

Beyond thebale

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PROFIT FROM WOOL INNOVATION

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BAITING OPTION

Beyond thebale

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FRONT COVER

Ruth Penfold of 'Millara' at Quandialla in Central West NSW sent in this photo of happy ewes being let out of the yard on the Stock Route at William's Crossing yards near Quandialla. Quatanda Photography by Ruth Penfold: www.facebook.com/quatanda.photography



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AWI INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

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

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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

NEW BAITING OPTION TO COMBAT WILD DOGS

An additional baiting option for reducing wild dog and fox numbers is now available to woolgrowers and other landholders across Australia. Para-aminopropiophenone (PAPP) is a new chemical (toxin) that is now being manufactured and sold in baits by Animal Control Technologies Australia Pty Ltd (ACTA) under the product names DOGABAIT for wild dog control and FOXECUTE® for fox control. PAPP was developed with funding support from AWI and is designed to allow baiting to still be an option in places where 1080 use is restricted, or for land managers who would prefer not to use 1080.

NATIONAL MERINO CHALLENGE

Last month's National Merino Challenge was once again a huge success. More than 140 students – nearly three times the number of its inaugural year in 2013 – travelled from across Australia to Sydney to compete in this educational initiative. The two-day AWI event involved presentations and demonstrations from a wide range of industry professionals to enable young people to develop their industry knowledge and networks. Our funding in programs like this aims to help improve the engagement of young people interested in the wool industry, thereby developing and retaining the skills the wool industry needs to be innovative in response to new challenges.

MERINO LIFETIME PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

This project is now under way with the first drop of ewe progeny in the project attracting strong interest from across the country at the 'Elders Balmoral' sire evaluation site field day in April. This nine-year project launched last year is collecting data to evaluate lifetime Merino productivity including the relationships between reproduction, meat and wool production, how to best select for lifetime productivity and the role that genetics plays in generating lifetime returns.

STRENGTHENING OUR INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

To help increase the demand for Australian wool in key markets across the world, AWI introduced in March a new management structure overseeing our international offices – with two new General Manager roles regionally segmented into Western Hemisphere and Eastern Hemisphere. Two new executives have joined AWI to take up these roles: Stuart Ford for the Western Hemisphere, and John Roberts for the Eastern Hemisphere. Both Stuart and John have complementary skillsets which will facilitate the strengthening of our offices and help support our retail and trade brand partners.

With more than 25 years of experience, including 10 years with a major US specialty apparel retailer, Stuart Ford is a retail and strategic marketing expert with in-depth experience of general management, channel optimisation, segmentation and digital marketing. John Roberts brings nearly 30 years' experience in the wool industry having worked in a wide range of industry sectors from primary production to processing, marketing and trading. He stems from a wool producing family in Binalong, NSW. On page 54 of this edition of *Beyond the Bale*, you can read Stuart Ford's perspective on the complexities of international marketing.

CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL

Australian retailers came together for the Campaign for Wool's Wool Week which was held last month to coincide with the start of the Australian mid-winter retail season. It was pleasing to see so many shop fronts and online stores promoting wool and the Woolmark brand. The Campaign aims to raise awareness amongst consumers about the unique, natural, renewable and biodegradable benefits offered by the fibre. It has been instrumental in educating consumers about the versatility of wool, and reconnecting them with its myriad uses – from luxurious fine Merino wool apparel through to beautiful hardwearing interior products for the home.

IWTO ANNUAL CONGRESS IN SYDNEY

More than 420 delegates from 25 countries convened in Sydney in April for a very successful International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) annual Congress. Co-hosted by the Federation of Australian Wool Organisations, the Congress brought together representatives from the wool textile pipeline for three days of networking and knowledge-sharing on the latest industry news and insights. It showcased the achievements of the Australian wool industry along with innovations in the supply chain both on-farm and in processing.

Wishing delegates a successful Congress in a pre-recorded video, HRH The Prince of Wales, Patron of the Campaign for Wool, spoke of wool's many natural advantages and the great progress being made in the industry to promote wool products. The event was officially opened by Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and featured presentations from local and international speakers.

With the theme of wool for future generations, the program covered global consumer and retail trends for wool, market intelligence, trade, economic sustainability, woolgrower technology, education and much more. You can read about three of the presentations in this edition of *Beyond the Bale*. Clint Laurent of Global Demographics Ltd forecast global shifts in the premium sector of the clothing market over the next decade will benefit wool – see pages 4-5. Woolgrower Ben Watts from NSW spoke about the growing use of automation and technology on wool-growing properties to help improve production and reduce labour costs – see page 33. Woolgrower Will Roberts from Queensland told the audience how the construction of cluster fencing is helping local sheep producers combat wild dogs and increase sheep and lamb numbers – see page 44. The IWTO will be making available podcasts of many of the presentations from the Congress for you to listen to on its website www.iwto.org

GLOBAL DEMOGRAPHICS WILL BENEFIT WOOL

According to leading demographics forecaster **Dr Clint Laurent**, global shifts in the premium sector of the clothing market during the next decade will have a positive influence on the market for wool apparel.

KEY POINTS

- The market for premium clothing products is projected to continue to grow – even with quite conservative GDP growth scenarios.
- 73% of the premium market is located in 10 countries – with North America, the UK, Japan and Germany accounting for 50%. These markets are expected to grow by 33% over the coming 10 years.
- China is a relatively small market at present (less than 1% of the total premium spend) but offers significant growth potential at 20% per annum. In 10 years' time it is projected to be 6% of the premium market.
- The consumer base is changing with the growth of the 'working age empty nester' segment, who are maintaining income (by working later in life), have fewer dependents, and hence higher than average disposable income. They are more than half of the premium market – and increasing – and spend above average on clothing.

“Shifts in global demographics over the next ten years will really work in favour of the wool industry.”

So says Dr Clint Laurent who gave a presentation on the evolving global consumer landscape to the International Wool Textiles Organisation (IWTO) Congress held in Sydney in April. Dr Laurent is the Managing Director of leading demographics forecasting company, Global Demographics Ltd, and an authority on interpreting the impact of global demographic change.

Dr Laurent said changes in demographics – such as age, income and location – can be used by the wool industry to identify its most lucrative markets, now and in the future.

“Consumer spending on products is the lifeblood of an industry; this is true for the wool industry as for any other industry,” Dr Laurent said.

“Wool is a very small niche of the textile market – it has only 1.4% of the global textile fibre market, with apparel wool accounting

for 0.6% of all textile fibre supply. But wool is in the beautiful position of being a fibre with positive characteristics that better educated consumers throughout the world increasingly appreciate.

“So wool is a fibre choice made for consumers in the premium apparel market, in other words those people who are able to routinely pay a premium price for their clothes – which is good news for woolgrowers that produce the fibre.

“There are some big changes under way in the demographics of the global premium segment that will work nicely for wool over the next decade.”

PREMIUM MARKET WILL GROW

Dr Laurent said wool's target market of premium consumers who are predisposed to paying a higher price on a better quality product such as wool, translates to people who spend about US\$2,000 per annum on clothing.

Such expenditure is associated with a household income of more than US\$125,000 per annum, with the exception of China where the threshold is US\$100,000 per annum.

“There are estimated to be 301 million people in the world living in households with that income level, and their estimated spend on clothing in 2015 was US\$625 billion. This means 9% of the global population accounts for 27% of spending in the total clothing market.

“So the wool industry can target a relatively small niche market that accounts for a very significant proportion of the total value of the market.”

Over the next 10 years, the value of the premium segment is predicted to grow by 44%.

Furthermore, Dr Laurent said the market for premium clothing products is projected to continue to grow – even with quite conservative GDP growth scenarios.

“Over the next 10 years, the number of people in the premium segment is predicted to grow by an impressive 32%, and the value of the segment will have an even more striking 44% increase. This is a movement to quality rather than quantity. The premium sector's share of the total clothing market will grow from 27% in 2015 to 29% in 2025.

“So the wool industry is standing in front of a ‘wall of money’ in many respects; the problem is how to get consumers to spend that money on wool. The good news is that it might not be as hard as you think because of the location of premium consumers.”

PREMIUM MARKET IS ACCESSIBLE

Dr Laurent said the world's affluent market is very localised.



Leading demographics forecaster **Dr Clint Laurent** presenting to the IWTO Congress in Sydney.

Only **China** shows a growth in share over the next decade (from 1% to 6%), of an additional 20 million people.

While the three older affluent regions (**North America, Western Europe, Affluent Asia**) decline in share over the next decade (from 85% to 78%), they nonetheless add 63 million people.

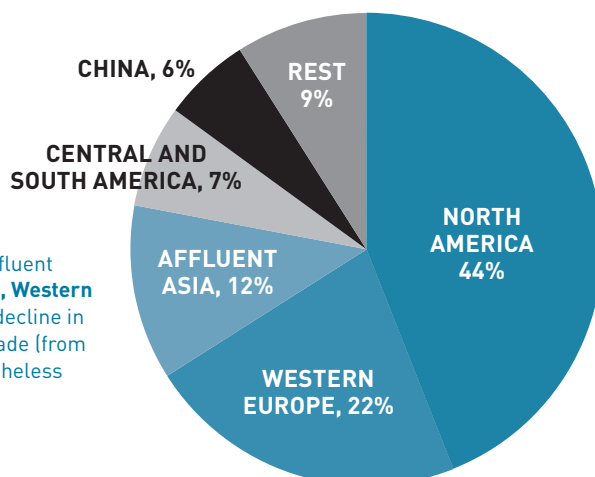


Figure 1. Location of premium customers in 10 years' time.

"The world's premium consumers are primarily located in the three regions that also dominate the total clothing market, specifically North America, Western Europe and 'Affluent Asia' (Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia)."

85% of premium consumers are located in these regions (North America 48%, Western Europe 22%, Affluent Asia 15%), while China currently has just 1% of the world's premium consumers.

In 10 years' time, the location of premium consumers doesn't change much, except for China. See Figure 1 above.

The geographic location of premium consumers will continue to be localised and hence accessible.

"While the three older affluent regions are predicted to decline in global share, from 85% to 78%, they nonetheless still add 63 million people to the premium clothes buyer. Only China shows a growth in share over the next ten years, from 1% to 6%, which is an additional 20 million people.

"So it is these two areas – the traditionally affluent regions plus China – that are where the growth is going to be and hence where the wool industry should focus its marketing."

In terms of specific countries, just 10 countries account for nearly three-quarters (73%) of global spending by the premium clothing segment. North America dominates with 33%, the UK is next at 9%, then Japan, Germany, Brazil, Italy, Canada, Australia, France and Switzerland.

"These 10 countries are crucial – not only now, but in the future. In 10 years' time, these 10 countries are expected to add a total of US\$143 billion in consumer spending, which is a 33% increase in absolute size."

Dr Laurent pointed out that these 10 countries are largely all old countries in terms of their population – which is pertinent to his next reason why demographics are shifting in wool's favour.

EMPTY NESTERS DRIVE CONSUMPTION

"There is something that a lot of people misunderstand about these countries – and Japan is a classic example," he said. "They think that because the populations of these countries are old, they are going to have a lot of trouble looking after all the old people. So they expect the economy to slow, their workforce to decline, the economy to go down and they therefore expect there's not going to be much market.

"No. The reality is that the premium consumer base is also changing because of the growth in the 'working age empty nester' segment. These are people who are maintaining their income (by carrying on working later in life) and have fewer dependents, and who therefore have higher than average disposable income.

"A whopping 24% of Japanese males aged 70-74 are still in full-time employment, which will rise to about 50% in 10 years' time. They have a great nutritional history, are well educated; but they suffer pension insecurity and they want intellectual stimulus, so they stay in the workforce.

"It's not just Japan. In the US, 23% of males aged 70-74 are still in full-time employment; in the UK the figure is 21%. The older workforce is now a reality.

