premium apparel, the broader micron woolgrowers ensure the market for wool in interior textiles continues to grow. With a significant number of Hycraft and Feltex Classic outlets across Australia, these two Godfrey Hirst flagship brands are ensuring wool's inherent benefits are known and understood by Australian consumers.

"Wool has many wonderful benefits when used in home products such as carpets," David says. "Aside from being a completely natural fibre, wool carpets also have acoustic benefits, are fire retardant and stain resistant, which is particularly good for families with young children."

"If wool wasn't as good as it was, it would not have been around for so long. There is nothing more natural than the wool fibre."

Godfrey Hirst is also one of the oldest Woolmark Interiors licensees, gaining certification in 1968. A mark of quality assurance, consumers know that products stamped with the Woolmark logo are made from high-quality pure new wool.

"We have had a long-standing relationship with The Woolmark Company and it's a relationship which we value highly. We believe the Woolmark logo has got very high consumer appeal and that's why we are so keen to put the logo on all residential and commercial products."

"Basically, all things being equal, if we sell products with the Woolmark logo it's going to outsell the competition – and consumers recognise this."

Just as trends are important in the fashion apparel industry, they also hold weight in the home textiles market. International trade shows enable brands like Godfrey Hirst to showcase – and sometimes introduce – the latest in wool products to international markets. Similarly, they are also the best place to see how other key markets are working with the fibre.

"Current design trends seem to be referencing those from the 1960s and '70s with rustic, chunky weaves and big bold patterns back in fashion. Wool also gives us our best textures in carpets, for example chunky loops can only be produced by wool. Right now we are seeing lots of greys and charcoals and we are also excited to launch some re-coloured products in line with international trends."

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.godfreyhirst.com



Woolmark certified wool carpets from Hycraft: **Odyssey 780 Stella** (bedroom) **Pegasus 690 Perseus** (lounge) and **Odyssey 690 Trojan** (dining room).



AWI co-hosted the **Wool Arena** at the Heimtextil interior textiles trade show, along with the IWTO and several **Woolmark licensees** that received a great deal of interest from visitors in their wool products.

INTEREST IN WOOL INTERIORS CONTINUES TO GROW

The world's largest trade show for interior textiles continues to grow – with reports there is **increasing momentum** in demand for wool in this sector – which is good news for woolgrowers whose clip is broader micron and crossbred wool.

The versatility of broader micron wool was on show at the Heimtextil international trade show for interior textiles in Frankfurt, Germany, with AWI once again co-hosting the successful Wool Arena, open to the show's 69,000 visitors.

Bringing together Woolmark licensees Jaspa Herington, Baur Vliesstoffe, Bönning + Sommer and DBCwool, the Wool Arena was co-hosted by the IWTO and showcased the latest innovations in wool bedding, carpets and furnishings.

"The Woolmark Company once again put on a great show which offers the wool industry a valuable meeting point at Heimtextil to discuss and engage with customers," said IWTO Secretary General Elisabeth van Delden. "At the same time it is a great opportunity to educate fair visitors about the natural benefits and properties of wool."

The demand for natural products such as wool in bedding continues to increase, with innovations such as sliver knits attracting consumers and prompting them to actively think about what they are sleeping on or under. New collections and product ranges for babies and children were seen at various bedding producers. Other trends include wool waddings for mattresses and wool balls for filled wool bedding were in high demand.

"Underlays have been a stronger offering than normal, particularly with European

customers," said Jaspa Herington National Sales & Marketing Manager Janine Bisset. "We also produced a baby quilt, which we haven't had before and we are expanding our quilt range to include a beautiful lightweight wool quilt, suitable for warmer months and climates.

"Customers love that the wool is from Australia. They keep asking if I'm from Austria because of the distance, but they know Australia and they know we offer a beautiful Australian product."

DBCwool Sales & Marketing Director Dominique Blandiaux agrees that innovation is imperative to continue to attract new customers. She said this year saw an increase in visitors to their stand, with new countries showing an interest in wool bedding.

"In Europe, we've had a lot of interest in wool balls – balls made from washed wool," said Ms Blandiaux. "This innovation is helping many people who have never used wool before. It's very easy to process, even without special machines, so it's a good way to introduce wool into products."

Wool industry members also reported that wool for acoustics is becoming increasingly important. Contemporary architecture's widespread use of concrete, glass and steel may result in stunning looks, but these materials spell disaster for acoustics. Wool carpets and wool felt panels are being integrated into the interior designs of offices and public spaces. In addition to the

acoustical benefits, wool panels offer great colours and the ability to filter air pollution and odour.

"There's some interesting things going on with rugs; some big heavy weaves sometimes mixed with other fibres," explains Wool Room Managing Director Chris Tattersall. "Thick weaves and indeed some of the finer weaves allow for a very natural, coarser-type look, which adds texture to the appearance."

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com/interiors



A Woolmark-certified quilt in **Herington's range** of bedding products that uses Australian Wool – available at major and independent retailers Australia-wide including **David Jones** and **Harvey Norman**.

SHEEP A KEY INGREDIENT

IN PARTS OF THE SHEEP/WHEAT ZONE

A livestock revolution in marginal cropping country is under way, with a resurgence of sheep as a risk management strategy due the high input costs of cropping and the risks of variable seasonal conditions.

Sheep are slowly becoming more popular amongst some cropping regions.

It is for an obviously good reason: sheep balance the risks associated with cropping.

Find an agricultural map of Australia from at least 20 years ago you will see a zone between the 'high rainfall' zone near the coast and the 'pastoral' zone in the interior called the 'wheat/sheep zone', but over the past two decades, sheep have slipped away from these large tracts of land.

Generational change, the upkeep of infrastructure, the financial commitment to expensive machinery and the labour associated with sheep are often quoted as reasons why some people moved away from livestock. However there is a quiet revolution taking place in some cropping regions.

A survey of the WA Eastern Wheatbelt in 2013 showed that 80 per cent of the top performing businesses run sheep as a necessity.

'How to Farm Profitably in the Eastern Wheatbelt' was conducted by Greg Kirk for Planfarm and funded by the Grains Research & Development Corporation.

15 farms were involved in the survey with annual average rainfall of between 300mm

and 350mm, and businesses running on 2,234ha to 12,200ha.

The study examined the financial returns and business practices of farms from 2006-2012.

The 'top' group of farmers within the survey produced operating surpluses that were 60 per cent above the average, which equated to an additional surplus of \$243,000 per annum.

While this group generally stated that livestock were only a small portion of their income, 80 per cent of these most profitable famers stated how livestock, and predominantly sheep, were an important of their farm operation.

The reasons were because they:

- provided cashflow in poor years
- provided additional income/work during the off-season
- enabled opportunistic trading
- reduced risk
- were complementary to a cropping operation
- assisted in weed control
- reduced the impact of frosts and pulse crops
- were an important part of the rotation

- forced the producer to make more conservative decisions.

The enthusiasm for sheep amongst the top financial performers in the Eastern Wheatbelt of WA is being echoed in other states.

Ian McClelland, founder of the Birchip Cropping Group in Victoria believes a slow move back to sheep is being driven by soil type to a degree.

"Those with deep sandy soils are largely sticking with cropping but in heavier country people in this region at least are looking at or have introduced sheep again. Last year for example a large number of lambs were fattened in the Mallee which brought good income to the region. With the poor season right across western Victoria, many failed or poor crops were grazed to give some return for these farmers."

The McClelland family run a Merino wool and prime lamb business alongside their grain operation and it works very well according to Ian.

"Over the past decade we have certainly made more out of livestock than cropping. The use of containment areas to save paddocks and feedlots for lambs has really revolutionised the game around here."

The Birchip Cropping Group for some time has run a Livestock Group which continues to be well supported with experts such as SA nutritionist San Jolly brought in to consult on how to make the most of livestock enterprises in traditional cropping areas.

"Although many younger farmers are very keen on cropping only, there is a growing sense of the role of sheep in cleaning up stubbles, summer weed control, reducing resistance to herbicides and interestingly, stopping mouse plagues as sheep are expert at cleaning up grain on the ground."

Ian says even 500 ewes in a cropping operation can deliver \$50,000 profit without much effort.

Given the recent past experience of variable seasonal conditions, plus the high input costs of cropping, producers in the wheat-sheep zone and low rainfall areas are seeing the benefit of having a wool enterprise to manage their risk.



WOOLGROWING CONTINUES TO PROVE ITS WORTH

There is a growing body of financial, production and benchmarking data that confirms the value and versatility of wool-growing as an enterprise.

While the prime lamb industry continues to thrive, at its core remains a Merino ewe flock. For more than 15 years the Merino ewe flock has been declining but recent evidence from the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggests the decline may have stopped and even begun swinging upwards as more realise the options a Merino operation brings.

“You must run what best suits your country and do it well” is the over-riding message from many experts, but within the analysis many are finding wool is holding its own over time.

An example of this is 2015 ‘Relative Sheep Enterprise Performance’ conducted by NSW Department of Agriculture Technical Specialist Phil Graham.

His modeling work took into account 54 years worth of data, rainfall records and actual prices across six NSW sites and examines the production and financial performance for a traditional prime lamb (PL) operation (first cross ewe), a Merino to terminal (MT), and 18-micron and 20-micron self-replacing Merino operations. His model can be adapted to any part of Australia.

Phil is urging sheep producers do look at profit and not just income as the traditional

prime lamb enterprise may well produce a higher income but with it comes higher risks and higher costs, particularly where replacement ewes are concerned.

“Looking at a lot of years’ figures it is clear that prime lamb enterprises in good years have been doing very well but in the bad years those same enterprises have really struggled. A 20-micron self-replacing Merino flock in the same climate has shown a lot more financial resilience and a lot more versatility.

“A Merino income will always give you three incomes in terms of wool, meat and surplus animals as well as the versatility surrounding Merino wethers. In recent times well bred 13-month old Merino wethers have been fetching prices close to the best prime lambs and when you consider a fleece on top of that, it is a very good string to your bow.”

The below figure is an example summary of this comparison. It compares the yearly profit per hectare of the traditional prime lamb enterprise to that of a self-replacing 20-micron Merino flock at Cootamundra, ranked according to yearly profit/ha over the past 54 years.

For a majority of the years, the prime lamb enterprise has outranked the Merino operation but the significant variation in profit for the prime lamb operation is worth

noting. Perhaps the most striking observation is the significant drop in prime lamb profits when seasons have been poor.

“Prime lamb operations have in general been very profitable of late but the truth is that wool prices have been very solid in recent years and particularly around 20-micron where wool returns have been very strong indeed. The good lamb prices are of course also reflected in strong mutton prices and this is where a Merino enterprise gets a good kick-along,” Phil said.

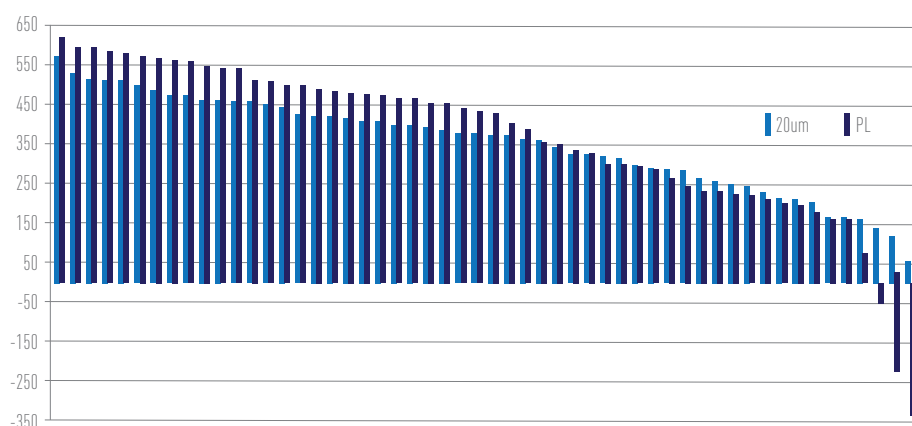
“The three drought years have a big impact on the long term profitability of the prime lamb enterprise. The difference in cash flow between the two enterprises from the three droughts is \$990/ha. It takes 13 good years (or 25% of the time studied) for the prime lamb operation to wipe out the difference from the three bad years. People could argue that a strategy to lower feeding costs will counter this effect. Destocking will lower feeding costs but it also lowers future income, so when looked at over a long period the effect shown in the graphic will still apply,” Phil adds in his report.

One advantage with wool genetics is that improvements to fibre diameter and fleece weight, which increase profits have very little impact on the feed required to maintain the flock.

The Merino ewe to terminal ram cross separates the benefits of improved lamb growth from the negative of increasing the size of the mature ewe.

Having adapted his work across for Tasmania as well as New South Wales, Phil concludes: “Successful producers run efficient enterprises they like and that suit their country. They focus on getting management and genetics right and not being swayed by short term fads.” **B**

ANNUAL PROFIT/HECTARE AT COOTAMUNDRA RANKED OVER PAST 54 YEARS: 20-MICRON SELF-REPLACING FLOCK VERSUS FIRST CROSS PRIME LAMB OPERATION



MORE INFORMATION

For a copy of his report contact Phil Graham, NSW Agriculture, phillip.graham@dpi.nsw.gov.au

WHAT THE TOP FARMERS DO CONSISTENTLY WELL



Everyone wants to make their farm **more profitable**. Is there something you can learn from the ‘better’ operators in the business? Read on for some useful insights from Victoria.

“The top 20 per cent of livestock producers are earning more than three times as much the average producers.”

So says farm business economist Paul Blackshaw who gave a presentation at last year's BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB conference on what the top farmers do consistently well.

For those who missed it, his presentation – along with 15 other presentations from the conference – was recorded and is available free from the BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB website to anyone across the country.

Mr Blackshaw works for the Victorian Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) based out of Rutherglen in north-eastern Victoria. One of his roles is to manage the Livestock Farm Monitor Project, delivered jointly by DEDJTR and Rural Finance, which analyses the financial and production performance of participating livestock farms (wool, lamb, beef or a mix of some or all) across Gippsland, south-west Victoria and northern Victoria.

To provide an insight into farm practices that contribute to profitability, the project also looks at the characteristics of the top-performing farms (top 20 per cent of farms), ranked on earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) per hectare, compared with ‘average’ farms.

HIGHER STOCKING RATES GENERATE MORE GROSS INCOME

The results in the table below outline some of the key characteristics of ‘average’ and ‘top 20 per cent’ farms in the three examined regions of Victoria, averaged over the past 10 years to 2014. The results show that the top 20 per cent made more than three times as much money as the average farm.