"The implications are that the labour force of these countries does not decline and the household income of these people stays up longer. Furthermore, they spend significantly less on their children because they have left home, they have largely reduced their mortgage and debt commitments, and they have largely equipped their house.

Working age empty nesters are spending above average on quality clothing.

"They are working age empty nesters – and this is where the money is. The per capita spending power of the household has risen, and they are now changing their consumption patterns towards things like health care, fitness, and international travel.

"Importantly, they are spending above average on clothing. And what's the big characteristic in clothing that these people want? Quality! These people are moving up in quality of clothing. 'Less but better' is the way to go – perfect for wool!"

CHINA'S PREMIUM MARKET WILL GROW

While China is a relatively small market at present (less than 1% of the total premium spend), it offers significant growth potential at 20% per annum. By 2025 it is projected to be 6% of the premium market.

Dr Laurent said the historical age bias of the rural-urban migration over the past 20 years means urban China now has a very large and growing working age empty nester segment – similar to the three traditional premium regions.

"The 292 million 40-64 years olds in urban areas are predicted to increase over the next 10 years by 100 million people to 391 million. Over the next 10 years, the total spend on clothing in the premium sector is expected to grow by 20% per annum, from US\$10 billion to US\$60 billion in value.

"Again, it's all about the mum and dads with the kids gone. They're still earning, and they've fully equipped their houses with washing machines and the like. It's these people that are driving the rise in fitness, international travel, food consumption; wellness has suddenly become an important plus, they also understand the environment and sustainability. They are a beautiful consumer group.

The premium market in China is forecast to rise from 1% global share to 6% global share during the next decade.

"Clothing is a major category for them! They've got out of the stage of wanting the big brand and the big brand statement, and they are moving more to the issue of 'Am I buying sensibly? Does it fit into my lifestyle needs rather than me fitting into a brand image?' They are becoming a much more discerning customer prepared to spend money where they feel they're going to get value. It's a steamroller of money coming through and the wool industry can't afford to ignore it!"

How does the wool industry target these consumers over such a vast country?

Luckily, the geographical distribution is very concentrated and hence accessible, largely in the east of the country. 23 Chinese cities (out of a total of 655 Chinese cities) account for 64% of households with a gross income of more than US\$100,000 per annum. In fact just seven cities account for 50% of the target. **B**



Australian tailor M.J. Bale highlighted the **sheep to shop journey** to the public outside its flagship Martin Place store in Sydney, with the help of AWI's **celebrity ram-bassadors Fred and Truffle**.

CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL AUSTRALIA

Retailers threw their support behind Australia's annual Wool Week held last month to coincide with the start of the mid-winter retail season. The initiative was part of the Campaign for Wool, which aims to educate consumers about the natural benefits of wool and increase sales of wool product.

Some of Australia's biggest apparel retailers have joined boutique shops, designers and woolgrowers in celebrating Australia's natural fibre for Wool Week 2016.

With wool highlighted in retail outlets across Australia from 9-16 May, leading shopping centre Westfield joined the campaign as a major partner. Westfield Sydney, Miranda and Doncaster this year hosted in-centre activations promoting wool. There were also intimate Q&A sessions with Australia's leading fashion designers, pop-up shops and exhibitions from leading textile artists.

With Australia producing 90 per cent of the

world's fine apparel wool, it's no surprise that some of the country's biggest labels and retailers are throwing their support behind the campaign.

Wool Week forms a key part of the Campaign for Wool. Initiated in 2010 by HRH The Prince of Wales, the Campaign for Wool promotes wool as a natural, renewable and biodegradable alternative to synthetic fibres.

"Wool Week aims to reconnect consumers with the versatility, luxury and natural benefits of wool, encouraging consumers to make more considered purchasing decisions," explained AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

"At a retail level, we applaud all of the Australian brands who continue to support the campaign and champion the message to 'Live naturally. Choose wool'.

"Both Westfield and AWI work with the world's leading retail and luxury brands and so we were pleased to welcome Westfield as a major partner for this year's celebrations, highlighting the use of Australian Merino wool both in Australian and international fashion."

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.campaignforwool.org



This ram-tastic spectacle was one of several **wool installations on display at Westfield Sydney**.



Extreme knitter **Jacquie Fink** hosted a knitting experience at Westfield Sydney.



Westfield Sydney hosted a **Designer Yarns series**, with shoppers invited to intimate Q&A sessions with leading fashion designers from STRATEAS CARLUCCI, M.J. Bale, Bianca Spender and Ginger & Smart.



Fashion labels Dion Lee, Celeste Tesoriero and WAH-WAH took part in **Westfield Doncaster's** InHabit pop-up showcase, alongside homewares by extreme knitter Jacquie Fink and textile artist Grace Wood.



Westfield Sydney, in partnership with The Powerhouse Museum, showcased a preview of the **Isabella Blow: A Fashionable Life** exhibition which opened during Wool Week and is running until 28 August. It features never before exhibited objects from Isabella Blow's personal collection and showcases her affinity to wool and commitment to nurturing emerging designers.



BIG DREAMS Emporium in Melbourne held a fun and fashionable kids yoga session, with attendees receiving a complimentary set of Merino knitwear from the childrenswear brand Love My Smalls. PHOTO: Ania von Oxenberg.

TURN OVER FOR MORE CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL NEWS ►

RETAILERS BACK CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL

Retailers across the country took part in Wool Week, with **window displays, in-store promotions and online initiatives** to educate consumers about the natural benefits of wool and increase sales of wool product. Here is a small selection of the retailers' promotions.



Myer – apparel



Westfield Miranda



Peter Jackson



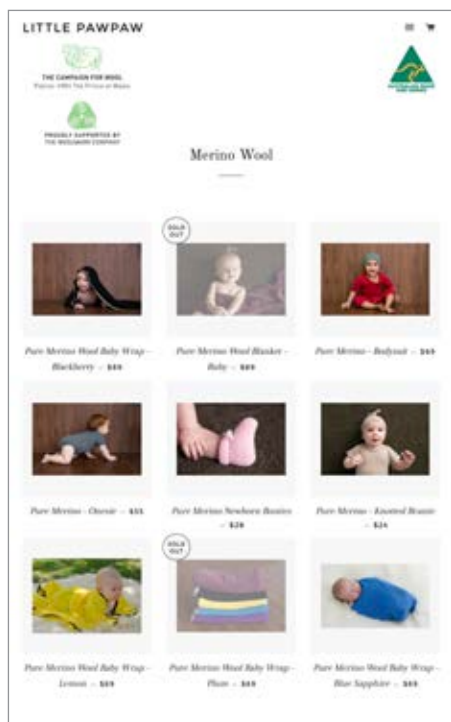
Sambag



Kookai



Ginger & Smart



Little Pawpaw



Rodd & Gunn



Myer - bedding

#WOOLWEEK

SOCIAL MEDIA COMPETITION

No matter where in Australia you were, Australians had the chance to win a \$1000 voucher to be spent at their favourite Campaign for Wool retail partner, by taking a wool-themed photo and sharing it on Instagram and tagging #WoolWeek. Here is a selection of the submitted entries.



Angus Barret Saddlery



Ella Sanders



Grace Murray



Hawthorn Football Club



Jaggad Cycling



millhaus

SPORTSCRAFT LET IT BE LUXE

More than 50 years after **Sportscraft** became the first Australian company to use the **Woolmark** logo, the iconic brand continues to have a love affair with wool, this season launching a luxurious collection with the help of actress **Naomi Watts**.



Actress **Naomi Watts** is the brand ambassador in Sportscraft's Luxe Wool Edit campaign. Here she wears the Woolmark-certified 100% Australian Merino wool Clara poncho from Sportscraft's autumn/winter collection.

Australian fashion brand Sportscraft this autumn released its Luxe Wool Edit, consisting of premium Australian Merino wool and wool blend pieces for women and men, available in-store and online.

The garments in this stylish and contemporary collection are Woolmark-certified, cementing Sportscraft's continued focus on quality fabrics.

Sportscraft brand ambassador Naomi Watts returned to front the Autumn/Winter 2016

campaign – following the success of its wool promotion last year – in which she showcases an elevated approach to cosy, yet sophisticated and modern, seasonal dressing.

Sportscraft ran a strong digital campaign to promote the use of Australian wool within its collection, with the Luxe Wool Edit being featured in the company's online shop and throughout its website and digital channels. The brand's website also explains the benefits of wool, the meaning behind the Woolmark, Woolmark Blend and Wool Blend logos, as well as a guide to how to wash wool apparel.

"Wool is an extremely versatile and renewable luxury fibre," the website states. "A fibre from the land, Australian wool is lovingly cultivated by generations of woolgrowers, who nurture every step of the growing process to deliver one of the earth's finest and most precious fibres."

"The collection is really luxurious because we've used these lovely soft Australian wools."

Hero pieces that make up the Luxe Wool Collection consist of a drape poncho with a stripe feature print, navy wrap coat with a contrast white grid fold-over collar, and a chunky cable knit jumper in pastel pink or cream.

Following huge demand for its beautiful wearable wool, Sportscraft also revealed its first foray into interior textiles, with the release of an exceptionally soft, extra-fine, 100 per cent Australian Merino wool throw. Featuring a cream colour and a delicate cable knit design, it adds pure luxury to the home this winter.

Many important moments make up Sportscraft's 102-year history, including in 1964 Sportscraft winning the Australian Wool Board's first 'Pure New Wool' licence – and Sportscraft is proud to continue carrying the internationally renowned Woolmark symbol today.



Sportscraft's website not only highlights marketing collateral related to wool, it also shows a direct path to the company's online shop where consumers can buy wool apparel.

MORE INFORMATION

www.sportscraft.com.au/LuxeWoolEdit.html

WOOLSTAR CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

After spending 20 years in corporate manufacturing, **Graeme Kerr** dreamt of building a manufacturing company that used quality Australian resources and Australian labour. A further 20 years later and Graeme is celebrating the success of the **Woolstar bedding brand** he created.

On 5 April 1996, in a small factory unit in south west Sydney, Wool Products Australia Pty Ltd and the Woolstar brand were born.

Owner Graeme Kerr wanted his products to be authentically Australian and he knew that there was nothing more Australian than wool – and so the journey began.

Graeme's goal was to build a brand that represented quality and innovation. Woolstar invested in high quality textile machines such as fibre carding machines, high-speed computerised cross lappers and high-speed quilting, sewing and binding machines.

This advanced technology provided Woolstar with the opportunity to focus on developing new innovative products for both the domestic and export markets.

Graeme knows that the overseas market loves Australian wool products, and he is proud to now export high-quality Australian-made 100 per cent Australian wool products to customers in various overseas countries including Argentina, China, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey, the UK and US.

"It is with enormous pride that this year we celebrate 20 years of business and 20 years of

using Australian wool," Mr Kerr says.

"The wool fibre used by Woolstar has high micron, consistent fibre length, and is the perfect mix of natural performance, strength and softness, providing excellent loft and comfort.

"We look forward to the coming years with complete positivity and determination to

deliver on the desire that Woolstar continues to manufacture products from 100% Australian wool."

Woolstar is a Woolmark licensee and proud supporter of the Campaign for Wool. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolstar.com.au



Woolstar owner **Graeme Kerr** with **Dennis Rowley** of 'Springwaters' Poll Dorset Stud at Boorowa, NSW, which supplies its Downs wool fleece to Woolstar.

WOOL IN THE MIX AT R.M.WILLIAMS

The **R.M.Williams** brand is and always has been inspired by the remarkable land of the Australian outback, and the people who live there. So it's entirely appropriate that the company's new winter range features a collection of wool apparel.

Travel to any regional city or town across Australia, and one thing's for sure: no doubt you'll see the iconic longhorn of R.M.Williams in shop windows, on bumper stickers or embroidered into the clothing being worn.

Continuing to be inspired by the Australian outback, R.M.Williams' latest winter range features a collection of Merino wool, Lambswool and wool-rich menswear and womenswear apparel. The knitwear collection has expanded to include fine and heavy gauge sweaters in an array of autumn and winter colours and is now available both in store and online in Australia.

"Wool has been a fundamental and integral part of R.M.Williams and Australian history, both physically in the product, whether it was the 1940/50's wool flannel shirtings, rugs, knitwear and under garments, or in the products offered to the shearing community, through the footwear and shearing tools sold through the catalogues," says R.M.Williams General Manager of Merchandise and Design Matt Francis.

The brand is active in rural and remote communities, exports to 15 countries and has more than 50 retail stores in Australia and one in London. In addition, R.M.Williams is available at more than 900 stockists



around the globe. From July, the wool-rich collection will be available in R.M.Williams' northern hemisphere stores as well as in key independent stockists.

"The use of Australian Merino wool in our collections is a natural connection and is important to us as a business both for the quality of the yarn and also to support the domestic wool industry." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.rmwilliams.com

MERINO SUIT

PASSES THE TRAVEL TEST

Man versus Merino: Australian tailor **M.J. Bale** dressed model Tom Bull in one of its Merino wool suits and sent him on a **grueling five-day journey from Sydney to London**. After travelling more than 20,000km and visiting nine countries, Tom was flagging but the Merino suit passed the travel test with flying colours.

With new research showing Australian men are travelling up to 10 hours longer for work trips than any other nation, Woolmark licensee M.J. Bale has put one of its Australian Merino wool suits to the ultimate test to see if it meets the demands of Australian travellers.

M.J. Bale's research of 1,000 Australians shows one quarter (24%) regularly travel up to 24 hours for business, arriving exhausted and often in a crushed outfit. Research also found 75% of Australians believe looking impeccable for business is crucial.

And so began M.J. Bale's 'Unsuitable Journey' campaign – a so-called torture test which sent one unsuspecting model from Sydney to London to attend M.J. Bale's Winter 2016 photo-shoot, but with quite a few unusual pit stops along the way!

Travelling on an endless run of planes, trains, buses, boats, bicycles, police cars, tuk tuks and taxis, Australian model Tom Bull travelled more than 20,000km through nine countries in just five days. Why? To prove that the superfine

Australian Merino wool suit he was wearing would fare a lot better than he did.

The results: One very tired Tom and one impeccably looking suit.

"Our range of suits are constructed with 100 per cent Australian Merino wool, so men really can stay immaculate from cabin to boardroom," explains M.J. Bale Founder and CEO Matt Jensen. "The images you see are raw and honest with no retouching to the model or suit, proving our claim that you can crush the man but you can't crush the suit."

Images and videos from the journey were posted by M.J. Bale on its social media channels throughout the five-day ordeal so consumers could see how both Tom and the suit were shaping up.

"You can crush the man, but you can't crush the suit."

Matt Jensen, M.J. Bale Founder and CEO

The taxing journey saw the model, wearing M.J. Bale's 'Saunders' suit in navy, travel across Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Rome, Naples, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Harwich – all without sleep.

"M.J. Bale's unique and innovative campaign highlights the versatility of Australian Merino wool, and whilst their model was put through his paces and emerged a little worse for wear, we had full confidence the suit would remain looking and feeling as fresh in London as it did in Sydney," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

And how did model Tom Bull rate the experience?

"Extreme as it was, the challenge wasn't one I was going to turn down," he said. "Despite the hellish journey it took to get there, the suit still looked top-notch diverting attention away from the bags under my eyes and from me falling asleep on the shoot!"

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.mj bale.com



BEFORE

SYDNEY: The start of the five-day journey with both model Tom Bull and the Merino suit looking in **top condition**.



AFTER

LONDON: The final destination after travelling through 12 cities, and while Tom looks worn out, the **Merino suit still looks impeccable**.

MAN VS MERINO: 5 DAYS FROM SYDNEY TO LONDON

A snapshot of the some of the conditions that M.J. Bale put model Tom Bull through to showcase the resilience of their Merino wool suits.



Bus from **Singapore** to **Kuala Lumpur**



Tuk tuk in **Bangkok**



Car from **Dubai** to **Abu Dhabi**



Plane from **Abu Dhabi** to **Rome**



Train from **Rome** to **Naples**



Bicycle from **Amsterdam** to **Rotterdam**



Boat from **Rotterdam** to **Harwich**



Car from **Harwich** to **London**

M.J. BALE'S SPRING/SUMMER SUCCESS WITH COOL WOOL

For its Spring/Summer 2015/16 collection, M.J. Bale partnered with AWI to promote the use of lightweight Cool Wool fabrics, developing suits, jackets and trousers suited to warmer climates.

The worsted cloth used in the suits and tuxedos was specially woven by a prestigious group of weavers that includes Italy's Vitale Barberis Canonico and has passed stringent testing to be awarded Cool Wool certification.

Woolgrowers may have seen this co-promotion on billboards throughout Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane; in magazines including the Virgin Australia in-flight magazine, *GQ* and *Men's Health*; or as part of a rollout of digital advertisements.

M.J. Bale's own communications, including social media channels and the brand's e-newsletter, also promoted the use of wool in the campaign and reached more than 130,000 people.

More than 150,000 wool products were promoted during this period.

"We're very humbled to be able to work alongside AWI to promote the fine and hard work of Australian woolgrowers and do our bit to help promote the fibre, M.J. Bale CEO Matt Jensen said.

"As a business owner with a view to quality garments, using Australian Merino wool is an imperative."



Marketing collateral from **M.J. Bale's**
Spring/Summer 2015/16 collection



The **Urban**, **Lounge** and **Smoking** Wool Denim suits are made from 65 per cent Merino wool and 35 per cent cotton fabric.

WOOL DENIM'S TWIST ON TRADITIONAL TAILORING

The traditional suit gets a modern makeover as AWI, Italian weaver Berto and Dutch suit manufacturer The Makers join forces to create **three Wool Denim suits**, made with 65 per cent Australian Merino wool.

As denim continues to remain one of the world's most popular fabrics, the interest in the use of Wool Denim is on the rise. AWI has worked with development partners to produce a wool/cotton denim blend that replaces some of the traditional denim yarns with machine-washable wool.

Most recently, collaborating with Italian weaver Berto and Dutch suit manufacturer The Makers, AWI presented an update to traditional tailoring at the world's leading denim show Amsterdam Denim Days.

Working with Berto's high-end denimwear department Blue Selvedge, the 65 per cent Merino wool and 35 per cent cotton fabric was manufactured by The Makers into three Wool Denim suits, introducing traditional tailoring to a contemporary customer.

The collection, titled 3x8, highlighted three moments during the 24 hours of a day where these suits could be worn – with three suits titled Urban, Lounge and Smoking:

- **Urban:** A utilitarian-style suit well matched for everyday activities. Designed for those whose main mode of

transportation is a bicycle, this suit has been adapted with a magnet to fold the leg of the trousers to avoid it getting stuck between the bike chain as well as the capability to tie the front of the suit to prevent it blowing in the wind whilst riding.

- **Lounge:** A partially lined, unstructured jacket and leisure trouser, helping you easily make the transition from day to night whilst still maintaining a contemporary look and feel.
- **Smoking:** Streetwear meets tuxedo with this Wool Denim suit. The Makers' Paris Fit is perfect for the man who feels too stiff and formal in a regular tux, but needs a suit for that special evening occasion.

"Merino wool has traditionally been used in more formal apparel products," explained AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "So to enable wool to regain some of its market share from cotton and take advantage of the trend towards casualisation, we have worked closely with the manufacturing industry to develop innovative fabrics using wool for these new markets.

"Joining forces with Berto and The Makers to create the 3x8 collection further allows us to not only update traditional tailoring methods and reinterpret the conventional suit, but also highlight the innate versatility of Merino wool and pass the fibre's natural benefits on to consumers."

With Wool Denim enjoying all of Merino wool's natural benefits, such as next to skin comfort, resilience and natural elasticity, visitors to AWI's stand at Amsterdam Denim Days were amazed to discover the denim suits were made from 65 per cent Merino wool.

"People commented on the softness of the Wool Denim fabric in comparison to cotton, and the comfort that the fabric would allow in making the suit more apt for everyday activities," explained AWI Benelux Country Manager Ingrid Oomen.

"Many visitors were also unaware that Merino wool could be used as a substitute for cotton in denim and were impressed by the casualisation of traditional tailoring in creating suits that were comfortable to wear day and night."

FROM MANHATTAN TO MUMBAI, DESIGNERS GET COOL WITH WOOL

There is no better example of the versatility of Australian Merino wool than **Cool Wool**. A natural choice of **fabric for warmer climates and trans-seasonal dressing**, across the world an increasing number of fashion designers are incorporating it into their Spring/Summer collections.

AMERICAN THOM BROWNE'S COLLECTION

Well-known American fashion designer Thom Browne – best known for his cropped take on the classic men's suit – has unveiled his Spring/Summer 2016 collection featuring a number of Cool Wool-certified garments, becoming the first American designer to do so.

Browne and AWI have signed a two-season partnership, with the New York-based designer a long-time champion of Australian Merino wool. A selection of wool scarves, shoes, ties and bags are also available worldwide, showcasing the innate versatility of Merino wool and further positioning the fibre as one for all seasons.

"Wool has long been an essential element of my collection and this partnership allows me to further explore the possibilities and boundless potential of the fibre," explained the designer. "We're using more wool in our spring collections each year and its natural benefits such as breathability and shape retention mean it is perfect for lightweight suiting."



A houndstooth blazer (left) and single button sports coat (right) are two examples of **Cool Wool** items in the **Thom Browne** Spring/Summer collection. PHOTO: Cory Vanderploeg



Cool Wool designs from Indian designers **Guarav Gupta** (left) and **Rajesh Pratap** (right) on the runway at the designer collaboration showcase in Mumbai.

COOL WOOL SHOWCASE IN INDIA

A group of six well-known Indian and Pakistani fashion designers has joined forces to champion the lightweight properties of wool, staging a fashion show and creating garments using Cool Wool fabrics.

With the support of AWI, Nachiket Barve, Rajesh Pratap Singh, Rahul Mishra, Troy Costa, Gaurav Jai Gupta and Omar Farooq united at a special event in Mumbai to each present a Cool Wool collection that highlighted the versatility of the trans-seasonal fibre, whilst staying true to each designer's personal aesthetics.

"The idea behind the designer collaboration showcase was to highlight the intrinsic yet not well-known aspects of wool – lightweight and trans-seasonal – and also present it in a very contemporary and stylish look," said AWI Country Manager for India, Arti Gudal. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com/cool-wool

INDIA: SHAWL STYLE

The manufacture and use of **shawls in India** is huge, and AWI has worked to get more of them made from Australian Merino wool.

Shawls have not only been an integral part of the Indian wardrobe for generations, but are also exported to international markets where they are well regarded as a sophisticated and comfortable style accessory.

AWI recently held retail seminars – titled ‘Shawl Style’ – in the industry hub of Punjab to help connect its partners across manufacturing, merchandising and fashion – with the aim to increase the use of Australian Merino wool in the industry.

Woolmark licensees including Shingora, SM Textiles and Apollo Textiles attended the events, which were co-partnered with high profile fashion publications *L’Officiel India* and *Vogue India*. The seminars’ panel consisted of senior leadership from top retailers in India including Arvind Brands, Future Brands, Tommy Hilfiger and Shoppers Stop.

AWI and its retail associates acknowledged the contribution of Woolmark licensees in

driving the sales growth of shawls and stoles across India.

“These seminars gave our licensee partners direct access to leaders in both the retail and fashion industry – initiatives such as these drive awareness, build affinity and create excitement about wool,” explained AWI Country Manager, India, Arti Gudal.

The seminars were followed by a fashion show by leading fashion designer and International Woolmark Prize participant, Nachiket Barve, who displayed a premium collection of stylish Australian Merino wool shawls and stoles.