It should be stressed that these are averages, and there is a large variation in climatic and land attributes within any region, so care should be taken in over-analysing the dollar figure results. Also, the top 20 per cent

of farmers are not the same farmers every year – some farms hit the top 20 per cent in some years and not others, and very few consistently stay in the top 20 per cent.

However Mr Blackshaw points out some interesting trends that contribute to profitability across the three examined regions.

“The top-performing farms generate considerably more gross income, primarily through higher stocking rates – per hectare, and per hectare per 100 mm of rainfall,” he said.

“Enterprise and variable costs are actually a bit higher for the more profitable farmers – but this basically means they are spending money to make money.

10 YEAR AVERAGES ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES STATEWIDE (VICTORIA)

	Average farm	Top 20% farm
Gross income (\$/ha)	\$516	\$762
Enterprise/variable costs (\$/ha)	\$209	\$243
Overhead costs (\$/ha)	\$121	\$126
Owner/operator allowance, ie labour (\$/ha)	\$91	\$85
Earnings before interest and tax (\$/ha)	\$94	\$308
Return to assets	1.7%	4.9%
Stocking rate (DSE/ha)	12.7	16.3

For instance, they tend to apply more phosphorus fertiliser (per hectare and per DSE), which means they are growing more grass and utilising it well.

"They manage their supplementary feed costs well so that enterprise costs are not increased per DSE, despite higher stocking rates. They are also slightly more labour efficient and keep overhead costs modest."

Detailed information, categorised by enterprise type and region, is available at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/farm-monitor-project

Looking beyond the figures, what are some of the things that the top farmers consistently do well that others might be able to learn from?

PERSONALITY TRAITS AFFECT PROFITABILITY

Mr Blackshaw says there are social and personality traits the top farmers possess that differentiates them from the 'average' farmers. For instance, the top performers really love talking about their farm, learning new things and running ideas past other people.

"These producers are very passionate about their farm, which gives them a real drive that translates into being successful in their business. They are hungry for knowledge and keen to find and discuss new things – and happy to think outside the box.

"They seek advice when required, and they're not afraid to spend a bit of money on a consultant.

"All the successful producers are part of a network or discussion group, be it a formal group like BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB or informal like having a beer on a Friday night with their neighbours and talking about what's happening on their farms.

"They really have a mindset to make the most out of their farm, and make the most money out of their farm too. This often involves taking on some level of risk, which might mean borrowing money, and interestingly this can actually keep farmers more focused on their goals.

However, Mr Blackshaw says the top farmers tend to have already found their 'sweet' spot: "This might mean them being happy with the type of enterprise they're running, or the size of the enterprise. If you love just love Merinos, that's what you should focus on because it's your passion."

PUSHING THE FARM SYSTEM

Mr Blackshaw says the top farmers are all trying to squeeze as much productivity out of their farms.

"They're all really pushing their system – sensibly and sustainably. We see that in the data, such as with the higher stocking rates."

Most of them have got multiple enterprises on their farm too, but not too many

enterprises. Once they get more than two or three, Mr Blackshaw says the farm business starts getting complicated and none of the enterprises tend to be run particularly well.

"It's partly about spreading the risk, but there's also got to be some complementarity between the enterprises, so cattle might follow the sheep well in the system, or they might have a little bit of cropping.

"The best farmers tend to have intimate knowledge of their farm and really know how to get the most from their land, such as knowing which paddocks grow the most feed. However a lot of them also take the opportunity of leasing a neighbour's property or an adjoining paddock for a couple of years if they come available.

"They also do some rotational grazing, tailored for what they want to do on their property."

Mr Blackshaw says the top farmers measure only the things that matter to them – such as condition scoring ewes – and don't measure everything that happens on their farm. They do tend to undertake regular soil testing though and use fertilizer judiciously. "They're not blanket fertilizing the whole farm, they are testing and going through the numbers and asking whether fertilizer for a particular area is economically viable for them."

The good farmers also focus on the genetics that really mean something to them, according to Mr Blackshaw. "They seek those genetics that will help them achieve their objectives. They buy good genetics, but they don't get too hung up on it."

RUNNING THEIR BUSINESS AS A BUSINESS

Mr Blackshaw says the top farmers run their farming business like any other business, not like a hobby or a lifestyle.

"They are really thinking about it as a business, such as looking at their returns every year and what they can change and improve. They've usually got a business plan – and it's usually written down and reviewed. So it might be something that says in the next five years they want to grow the business by a certain amount, and it might involve how different family members are involved in the farm.

"They do cash flow budgeting, with some farmers regularly doing updates and comparing their budgets to actual as they go through the year. These people use it as a really important management tool so they know how that farm is going to perform in the next 12 months."

Mr Blackshaw also says the top producers have the capacity to get through difficult times: "This includes a financial capacity: when things get tight they still have the capacity to keep making money and growing – and mental capacity: they know they've been through tough times before and come out alright, and so they know they can deal with tough times again."

They're using contractors and contract labour as required. "So when they have periods of peak work or they have tasks that need specialised expertise, they go out and buy that labour. They've worked out what they're good at and what they're not good at and they bring in people to do the stuff that they're not really so good at themselves."

Mr Blackshaw also says most of the top livestock producers are selling stock direct, such as to the abattoir, processor or feedlot. Most of them are still using an agent even though some are a bit reluctant and uncomfortable that it's costing them money. If they use an agent, they make sure they are really working for them, adding value their business. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

www.wool.com/bestwoolbestlamb

Paul Blackshaw: 02 6030 4502

paul.blackshaw@ecodev.vic.gov.au

WHAT THE TOP FARMERS CONSISTENTLY DO WELL

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Passionate and driven, and love talking about their farm.
- Open and enquiring mind, with a hunger for knowledge and information.
- Mindset to make the most out of their farm.
- Part of a farming network or discussion group.
- Appetite to take on risk.
- Found their 'sweet' spot in business.

FARM SYSTEM

- Really push their farm system.
- Have multiple enterprises, but not too many.
- Know their farm and its land very well.
- Seek advice when required.
- Buy good genetics, but don't get too hung up on it.
- Measure only the things that matter to them.
- Regular soil testing and use fertilizer wisely.
- Rotationally graze, to a degree.
- Lease additional land when available.

BUSINESS TRAITS

- Treat their business like a business.
- Do cash flow budgeting, with regular updates and comparison to actuals.
- Have a business plan – written down and reviewed.
- Financial and mental capacity to get through difficult times.
- Use contractors and contract labour as required.
- Sell direct – if using an agent, make them work.

FLY AND LICE TREATMENTS:

WHICH APPLICATION METHODS SUIT YOUR FARM?

While all application methods can be successful when carried out correctly, your best treatment choice will be the method where you can access **properly maintained and set up equipment**, which you or your staff can use correctly on the whole mob.

In the March 2015 *Beyond the Bale* article 'To dip, spray, jet or backline?', the important operational aspects of application methods were considered. This article highlights the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

The application methods that can be used for (a) flystrike prevention and treatment and (b) lice treatment are summarised in the table right. The methods' effectiveness will depend on their set up, how well they are used by the operator and which chemical is used in them.

DIPPING

Advantages

Dips are best suited to applying short-wool lice treatments because the product is applied all over the body allowing a rapid knockdown or kill of the lice (if a fully effective chemical has been used). For most products, this removes the need for a quarantine period (the time before treated sheep can be mixed with

Application method	Flystrike prevention	Flystrike treatment	Lice treatment
Dip – plunge	Not recommended	Not recommended	Eradication
Dip – cage	Not recommended	Not recommended	Eradication
Dip – shower	Not recommended	Not recommended	Eradication
Hand jet	Suitable	Suitable	Suppression only
Automatic jetting race	Suitable	Suitable if equipment jets affected areas	Suppression only
Short wool spray-on or backline	Suitable, but protection period may be reduced	Not ideal as a sole treatment as larvae take some time to die	Eradication
Long wool spray-on or backline	Suitable	Not ideal as a sole treatment as larvae take some time to die	Suppression only

other lice-free sheep) compared with using backline or spray-on lice products.

Shower, plunge and cage dips are all capable of treating relatively large numbers of sheep easily. Although they are not suited to applying flystrike prevention products, they can be useful for emergency flystrike treatments when many sheep are struck.

Cage dips also reduce the exposure of the operator to splashing from the dipwash.

Disadvantages

For fly treatments, only cyromazine is registered for use in dips, and this is not suitable alone for treating struck sheep, as maggots take too long to die.

For lice treatments, dipping should not be done until two weeks off shears to allow shearing wounds to close. This is generally inconvenient on large properties where the re-mustering costs can be significant. The treatment must then be completed no later than six weeks off shears, as after this, wetting to the skin all over may not be achieved in the time spent in the dip. While label recommendations do not mention cover

or snow combs, you should consider that the extra wool left on the sheep is equivalent to some weeks' growth.

Aside from having access to a dip, there are a number of other disadvantages:

- Plentiful clean water is required.
- There is a need to dispose of the spent and unused dipwash.
- Operator exposure to the chemical concentrate and dipwash can be high, except with cage dips.
- Diseases such as dermatophilus (lumpy wool) can be spread.
- Sheep may swallow dipwash (when immersed in a plunge or cage dip).
- Sheep must be strong enough to swim the length of a plunge dip and climb out fully wet.
- Operators may not have the skills to maintain the equipment (although cage dips usually come with trained contractors).



Cage dipping of sheep provides a safe working environment when treating sheep for lice.

HAND JETTING

Advantages

With good technique, hand jetting is the most thorough long wool flystrike treatment, and the protection provided by jetting products is likely to be greater when applied by hand jetting.

Disadvantages

Jetting for lice is not an option if eradication is the goal; the lice population on the sheep can only be suppressed, as it is not possible to completely wet the sheep to the skin over the entire body, which is essential for eradication.

Other disadvantages:

- It is slow, hard work.
- Thoroughness of the method declines as the operator tires.
- High chemical residues can be left in the fleece.
- The operator requires good quality, comfortable personal protective equipment.
- Access to water, a concrete-floored race and good jetting equipment, including a suitable pump, is needed.
- Jetting handpieces vary in their efficiencies.
- Exposure to chemical concentrate is high as the operator needs to dilute the concentrate.

AUTOMATIC JETTING RACE

Advantages

Automatic jetting races are much faster than hand jetting, and a great deal less work.

Because they remove the need for the operator to stand in the race with the sheep, the operator can stand back from the machine, thereby reducing exposure to insecticides – provided they are set up and working properly and efficiently.

Disadvantages

Automatic jetting races do vary widely in their efficiencies. It is essential that they have an adequate sized pump and are set up properly – including being adjusted to the size of the sheep.

Other disadvantages:

- Plentiful clean water is required.
- Exposure to chemical is high, from both diluting concentrate and from moving stalled sheep.
- Penetration of chemical into the wool (especially with long wool) is less effective than hand jetting.
- There is a need to dispose of spent/unused jetting fluid.
- Needs to be set up well to encourage consistent and moderate flow rate of sheep through the race.

SPRAY-ONS AND BACKLINE PRODUCTS

Advantages

Their ease of application and simple to use, inexpensive equipment has made these very popular. They can also be applied with a power-assisted applicator, which helps ensure consistency and reduces operator fatigue.

Safety is improved because exposure to chemical tends to be lower as products come ready for direct application (no dilution or mixing required) and there is no splash or spray.

Also, no water or power is required, making it suitable for yards where large quantities of clean water and/or power are not available. As there is no dipwash, only the empty containers need disposal.

They can be used for both lice eradication (when applied to short wool) as well as suppression of lice in long wool and prevention of flystrike on short or long wool.

Disadvantages

Their major disadvantage is the cost of the chemical product. The applicator must also be matched to the product and while application appears to be simple it takes some practice and must be done carefully.

Spray-on flystrike preventative products do not spread, so must be applied where the protection is required. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

For further information on fly and lice treatments, choose the Treatments section of FlyBoss at www.flyboss.com.au and LiceBoss at www.liceboss.com.au

flyboss
liceboss

paraboss

BEST PRACTICE ADVICE FOR MANAGING SHEEP PARASITES

ParaBoss is a suite of three products – **WormBoss**, **FlyBoss** and **LiceBoss** – developed to help sheep producers in the management of worms, blowflies and lice.

The WormBoss, FlyBoss and LiceBoss websites 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 expert panels of parasitologists and veterinarians from across Australia.

ParaBoss provides access to the three websites at www.paraboss.com.au.

Subscribe to ParaBoss News, the twice monthly free email newsletter with state outlooks on the current state of sheep parasites as well as feature articles and the quick quiz to test your knowledge of sheep parasites. You can register on the ParaBoss website.

Join us on **Facebook** at www.facebook.com/paraboss.com.au to see weekly posts on flystrike, lice and worm control.

ParaBoss is funded by AWI and MLA and coordinated by the University of New England with industry oversight.

MORE INFORMATION
www.paraboss.com.au



Backline applications are convenient and fast. PHOTO: Peter James

FOOTROT ERADICATION REQUIRES DEDICATION

Woolgrowers **Shelley Saunders** and **Chris Cocker** eradicated footrot from their property at Nile in Tasmania after a two-year program that involved hard work and attention to detail.



Woolgrower **Shelley Saunders** and husband **Chris** have worked hard to build an ultrafine Merino flock, and the effort to eradicate footrot has been worth it. PHOTO: Catriona Nicholls

Shelley Saunders and Chris Cocker from Nile in Tasmania – who run 2,800 ultrafine and superfine Merino ewes for wool and lamb production – know the effort, cost and attention to detail that is required to eradicate footrot.

After a two-year control and eradication program, which included regular flock inspections, foot paring, foot bathing and the use of antibiotics in severely affected sheep, the couple is declaring their flock footrot free.

“In January 2012 a bushfire destroyed half of our boundary fence and burnt several hectares of farm land around us,” Shelley said.

“Over the following couple of months we had stray sheep wandering on and off the property until the boundary fence was replaced around the end of March. During early April, we brought the sheep into the yards for crutching and noticed a few lame ewes. We turned them over to discover advanced footrot.

“We’ve been here for 20 years and only ever experienced footrot once, about 10 years ago, with no sign of it since.

“We were at a loss as to where the infection came from but thought the fire-damaged fence, giving stray stock access to our property, was the most likely source.”

IMMEDIATE ACTION

Shelley and Chris needed a diagnosis as soon as possible to implement an appropriate management strategy. Chris contacted Department of Primary Industries Water and Environment (DPIWE) Senior Veterinary Officer, Dr Bruce Jackson, who took some foot scrapings and confirmed virulent footrot, but not a specific strain.

Shelley and Chris immediately embarked on an inspection and control program, calling in

contractors to turn over every sheep, inspect and pare every foot, and foot bath every animal in zinc sulphate with sodium lauryl sulphate. 20-30 animals with severe footrot lesions were immediately culled.

“At that stage we already had a foot bath, but only a manual sheep handler, so we were not equipped to manhandle every sheep ourselves,” Shelley said.

“We thought if we got onto it quickly we would be right, but in hindsight we didn’t handle this early stage as well as we could have – we should have foot bathed more frequently and sought advice from our consulting veterinarian earlier.

“During May and June 2012 we received 245mm of rain and by the time the contractors returned in June the affected sheep numbers had increased significantly to about 18 per cent of the flock.

“By this stage affected (dirty) sheep were identified in our clean mobs and half the dirty sheep presented as clean – but we had been so particular with foot bathing, not crossing clean animals over contaminated ground that I knew something wasn’t right.”

Shelley called upon the services of local consulting veterinarian Dr Paul Nilon for his advice.

“Paul said there was no point trying to eradicate now (during winter), we had too many differential diagnoses due to the wet conditions – it was a waste of time,” Shelley said.

“So we chose to foot bath during winter to contain the disease and try again to eradicate after spring.”

LAMBING MANAGEMENT

One additional management change Shelley and Chris implemented in the meantime was

to shorten their lambing period from five weeks to three.

“We wanted to restart foot bathing as soon as possible after lambing during spring, so cut our usual five-week lambing period back by two weeks, which ended up being really effective. After the first foot bathing (including 850 lambs) we only had two infected lambs.

“We brought the mobs back into the foot bath every three weeks. It took a while to foot bath with 50–60 in at a time, depending on the age of animals and their behaviour.”

SUMMER ERADICATION

Shelley and Chris decided against bringing the contractors back during the summer of 2013-14 to control costs.

“We decided to set ourselves up to do our inspections,” Shelley said. “We put down a 9m x 9m concrete slab, bought a Peakhandler and two sets of pneumatic foot shears.

“The handler was amazing – Chris set it up so the animals fit well, were relaxed and would lie in the cradle properly.

“In the end I got quite good at it, with just me and a dog. The first summer we had no roof and the sun was pretty harsh, but by the following summer we had erected a roof over the handling area, which made a huge difference.

“We aimed to eradicate in the one year – we started to foot pare not long after Christmas 2013 and raddled anything with score 1 or higher, though there weren’t many because of our vigilant winter-spring footbathing program.”

Shelley pared all four feet on every animal and continued to isolate clean sheep from dirty sheep, treating affected sheep with antibiotics and culling anything that didn’t respond.

"At the end of autumn we thought we had it beat – we hadn't found any new cases, but we still had a small 'active' mob, which had been the treated animals we now considered clean."

Shelley's cautionary approach paid off as the 'active' mob broke down in late November 2013. In January 2014 all sheep in the other mobs were inspected and found to be clean.

"After that point we didn't foot bath the clean ones again – we thought they were clean and if we were wrong we wanted the footrot to express itself."

Shelley treated the dirty mob again, but eased back on the foot bathing to allow any footrot to express itself.

"We culled the few with lesion score of 4 or more and treated the remaining with score 1 and 2," Shelley explained. "We have been clean and free of footrot since March 2014."

KEYS TO SUCCESS

According to Shelley, footrot is the most challenging animal health issue she and Chris have had to manage to date.

"It is so disheartening to see it breakout in what was thought to be clean mobs," Shelley said. "Eradication takes time, cost and dedication to detail."

"It is important to identify the disease and respond quickly. You need to know what you are looking for and ensure you keep clean sheep separate."

Whether you embark on eradication or a control program depends on the time of year and your own enterprise goals, according to Shelley.

"Control is worthwhile, although treating is difficult," she said.

"When we had the outbreak the second year we kept a dirty mob and colour coded affected sheep. Anything that had been treated in the dirty mob was raddled so we could identify any escapees. Anything that didn't respond to treatment was culled."

Despite the expense and effort Shelley would take the same approach again.

"We would do the same thing because of the small flock size and focus of our enterprise – our genetic gains have been so great and we have so few animals out there for our niche market and to our mind they were worth the work and expense."

Shelley admits that setting themselves up so they could carry out their own inspections was critical.

ONGOING VIGILANCE

Although they have seen no sign of footrot since early 2014, Shelley remains vigilant about monitoring their boundary fences and as soon as she finds neighbouring strays they are caught and inspected for any signs of disease (including footrot, lice and ill thrift).

"Fortunately stock straying onto our property since the outbreak has been during summer when it is dry. We always check any stray animals and sheep limping in the flock," Shelley said.

"We also try to avoid dams and have established troughs as watering points in as many paddocks as possible to avoid

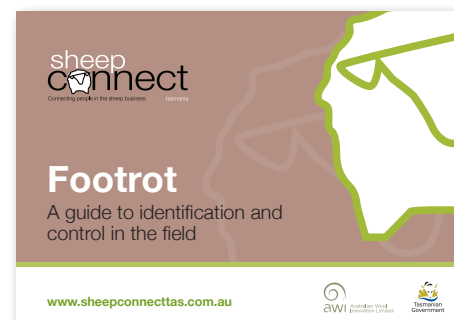
muddy conditions, which can harbour footrot bacteria."

According to Shelley the other useful tool was to have a pictorial guide to footrot scores: "sometimes early stage footrot is difficult to identify and to have a pictorial reference is really useful." **B**

MORE INFORMATION

A range of 11 factsheets on footrot – which outline the disease's cause, symptoms, treatment, management and eradication options – has been developed by Sheep Connect Tasmania as part of a collaborative project with DPIPW, funded by AWI. The full range of factsheets is also available as a handy ute guide, featuring stories from two Tasmanian producers who have overcome the challenges of footrot using slightly different approaches. Visit www.sheepconnecttas.com.au to download the resources.

The ute guide to support tactical footrot management is available from **AWI's Sheep Connect Tasmania** network.



Well-designed sheep handling equipment can ease the load of eradication inspections, reducing operator fatigue and increasing handling efficiencies. PHOTO: James Tyson

FOOTROT: KEY POINTS

- Virulent footrot can cause significant production loss in affected flocks.
- Foot paring and/or footbathing or antibiotic treatment can reduce the prevalence, and, if followed by repeated foot inspections and culling of high risk sheep during a non-transmission period, are the keys to get eradication.
- Careful eradication inspections are absolutely critical to the success of any footrot eradication program.
- A thorough inspection technique is essential to ensure every last foot is inspected, all sheep infected with virulent footrot are identified and appropriate measures are taken in a timely manner.
- Sheep handling equipment will reduce operator fatigue and increase handling efficiencies.
- Ongoing flock monitoring and on-farm biosecurity are critical to keeping footrot at bay post eradication.

NEW WILD DOG COORDINATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

A wild dog coordinator has been appointed to help reduce dog predation in sheep producing areas of **Western Australia**. The AWI-funded coordinator will work with woolgrowers and other stakeholders to help strengthen the rural communities' efforts to achieve sustained on-the-ground control of wild dogs.



The new wild dog coordinator, **Meja Aldrich**.

A wild dog coordinator has been appointed in Western Australia to assist woolgrowers, other livestock producers, public land managers, and other key stakeholders to work together to lessen the impact of sheep predation by wild dogs.

Reduced attacks will improve on-farm productivity, biodiversity and rural community wellbeing in wool-growing regions of the state.

The new wild dog coordinator, Meja Aldrich, is based at Mingenew in the northern wheatbelt of Western Australia and will initially focus primarily on the Northern Agricultural Region and the adjacent pastoral region across the WA State Barrier Fence.

AWI has created the position for an initial term of three years, after which it is anticipated that the strong and effective wild dog management programs, currently existing and soon to be established where necessary, will be highly coordinated. This effective approach can then be further expanded to include other wild dog affected wool and sheep production areas.

The coordinator role is supported and advised by a Project Advisory Group drawn from a broad cross section of stakeholders. Meja will also be supported by the National Wild Dog Facilitator – and through this link by project officers and researchers experienced in wild dog and pest management, as well as the network of Invasive Animals CRC staff.

The position in Western Australia complements the AWI-funded wild dog coordinators currently operating in western NSW, north-eastern NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

NEED FOR COORDINATION

A key part of Meja's role will be to facilitate collaboration between landholders (in new or existing wild dog management groups) and with other key stakeholders, locally and across shires. She will also help coordinate best practice on-ground wild dog control activities. This is vital, but can be

challenging for landholders and groups without the external help provided by an independent coordinator.

As used by other wild dog coordinators, Meja will use a 'cross-tenure landscape level' approach with local communities that highlights the benefit of focusing on the 'common problem' rather than attributing ownership of the dogs to individual land managers.

This approach encourages good working relationships between private and public land managers. More importantly, it can have a positive impact on the emotional well-being of farmers in the area who then feel that something positive is being done to address the constant financial and emotional impact of wild dogs.

AWI On-farm Program Manager Ian Evans says woolgrowers recognise the vital need for wild dog control, but they often don't have the relationships with all land managers across such vast distances as in Western Australia that are needed to be able to work together on the dog problem.

"Nor do they necessarily have all the skills or resources to combat dogs, and those people that are actively involved in dog control can often feel burnout due to the scale of the problem," he added.

"That is why communities need a coordinator to step in and help out. They need somebody independent who can get landholders working together locally and across shires. I'm sure woolgrowers across the state will welcome the benefits of this new position in WA."

INTRODUCING MEJA ALDRICH

Meja Aldrich has a good understanding of livestock production and behaviour, coordination with producers, and a desire to improve the welfare of sheep within the production process.

"I understand how damaging predatory behaviour can be for farm operations and industries," she says. "I place great significance in clear communication with

producers and recognise the importance of strong relationships."

Californian-born, with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Business from California State University in Fresno, Meja began in the role last month.

"I really enjoy working with producers in Western Australia. Most of my livestock experience here comes from working on stations and export depots.

"My work as a senior station hand on cattle stations in the Barkly, Pilbara, and Goldfields taught me how to understand livestock and to work in a team environment. I've also worked at sheep and cattle export depots in Geraldton, Kojonup, and Badgingarra which gave me experience at connecting with producers, agents and other stakeholders in the industry.

"Most recently I conducted a livestock evaluation in the Mingenew Irwin area which opened my eyes to producer trends and development opportunities for local farming communities."

B

MORE INFORMATION

Meja Aldrich can be contacted on 0417 622 780 and meja.aldrich@wool.com

AWI FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding is available under AWI's 'Community Wild Dog Control Initiative' to individual groups to undertake wild dog control activities. Funding can be directed by groups to fill gaps they have identified in their control plans. Particular emphasis is placed on assisting groups to become self-sufficient in the longer term.

To apply, groups should download and complete the application form at www.wool.com/wilddogs and submit it along with a plan, a map and a project budget to wilddogs@wool.com. Applications are open to new groups as well as those groups that have previously received funding from AWI.

If you need clarification or assistance please contact Ian Evans at AWI on 0427 773 005 or ian.evans@wool.com

WANTED!

PHOTOS OF WILD DOG EXCLUSION FENCING

Have you erected wild dog exclusion fencing on your property? If so, send in some photos of it to AWI and the photos could be included in an upcoming booklet to help other woolgrowers who are considering exclusion fencing.

Not only will you be **helping your fellow woolgrowers** combat wild dogs, but you will **receive some wool socks** as thanks from AWI and also be in the running to **win a Queen size woollen doona set** valued at more than \$250.

Well designed and constructed exclusion fences have been very effective at preventing wild dogs from entering woolgrowers' properties or 'clusters' of properties, resulting in increased on-farm productivity and the ability for woolgrowers to run sheep without the stress of worrying about attacks. Having the capacity to keep dogs out of a property or properties, and get rid of the dogs inside the fence, is the key to future long term freedom from wild dog predation.

AWI would like to help woolgrowers who are considering, planning, building or maintaining wild dog exclusion fencing by making available to them photos and plans of successful exclusion fences already built on other properties.

If you have already constructed or are in the process of constructing wild dog exclusion fencing, AWI would like to collect your ideas, techniques, and information on the tools and equipment used.

AWI will collate your photos and plans into a booklet to be made available to woolgrowers. The booklet will cover all wild dog affected sheep regions of Australia. It will also include other resources such as listings of commercial wire manufacturers.

The aim of the booklet is not to be an 'instruction manual for how to build your exclusion fencing' – the geography, facilities and economic circumstances of woolgrowers suffering wild dog predation vary far too much to adequately cover in a short booklet all aspects of exclusion fence construction. Besides which, many producers are already highly skilled in all aspects of fence construction and/or may use skilled specialist fencing contractors.

WHAT TO SEND

AWI is interested in receiving photos and/or drawn plans of **all aspects** of wild dog exclusion fencing, including but not limited to:

- fences of every size and description; conventional, electric and combinations; fabricated netting, plain and barbed wire and combinations

- river and creek/gully crossings
- gateways and grids/ramps
- road crossings including farm roads/tracks, main roads and highways.

Photos should preferably contain an item which will enable the reader to accurately estimate sizes.

Also of interest are photos and/or drawn plans that depict:

- how producers have handled any challenges posed by the terrain (flat, undulating or steep)
- site/fence line preparation
- the machines and equipment used
- tips and techniques.

'Before and after construction' photos and 'inside and outside' (astride) post-construction photos are also welcomed.

HOW TO SEND

Please send your photos and/or plans via email to wilddogs@wool.com. Include your name, property name, address and phone number in your email. Also include a brief description of what each photo depicts.

To enable optimum print quality, photos should be sent to AWI in as high resolution (clarity) as possible. Ideally the resolution should be at least 300dpi. In layman's terms, have your camera settings set on as high resolution as possible (some camera's settings refer to this as, for example, 'superfine') or if taking a photo and emailing via a Smartphone send it 'actual size' (iPhone) or 'Original' (Android).

Plans should be sent as PDFs or digital images of the same resolution as photos.

If your internet connection limits the size of the files that you can send as attachments to emails, copy your files onto a USB thumb drive and post it to: Wild Dog Fencing, Australian Wool Innovation, GPO Box 4177, Sydney NSW 2001. AWI will either return your USB or send you a new one after we download your images.

REWARDS FOR SENDING!

AWI will post a pair of wool rich socks to people that send one or two relevant publishable image(s). By sending more than two image(s), you will receive two pairs of socks.