“AWI has provided a great platform for key stakeholders of the textile industry to showcase their expertise in different fields,” he said. “As a designer, I constantly work with licensees to source the fabrics which I design and showcase via retailers.”



BUGABOO RETURNS TO MERINO WOOL



Bugaboo stroller accessories made from wool help make life easier on the move for babies and parents. *PHOTO: Bugaboo*

After finding success with its first collection of Australian Merino wool stroller accessories, **Bugaboo** has continued to work with the natural fibre, **expanding its product range** with a contemporary wool blanket.

Two years ago, leading Dutch stroller brand Bugaboo released its first range of pure Australian Merino wool products, including a wool seat liner, wool mattress cover and the long-awaited Bugaboo Wool Blanket, pleasing newborns and parents around the world.

In time for the northern hemisphere’s spring, Bugaboo updated its Merino wool blanket portfolio, releasing the much-loved Bugaboo Soft Wool Blanket in three new colours along with a more contemporary look.

This season’s Bugaboo Soft Wool Blanket is available in store and online in light grey mélange, off-white mélange and petrol blue mélange and can be machine washed and tumble dried. The blanket also has a new pattern, incorporating both a rib stitch and basket weave for a more contemporary look.

Bugaboo says it has been attracted to use Australian Merino wool due to its natural health and wellbeing benefits and the softness of the fibre, along with the authentic story and provenance of Australian wool.

“We are once again honoured to have worked with The Woolmark Company on the Bugaboo Soft Wool Blanket,” said Bugaboo Senior Brand Manager Evelien Oosterveld. “Made from the finest Merino wool, the blankets are both beautiful and functional; they are sure to keep little ones comfortable all-year round.”

The Woolmark-certified Bugaboo Wool Collection is available online and stocked in stores in 50 countries across the world including Australia.

MORE INFORMATION
www.bugaboo.com



Indian designer **Nachiket Barve's** Merino wool shawls can be worn in different ways, turning this accessory into the statement piece of any outfit.



The **Bugaboo** Soft Wool Blanket, available in three colours, can be machine washed and tumble dried.

STUDENT SEMINARS CONTINUE TO INSPIRE

AWI continues to host **seminars** to inspire and educate **textile and fashion students**, in the early stage of their careers, about the properties and benefits of Merino wool.

“What an amazing day – thank you! The seminar was so insightful, inspiring and interesting from start to finish. There was such a broad range of industry perspectives, and I completely see wool in a more exciting, sustainable and versatile way than before. Consider me inspired!”

Such was the feedback from students attending AWI's latest series of Merino wool seminars, held in London and Paris.

These students are the industry's future designers and decision makers, so it is important to inspire them to use wool now and continue to promote the fibre in their future professional endeavours. AWI hosts these initiatives to help ensure the long-term sustainability of the Australian wool industry.

Held in London as part of AWI's 'Naturally Inspiring' seminar series and in Paris as part of the Première Vision trade show, the two recent seminars together attracted more than 200 tertiary students.

Those attending the London event were treated to exclusive expert insights from

industry professionals including fashion commentator Colin McDowell, Marks & Spencer's Head of Innovation and Quality for Menswear Mark Yates, UK menswear design duo Agi & Sam, and UNMADE co-founder Ben Alun-Jones.

Students were surveyed after the seminar with 97% strongly agreeing that their knowledge of wool and the wool supply chain had increased significantly having attended the event.

The Paris event included presentations by design consultant and Carruthers Associates Design Director Professor Sheila-Mary Carruthers and textile designer Riccardo Rami who is instrumental in the development of The Wool Lab sourcing guide, which students got to experience at the seminar.

“It was very encouraging for me as a new woven textile designer,” said a university student attending the event. “There are lots of possibilities and opportunities I wasn't aware of before. It was very stimulating and I'm excited to go home and research more into wool!”

B



Leading fashion commentator **Colin McDowell** giving a presentation to fashion and textile students at AWI's 'Naturally Inspiring' seminar in **London**.



Models showcase some of the finest menswear apparel made from **Woolmark Gold** fabrics at **Shanghai Fashion Week**.

WOOLMARK GOLD REDEFINES CHINESE LUXURY

AWI's **Woolmark Gold** marketing platform promotes European excellence in weaving Australian Merino wool fabric, to an expanding and evolving **luxury Chinese market**.

AWI's Woolmark Gold marketing platform continues to position Australian Merino wool as the prestigious fibre of choice in the rapidly growing Chinese domestic market for luxury goods.

The market for luxury apparel in China has been expanding rapidly and consumers are looking for true quality at this level of the market.

The premium Woolmark Gold brand represents recognition of outstanding achievement in the weaving and knitting

of Australia's finest micron wools. AWI has recently expanded its Woolmark Gold yarn and fabric partners, encompassing the majority of the best British and Italian spinners and weavers.

In addition to the distinguished and long-term Woolmark Gold partners – including Bower Roebuck, Charles Clayton, Dormeuil, Holland & Sherry, John Foster, Johnstons of Elgin, REDA, Scabal, Taylor & Lodge, Vitale Barberis Canonico and William Halstead – new companies include Alfred Brown, Fox Brothers, Joseph H Clissold, Lanificio Cerruti,



Lanificio Ermenegildo Zegna & Figli, and Tallia di Delfino.

Their first-class Merino wool yarns and fabrics offer superior quality to high-end menswear designers in China.

"Chinese consumers' concept of luxury has changed over time," said AWI Marketing Vice President Greater China, Jeff Ma.

"Focusing less on big brands' statement, they're turning their attention towards the details of the fabric, appreciating the craftsmanship, texture, origins and cutting. At the same time, domestic menswear brands have changed their strategies.

"Like many other designers on the global scene, they are investing in design, service and further developing their craft. Our intention is to enhance the brand partners' reputation while acquainting China's new generation of consumers with Woolmark Gold's quality assurance and emotional values."

AWI showcased the latest in luxury menswear tailoring at Shanghai Fashion Week in April, collaborating with four Chinese menswear brands – TRANDS, Kevin Kelly, ICICLE and Beautyberry – all of which featured Woolmark Gold premium fabrics in their latest 2016 Autumn/Winter collections.

The event at Shanghai Fashion Week showcased high-quality fabrics, traditional craftsmanship and modern silhouettes designed to meet the demands of fashion-conscious youth and style-savvy consumers.

The shows interpreted the spirit of the modern Woolmark Gold gentlemen, in line with the campaign theme of 'The Gentlemen's Guild', which reinforces the brand's distinguished reputation and refined style. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com

WOOL RESOURCE CENTRE ESTABLISHED IN HONG KONG

AWI has opened a **Wool Resource Centre** in **Hong Kong** to showcase Australian wool and help supply chain partners develop, produce and market products in this important region for wool.

Continuing its mission to inspire, connect and educate global brands and the textile and apparel industries, AWI last month opened a Wool Resource Centre in Kowloon, Hong Kong.

The multi-functional space will act as a global hub for wool, enabling visitors – including spinners, knitters, weavers, retailers, designers, students and garment makers – to discover the versatility of Australian wool, as

well as present new opportunities for Hong Kong's textile industry.

Australian woolgrowers travelling to Hong Kong area also welcome to visit the Wool Resource Centre and utilise it as an office space for meetings or presentations to industry.

The Wool Resource Centre provides market intelligence, technical innovations and sourcing information for the supply chain. As part of its interactive program, AWI will also host seminars and training workshops to anyone who is interested about understanding the properties of wool.

Why Hong Kong? Hong Kong was selected as the home of the Wool Resource Centre due to its importance in the sourcing of Australian Merino wool. All global brands travel to Hong Kong for sourcing trips, and the region is also a key manufacturing hub for spinners and knitters, making it a natural choice for the Wool Resource Centre.

Since the 1950s, textiles and garments have dominated Hong Kong's exports, and the textile industry currently employs almost four per cent of the local manufacturing workforce.

"The Wool Resource Centre in Hong Kong is a multi-functional space dedicated to product and process innovation to be used by all our partners throughout the supply chain," explained AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

"Supply chain partners can showcase their product or host a launch, designers can find inspiration and touch and feel the latest and greatest in wool, and woolgrowers can use the centre for industry presentations. Importantly, it also connects the Hong Kong office of AWI with global players in the wool industry, acting as a permanent trade space with the aim to assist visitors improve business relationships and commercial outcomes."

The highly contemporary space includes a library, a showroom and an events space for visitors to develop and enhance their education on wool. There are six separate zones including open-plan workspaces, a meeting room and an auditorium, and the permanent office for AWI's Hong Kong staff.

B



The Australian Consular General in Hong Kong **Paul Tighe** (centre), with AWI CEO **Stuart McCullough** (left) and The Honourable **Felix Chung** (right) of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong (Textiles and Garment constituency), at last month's launch of the Wool Resource Centre.



Visitors to the **Wool Resource Centre** viewing The Wool Lab Sport, AWI's sourcing guide to the world's best commercially available wool fabrics for activewear and sport.

MORE INFORMATION
HKresourcecentre@wool.com



Leading Italian tennis player **Paolo Lorenzi** was the first person to wear the 'Australian' brand's 100 per cent Merino wool tennis T-shirt on court at the **Italian Open**.

'AUSTRALIAN' A WINNER AT ITALIAN OPEN

A new collaboration between AWI and iconic Italian brand **'Australian'** – the oldest sports brand in the Italian market – went public during the **Italian Open tennis tournament in Rome** last month.

While it was Britain's number one tennis player Andy Murray and American Serena Williams who raised the winners' trophies in the finals of the Italian Open in Rome last month, it was sporting brand 'Australian' and Australian Merino wool that were the winners at all 160 matches held throughout the tournament.

One might expect that a brand called 'Australian', which also has a kangaroo as part of its logo, would be a brand from Down Under. However 'Australian' is an iconic Italian sportswear brand created 60 years ago in Milan by L'Alpina Maglierie Sportive S.p.A.

It was the technique, dynamism and class of Australian tennis champions Rod Laver and Ken Rosewall, who imposed themselves on tennis courts after World War II, which

inspired the creation of the 'Australian' brand by L'Alpina. Today, the brand's apparel is now distributed in 16 different countries as well as more than 400 stores in Italy.

This year, the 'Australian' brand collaborated with the Italian office of AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company to unveil the world's first pure Merino wool tennis collection. It comprises polo shirts, T-shirts and shorts, inspired by the clean and classical silhouettes of the 1960s.

The brand's ATP team was the first ever to wear the collection, during the Italian Open held last month.

"To be honest, at the beginning I was a little bit sceptical because I thought that playing tennis with a wool T-shirt wasn't a thing



The **officials of the Italian Open** tennis tournament in Rome were dressed in **Merino wool polo shirts and jumpers** that displayed the Woolmark logo prominently on the sleeves.

that happens daily," leading Italian tennis Paolo Lorenzi said. "But I have to say that I was amazed because the fabric is of very high-quality; the perception you will be hot, in reality, is unreal. I have to admit that I was satisfied and I hope there will be other occasions to use this T-shirt."

The tournament's officials were also dressed for the duration of the competition in 100 per cent Merino wool polo shirts and jumpers. The apparel was available to buy in the 'Australian' brand's shops at the stadium.

"The past few years has seen an explosive growth in demand for activewear, which presents huge opportunities for Merino wool as a technical textile," AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said.

"The collaboration between the 'Australian' brand and AWI is an example of how we are collaborating with leading manufacturers and brands to promote the natural benefits of wool as a performance fibre, with the aim to revitalize the use of wool in activewear." B



The 'Australian' brand's Merino apparel was **available to purchase** at the Italian Open.

PAT FARMER RUNS ACROSS INDIA IN WOOL

From the southern tip of India to its top, running legend **Pat Farmer** ran for 64 days, across 4,400km, surviving extreme temperatures and conditions – all while wearing **Merino wool**.

On 29 March, Australian ultra-marathon veteran Pat Farmer completed an epic run across India that he began more than two months earlier on both Australia Day and India's Republic Day, averaging around 70km of running every day for 64 days.

While the main purpose of Pat's 'Spirit of India Run' was to strengthen relations between Australia and India and raise funds for disadvantaged Indian girls, Pat also wore a superfine Merino wool running top supplied by AWI to test out how it coped with the intense conditions.

Pat ran through extreme heat and humidity, rain, snow and sleet – through towns, villages, cities, deserts, highways, jungles and mountains.

"Having raced in Merino wool on many extreme adventures over the past 18 years, it was my first choice for this most arduous of runs," he said. "Its natural breathability helped me dissipate the extreme heat that I encountered, yet it also protected me against the cold in the latter days of the run."

The reception from the Indian people for the run was enormous. Pat appeared in the news

every day and did press conferences almost every night, on top of his run schedule. Literally millions of people cheered him on over the course of the run, with many of them also running a short distance with him.

A film crew travelling with Mr Farmer recorded the entire journey for an upcoming film about his marathon undertaking. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.patfarmer.com

Pat Farmer and crew overtaking some traditional traffic on the road into Mumbai.



BERNIE VINCE JOINS FIBRE OF FOOTBALL

Star **Melbourne Football Club** midfielder **Bernie Vince** has joined AWI's **Fibre of Football** campaign, highlighting the great connections between the wool industry and Australian Rules Football.

Bernie Vince has joined fellow football stars Tom Hawkins, Nat Fyfe and Luke Breust who have all shared their stories of how growing up in the country has helped make them who they are today.

The Fibre of Football campaign has been created to show football fans the importance of the wool industry to the fabric of the game now enjoyed by millions of Australians every weekend.

The campaign has now been running for well over 12 months and involves 100 per cent Australian Merino football jumpers, scarves, beanies, gloves and knitting kits available through AFL club stores and websites.

In the latest Fibre of Football video, shown on Channel 7 in April as part of AFL coverage, Bernie has some fun in taking the viewer back to his family's wool-growing property on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula. Having spent a lot of time in woolsheds, Bernie and his father Tim explain the importance of humour and teamwork that takes place inside a shearing shed.

The video is the first time a drone has been used to film inside a working shearing shed, showing the flow of wool from the sheep's back to wool press as part of an iconic Australian activity. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.fibreoffootball.com.au



Melbourne Football Club AFL star midfielder **Bernie Vince** has joined AWI's Fibre of Football campaign.

BREAKING THE 10 MICRON BARRIER

Australian growers of superfine wool continue to advance the fineness and excellence of their fibre, as exemplified at this year's **Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards**. The Zegna Group is one of the largest buyers of Australian Merino wool.

The world record for the finest Merino wool fleece ever produced has been broken by two Australian entrants in this year's Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards.

The awards comprise two categories for superfine Merino ewe or wether skirted fleeces. The Vellus Aureum Trophy is for fleeces with a minimum weight of 750 gms and tested as 13.9 micron or finer. The Wool Trophy is for fleeces of 18.5 micron or finer.



The fleece of **Bradley Sandlant** of 'Pyrenees Park' in **Central Victoria** has a world record fineness of 9.8 micron. He is pictured here with his wife **Melissa**, **Paola Zegna** and AWI Chairman **Wal Merriman**. PHOTO: Tim Kindler

Both competitions are open to Australia and New Zealand woolgrowers, with Australian woolgrowers this year taking out the top three spots in both categories. David and Susan Rowbottom (St Helens, Victoria) won both the 1st and 3rd places of the Vellus Aureum Trophy, while Bradley Sandlant (Lexton, Vic) was awarded the 2nd place.

The 1st place of the Wool Trophy went to Ed and Jill Hundy (Pyramul, Mudgee, NSW), the 2nd to Allan and Carolyn Phillips (Deddington, Tasmania), and the 3rd to Andrew and Penny Hundy (Mudgee, NSW).

The woolgrowers were presented with the awards by the Chairman of the Ermenegildo Zegna Group, Paolo Zegna, during a gala dinner in Sydney hosted by the Zegna Group in the presence of the company's top clients, representatives of the international press and the major institutions associated with the world of wool.

"It has to be noted that this year both the 1st and 2nd ranked fleeces in the Vellus Aureum Trophy, with respectively 9.9 and 9.8 micron, overtook the previous world record of fineness," said Count Zegna.

"Our congratulations go to the winners and to each of the entrants. Supporting, understanding and promoting the commitment, skills and processes of growing superfine Merino is a must for us: we would like all our Zegna consumers to be aware and to highly appreciate that."

The fleeces entered in the Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards are judged according to a series of criteria including style, strength and evenness, as well as fineness. All the fleeces entered in the competition are purchased by the Zegna Group, with the best fleeces transformed into the top line fabrics of the Ermenegildo Zegna collections.

The Ermenegildo Zegna Group is one of the world's leading luxury menswear brands, founded in 1910 in Trivero, in the Biella Alps of Italy. The company became the first Woolmark licensee in 1964.

Today, the company is one of the single largest buyers of Australian Merino wool. There are 523 Zegna stores (303 company-owned) in more than 100 countries around the world. The total Group revenues in 2015 reached €1.26 billion (AU\$1.88 billion). **B**

MEDIA TOUR TO ARMIDALE

To complement the hosting of this year's Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Awards in Sydney and to help place Australian Merino wool under the global spotlight, the Zegna Group with support from AWI organised a visit for international and Australian journalists to the Zegna-owned wool-growing property 'Achill' at Armidale in NSW.

The visit underlined the role of Australian wool within the fashion and textile industries while showcasing values like quality, innovation, provenance and traceability.

The journalists saw first-hand where the fibre originates, the intricacies of growing the fibre, and wool classing demonstrations. This provided them with an understanding and appreciation for the world's finest wool, which they are now relaying to their readership of consumers in key markets across the world.



Counting sheep at Achill. PHOTO: Kara Rosenlund

BIODIVERSITY HELPS MARKETING

Woolgrowers **David and Susan Rowbottom** manage their property's natural landscape to not only grow top quality wool, but also encourage biodiversity – an important consideration for increasingly environmentally-aware customers.



Susan and David Rowbottom from South Western Victoria with the 9.9 micron fleece that won this year's Vellus Aureum Trophy, an award they won for a third consecutive time. They are pictured here with the Chairman of the Ermenegildo Zegna Group, **Paola Zegna**. PHOTO: Tim Kindler

Australia's woolgrowers are proud custodians of a large part of the Australian landscape. Possessing a natural affinity with the land, these farmers strive to ensure their innovative farming practices are applied in harmony with the environment.

For today's discerning customers, this eco-sensitive farming can be as important as the quality of the clothing itself. There are many brands that use 'the farm to fashion story' as a core ingredient in the marketing of their high-value end product.

One aspect of responsible land use is biodiversity – and David and Susan Rowbottom, whose 9.9 micron fleece won this year's Ermenegildo Zegna Vellus Aureum Trophy (see page opposite), are doing their bit to help safeguard the biodiversity of native animals on their property.

The Rowbottoms, along with their sons Aaron and Gavin, run the internationally acclaimed Rowensville Stud located in South Western Victoria. As part of their farming operation they are also active custodians of the last known population of the endangered

Southern Brown Bandicoot in Moyne Shire.

Custodianship for a small ground dwelling mammal that eats fungi and insects might seem a tricky task when also trying to produce a pasture based income. It is, especially when the paddocks the bandicoots favour contain rushes and pressure is on to change to improved pasture. The Rowbottoms have some choices to make, knowing that what they decide will have ramifications for the bandicoots but also for their own financial situation.

Across a three-year period, the bandicoots have been seen on remote sensing cameras, emerging from fenced remnants which have the low thick cover they prefer, to feed on insects and fungi in the adjoining paddocks. The cameras were set up by the Basalt to Bay Landcare Network to prove that the farmland does provide habitat for the species and that farming can coincide with species' protection in many cases.

Over and over again, sheep and a host of native species have been filmed using the same land. There is no doubt that the farm is an important host to bandicoots, extending the habitat range of the adjoining Parks Victoria Reserve and enabling the bandicoots in the reserve safe passage to new homes

and mates. Without the farm, the reserve could become a dead end for many of its inhabitants.

When private land is known to provide habitat for Federally protected species, there are opportunities than can help the landholder protect that species. One of those is accessing the variety of Landcare locally delivered grants for remnant protection.

For David and Susan, their choices are based on wanting to develop better pasture in some parts of the paddock, whilst also fencing off more of the locations the bandicoots are shown to use as cover from foxes and feral cats. The Basalt to Bay Landcare Network is partnered with other adjoining landholders on fox control, and this year will work with David and Susan to plan where the new fenced remnants will be located with possible assistance from the Victorian Landcare Grants.

This mix of sheep and biodiversity will increasingly become a selling tool for woolgrowers like David and Susan – whose story of bandicoots and other species will be told to markets as a way of differentiating wool from other competing fibres that are less eco-friendly.

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.basalttobay.org.au



The **Rowbottom's property** 'Rowensville' is an example of how **endangered native species are protected** within a farming model. Pictured is a **Southern Brown Bandicoot** photographed in the same location as where some Rowensville sheep graze. PHOTO: Basalt to Bay Landcare Network

'THE SOURCE'

Four new episodes in AWI's 'The Source' series of short films have been released showcasing Australian woolgrowers and the land they work. The woolgrowers are the lead characters in this narrative, telling their own stories in their own words.

Information about the origin of Australian Merino wool and the farmers who grow this fine fibre are of increasing appeal to consumers and industry partners across the world.

After all, Australian woolgrowers have a unique and interesting heritage of more than 200 years growing Merino wool across a range of environments – from the high rainfall areas, to the wheat/sheep zone, out to the drier pastoral zone.

As a result AWI prepares marketing collateral, telling the story of wool's provenance and its key benefits, targeted both directly at consumers, and also for partner brands to help them market their wool products.

One such piece of marketing collateral is 'The Source' series of short films, prepared by AWI's in-house video production team, featuring woolgrowers across Australia telling their own stories, about their own farming enterprises, in their own words.

Four new films have recently been produced and released, following on from four previous films released in late 2014. Take a look at www.merino.com/thesource to discover the diverse stories of the some of your fellow woolgrowers and their farms that all produce the fibre of our nation: Merino wool.

The previous four episodes in the series were:

- **Episode 1 – All in the family**
Will, Dion and Lenny Lebrun – 'Wullara', Tumby Bay, South Australia
- **Episode 2 – The science of sheep**
Matthew and Cherie Coddington – 'Roseville Park', Dubbo, NSW
- **Episode 3 – Role reversals**
Jessica and Rob Horstman – 'Mulga Springs', Northampton, Western Australia
- **Episode 4 – Cultivating the land**
Richard and Jenny Weatherly – 'Connewarran', Mortlake, Victoria



EPISODE 5: RETURNING HOME TO THE FARM

STEPHANIE FIELD –
'BENANGAROO',
JUGIONG, NSW

20-year-old Stephanie Field's life as an international model can seem a world away from the farm she grew up on near Jugiong in NSW, but she never forgets her roots and is always especially pleased to return to her family home, and mum and dad, and show us she's a true country girl at heart.



EPISODE 6: SUPERFINE FRONTIER IN TASMANIA

LYNDEL POOLE AND SIMON CAMERON – 'KINGSTON',
CAMPBELL TOWN, TASMANIA

Journey to a remote part of Tasmania and discover 'Kingston', where for two Australian superfine Merino woolgrowers, producing wool isn't just an ordinary day job – it's a way life. What makes 'Kingston' so unique is the land itself, a large proportion of which is still in pre-European state.



EPISODE 7: FAMILY TIES FOR CITY GIRL

LAURA AND CATHY TRUSS –
'WAREO', QUILPIE,
QUEENSLAND

It's the type of romance you generally see on the silver screen. But when city girl Laura swapped the bright lights of Brisbane for the clean country air, she fell in love in more ways than one. Listen to Laura's story as she discusses her life's transformation with new mother-in-law Cathy.