The contributors of the best five images will each receive an Australian wool doona valued in excess of \$250, and have their winning photo published in *Beyond the Bale*.

Entries close on Friday 3rd June 2016.

(Note: By sending any image(s) to us, you will be giving AWI and its affiliates, rights to use, publish and distribute as it sees fit, including but not restricted to inclusion in the AWI fencing booklet, its websites and *Beyond the Bale*. AWI will attribute any published image to the person contributing the image(s), eg Source: Ian Evans, Kuloomba Downs, Deniliquin.)

B

MORE INFORMATION

If you need clarification or assistance please contact Ian Evans at AWI on 0427 773 005 or ian.evans@wool.com



Wild dog and kangaroo exclusion fencing on 'Moorooka' at Morven in Queensland. Old steels pickets were cut and welded to the top of the pickets of the original fence and 90cm high ringlock added.

GUARDIAN DOGS

HELP PROTECT SHEEP FLOCKS

FAST FACTS

- The introduction of Maremma guardian dogs, along with exclusion fencing and trapping, has helped reduce stock losses and increase lambing percentages on the 30,000 hectare property 'Glenorie' in south west Queensland.
- Guardian dogs live permanently with 'their' stock, protecting them from predators such as wild dogs.
- They require a big investment of time and money to ensure they're properly bonded with their flock, but they can prove effective as part of a coordinated campaign with other control practices.

Peter and Marie Crook-King and their daughter Julie Brown are optimistic they've turned a corner after three tough years of devastating wild dog attacks, thanks in part to the Maremma dogs they have guarding their flock of 2,600 Merino sheep.

It's not before time. In the 2013-14 financial year the Crook-Kings lost 900 adult sheep and every lamb that was born on their 30,000 hectare property 'Glenorie', 85 km south of Morven.

"We would see lambs being dropped in the paddock but a week later they were gone," remembers Marie Crook-King.

"The only lambs we got that year were the 50 poddy lambs that we raised by hand."

'Glenorie' is mainly mulga country, some heavily timbered, and forms an island in a sea of cattle properties, with the next closest sheep producers 50 km to the north and 170 km west.

The Crook-Kings decided on a three-pronged attack to try to limit wild dog damage – building a 200 km exclusion fence with their neighbours, trapping, and investing in Maremma guardian dogs for their sheep.

Three years on, they have 26 Maremmas in work and eight dogs in training. Last summer they marked 370 lambs, which equates to a lambing percentage of 50-60%



A Maremma dog guarding ewes from wild dogs at 'Glenorie' in south west Queensland.

in a season also affected by drought. Wether losses have dropped from 24% to under 4% since they introduced the guardian dogs.

Julie admits the decision to use Maremmas was the start of 'a massive learning curve', which began with reading the Guardian Dogs Best Practice Manual from the Invasive Animals CRC, and an initial visit to Ninian and Anne Stewart-Moore of 'Dunluce', Hughenden, to see the dogs in action.

For anyone planning to invest in guardian dogs, Julie has one piece of advice – they require a big investment of time and money. A Maremma pup generally sells for \$300-\$1,200 and owners spend years training them to bond with the sheep.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Crook-Kings made their biggest investment in 2012 when they travelled south to Lurgenglare Maremmas at Invergordon, Victoria, and returned home with nine grown dogs and five pups.

After some trial and error in training, Marie and Julie found they preferred the dogs to be two to three years old before they could be trusted to guard the flock, as younger animals tended to sometimes 'play' with the sheep, or stray from the mob.

In training, the dogs are yarded with sheep for several months, tethered each night and monitored closely during the day to ensure they can be trusted.

"It's a very gradual process because you need to be able to trust them fully when they're out in the paddock, because then they're the boss," says Marie.

"We constantly check them in the paddocks and if a dog leaves its mob, we will bring it back in and re-educate it."

The Crook-Kings use working kelpies but the training is different for the guardian dogs – Marie says they must be able to be led, caught and put on the chain, and they aren't encouraged to make friends with visitors or contractors.

She doesn't use commands on the dogs, apart from growling or saying 'NO' if a young dog makes a mistake in the yards, and says that unlike kelpies, Maremmas generally won't look a person in the eye.

It's a trait together with their floppy ears and calm, aloof behaviour that ensures the Maremmas are accepted by the sheep they protect.

While they have no preference for males or females, Julie is adamant that all guardian dogs must be de-sexed, to prevent them from wandering and mating with wild dogs.

They work on a ratio of 1:100 head of sheep in a mob of wethers, and 1:50 for ewes, although that can change in the paddocks closer to the homestead.

"Wethers tend to run together in big mobs so it's easier for the dogs to guard them, but ewes may split up or be more individual, so that makes it more challenging," Marie says.

Older sheep are harder to educate to the dogs. "When we first started they would just see a Maremma and run, because they were so afraid of the wild dogs."

When it comes to mustering, the Maremmas generally know the 'Glenorie' kelpies and don't worry too much about them, although some will 'arc up' at the working dogs, she says. The kelpies tend to ignore the guardian dogs.

Once the sheep are in the yards, some guardians choose to wait outside, while others will allow themselves to be caught and tied up on the chain until they can re-join their mob.

Marie and Julie can tell each Maremma apart in the paddock, and Julie says they all have their quirks.

"They're very funny – some are very friendly and let out a few excited yelps when they see me but others stand back and bark menacingly, or will try to push the sheep away," she says.

But while they're fast, agile and strong, Julie says they're not naturally aggressive dogs and use a deep bark and threatening behaviour to dissuade predators or protect the stock.

"I've been bitten by a cattle dog, but I've never been bitten by a Maremma!"

MAINTENANCE

Adult Maremmas weigh 30 to 50 kilograms but once in the paddock, their food intake decreases due to their habit of scavenging.

Julie's brother Bill Crook-King built numerous feeding stations out of lightweight RHS steel with corrugated iron roofs that were placed at various watering points on 'Glenorie', with a bag of dog biscuits in each one.

Julie estimates the dogs cost \$600/month to feed, which equates to approximately \$2.80 per sheep per year at current flock numbers.

Julie is a vet, so she vaccinated the guardian dogs for distemper, parvovirus and canine hepatitis, and worms them for hydatids when the sheep come into the yards.

Mortality rates are low. The Crook-Kings have lost five dogs in three years, with one death from baiting. Dog fights, heat exhaustion and proximity to public roads can also be causes of death.

ADDITIONAL WILD DOG CONTROL

The Crook-Kings have completed their section of the wild dog exclusion fence and continue to trap inside the fence to

complement the work of the guardian dogs.

On average they trap or kill 60-70 wild dogs per year. They've also seen evidence of dog attacks on some of their 250 Santa Gertrudis-Angus cross cattle.

The last section of 20 km is yet to be closed in the 200 km exclusion fence which encircles an area of 202,000 hectares, covering 17 properties owned by 11 landholders. The netting fence stands 175cm high with an apron at the bottom to prevent the dogs from digging under it.

CONCLUSION

The Crook-Kings say controlling wild dogs on 'Glenorie' will depend on vigilant patrolling of the new exclusion fence and eradicating any dogs found inside it.

They feel 'a lot more positive' about the future since investing in Maremmas to protect their sheep and are hopeful that the guardian dogs may also assist in protecting newborn lambs from feral pigs and other predators.

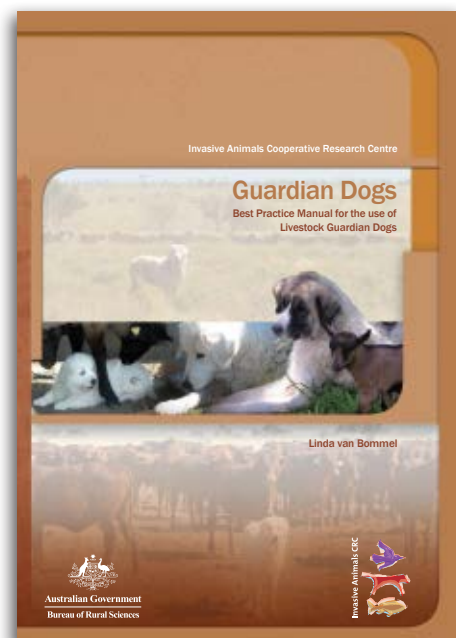
Julie Brown says anyone considering investing in Maremmas for wild dog control must be completely committed, as guardians require a big investment in time and effort to ensure they're properly bonded with their flock.

E

MORE INFORMATION

Information to help Queensland's sheep and wool producers combat wild dogs is available on AWI's Leading Sheep network website at www.leadingsheep.com.au

The Invasive Animals CRC's 'Best Practice Manual for the use of Livestock Guardian Dogs' plus other resources and information are available from www.pestsmart.org.au



CRUTCHING AND SHEARING ON THE GO

The award winning **Handypiece** portable electric shearing equipment enables woolgrowers and shearers to dag, crutch, and shear when away from the sheds and without a generator.



Farmer **David Short** with the **Handypiece** portable electric shearing equipment he developed.

With the advent of portable electric hand pieces, gone are the days of having to transport a generator and shearing plant around the property, or to muster stock to the shearing shed.

Although not intended to replace traditional machine shearing in sheds, portable shearing equipment can be useful for crutching mobs and shearing on the spot, 'out the back' away from power.

One of the innovators in this field is New Zealand farmer David Short who won the 'Best Innovation' award at Sheepvention's farm invention competition in 2009 for his portable 'Handypiece' product. David says it wasn't long before the Handypiece found favour with many other farmers around his native New Zealand and then Australia, becoming famous for its slimline design, durability and ease of use.

The product has continued to develop with the launch last year of the new Handypiece Pro™ which won the 'Wool Harvesting and Equipment' section at Sheepvention. The technology in the new Handypiece Pro boasts a high 1.3Nm of torque (the brushless motor creates little heat build-up), 1.4kg of weight (up to 100gms lighter than a traditional handpiece) and consistent speed adjustable for 2400rpm through to 3500rpm.

After seven years of development, David feels his company has come up with a complete

package in the Handypiece Pro which he says combines all of the requirements needed for a true portable handpiece – comfort, convenience and effectiveness.

"With the new Handypiece Pro, we are offering our Handypiece Drive and power pack already attached to the new Lister hand piece," he says. "This unit is superior in that it has no vibration and is extremely quiet.

"The beauty of this system is that, unlike a lot of older hand pieces that are brushed, the Handypiece relies on a double roller sealed bearing behind the cam that can't be clogged or fouled by dust, dirt, or mud. The direct drive design means fewer moving parts and therefore a longer motor life. This system will last for years.

"With its well-engineered weight distribution, it is not only balanced, but easy-to grip and comfortable to hold."

David says that with a low current draw from the 12Ah Lithium Polymer battery, you can crutch between 300-400 sheep on one charge, depending on the condition of the sheep and how dirty they are, or shear up to 50 sheep.

"With an extra battery you will do a whole day's crutching out the back of the farm," David says.

The Handypiece's batteries are long-life, with an average of 80% capacity remaining after 1000 recharges. Additional batteries can be purchased on request. As well as being battery operated (attached to the user's belt, which is provided), for continuous crutching or shearing the 5 meter extension cord can attach to a quad bike or ute to power the 12-volt motor.

"The Handypiece's design has been proven in working situations for farmers seeking an easier way of operating in today's farming environment. It's also ideal to keep in your vehicle through times of flystrike," David adds.

The Handypiece Pro™ kit includes a Lister hand piece, Handypiece Drive, 5m extension cable, 12v Lithium battery pack and charger, belt, holster and pouch, screwdriver, oil bottle and carry bag. Additional battery packs are also available on request.

David says the extreme quiet of the Handypiece when in use can benefit both the animal and operator – helping make it suitable not only for crutching and shearing sheep but also for use on alpacas and cow tail clipping. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.handypiece.com
Freecall 1800 053 643



David crutching in the yards with the **Handypiece**.



GIRLS RULE ROOST

AT RYLINGTON SHEARING SCHOOL

Year 10 student **Shania Willison** of the WA College of Agriculture, Harvey, at the shearing school at Rylington Park in WA. PHOTO: Farm Weekly

Eleven students from Years 10, 11 and 12 at WA College of Agriculture, Harvey, attended a five-day shearing and wool handling school, funded by AWI, at Rylington Park near Boyup Brook in November.

Reflecting the increasing gender shift to more females in sheds, eight of the students on the introductory course were girls.

Rylington Park – which has a shed with a raised board, six shearing plants and plenty of room for training – runs eight schools a year, all by accredited shearing and wool handling trainers.

The course not only gave the students practical shearing, wool handling and

shed experience – including how to identify different types of wool, hand piece maintenance, drafting and how to safely handle sheep – but also counted towards the students' Certificate II in Agriculture. To achieve this competency, they had to be able to shear five sheep an hour which is equivalent to the novice shearers rate of 40 sheep a day.

"The majority of the students' parents have sheep and pay the wool levy," trainer Steve Thompson said. "My feeling was that most of the students were interested, after finishing their schooling, in working in the shearing industry to earn money off farm – it is great to see these young adults wanting to return to the industry."

AWI shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray added, "With only four of the students having previously fully shorn a sheep, the course enabled the students to come out of the week ready to be safely engaged in shed work during their school holidays.

"It also provided the students with an opportunity to gain good grounding for a career in shearing. It is part of AWI's strategy is to attract and retain new entrants into the shearing and wool handling, as well as increase returns to woolgrowers through improved clip preparation practices."

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/shearertraining

AUSSIE SHEARING WIN

AT DAY-NIGHT CRICKET TEST

With the spotlight on the Adelaide Oval in November for the world's first day-night cricket test, between Australia and New Zealand, two top Aussie shearers competed at the venue in a complementary 'shearing test' against two New Zealand born shearers.

The South Australian Cricket Association (SACA) invited Sports Shear Australia Association, with support from AWI, to showcase shearing during the high profile event.

In each of the first three days of the cricket test, South Australians Shannon Warnest and John Dalla took on the Kiwi duo of Rick Chilcott and Imran Sullivan who have been working in local sheds.

The competition took place on AWI's two-stand portable shearing trailer set up in full view for the 15,000 SACA members who

attended the sporting event each day. After two days the scores were tied at one-all, but the Aussies managed to emulate the result of the cricket test by winning in the final match by a close eight seconds.

Seven times national blade shearing champion John Dalla also provided a demonstration of traditional blade shearing during the cricket tea break.

Sports Shear SA chairman David Brooker and AWI shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray provided the commentary for the crowds.

"The initiative was a valuable opportunity to promote wool, shearing and careers in agriculture to the public and SACA members from both city and country regions," Mr Murray said.