EPISODE 8: STATE'S OLDEST MERINO STUD

ANDREW MORPHETT AND PETER HAYWARD – 'ANLABY',
BURRA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

From humble beginnings starting with one man's vision more than 175 years ago, to the fully fledged wool-growing property that it is today, learn how Anlaby's current owners have developed a supply chain which produces premium Merino wool product from the very fleece grown on the farm.

MORE INFORMATION
www.merino.com/thesource

Stephanie Field modelling an Australian wool garment on her family's property, as part of **Jeanswest's** new 'Australian Wool Collection' marketing campaign. *PHOTO: Stephen Chee*

JEANSWEST'S AUSTRALIAN WOOL COLLECTION

Fashion brand **Jeanswest** is using the provenance of Australian wool and the fibre's key benefits to help market its current collection of **Woolmark-certified knitwear** to consumers.

Jeanswest has launched a new Woolmark-certified 'Australian Wool Collection' comprising women's and men's knitwear – and the fashion brand is highlighting the source of the fibre, Australian wool-growing properties, as the backdrop to its marketing campaign, in-store and online.

Working with AWI subsidiary The Woolmark Company, Jeanswest is demonstrating its continued commitment to increasing its premium category in conjunction with traceability and transparency in relation to its sourcing while also supporting the Australian wool industry.

"We are passionate to tell the story behind our collections and working closely with The Woolmark Company provided us the opportunity to trace where the wool originated from for our new AW16 Woolmark range as well as shoot our campaign on a wool-growing property," said Jeanswest General Manager of Product, Adam Lloyd. "For us, this reflected our commitment for complete transparency and traceability within our business.



Stephanie with her father **Michael** and mother **Angela** at their property, Benangaroo Station in NSW. *PHOTO: Stephen Chee*


"The Woolmark association brings with it the highest level of quality and integrity, so our customers can be assured they are purchasing superior, premium knitwear that will last the test of time."

The campaign shoot took place at 'Benangaroo Station' at Jugiong in NSW, owned and operated by Michael and Angela Field who produce close to 2,500 bales of Merino wool annually. The Fields' daughter, international model Stephanie, returned to Australia from her New York residence and faces the new Jeanswest campaign on her family's property.

"Being able to share where I grew up with the rest of the crew was such an incredible experience, it made me feel proud of who I am and where I come from. It's not often you have the luxury of shooting in the comfort of your own home," explained Stephanie.

The Woolmark Company also collaborated with Jeanswest to offer wool training programs, which gave Jeanswest team members a better understanding and appreciation of wool production. This was passed on and reflected in the marketing to consumers.

"With high visibility across Australia and New Zealand, the latest Woolmark collection for Jeanswest is a fantastic way for our local consumers to experience the luxuriousness of Australian Merino wool," explained AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

"Equally important, it allows our hard-working woolgrowers to witness the commercial aspect of their product – seeing their wool on the racks of one of Australia's largest lifestyle retailers." 

MORE INFORMATION

The apparel is available in-store and online at www.jeanswest.com.au



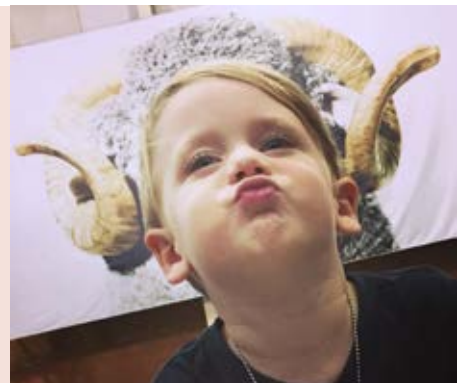
The **Jeanswest website** not only provided their customers with a direct path to purchase Australian wool garments, but also provided a wealth of information on the story behind the 'Australian Wool Collection'

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW

AWI was a partner of this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show, supporting the many activities in the **Sheep and Wool Pavilion** that was abuzz for the two weeks of the Show, and which attracted around 750,000 people through the gates.

SHEEP SHEARING

Sheep shearing demonstrations attracted large crowds throughout the duration of the show. AWI's shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray led a team of shearers, bringing a proud part of Australia's rural culture to life, and reminding those in the crowd that there is work for shearers in all corners of Australia. About 2,000 people each day helped shear sheep and collect wool, while many others watched on, listening to yarns about where wool comes from. Pictured is 17-year-old shearer Andrew Murray from Wellington. *PHOTO: Mark Griggs, The Land.*



FUN AND FACTS FOR ALL THE FAMILY

AWI's activities at the Sydney Royal Easter Show provided the opportunity for AWI to not only speak personally with Australian woolgrowers, but also educate Sydney's city folk on the importance of Australia's wool industry and to bridge the gap from sheep to shop. Education was a key focus at AWI's exhibits, with staff providing information on the wool supply chain and AWI initiatives such as the Wool4School fashion design initiative.





CELEBRITY VISITORS

It was not only members of the public that were keen to visit the Sheep and Wool Pavilion. A-list celebrities Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban also dropped in and showed great interest in the sheep and wool exhibits.

Pictured here is woolgrower Ben Watts (see page 33) from Molong in NSW showing the two stars one of his lambs from the AWI stand. Nicole was so impressed that she posted this picture on her Facebook site that has more than 10 million followers.

IN THE MEDIA

Jonesy & Amanda of WFSM Radio took their leading breakfast show on an outside broadcast to the Sydney Royal Easter Show where the duo tried their hand at shearing.

Under the expert guidance of AWI's shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray and leading shearer Ian Elkins the radio hosts relayed their positive experiences live to their large Sydney audience. Pictured here is Amanda Keller with Ian Elkins.



FEATURE BREED

Corriedales this year celebrated their centenary of exhibiting at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Given its 100 years of association with the Show, it was wonderfully fitting that there were exactly 100 Corriedales exhibited this year in the show ring. As the feature breed of the 2016 Show, there was a breed display stand in the Sheep & Wool Pavilion throughout the Show, supported by AWI.

Pictured left are Michael Watkin (St Gregory's College, Campbelltown) holding the Grand Champion Corriedale ewe, with Tony Manchester (Roseville Corriedales, Kingsvale) holding the Grand Champion Corriedale ram.

PHOTO: The Land.



By concentrating more on ewe nutrition since doing a **Lifetime Management Course**, woolgrower **Ruth Robinson**, who runs a self-replacing Merino flock in the **Mid North of South Australia**, has lifted lambing rates over the past two years. Ruth is pictured here last year after lambing, when there was much more feed than now. *PHOTO: Stock Journal*

FERTILITY AND NUTRITION

LIFT LAMBING RATES

For woolgrower **Ruth Robinson at Mannanarie in the Mid North of South Australia**, concentrating on the fertility and nutrition of the 1,200 ewes in her self-replacing Merino flock is helping lift productivity and profitability.

FAST FACTS

- Ruth's 1,200 Merino ewes and their fertility are the profit drivers for her business.
- Ruth achieves a healthy gross margin of \$46 per dry sheep equivalent.
- She has undertaken a Lifetime Ewe Management course and been involved in a benchmarking group.
- Over the past two years, lambing rates have increased to 102%.
- Lambing takes place in June/July to avoid the autumn feed gap.
- Ewes are pregnancy scanned; dry ewes are removed and twin bearing ewes receive more feed.
- Multi-row windbreaks are being established on her property to increase lamb survival.

Ruth Robinson's property north of Jamestown in South Australia has been in her family since her great great grandfather first took up the land in 1872. Ruth is the fifth generation to farm the property, after returning in the late 1970s following four years at Roseworthy Agricultural College.

Back then, when Ruth started managing sheep on the property, the wool was up to 28 microns. Now the younger sheep have 19 micron wool and the adults have 21-22 micron. They cut an average of between 6 and 7 kg per head, with 70-75% yield.

Ruth runs a self-replacing Merino flock on the 946 ha property. 240 ha is native grassland; a further 85 ha is treated as grazing only, even though it has been cropped in the past. The remainder is used for either cereal cropping or grazing.

Only about 200 ha is cereal cropped each year, with a further 40-50 ha sown to vetch and

oats for sheep, prior to going into the cereal rotation the following year. In addition, some paddocks are sown with oats (some into existing lucerne) for winter sheep feed and/or late spring feed as standing crops.

Ruth's husband, John Voumard, is a lawyer and runs a regional law firm based at Jamestown, where Ruth spends part of her time as well as running the farm. They have two daughters, Catherine and Sarah Voumard, who work full time away from the farm. Sarah helps on the farm most weekends, and Catherine occasionally.

"My emphasis on sheep rather than crops is a bit contrary to the district norm – I run the sheep essentially on my own and have the cropping share-farmed," Ruth said. The cropping phase helps control weeds and the stubbles provide some summer grazing.

"I mate about 1,200 Merino ewes to North Ashrose Merino rams. These ewes and

their fertility are the profit drivers for the business and so I focus on them."

To do that, Ruth sells the wether lambs early – generally in December – and culls the ewe hoggets pretty heavily, which gives her more flexibility in selling old or young ewes.

"I usually keep sound-mouthed 5.5 year old ewes as part of the breeding flock, which allows me to cull the hoggets by about a third, and young ewes always sell well.

"I then sell all the 6.5 year old ewes, in two lines – sound mouth and cast for age. The sound mouths generally go to another grazier to rear a cross-bred lamb.

"There's also a line of mixed age culls made up of anything I've taken a dislike to during the year – including ewes that haven't reared a lamb (as determined at weaning time).

"I pregnancy scan, and anything not in lamb gets no second chances."

Most sales are off-shears in late November or December. In a dry year, the dry ewes are sold much earlier (this year, in April) – to leave more room for the productive ewes.

Ruth's ewes lamb in June/July, which again is against the district norm of April/May. She says each of these times has its pros and cons.

"April/May is better weather for lambing, but has the heavily pregnant ewes needing nutrition in February/March when we can never expect any decent feed. So while June/July will always have some poor lambing weather, the ewes are heavily pregnant later when in a year with an early break we might have some feed. This year has not been one of those early breaks unfortunately!"

Ruth usually supplementary feeds for a few weeks, but aims for as short a time as possible. In addition to supplementary feeding hay and grain, Ruth makes licks consisting of salt, lime and magnesium with the aim of building up their calcium for bone and milk, and magnesium for muscle function, before they drop the lambs.

LIFETIME EWE MANAGEMENT

To learn more about how to proactively manage the nutrition of her ewe flock through the reproduction cycle, Ruth has undertaken a Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) course with other producers in the region, as part of a group led by Daniel Schuppan of Landmark at Jamestown.

The LTEM course, supported by AWI, provides materials and develops skills to help sheep producers improve sheep nutrition, lambing percentages and weaning rates.

"Doing the course helped me appreciate the importance of keeping up the nutrition and condition of the ewe all year through, and since doing the course I have tried to focus more on that, especially in the lead-up to lambing.

"I condition score the ewes when they're in the yards now, and while I couldn't necessarily tell you if they're a 3.3 or a 3.4, I can certainly tell if I can feel a bit much bone and they need more feed.

"I also attempt to give the twin-bearers better feed in the lead-up to lambing."

The result of this focus on nutrition is easier lambing and improved lamb survival.

"I used to be content with 85- 90% lambing (of ewes mated) as a long-term average. Then in 2013 when I took the eye off the ball in the lead up to lambing, it was only 72%.

"Concentrating more on ewe nutrition since doing the LTEM course has led to a return to 90% again in 2014 and a further lift to 102% in 2015. And I am sure there is more potential yet! 2015 was the first year I have ever run out of the appropriate ear tags at marking time."

BENCHMARKING

Ruth has also been a member of a benchmarking group run by Daniel Schuppan.

"As with the LTEM group, it's good just to get sheep producers together and discuss common problems," Ruth said.

"Generally I am pretty happy with my gross margin. For two years running, my figures have been \$46 per dry sheep equivalent.

In comparison with other group members, Ruth spends less time working with the sheep during the year and has a higher labour bill at the times when she has to employ contractors, such as for shearing, crutching, lamb marking and pregnancy scanning.

"The benchmarking course has helped me realise that in order to make money, you've got to spend some. I had run a cost-minimal enterprise, but minimum cost is not always best profit – this has particularly applied to growing feed for the sheep."

PASTURES AND GRAZING

Much of the country on the property is very open, with no natural trees, which leaves the sheep exposed, so Ruth aims – subject to paddocks in crop – to select paddocks for lambing that have a bit more undulation and hence natural protection. She has also started a long-term project of establishing multi-row windbreaks.

Ruth rotationally grazes for most of the year, by running big mobs of ewes (up to 1,000 head) for short times in paddocks of varying sizes, including some grazing-only blocks which she has subdivided into smaller paddocks.

"In this way, I think the usage of pasture is more thorough, and each paddock gets a longer spell before being grazed again. I find having less mobs makes day to day management easier, as there are fewer mobs – and troughs – to check. It does mean

the mobs are bigger when they need to be handled, but I have got used to that.

"However the bigger mobs are not ideal for lambing, as the mobs are too big to last in one paddock for the five-week lambing period; they can't be forcibly moved; and moving by drifting is sometimes not completely successful. I usually have three mobs of ewes for lambing, and this year I will try making it five mobs, each of 200-250."

The Lifetime Ewe Management course encourages producers to assess the amount of feed available, and check that it matches the needs of the sheep. Doing the course helped Ruth take more notice of her pastures. She says that rotational grazing allows her to stay in tune with pasture condition better as she is looking at it more often.

One of Ruth's interests is encouraging the remnant native vegetation (grasses and forbs) she has on parts of the property.

"The perennial species take whatever the seasons throw at them, without fertiliser, hanging on in poor years and thriving with a bit of summer rain whereas summer rain only produces rubbish in the cropped paddocks. And the sheep really seem to enjoy the variety!"

SHEARING AND OTHER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

All Ruth's sheep are shorn in early to mid-November because that's when the shearers are available.

"It is not an ideal time, as grass-seeds have formed by then, and spring weather can leave sheep prone to a few flies. However I manage the seeds by taking the sheep off untreated paddocks just as barley grass or wild geranium seeds are threatening to get into the wool. I put them on hay-frozen paddocks, or standing crops or lucerne if I've controlled the weeds well enough.

"But then when the sheep have been shorn they can go on untreated paddocks again, and by the time they have much wool, the seeds have dropped. The wool always tests at less than 1% vegetable matter, so the strategy works, even though it's a challenge!"

She says having bare-shorn sheep at the start of summer is good fly prevention for the remainder of summer/early autumn.

"I generally do a pre-shearing crutch a month or so before shearing which prevents breech strike, and I have begun to jet the lambs as they're weaned in September as they did tend to get either breech or body strike given a bit of rain in October or November."

Worms are not much of an issue on the property. "I always collect faecal samples for testing before I drench, and only occasionally have to drench. It's a great saving in both money and effort!"

MAXIMISING THE REPRODUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF THE MERINO

FAST FACTS

- 2014 Nuffield Scholarship recipient Tim Gubbins researched a range of sheep management systems in Australia and abroad to determine the best methods to lift lambing percentages of Australian Merinos.
- Tim encourages woolgrowers to apply for the 2017 Nuffield Scholarship, saying the scholarship is a great opportunity for producers to look at farming's opportunities and challenges from a new perspective.

Through an AWI-funded Nuffield scholarship, woolgrower Tim Gubbins from Darlington in the Western District of Victoria has investigated ways to maximize the reproductive potential of the Merino breed with a specific focus on the period from conception through to weaning.

"I have managed a number of sheep operations, from Merino to cross breeds, and I genuinely believe that the Merino can be as profitable as any cross bred operation. The Merino can rear twin lambs and produce a productive fleece of high quality," Tim says.

"My Nuffield studies have been aimed at finding ways to help woolgrowers simply and effectively unlock the potential that exists within their own flock. To do this we need to achieve higher lambing percentages and weaning rates.

"Lamb birth weight is the absolute key factor in determining lamb survival. A strong, healthy lamb that is up and suckling within 15 minutes of being born has a 90-95 per cent chance of still being alive 90 days later. Each extra kilogram of birth weight also results in an extra 3.2 kg of lamb at weaning.

"Currently the average Merino lamb marking percentage sits around 80 per cent nationally. This rate can be lifted; it is not a ceiling set by the animal, but is largely a reflection on the management provided.

"While a breeding objective is the starting point for any producer, there is little point in chasing high fertility traits or superior lamb growth rates as selection criteria, if your management or feeding system is not capable of achieving the genetic potential."

Travel is a key part of being a Nuffield scholar and over the past two years Tim visited 13 countries as part of his research.

"I found that sheep producers all across the world are very focused on lifting lamb survival, weaning weights and profits. The common factor that has the biggest impact in this respect is nutritional management – and correct pasture utilisation is critical in addressing nutrition."

NUTRITION IS EVERYTHING

Tim says meeting the correct nutritional level required by the ewe is essential for optimum profitability – it drives the whole system.

"The ability to accurately condition score is the cheapest management skill available and

one which can have the biggest impact on farm profitability. Ewes should not be less than condition score 3 for joining or lambing. Increasing condition score of a lambing ewe from 2.2 to 3.2 equates to approximately a 10 per cent increase in single lamb survival.

"Also, 'fit not fat' is a common theme amongst researchers and consultants. Ewes that are more than condition score 3.8 will have issues with being too fat, such as high dystocia rates in single bearing ewes and lazy lambings in twin bearing ewes."

He says pregnancy scanning as a management tool can dictate the lifetime performance of the subsequent lambs. Pregnancy testing also gives a report card on how well the farmer has managed ewe nutrition.

PASTURE MANAGEMENT

One of the biggest lessons Tim learnt while travelling was how critical pasture is in economically meeting those nutritional goals.

He says profitable farms find a way to better utilise the grass they grow, thus reducing the



Nuffield scholar Tim Gubbins visiting an SUL (Uruguayan Secretariat of Wool) research centre in Uruguay as part of his studies.

amount of supplementary feed required and increasing the bottom line profit.

"This is an area Australian sheep farmers can possibly learn from New Zealand, UK and Irish farmers who primarily rely on what they grow for all their feed requirements, as supplement is not as readily and cheaply available as here in Australia.

"High levels of 'waste' are prevalent in Australia. While this can be partly explained by having a variable climate which affects stocking rates, waste occurs in: the excess

body condition carried by some sheep, letting pasture levels grow beyond the highest feed quality before sheep graze it, or overgrazing and not allowing an adequate time for pastures to recover."

OTHER FACTORS

Tim says providing adequate shelter in paddocks is a basic step that can be implemented to markedly lift lamb survival. Shelter is particularly useful in reducing the wind-chill factor, which combined with wet

conditions, can cause large losses in new born lambs.

He says woolgrowers should also be watchful of diseases affecting pregnant ewes, such as *Campylobacter* which is a leading cause of sheep abortion, pregnancy toxemia, and footrot which causes stress on pregnant and lactating ewes. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

Tim's report will soon be available via www.wool.com/nuffield

APPLICATIONS FOR 2017 CLOSE SOON



AWI invites people from the wool industry across Australia to apply for the 2017 AWI Nuffield Wool Scholarship. Applications close on 30 June 2016.

The scholarship, worth \$30,000, will enable the successful recipient to travel overseas and study an agricultural topic of his/her choice.

The scholarship is a unique opportunity to study a particular subject of interest,

and increase practical knowledge and management skills and techniques in the Australian wool industry. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about previous recipients of the AWI Nuffield Wool Scholarship, visit www.wool.com/nuffield. To apply for the scholarship, or to access Nuffield students' reports, visit www.nuffield.com.au

OPTIMISING LAMB SURVIVAL



Lamb survival workshops aim to increase producers' knowledge about the causes of lamb deaths and how to maximise lamb survival.

Workshops are carried out in most states to increase producers' skills and knowledge around lamb survival. Woolgrowers can approach their AWI state network to organise lamb survival workshops – see contacts right.

Getting a better understanding of the true causes of lamb deaths is a key step to implementing cost effective management changes to improve lamb survival rates and reduce mortality. The workshops therefore provide an opportunity for producers to observe and carry out lamb post mortems to learn how to determine causes of lamb mortality.

Producers attending AWI-funded lamb survival workshops will be provided with a new 64-page manual: the 'Lambs Alive: A hands-on approach to optimising lamb survival' decision support tool. The tool provides a simple but effective pictorial step-by-step guide that identifies the key signs to look for in conducting a lamb postmortem.

Key management strategies to address the various causes of death are also outlined in the tool.

The tool is designed to be used in conjunction with producer workshops and only available to producers who participate in the workshops.

The production of the tool was funded by AWI and MLA and the Making More From Sheep program. **B**

AWI STATE NETWORKS

AWI state networks provide opportunities for producers to get involved in

educational and practical programs that focus on making positive changes to production and management practices.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED, CONTACT THE COORDINATOR IN YOUR STATE

AWI STATE NETWORK	COORDINATOR	PHONE	EMAIL
Sheep Connect NSW	Shelly Anderson	02 6391 3954	sheep.connect@industry.nsw.gov.au
BESTWOOL/ BESTLAMB (Vic)	Lyndon Kubeil	03 5761 1649	lyndon.kubeil@ecodev.vic.gov.au
Sheep Connect SA	Ian McFarland	08 8226 0428	ian.mcfarland@sa.gov.au
The Sheep's Back (WA)	Andrew Ritchie	08 9736 1055	andrew@iconag.com.au
Leading Sheep (Qld)	Nicole Sallur	07 4654 4220	nicole.sallur@daf.qld.gov.au
Sheep Connect TAS	James Tyson	0409 006 774	james.tyson@utas.edu.au
Pastoral Profit (national)	Pene Keynes	08 8841 4500	pastoralprofit@ruraldirections.com

SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY

TURNING PASTURES INTO PROFIT

Woolgrowers in the Mediterranean and temperate agricultural zones of southern Australia can now harness **high-resolution satellite technology to obtain the latest pasture production estimates** at paddock and whole-of-farm level.

Pastures from Space Plus (PFS Plus), launched in March at Wagin Woolorama, is a new near real-time farm monitoring tool, developed by Landgate with farmers for farmers. It can deliver pasture information directly to woolgrowers to help them make decisions on stocking rates, feed budgeting and fertiliser application.

The tool provides Pasture Growth Rates (PGR), Feed On Offer (FOO), Total Dry Matter (TDM) and Greenness Imagery (NDVI). It integrates high-resolution satellite imagery, a stocking rate calculator, feed budgeting tool, Bureau of Meteorology rainfall data, plus 12 years of historical pasture data, all in one online service.

PFS Plus is available to farmers by subscription from Landgate, with its pricing reflecting total hectares per individual property. It is accessible on mobile devices in the field as well as laptops and PCs at home.

HOW IS PFS PLUS DIFFERENT?

Pastures from Space was originally developed in 2000. More recently, farmers, graziers and agronomists have worked with Landgate, in partnership with CSIRO and the Department of Agriculture and Food (WA), to produce this new and unique product.

PFS Plus has the same important features as the previous version, with the addition of

Landsat 8 high resolution 30m imagery (ie each pixel is 30m x 30m), which gives 64 times the detail of the previous 250m resolution data. Landsat 8 orbits over the same region every 16 days (7 + 9 days in overlapping regions).

Using aerial imagery as a backdrop, PFS Plus includes the facility for farmers to map their own paddocks, saving them money by not needing a consultant to do it for them. Also new in PFS Plus is a quick and easy-to-read summary report on all of their paddocks showing the PGRs, FOOs and change in FOO for the week.