Aussie and Kiwi shearers battle it out for honours at the Adelaide Oval during the world's first day-night cricket test. PHOTO: Steph Brooker-Jones

B

FERTILITY DRIVES PROFITABILITY

The selection of the most fertile ewes and a focus on their condition and nutrition has resulted in high lambing and weaning rates for woolgrower **Alan Williams**.



Alan Williams (right) with his father **Ken** with a mob of ewes on their property 'Yarong' at **Forbes** in **NSW**. PHOTO: The Forbes Advocate

For woolgrower Alan Williams of 'Yarong' at Forbes in NSW, keeping farming practices simple and consistent is helping keep his productivity and profitability up.

"Our focus is on breeding a productive, balanced Merino with plainer bodies and large frames," Alan says. "A lot of things fall into place when selection pressure is put on fertility and wool quality. Keeping it simple helps keep production consistent."

'Yarong' has been in the family for 135 years, and Alan farms the property with his father Ken. They run 1,775 Merino ewes and about 500

Merino wethers on the 1,700 hectare property, along with some winter cereals. The adult ewes cut 18.8 micron wool.

FERTILITY: THE MAJOR PROFIT DRIVER

Alan achieves an impressive lambing percentage, averaging 116% to ewes joined over the past five years and reaching a high of 122%. Notably, his weaning rate is pretty much the same.

"Ewe fertility and high lambing and weaning rates are key drivers for our business," Alan says.

"Weaning a consistently high percentage of lambs and successfully managing them through to one year olds has a huge influence on flock profitability.

"Selection pressure can be increased, surplus ewe numbers increase, and the average flock age decreases – all making the flock, and the business, more productive.

"Maximising the weaning percentage for maidens sets these ewes up for life, which is especially important for us as a third of our ewe flock are maidens."

Lambing takes place in April, resulting in the lambs being marked and weaned by the time spring comes along.

Alan has recently completed a Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course with the 'Grawlin' group, facilitated by Megan Rogers. The LTEM course, supported by AWI, provides materials and develops skills to help sheep producers improve animal nutrition, lambing percentages and weaning rates.

"It was a very useful and interesting course. I enjoyed going to other producers' properties, seeing their paddocks and how others manage the condition and nutrition of their ewes. It reinforced a lot of what we are doing here at 'Yarong'."

Alan pays particular attention to the nutrition of his ewes, ensuring they are in optimum condition pre-joining. Condition scoring backs up his observation of ewes in the paddock.

All the ewes are scanned for multiples and managed accordingly. Twinning ewes are put

into the better pasture and are given extra feed in dry times. Singles are run in mob sizes of 400-500, while the twinning ewes are run in smaller sizes of about 100 if possible.

Selecting the most fertile and competent mothers over ewes that lose lambs delivers long-term genetic gains for the flock, with higher lamb survival rates into the future.

The identification of wet and dry ewes offers significant opportunities to attain high weaning rates. Alan selects ewes capable of rearing lambs by identifying (at lamb marking) which ewes have wet or dry udders.

"Dry ewes, and lambing and lost ewes, are identified and removed accordingly," Alan says.

"Maidens that scan dry get a second chance if they pass a visual assessment. I visually assess the others that haven't got pregnant and if they look OK I give them a second chance, but if it comes back dry again then it has to go."

As well as completing the Lifetime Ewe Management course, Alan has also done the Bred Well Fed Well course that teaches how to optimise reproduction and profitability in ewe flocks, and attended seminars on ewe and lamb management by local vet Alan Sharrock of Lachlan Valley Veterinary Clinic.

Also of note, Alan is able to minimise input costs and labour requirements through not needing to apply fly prevention or lice treatments. Ewes are drenched once pre-lambing.

WETHERS OFFER FLEXIBILITY

Wethers make up about 20 per cent of Alan's operation which provides him with flexibility.

"The wethers don't need as much attention as the ewes, which need to be kept in the best condition. This makes the wethers easier to run; they can be confined, fed on the cereal stubble, and they can be sold more easily if necessary.

"If the season goes bad, the wethers are the first to go; or if prices are high I can sell them at a good profit. If the season is good, they can remain on the property."

SURPLUS SHEEP SALES

As well as the sale of wether lambs, Alan says 35-40% of his 1½ year ewes are sold to repeat

buyers and his 4½ year ewes as a straight line to repeat buyers.

"The 4½ year ewes are a totally different market to a mixed age line or older ewes. We haven't always been able to sell at 4½ years but consistently high lambing rates have enabled this."

To optimise returns, ewes are sold on-property after shearing in September when demand is greatest due to people looking to restock in the hope of a good season.

"We have repeat buyers that like the consistency of supply and the profitability it provides, and they pay accordingly. We've built up a good rapport with our buyers. They benefit from knowing what they're buying and they're avoiding the uncertainty of the sale yards."

SHEARING

Lambs are shorn at 6-7 months of age at 'Yarong', with the wool 60-70mm long, before the heat of summer and grass seed becomes a problem.

However, Alan is moving to six-month shearing of breeding ewes this year – which he says is being done more and more in the area.

"Six-month shearing might help increase lambing percentages, as less fleece on the ewe will reduce the weight it has to carry around and hence enable it to stay in better condition.

"Also, I find 12-month shearing can have a tendency to give wool a high mid-point break, and I'm hoping that six-month shearing will reduce this.

Alan has recently built a new 4-stand shearing shed to help the transition.

"We have had a regular local team of shearers, led by Greg Briggs, for about 10 years – they enjoy shearing here. Having a good long-term relationship helps ensure a high-quality clip preparation."

CONCLUSION

Although parts of the Lachlan Valley, in which Forbes sits, have witnessed increased cross breeding and fattening, there are still a significant number of Merino sheep producers.

They, like Alan and Ken Williams, believe that wool production has a bright future and that it is a worthwhile skill which should be handed on to future generations.

Alan was part of the Jemalong Wool Merino Breeders Group Circuit that was held in the region in March last year. It involved two days of networking ideas and innovations intended to improve the Australian Merino within the Forbes and neighbouring districts.

"We're very happy we stuck with Merinos at 'Yarong'," says Alan. "We've continued with what we know is a great animal – one which we're constantly improving by selecting for fertility and thereby lifting the productivity and profitability of our business."

B

MOB SIZE PROJECT TO PIONEER NEW LAMBING KNOWLEDGE

A new research initiative is set to break new ground for sheep husbandry by exploring the crucial factor of **mob size** in helping to determine weaning percentages.

Recognising the critical importance of reproductive success in the Australian sheep industry, AWI and Meat & Livestock Australia are collaborating to examine the effect of lambing mob size and stocking density in a bid to lift lamb survival and therefore weaning rates.

This initiative is expected to deliver the basis for the next level of reproductive performance improvement for graduates of the very successful Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course, funded by AWI and delivered nationally through Rural Industries Skill Training (www.rist.edu.au).

According to AWI's General Manager of Research, Dr Paul Swan, "The LTEM Program has typically been transformative for the growers who've graduated. The 2,100 AWI-funded LTEM graduates have improved their weaning rates by around 7-10%, and simultaneously reduced their ewe mortality rates, by assessing and optimising ewe condition score, and identifying and differentially managing twin bearers.

"Yet while these performance gains are substantial, evidence has been mounting that the density of lambing ewes in the lambing paddock could also be having an influence on lambing outcomes, particularly the risk of mis-mothering."

With existing best practices widely adopted across these businesses, researchers are confident that by filling this knowledge gap of the effects of lambing density, stocking rate and flock size on lamb survival, a new set of tools

will be generated to lift lamb survival to the next level.

More than 30 individual project sites will be established over two years in this on-the-ground research project, with much of the research to take place on commercial wool-growing properties. The properties will be across Western Australia, Victoria and NSW to allow for a natural variation in other animal, management and environmental influences; opportunities to expand the work into other states are being explored.

This initiative will be fronted by AWI reproduction specialist Dr Andrew Thompson, who was one of the original developers of LTEM, and who managed the preceding AWI-funded Lifetime Wool Production program. According to Dr Thompson, this initiative aligns well with the national Sheep Reproduction Strategy, and fills an important knowledge gap.

"We will deliver improved recommendations for sheep producers regarding the allocation of ewes to paddocks, paddock size, stock density and feed on offer during lambing. It will assist producers make more informed decisions about the cost benefit of investing funds in paddock subdivision to improve reproductive performance and farm profitability.

"If we succeed as expected, the payoffs for the industry will potentially be massive – improving the survival of single lambs by just 5% and twin lambs by 20% would improve industry wide farm profit by \$450 million per annum."

B





PhD student **Amy Lockwood** from Western Australia who is the recipient of an **AWI-sponsored Science and Innovation Award** for Young People in Agriculture.

DRONES

TO MONITOR LAMBING EWES

New research aims to provide an insight into the ability of drones to be used for **monitoring lambing ewes** and their offspring, potentially increasing lamb survival and reproduction rates.

Research into the use of drone technology to improve on-farm management and efficiency during lambing will soon be under way thanks to an AWI-supported grant.

The research will be undertaken by 22-year-old Amy Lockwood, a PhD student at Murdoch University in Perth, who was presented with a Science and Innovation Award for Young People in Agriculture earlier this month.

Amy grew up in Albany in Western Australia and completed a Bachelor of Animal Science with first class Honours at Murdoch University in 2014. Her PhD project is investigating the effects of lambing density, flock size and stocking rate on ewe-lamb behaviour and lamb survival.

POTENTIAL OF DRONES

Drones, also known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), are controlled either manually in real time by a 'pilot on the ground' (eg a farmer or researcher) using a remote control, or autonomously by the drone following a pre-programmed flightpath. Drones are able to have a camera mounted on them that relays vision back to the operator.

Drones can be used in a grazing enterprise as an alternative to some of the jobs normally done in a ute or on a bike, such as monitoring stock, pasture, water and fencing.

"This project in particular will assess the effectiveness of drones to help sheep producers remotely monitor lambing ewes, their feed or water sources during lambing, and identify ewes with lambing issues," Amy says.

"Observation of ewes and lambs using drones is regarded as less intrusive than observation by a person walking or driving amongst the flock. By limiting disturbance to lambing ewes and potentially increasing the frequency of monitoring, drones could aid in improving lamb survival (particularly during the first three days of life when more than 80 per cent of lamb mortalities occur) and therefore woolgrowers' productivity and profitability."

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Over three days during lambing, up to 250 twin-bearing and single-bearing ewes will be monitored in separate paddocks using different drones.

Fixed wing drones will be used to identify the location of the ewes in order to assess their distribution within each paddock and the proximity of lambing ewes to other ewes.

As the development of the ewe-lamb bond is central to lamb survival, multicopter drones will be used during the first 30-90 minutes following the delivery of each lamb to assess behaviours associated with bonding.

A style of **drone** called a **multicopter** which is a small multi-rotor helicopter that can hover. The camera, which **relays vision back to the operator**, is mounted on the drone's underside.



Amy says ewes will be monitored for lambing issues or signs of ill health to determine the potential of drones to be used for monitoring animal health and welfare.

"Behaviours we plan to observe include the time the ewe spends grooming each lamb, the amount of time the ewe and lamb spend together, the duration between the birth of the first and second lamb, and interactions between the ewe-lamb and other ewes.

"The drones' effectiveness for assessing water, feed and fence-lines will also be monitored.

"The different drones used, including fixed-wing and multicopter drones, will be compared in order to identify their benefits and limitations for specific purposes."

LAMBING DENSITY AND SURVIVAL

The knowledge and experience gained in this project will have direct relevance to other studies into the relationship between lambing density and lamb survival.

"Of particular value to me," says Amy "this project will help assess the feasibility of using drones to assess ewe-lamb behaviours and the distribution of ewes within the lambing paddock for my PhD project."

Assessing the location of ewes within the lambing paddock could help us to understand how lambing ewes utilise the paddock and to define 'lambing density', or the distribution of birth sites within the paddock.

**The Science and Innovation Awards for Young People in Agriculture are coordinated by ABARES and are open to young people aged 18-35 years working or studying in rural industries. The annual awards aim to encourage the uptake of science, innovation and technology in rural industries.*

B

MORE INFORMATION
A.Lockwood@murdoch.edu.au

BECOME A YOUNG AMBASSADOR FOR WOOL

FAST FACTS

- Applications are open to young Australians for selection as Young Farming Champions representing the wool industry.
- Young Farming Champions share their passion for agriculture with urban students and the public to show there is a bright and prosperous future in the industry.
- Tom Tourle was selected as an AWI Young Farming Champion in 2014, and he has been encouraging young people to explore careers in the wool industry.

Are you following a career pathway in wool or sheep and love what you do? Are you interested in learning how to inspire other young people to enter the wool industry?

Expressions of interest are now open to become a 2016 Art4Agriculture Young Farming Champion – a program supported by AWI and organisations in other sectors of the Australian farming industry.

The program aims to create an Australia-wide network of enthusiastic young professionals to promote Australian agriculture as a dynamic, innovative, rewarding and vibrant industry. As a Young Farming Champion sponsored by AWI, you would actively engage with the public and

school students, spreading your passion for wool, bridging the rural-urban divide, and inspiring the next generation of youngsters to consider a career in the wool industry.

As a Young Farming Champion you would become equipped with unique insights into all aspects of the agricultural supply chain as well as consumer attitudes and trends. You would then be able to feed this knowledge back to your peers to help them respond to emerging issues as well as assist others to also develop meaningful relationships with urban consumers. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

www.art4agriculture.com.au/yfc

Lynne Strong, 0407 740 446

lynnestrong@art4agriculture.com.au

YOUNG FARMING CHAMPION: TOM TOURLE

For 2014 Young Farming Champion Tom Tourle, growing wool is in his blood. Born and bred on a commercial wool-growing property just outside of Dubbo, producing 18-19 micron Merino wool, Tom was exposed to farm life right from the start. Riding tractors with his parents, watching master shearers at work and seeing the beautiful fleece produced by his parents Liz and Scott paved the way for a bright future. And so when Tom heard of the Young Farming Champion program – and saw what previous champions had accomplished – he was keen to become a part of it. After all, public engagement and spreading the good story of agriculture, particularly wool, are two things that drive this 25-year-old.



Tom Tourle. PHOTO: Fairfax Media

We caught up with Tom to ask him about his experience of the program.

WHAT DID YOUR ROLE AS A YOUNG FARMING CHAMPION ENTAIL?

As a Young Farming Champion I have been involved in public and youth engagement, by speaking to people at shows about agriculture and the great things we do as producers. During the 2015 Sydney Royal Easter Show I was blown away by the interest shown by city people who wanted to know more about what we do and why we love being farmers. It was during the midst of yet another animal activist campaign so we had prepared ourselves to answer some tough questions. However, after chatting to hundreds of people, the appreciation for what we do was overwhelming. It was a real eye opener to see that these people love sheep and wool nearly as much as we do, and just want to know more about it.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

One of the biggest things I've learned from the Young Farming Champions program is how to positively engage with people who aren't from an agricultural background. We were put through our paces to hone our public speaking skills, and also given tips on how to effectively answer tough questions regarding animal welfare and land management. What it all comes down to is that if we want people to see the positive side of agriculture, we need to be proactive in telling the good story of what we do.

HOW WILL YOU USE THESE NEW SKILL SETS IN YOUR CAREER AND WHAT IS YOUR DREAM JOB?

I believe communication is the key to success in most aspects of what we do. Having the ability to effectively communicate with people has already helped me in my career significantly. As a teacher with Western College and TAFE Western – whilst also working on my family property – I deal with students from a wide range of backgrounds and ages, and the skills I have been fortunate to develop as a Young Farming Champion have helped me communicate in all areas.

What I am doing right now is perfect for me. I love what I do day-to-day on the farm, and it's always great to get out and deliver training to people and share my passion for agriculture with them.

WHY ARE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE YOUNG FARMING CHAMPION PROGRAM IMPORTANT?

The educational initiatives I have been involved with through AWI are so important in the development of young farmers, as it equips us with the skills we need to be great ambassadors for the wool industry. Often we can get caught up in the negativity of farming, but having the ability to network with other positive people in the industry gives you that boost you sometimes need, while increasing our ability to share that positivity with the public.

2016 NATIONAL MERINO CHALLENGE

Registrations open on 21 March for this year's National Merino Challenge which is being held in **Sydney**. The National Merino Challenge is an AWI initiative designed to allow young people to engage with the Merino industry by developing their knowledge, skills and networks.



A demonstration from last year's **National Merino Challenge**, with students being shown what to look for when selecting rams and ewes.

The 2016 National Merino Challenge (NMC) is heading to the Sydney Showgrounds on 14 and 15 May to encourage the next generation of the wool industry.

Now in its fourth year, the annual NMC has involved more than 225 students and 40 teachers from 30 different secondary schools, universities and registered training organisations.

Run by AWI, the two-day NMC involves presentations and demonstrations from industry professionals to enable young people to develop their industry knowledge, skills and networks. The NMC is guided by a Steering Committee which includes representatives from across the sheep and wool and education industries.

Students participate in seven 'mini-challenges' across two days, testing their knowledge of Merino fleece, production and breeding and selection principles. Designed around existing industry tools and techniques, students learn

practical skills such as condition scoring, feed budgeting, ASBVs and visual assessment for animal selection and AWEX wool typing.

Other highlights of the 2016 NMC program include a careers session in which a panel of young professionals already in the industry provides students with advice on entering the agricultural sector, a presentation on the importance of effective woolhandling techniques for good clip preparation, and a shearing demonstration.

An NMC Industry Dinner will also be held enabling the students to spend an evening with a range of wool industry participants, from woolgrowers to brokers and researchers.

Zoe Lynch from Charles Sturt University who was part of the winning team in the tertiary division of last year's competition said, "I found the National Merino Challenge a really great opportunity to network with people within the industry and with people doing similar subjects to what I do, which is

Agricultural Science. Coming to the National Merino Challenge is outstanding if you want a career in wool."

Tom Tourle, who attended the 2013 event with Dubbo's TAFE Western Institute and is now a Young Farming Champion for the wool industry (see page 45), said: "The reason I wanted to be involved with the National Merino Challenge was the thrill of the competition but also to catch up with other young passionate people in the industry. It was a great weekend, we learnt so much about Merinos and wool which has been very valuable. It's a great educational experience and it can really invigorate so you see that there is a very bright future in wool."

B

MORE INFORMATION

To register for the 2016 National Merino Challenge in Sydney or for more information, visit www.awinmc.com.au
Registrations open on 21 March and close 22 April.

easy handling

Simple & affordable sheep-handler



NO sore knees **NO** crook back
YES easy fast sheep handling

It's the best piece of sheep-handling equipment I have ever brought.
Neil Gardyne

easy water

Self-powered water-pump



NO fuel **NO** power
YES water for livestock

Using only the power of the flowing water the Hydrobine will pump to over 200m in height. Great for remote areas of your farm.

easy crutching

Simple & fast sheep-crutcher



NO bending **NO** dragging
YES fast easy crutching

Wish I had found your crutching system 10 years ago.
William Hurn



Call Now 1-800-750-584

www.perkinz.com.au



Participants at the 2016 Breeding Leadership course at Clare in South Australia.

FAST FACTS

- AWI held a five-day professional development course for young woolgrowers in February.
- The 26 participants in the Breeding Leadership course are the next generation of leaders within the wool industry.
- At the course, the participants discussed marketing, leading and managing people, corporate governance, succession planning, time management and strategic planning.

The future of the wool industry is in good hands judging by the latest group of Breeding Leadership participants.

The week-long course has now helped progress the careers of almost 150 young people within the wool industry, many of which hold leading wool roles today.

Now in its sixth year, Breeding Leadership arms young woolgrowers, studmasters, woolclassers, wool agents, students and business people with the skills and tools to become better leaders.

The program develops skills and knowledge in personality typing, business strategy, working in teams and innovative thinking.

The AWI event, held every two years, involves participants from every state. The course this year was held at Clare in South

Australia, and the group also toured two wool-focused businesses: Michell Wool in Adelaide and Anlaby Station near Kapunda, gaining valuable insights into their vision and business strategies.

"The week provided a toolkit to go away with and help drive the industry forward," said Samantha Neumann, who works for Elders in Adelaide. "It was also an opportunity to develop a network with enthusiastic people that have a passion for the wool industry."

Andrew Rolfe from Cooma, NSW, commented, "the course has provided me with the strength to go back to the farm and build the business. The leadership skills learnt will be very handy for me; the timing is perfect for my career and stage of business".

Funded by AWI and delivered by Rural Directions Pty Ltd, Breeding Leadership forms a key part of a growing commitment to education in the wool industry.

Alongside initiatives such as the National Merino Challenge, Hay Rural Education Program, Nuffield Scholarship, Australian Rural Leadership Program, Horizon Scholarship, Youth in Agriculture, Learn About Wool Kits and the Young Studmaster Muster, AWI is helping to foster and educate the new generations of wool specialists.

26 wool industry representatives participated in Breeding Leadership 2016. **B**

Attendees		
Jordan Hoban	Cowra	NSW
Caris Jones	Armidale	NSW
Floyd Legge	Cudal	NSW
Annabel Lugsdin	Hay	NSW
Adele Offley	Young	NSW
Andrew Rayner	Mudgee	NSW
Daniel Rayner	Oberon	NSW
Andrew Rolfe	Cooma	NSW
Lachlan Sutton	Broken Hill	NSW
Alistair Turner	Hay	NSW
Dayne West	Dubbo	NSW
Alex Willson	Crookwell	NSW
Troy Yarnold	Woolbrook	NSW
Anthony Yeo	Canowindra	NSW
Alex Stirton	Charleville	QLD
Chris Turnbull	Tambo	QLD
John Dalla	Warooka	SA
Tyler Dennis	Port Lincoln	SA
Ed Morgan	Cockburn	SA
Sam Neumann	Adelaide	SA
Sarah Slee	Wilmington	SA
Belinda Amess	Caramut	Vic
Becky McKay	Dunneworthy	Vic
Anna Cotton	Swansea	Tas
Scott Button	Tammin	WA
Alice Wilsdon	Esperance	WA

2016 IWTO CONGRESS IN SYDNEY

The **International Wool Textile Organisation's (IWTO)** annual Congress will be held in **Sydney** next month, **4-6 April**. There is still time to register your attendance and be part of this global get-together of the wool supply chain.

The IWTO Congress is the annual gathering of the entire wool industry, connecting farm with fashion and everyone in between. Woolgrowers, spinners, weavers, garment manufacturers, designers and retailers will be united to discuss the role of wool for future generations.

Co-hosted by the Federation of Australian Wool Organisations (FAWO), the Congress will be held in the historic The Rocks precinct at the Four Seasons Hotel Sydney.

Featuring presentations from local and international speakers, the program covers global consumer and retail trends for wool, market intelligence, trade, economic sustainability, woolgrower technology, education for future generations and more.

SPEAKERS AT THE CONGRESS INCLUDE:

Market Intelligence, Outlook and Trends:

- Bruna Angel, Senior Analyst, PCI Fibres
- Georgia Twomey, Commodity Analyst, Rabobank
- Chris Wilcox, Executive Director, National Council of Wool Selling Brokers of Australia
- Yang Xiaoxiong, Nanjing Wool Market, China

Wool Innovation & Technology:

- Kerry Hansford, Quality and Project Manager, AWEX, Australia
- Jeremy Wear, Manager, SGS Société Générale de Surveillance S.A., New Zealand
- Peter Morgan, Executive Director, Australian Council of Wool Exporters and Processors
- Qu Jiande, Changshu Xinguang Wool Specialist Processor Co., Ltd, China

Education, Extension & Adoption:

- Julie Davies, AWI Group Manager, Trade Education
- Prof Xungai Wang, Deakin University
- David Hunter, Deakin Prime
- Enrico Prino, Citta Studi Spa

Woolgrower Technology:

- Ben Watts, woolgrower, Molong, NSW
- Marcus Majass, AWI Solutions Architect

Economic Sustainability:

- Will Roberts, woolgrower, Morven, Queensland
- Raffaello Napoleone CEO, Pitti Immagine

Strategic Market Insight:

- Dr Paul Swan, AWI General Manager Research
- Dr Clint Laurent, MD, Global Demographics

Retail Forum:

- Paolo Zegna, Chairman, Ermenegildo Zegna
- Craig Vanderoef, Senior Director Running Apparel, adidas
- Phil Dickinson, Founder, Some Ideas
- Carla Zampatti, fashion designer

Woolgrowers are invited to attend two days of the Congress for a registration fee of \$750 plus GST. Registration includes the Wednesday Retail Forum / Strategic Market Insights sessions with high profile speakers, day delegate package, Woolgrower Dinner and access to the wool auctions being held at the Four Seasons. Thursday will include an all-day post-Congress farm tour – an additional fee of \$100 will cover transport costs and secure your seat on the bus.

AWI is proudly supporting the Congress.

"The Congress is a wonderful opportunity for Australia to showcase its wool industry and many success stories," AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said. "With the Sydney Royal Easter Show taking place just prior to the Congress, 17-30 March, we're hoping that many woolgrowers will continue on to the Congress and take the opportunity to connect with the rest of the global wool supply chain."

B

MORE INFORMATION

Further information including the program, costs and full registration details are available on www.iwto.org/events



ADELAIDE TO HOST NEW INTERNATIONAL MERINO GATHERING

South Australia will set the scene for a new and exciting global sheep industry event, the **World Merino Insight** hosted by Merino SA on 4-9 September.



Held in picturesque **Adelaide**, delegates to the **World Merino Insight** will benefit not only from the close proximity of the city to the country, but also from the event being run in conjunction with the **Royal Adelaide Show**.



The World Merino Insight is a new and exciting sheep industry event designed to run every four years in a biennial rotation with the World Merino Conference.

The 2016 event will be held in, and near, Adelaide in September, coinciding with the Royal Adelaide Show, the Classings Classic Ram Sale, and the SA Stud Merino and Poll Merino Ram Sale.

Organised by the South Australian Stud Merino Sheepbreeders' Association (Merino SA) for the World Federation of Merino Breeders, and partnered by AWI and Thomas Foods International, the event aims to attract hundreds of international and local delegates to South Australia.

Merino SA president Roger Fiebig said the event has an exciting program and will allow Australian producers to mingle with counterparts from across the world.

"It's exciting that SA has the chance to play host to such an important new, global event," he said.

"The World Merino Insight will give producers an educational and insightful look into all aspects of the sheep industry, and a chance to head along to the second biggest show in Australia, the Royal Adelaide Show."

The Show is popular with sheep breeders not only within South Australia but across Australia, and the world. It will form an important part of the week-long and diverse program designed for people in the sheep, meat and fashion industries.

The program will also include an AWI-supported day 'Global Merino Unity' held at the Hilton Adelaide, the 'TFI Merino Innovation Day' at Murray Bridge and several social functions.

Topics including wool promotion, sheepmeat handling and marketing, export trends and outlooks, sheep production improvements and the latest technology will be covered during the Global Merino Unity day.

A panel session of international speakers will also give delegates a global update and insights from key Merino breeding nations. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.worldmerinoinsight.com to register for one of the several packages on offer. You can also follow Insight activities on Facebook under 'World Merino Insight Adelaide 2016'.

2016 PROGRAM

SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER

Rabobank Welcome Drinks: Evening function to open the World Merino Insight at the Hilton Adelaide.

MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

TFI Merino Innovation Day: Visit Murray Bridge by coach. Will include trade and Merino displays as well as the renowned Classings Classic Ram Sale.

Informal evening function at the Adelaide home of Robert Ashby, former president of the World Federation of Merino Breeders.

TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

Main conference day: 'Global Merino Unity' (with AWI guest speakers: General Manager Product Development and Commercialisation, Jimmy Jackson and AWI Sheep Industry Specialist, Stuart Hodgson) and the 'AWI Global Merino Unity Conference Dinner' at the Hilton Adelaide.

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Attend Royal Adelaide Show and view industry competitions and the Schools' Merino Wethers Competition.

Small 'behind the scenes' group tour and Royal Adelaide Show Luncheon.

Rabobank Merino Feature Breed Social Event: Evening event, including a fashion parade with garments provided by AWI and the TAFE SA School of Fashion and Footwear, in the Sheep Pavilion.

THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Delegates to attend Royal Adelaide Show to see the top-tier of Merino judging with the awarding of the Grand Supreme exhibit. Alternatively, delegates may undertake a tour of the Adelaide Hills including visiting the Michell Wool Processing plant, a Merino Stud's homestead, a leading Barossa Valley winery for lunch, and a nature reserve.

FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

SA Stud Merino and Poll Merino Ram Sale in the Sheep Pavilion at the Adelaide Showground.

CORRIEDALE

SHEEP AND WOOL ON SHOW

FAST FACTS

- Students and staff from five NSW colleges attended a field day in October organised by the NSW branch of the Australian Corriedale Association.
- The field day, held at Taralga Showground in the Southern Tablelands of NSW, aimed to improve the classing, judging and handling skills of the students.
- The students are keen contestants in junior judging and handling competitions.

The NSW Corriedale Association held a field day at Taralga Showground in October for 120 school students from five schools that are showing or are intending to show animals during 2016, including at the Sydney Royal Easter Show later this month.

The aim of the field day was to expose students to show preparation, judging and health care of Corriedale sheep, and improve the classing, judging and handling skills of the students.

The schools attending were All Saints' College, Bathurst; Braidwood Central School; Lithgow High School; St Gregory's College, Campbelltown; and Trinity Catholic College, Goulburn.

All Saints' College agriculture elective students from Years 10 and 11 attended a training workshop day at the Taralga Showground.



Richard Carter of Billigaboo with Tony and John Manchester of Roseville Corriedales at the Henty Show.

The hands-on workshops were run by members of the NSW Corriedale Association and district veterinarian Bill Johnston from Local Land Services in Goulburn, and were organised by Henry Thompson of Tymec at Laggan.

All were on hand to provide advice and were delighted at the quantity of questions asked and the interest shown by the students.

AWI Group Manager for Trade Education Julie Davies made the trip down to Taralga to promote the Wool4School fashion design competition to the attending students and inform them about the contemporary use of wool in clothing. Julie also provided a presentation on other AWI education and marketing activities in Australia and overseas.

NSW State President of the Australian Corriedale Association, Tony Manchester, said the Association greatly appreciated Julie's enthusiasm and effort in going to Taralga.

"It was a very positive response from AWI. Wool has a definite role in the world in which these kids will be living. It is exciting for us to be able to foster their enthusiasm for a product

that has such scope and potential. AWI has shown, by clever targeting, marketing and educating, how a product's economic viability can be enhanced."

The Corriedale Association also had a site at the recent field days at both Henty and Orange in NSW – at which the Association featured Corriedale sheep, fleece and products. Mr Manchester said the field days proved to be very well supported and the Association was able to make the case as to why the stronger wools with their "life, lustre and loft" have increased in value dramatically in the past two years.

"Heading into this century we have seen the importance of these wools grow as the percentage of strong wools in the Australian clip has increased just as it did in the early half of last century," he said. "AWI has been quick and positive in marketing the different characteristics of the stronger wools, as well as Merino wool which it has marketed so successfully."



WOOL SELLING SYSTEMS REVIEW

The independent panel commissioned by AWI to examine the wool selling system has issued its final report which includes a number of **significant findings and recommendations**.

The most significant examination of the wool selling system since the arrival of the digital age is now complete.

Commissioned by the AWI Board, the Wool Selling Systems Review (WSSR) examined in detail the opportunities for innovation in the exchange of wool from the farm gate until it passes the ship's rail for export.

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said the review involved some of the greatest competition and business minds in Australia.

"This very significant review was conducted at arms-length to AWI. It involved almost 100 submissions and many more issues raised from a wide variety of viewpoints and much discussion and debate. This review explores some great opportunities to reduce the cost of selling wool for growers, reduce the barriers for those wanting to buy wool and to help bring the wool industry into the digital age."

The WSSR Panel included Fox & Lillie Managing Director James Lillie; Graeme Samuel AC, Monash Business School, Monash University; Bernard Wonder PSM, consultant and director; and William Wilson, director of Australian Investor Relation Services. John Roberts, director of Eubindal Pty Ltd was the executive officer and secretariat for the panel.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

The 68-page final report of the WSSR Panel includes a number of significant findings and recommendations. The key points of the report, as outlined by the Panel are:

- Australia's wool selling system is dominated by open cry auction which provides prompt and secure payment as well as managing sales of a highly diverse product. However, unlike selling systems serving other rural industries, the wool selling system has proved resistant to change, largely as a result of high transaction costs of moving to alternative systems as well as complexity and limited transparency of the current system.
- The Panel's focus on the selling system has been from the time wool leaves the farm until it passes the ship's rail for export. The estimated total cost of the selling system in 2014/15 based on this definition was around \$300 million, although the real cost may be higher to the extent that the current system inhibits take-up of alternative selling options.
- The Panel has identified a lack of competitive neutrality surrounding the operations of the Australian Wool Testing Authority (AWTA). The proposed remedy is for AWTA to make a tax equivalent payment to be used for R&D purposes. In the long term, the Panel expects this action to increase competition in the testing environment, including on-farm testing of wool.
- The appraisal of wool at auction looks to be 'gold plated', involving objective testing, sample display and multiple appraisal. The Panel sees scope for a differentiated approach not necessarily requiring sample display of all wool and making greater use, where appropriate, of sale by description.
- Brokers' charges (which account for more than 50% of total selling system costs) and related service offerings are not always transparent to growers. The Panel has developed an initiative for a wool selling portal (see below) which could go some way towards enhancing transparency and thereby assisting the efficiency of decision making.
- In regard to commission buying, the Panel sees potential problems with a buyer using the services of a potential competitor and the sharing of price and purchase information such behaviour implies. However, the issues raise complex legal and competition questions and the Panel recommends affected parties seek appropriate advice. AWEX may also need to review its arrangements designed to facilitate and promote competition in the wool market.
- A smaller wool clip has fuelled debate regarding further centralisation of selling centres from both a cost reduction and increased returns perspectives. The Panel recognises this is a priority issue for industry attention but has concluded that any action in this regard is largely a commercial matter.
- The large number of small lots sold and their related system-wide costs is of concern to the Panel. It recommends increased lot sizes which should improve the efficiency of the selling system and reduce costs accordingly.
- The Panel has concluded that most of the issues it has identified and analysed can be addressed in part by the development of a Wool Exchange Portal (WEP). The WEP would be an online tool to enable growers and other market participants to compare available options and to choose selling and buying strategies best suited to individual circumstances. The Panel expects a WEP would reduce selling costs and enhance competition in the selling system.
- The WEP could help achieve virtual centralisation; it could provide opportunities to reduce the large number of very small lots; it could overcome the need for physical attendance at auctions and thereby reduce the need for commission buying; and it could enhance the level of transparency while promoting competition.
- The Panel recommends the WEP be taken forward by a Steering Group. Further details of the work to be done in this regard as well as options concerning ownership and operation of the WEP are provided in the report.

The Wool Selling Systems Report will now be discussed as part of ongoing consultation with AWI shareholders. **E**

MORE INFORMATION

The WSSR Panel's report is available on the AWI website at www.wool.com/wssr

MARKET INTELL

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON

THE EMI HAS PERFORMED WELL, ESPECIALLY BROADER MICRONS

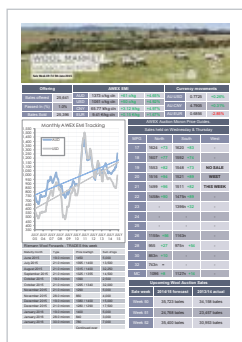
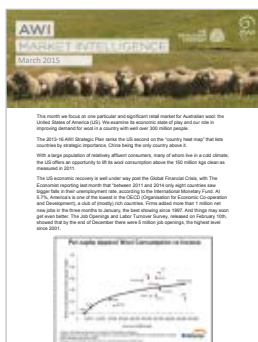
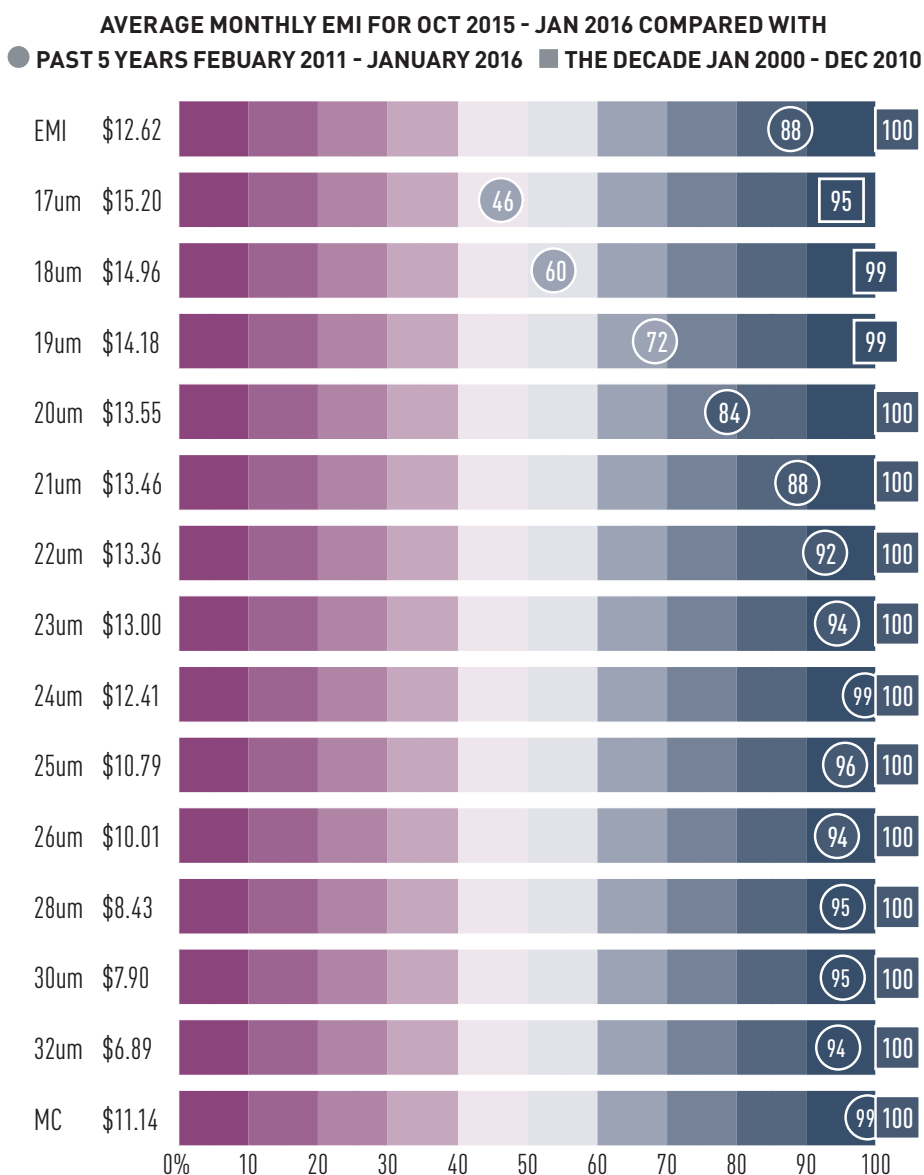
The chart opposite provides a snapshot of how well the AWEX monthly Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) and a range of microns have performed for the past three months (October 2015 – January 2016) in Australian dollar terms compared with the past five years (circles) and the decade January 2000 – December 2010 (squares).

From October 2015 – January 2016, the monthly EMI averaged at \$12.62, tracking at the 88th percentile against the past five-year monthly EMI. The percentile value (88th) indicates that the five-year monthly EMI recorded a price lower than \$12.62 for 88 per cent of the time. Or to put it another way, in the past five years the monthly EMI has recorded a price higher than the current \$12.62 (October 2015 – January 2016) for only 12 per cent of the time.

While the EMI is tracking at the 88th percentile over the past five years, it is at the 100th percentile when compared to January 2000 - December 2010. This means the current EMI of \$12.62 (October 2015 – January 2016) is higher than it was at any time during the first decade of this century.

The broader microns and Merino Cardings (MC) have continued to perform particularly well recently. For the past three months (October 2015 – January 2016) Merino Cardings averaged at \$11.44, operating at the 100th percentile for the past five years and the 99th percentile for the first decade of the century.

For the same period, 18 micron averaged at a monthly value of \$14.96 (60th percentile and 99th percentile respectively), 21 micron averaged at \$13.56 (88th percentile and 100th percentile), and 28 micron averaged at \$8.43 (95th percentile and 100th percentile). **B**



AWI'S BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

AWI provides weekly market reports and monthly electronic newsletters, which can be subscribed to at www.wool.com/subscribe or by direct download from the AWI website at www.wool.com/marketintelligence

These reports provide weekly commentary on the wool auction market from AWI trade specialists and monthly insights into economic, finance and trade issues affecting global demand for wool, and what this means for the Australian wool industry.

IGENCE REPORT

ULTRA-FINE PRODUCTION CONTINUES TO RISE

The latest figures from the Australian Wool Testing Authority Ltd (AWTA Ltd) Key Test Data shows an increase of wools tested this year finer than 15.5 micron.

As at the end of January 2016, the total figure of wools tested being finer than 15.6 micron has exceeded the previous full 12 months season 2014/15 by 183,400 kgs, with 5 months left of testing for the season to be added. By simplistic extension, this gives a forecast figure of a season on season maximum growth potential of 56.6% within this production area, with 5 months of the testing season left, in theoretical terms.

With the historical low levels of prices being received for these very finest of our wools, it is quite surprising that testing appears to be on a heavy increase. Seasonal conditions may partly explain a minor part of the increase, particularly in Tasmania where the dry conditions have 'fined up' a few clips, but breeding decisions undertaken several years back would be the most attributable and logical factor. Obviously the accuracy of the forecast might not be met, particularly given the vagaries of wool-growing and seasonal conditions as well as shearing and testing patterns, but the trend is apparent and measurable to the stated figures at this stage.

With this figure in mind, it is worth noting the 15.6 to 16.5 micron area of Ultra-fine tested wool is on track to actually reduce by about 4.9%, season on season, using the same extension method as the above. Overall Ultra-fine (0.1 to 16.5 micron) testing is forecast to increase by around 500,000 kgs or around 4.3% this current season.

2015/16 season	Fleece	Skirtings	Cardings	Total to Jan 2016
0 to 12.5u	300 kgs	0	0	300 kgs
12.6u – 13.5u	10,000 kgs	2,400 kgs	0	12,400 kgs
13.6u – 14.5u	145,100 kgs	45,700 kgs	8,600 kgs	199,400 kgs
14.6u – 15.5u	1,192,900 kgs	426,300 kgs	96,600 kgs	1,715,800 kgs
15.6u – 16.5u	4,234,700 kgs	1,790,700 kgs	608,800 kgs	6,634,200 kgs
TOTAL to Jan 2016				8,562,100 kgs

2014/15 season	Fleece	Skirtings	Cardings	TOTAL
0 to 12.5u	1,000 kgs	0	0	1,000 kgs
12.6u – 13.5u	17,400 kgs	4,700 kgs	800 kgs	22,900 kgs
13.6u – 14.5u	99,500 kgs	29,200 kgs	13,000 kgs	141,700 kgs
14.6u – 15.5u	1,012,900 kgs	359,500 kgs	206,400 kgs	1,578,900 kgs
15.6u – 16.5u	6,048,900 kgs	2,468,000 kgs	1,363,000 kgs	9,879,900 kgs
TOTAL				11,624,400 kgs

2013/14 season	Fleece	Skirtings	Cardings	TOTAL
0 to 12.5u	2,600 kgs	300 kgs	0	2,900 kgs
12.6u – 13.5u	12,400 kgs	3,500 kgs	400 kgs	16,300 kgs
13.6u – 14.5u	122,700 kgs	35,100 kgs	14,600 kgs	172,500 kgs
14.6u – 15.5u	1,469,100 kgs	533,900 kgs	206,900 kgs	2,209,900 kgs
15.6u – 16.5u	6,832,800 kgs	2,906,300 kgs	1,414,700 kgs	11,153,900 kgs
TOTAL				13,555,500 kgs

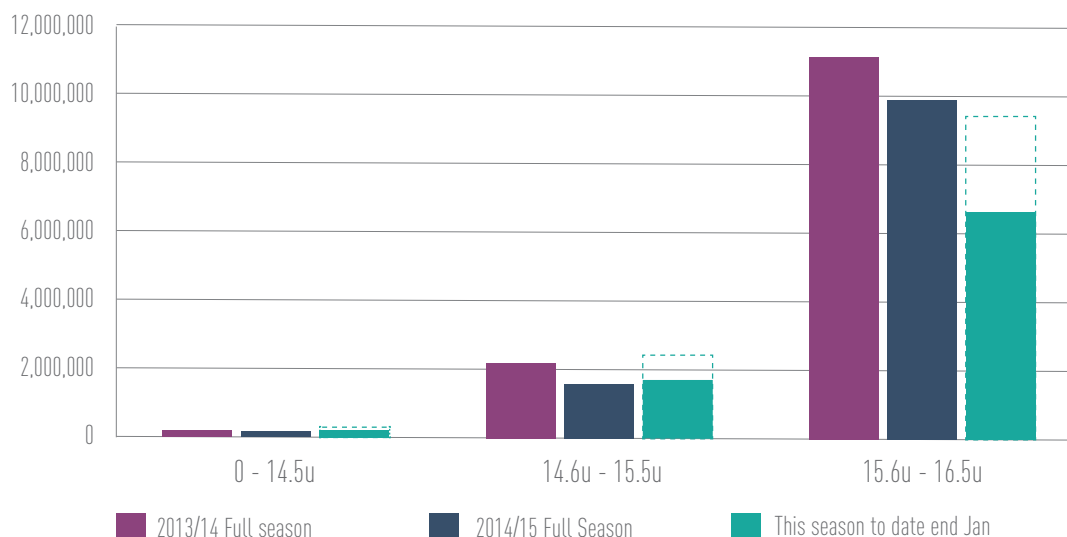
Notes to the tables:

* Figures are extracted from a micron figure only, and no quality assessment attached.

* "Fleece" figures includes all fleece descriptions.

* Kgs are greasy kilograms, * Sourced from AWTA Key test Data

AUSTRALIAN ULTRA FINE WOOL TESTED (IN KGS GREASY)



The dotted line above the current season indicates a forecast figure for the current season (based on there being 5 months of the testing season left).

FASHION SHOWS BECOME CONSUMER FACING



Peter Ackroyd, President of the IWT and Chief Operating Officer of the Campaign for Wool.

In our regular feature article written by **AWI's Global Strategic Advisor Peter Ackroyd**, we provide an insight into **changes to fashion show schedules and audiences caused by the advent of social and digital media**. Mr Ackroyd is President of the International Wool Textile Organisation and Chief Operating Officer of the Campaign for Wool.

When Michael Heseltine was President of the British Board of Trade some twenty five years ago, he visited *Première Vision* in Paris where around fifty UK weavers of wool were showing their winter menswear and womenswear fabrics. Heseltine had been well briefed and surprised the assembled textile industry leaders with his knowledge of the intricacies of the fashion system and cycles – a knowledge gained when he controlled (and still does) Haymarket Press and Publishing in London. His recollections about how, mainly women's clothing companies and retailers, waited outside the dispatch doors of the printers to pounce on his fancy fashion magazines, fresh of the press, featuring the Paris, Milan and London couture shows, intrigued all in the room.

Those were the glory days of the glossies when the antics of the High Street were pure and unashamed plagiarism. Little alas has changed with the passing of time.

Fashion trade fairs in January/February for the next winter and September for the next spring were a fad of the 1970s and 80s, as Paris and Milan vied for prime position in an increasingly crowded calendar. This was not to last as women's and later men's Fashion Weeks began to appear in the late 1980s, firstly in Paris, Milan, London and New York, swiftly followed by Sydney, Auckland, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Singapore and several even more unlikely cities across Asia.

These closed 'trade only' events predated the digital age when anyone caught with a camera taking a sly shot of a frock was escorted off the premises after the offending film had been unspooled and exposed. Instant communication can be the scourge of creativity and when fashion celebrities saw their seasonal secrets, fresh from the studio and on the runway, beamed around the world before the models had time to light

their cigarettes, it was probably time to blow the whistle and rethink the workings of the entire fashion (and textile) system.

Some leading luxury clothing brands started this very process last month. Before we look at what one fashion journalist described as a 'revolution' in the industry, let's look at how things were in previous years.

Bulk shipments of greasy wool usually leave Australia for the combing and spinning mills of Asia and Europe between October and January in preparation for the Northern Hemisphere winter season. Let's remind ourselves that in preparation for winter, spinners and weavers begin to put together their yarn collections for knitwear manufacturers and tailored clothing manufacturers around May and start to show new colours and samples to key accounts from late June to October often at textile trade fairs such as *Pitti Filati*, *Filò*, yarns shows in Italy, *Première Vision* in Paris, *Idea Biella* in Milan and *Intertextile* in Shanghai. Visitors to these strictly trade only events are yarn and fabric buyers from all the major fashion brands and retailers preparing for autumn the following year. Buyers usually only 'sample', that is to say, placing small orders to make up model garments to test the market at apparel trade fairs and Fashion Weeks the following January and February. The fashion brands then place their long awaited bulk orders for fabric and yarn with spinners and weavers for delivery between May and July, for garments to be made up by late summer in time for autumn.

All the men's and women's wear brands will have shown their model garments to trade buyers and press during the January Fashion Weeks, a clear eight months before the bulk goods are on the racks in stores in the malls and high streets of the northern hemisphere.

Fashion Weeks are fancy affairs and a classy cat walk show doesn't come cheap. AU\$ 200,000 is seen as an average investment and several luxury brands will routinely spend up to ten times that amount. And all this expense purely for retailers and press a clear eight months before the goods hit the stores!

As the once trade secrets of the fashion runways now instantly enter the public domain via social media, why not reschedule these expensive extravaganzas to take place in the autumn when the goods are available in store and online? Burberry decided to do just that and announced that future Burberry fashion events will be 'consumer (rather than trade) facing' to open the retail seasons. Several other brands that had probably been hesitating for months, followed suit and within a week, Tom Ford and Tommy Hilfiger had made the move and several more are certain to follow.

"The changes we are making will allow us to build a closer connection between the experience that we create with our runway shows and the moment when people can physically explore the collections for themselves," Burberry's chief creative and chief executive officer, Christopher Bailey, told *WWD*, the highly respected fashion magazine in New York. "Our shows have been evolving to close this gap for some time. From live-streams, to ordering straight from the runway, to live social media campaigns, this is the latest step in a creative process that will continue to evolve."

The fashion industry is talking of a 'shifting of tectonic plates' with further tremors to come in early course as more and more brands are expected to opt for near public shows in season and very private previews some eight months before.

READERS' PHOTOS!

Have you got any interesting photos that you'd like to share with other readers of *Beyond the Bale*?

We are always keen to see and hear what people working with Australian wool are

up to. If you want to share any photos with us, please email the image and a brief description to the editor of *Beyond the Bale* Richard Smith at richard.smith@wool.com. The photos could portray any feature, be

it humorous or poignant, informative or provoking, gritty or beautiful.

Here are a few photos that we have recently received from readers.

HEADING HOME

Julie Russell of **Wickepin** in **Western Australia** sent in this photo of a mob of nearly 500 of their 3,900 Merinos heading back to their paddock in the early morning after being shorn and sprayed with a lice treatment, a drive of approximately five kilometres of which part is along this narrow roadway section through creek-land lined with mature York Gum, Jam and Salmon Gum trees.



MAKING THEIR WAY TO WATER

Kelly Kirkland of **Balaklava** in **South Australia** sent in this photo she took a couple of years ago on her property 'Kiraba'. Photographed early one morning, it was the beginning of a hot day during summer and taken as a mob of Merino ewes made their way to water.



THE NEXT GENERATION

Bernadette Bodel and her husband from **Ganmain** in **Riverina** of **NSW** sent in this photo of their 10-year-old daughter **Antonia Purcell** in their shearing shed, with their dog **Belle** and her pup **Jax**.



WIN!!!

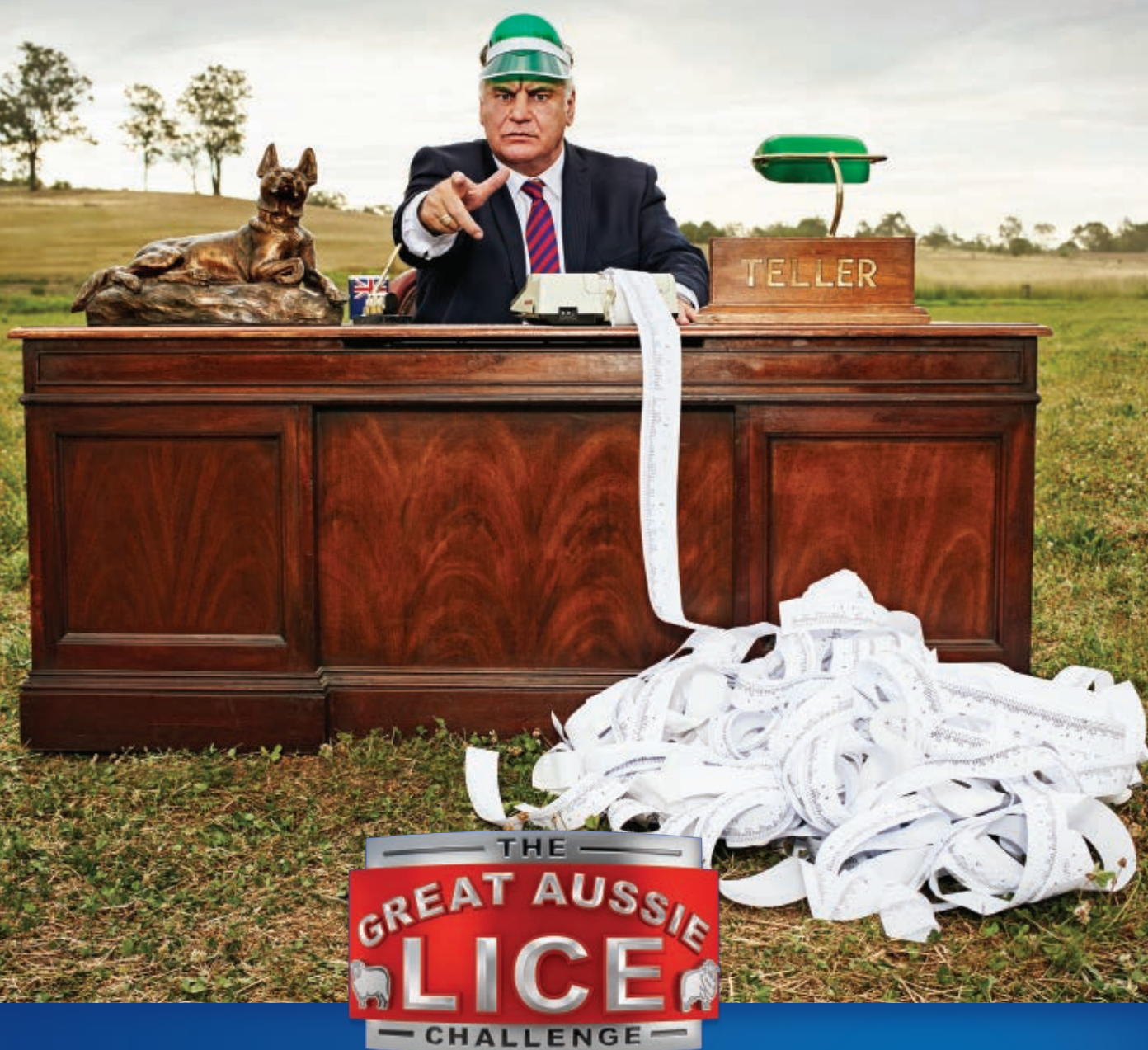
If you submit a photo that gets published in Readers' Photos, you'll receive an autographed copy of Andrew Chapman's 'Woolsheds'.

One of Australia's finest photographers, Andrew Chapman, embarked on a passionately ambitious project to record woolsheds in every state, capturing the grand as well as the everyday. This is an invaluable historical record of an Australian icon. The 216-page hardback book is also available to purchase for \$39.95 (plus postage) from Andrew's website www.andrewchapmanphotography.com and good bookshops.

YARD WORK AT MERRIMBA STATION

'Merrimba' near **Warren** in **NSW** is owned by the Paraway Pastoral Company and managed by **Jack Brennan**. Spanning 19,057 hectares, the property runs 8,000-10,000 ewes but usually around 16,000 to 20,000 sheep – which makes yard work a big job.





LET'S MAKE THOSE LICE SEE RED!

Did you know sheep lice cost the Australian wool industry a bloody fortune each year? That's flocking ridiculous! It's time to do something about it and join the Great Aussie Lice Challenge. Register now and get all the latest information and advice from the sheep lice experts who brought you Avenge Pour-On and Piranha Dip. Keep your money where it belongs... in your pocket. C'mon Australia, you know it makes sense!

Register now at licechallenge.com.au or call 1800 678 368



DO IT ONCE. DO IT RIGHT.



© Bayer Australia Limited. 875 Pacific Highway, Pymble NSW 2073, ACN 000 138 714. AVENGE® and PIRANHA® are registered trademarks of the Bayer Group. Call 1800 678 368 for more information.