There is also a stocking rate calculator for each paddock which uses the actual PGR and FOO data reported for the paddock, taking away a lot of the guess work.

BENEFITS OF USING LANDSAT 8 IMAGERY

Landsat 8 has benefits for both pastures and crops. With Landsat 8 imagery, you can see the differences within a paddock. For example, you can see which parts of a paddock are growing better than others, which parts of a paddock are being grazed more heavily than others, and which parts of a paddock are recovering faster post-grazing.

By seeing which parts of the paddock are more productive than others, you could determine where fence lines are better located, and you can see which paddocks are performing better than others (on both sides

of the fence). You can also see where weeds are germinating following unseasonal rainfall and potentially which parts of the paddock are having moisture penetration issues.



Woolgrowers **Tracy** and **Brad Wooldridge** from WA used PFS Plus to help them manage their way through 2015's tough seasonal conditions.

"A GAME CHANGER"

This new version of Pastures from Space has been described as a "game changer" by woolgrowers Brad and Tracy Wooldridge, who farm 500 hectares at Arthur River, 250 km south of Perth in WA. They purchased 180 hectares at Kalgan near Albany after assessing information available through PFS Plus.

"We use Landgate's Pastures from Space Plus to predict seasonal outcomes and for in-season green feed budgeting," Mr Wooldridge said.

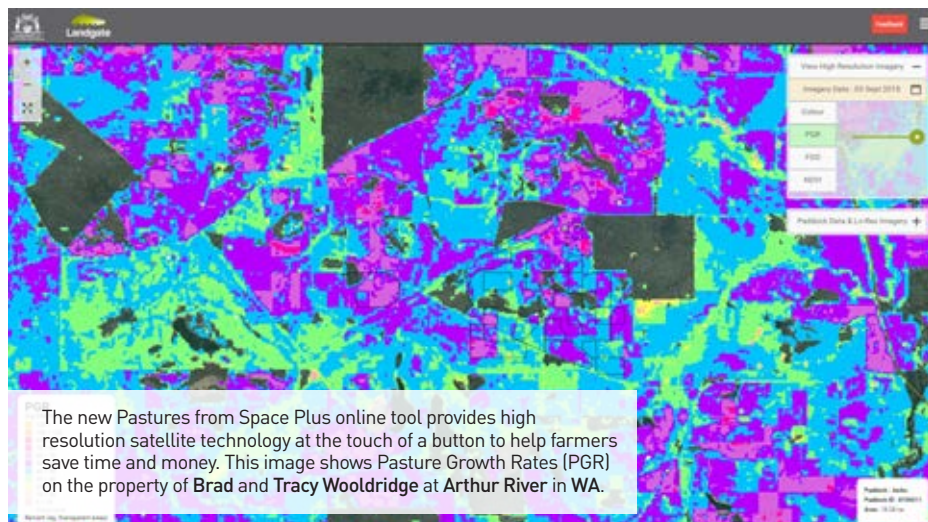
"As our ewes are rotationally grazed, we need a sound knowledge of pasture growth rates and feed on offer.

"This year we mated 2,200 ewes, having dropped numbers when Pastures from Space Plus showed us 2015 was going to be a bad season; we're planning to build our stock up to about 2,700 ewes for 2017.

"You can't make impartial decisions on memory; Pastures from Space Plus takes the hope and prayer out of livestock management. This is a great new version; the pan, zoom and sequential fading of images make it so useful.

"There are a lot of new products on the market but none of them have Landgate's track record."

B



MORE INFORMATION
<https://pfs.landgate.wa.gov.au>

WALK OVER WEIGHING

Automatic **walk over weighing technology** in the paddock is a cost effective and efficient way of **monitoring live-weight of breeding stock** to help ensure ewes are in good condition during lambing. It's also useful for identifying the most productive ewes, and monitoring general animal health.

There is a growing use of automation and technology on wool-growing properties to help improve production and reduce labour costs.

For woolgrower Ben Watts from Molong in NSW, the introduction of 'walk over weighing' on operations he runs has enabled better and more regular assessment of his breeding stock, and consequently increased the productivity of his business.

"Our biggest business driver is the condition of our ewes, and their performance is essentially driven by nutrition," Ben said in a presentation to the recent International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) Congress in Sydney.

"Ewe bodyweights can change quite quickly, before we can even visually see a change. So we wanted to be able to obtain live data on each individual sheep, and use that data to help us improve their production, their health, and our profitability."

Walk over weighing coupled with electronic identification has worked well for his business by automatically capturing a sheep's ID tag and body weight as it walks through a race and over an electronic weighing platform, with incentives such as feed or supplement such as salt, on the other side. The sheep quickly become conditioned to walk through and weigh themselves.

Ben says the largest mob size where walk over weighing is highly effective for him is 1,250 ewes. The ewes are condition scored against their weight prior to going into the pasture, so walk over weighing works on individual body weight from known points.

USEFUL APPLICATIONS TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY

By putting the data through a software program, Ben can very quickly be live monitoring individual ewe weights.

"The key benefit of walk over weighing is that it helps us check the condition of our ewes during lambing, and identify and

treat any ewes that need supplementary feed. We fit an auto-drafter to the weighing platform so the ewes with low weight can be automatically drafted out for supplementary feeding. This results in our ewes having a more even body score, so their wool production (and tensile strength) and fertility can be optimised, along with the successful rearing of twin lambs."

Ben said there are other uses for walk over weighing in the paddock.

"Later in the year when the ewes are rearing their lambs, we have a more simple set-up to record which lambs are pairing with which ewes and therefore their parentage. This enables us to identify the more productive ewes without significant labour force requirements, which from a commercial woolgrowers' perspective is more than acceptable.

"We also use walk over weighing to monitor each of our lambs and identify if their growth rates are not dropping off, which could indicate we might have misjudged the amount of feed in our pastures.

"Walk over weighing is also the best live indicator of animal health because, as we all know, when we feel ill we stop eating and drinking, and lose weight. The set-up alerts us to a drop in an animal's weight, which could be caused by sickness from the likes of flystrike or intestinal worms,

and enables us to address the animal's illness in a very timely manner."

COST AND LABOUR SAVINGS

Because walk over weighing in the paddock is automated, there is no requirement for a staff member to be out in the paddock doing the weighing. The sheep do all the recording themselves. It is therefore a very efficient and cost effective system.

Traditionally, to weigh sheep, staff would have to bring them in, visually read each tag, and weigh them individually – which Ben said would cost 22c-35c per record – and because it would take a lot of time, weighing wouldn't happen very often.

"However now, with walk over weighing in the paddock, with the sheep effectively doing the weighing for us, we can now take weekly records (which might be made up of 10-15 records taken throughout the week) at a cost of under 5c per head per week.

"It has improved the way we look at our ewes, we have a clearer picture of what's going on, so we don't have to be manually weighing at the yards and we can spend our time on other important jobs."

MORE INFORMATION

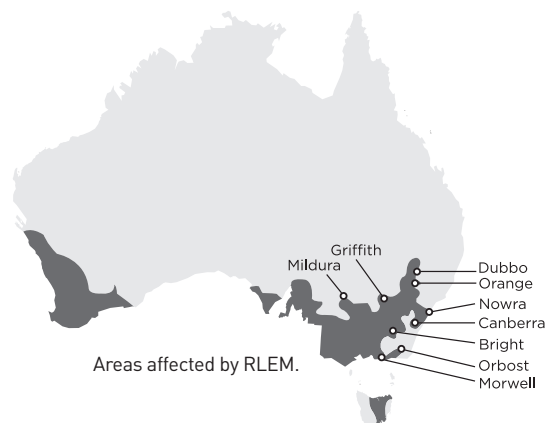
Ben Watts

ben@bralca.com 0428 668 706



Woolgrower **Ben Watts** from Molong in NSW presenting on the topic of farm automation to the audience at the **International Wool Textile Organisation Congress** in Sydney in April.

TIME IS RIGHT FOR TIMERITE®



Areas affected by RLEM.

FAST FACTS

- The TIMERITE® package provides a reliable and effective option for control of redlegged earth mites (RLEM) in Australian pastures.
- The RLEM is a major pest of pasture legumes in the winter rainfall regions of southern Australia.
- You can obtain your optimal spray date by using the tool on the TIMERITE® website www.timerite.com.au or by phoning the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.

Now is the time of year for farmers to find out the optimal date in spring for controlling redlegged earth mites (RLEM) in their pastures.

RLEM is a major pest of pasture legumes in the winter rainfall regions of southern Australia. They are small mites (1 mm long) with black bodies and red legs that spend most of their time on the soil surface, moving up onto plants to feed.

Mite feeding can result in production losses through all stages of annual legume growth in pastures and crops.

Mites are often abundant in pastures and it has been calculated that 12,000 mites/m² use as much energy as one dry sheep equivalent per hectare (one DSE/ha). Mite densities well in excess of 12,000/m² are frequently recorded in pastures and can lead to a high level of competition with sheep for the pasture resource.

TIMERITE® provides farmers with the date for a single spring spray that controls RLEM through to the following autumn. This date is unique to each farm and will remain constant from year to year.

TIMERITE® works by taking advantage of a time in the RLEM lifecycle when there are the largest proportion of active RLEM present and the lowest proportion of eggs. This is the ideal time to spray, because active RLEM are susceptible to sprays whereas eggs are not.

RLEM are found throughout areas of southern Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania with winter dominant rainfall and a dry summer. The TIMERITE® package covers all areas affected by RLEM.

OBTAINING YOUR OPTIMAL SPRAY DATE

You can obtain your optimal spray date by using the tool on the TIMERITE® website www.timerite.com.au.

You will need the exact location of the paddock you are to spray in latitude and longitude (in degrees and minutes). You could use a Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) to find out this exact latitude and longitude or you could use websites like www.itouchmap.com/latlong.html

You can also obtain the spray date for your property from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099. You will need a named place on or very close (less than 10km) to where your property is that can be looked up on

a map. Alternatively you can provide the AWI Helpline with the exact latitude and longitude.

WHEN TO SPRAY

Spray as close as possible to the optimal spray date.

If it is not possible to spray within a couple of days of the date, use a systemic, residual chemical applied within a two-week period leading up to and including the optimal TIMERITE® spray date. Spraying after the optimal date does not achieve good control the following autumn.

You do not need to have very high mite numbers to consider spraying but if you cannot see any mites in your pasture it is probably not worth spraying.

TIMERITE® does not effectively control other pasture pests the following autumn.

Note: Resistance to synthetic pyrethroids and organophosphates has appeared in some populations of RLEM, particularly in WA. Woolgrowers are urged to adopt integrated pest management strategies to reduce dependence on chemicals, and to avoid repeatedly using insecticides from the same group to reduce the spread of resistance. Other strategies include planting varieties of subclover expressing seedling resistance to RLEM, control of broad leaved weeds and grazing management. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.timerite.com.au
AWI Helpline 1800 070 099



RLEM and feeding damage.



Comparison of unsprayed and sprayed sites on a property at Cranbrook, WA



LAMBEX 2016

HEADS TO ALBURY

FAST FACTS

- Woolgrowers and sheep producers are invited to the LambEx sheep and lamb industry event in Albury in mid-August.
- It will comprise inspirational and informative presentations, trade displays, entertainment and networking opportunities.
- AWI is co-sponsoring the event to promote the role of Merinos within lamb enterprises.

Australian woolgrowers and the Australian sheep and lamb industry are invited to attend LambEx 2016, a three-day event being held in August in Albury, NSW.

The expo will focus on an array of local and global issues influencing the Australian sheep and lamb industry and will feature outstanding international and Australian speakers.

Topics cover investment in genetics and perennial pastures, management costs and target feeding for strong lambing percentages, boosting production gains through genetics and farming in an ever-variable climate.

As well as presentations from farmers, researchers and consultants, there will be entertaining and inspirational stories from former world champion marathon runner Robert De Castella and adventurers Cas and Jonesy.

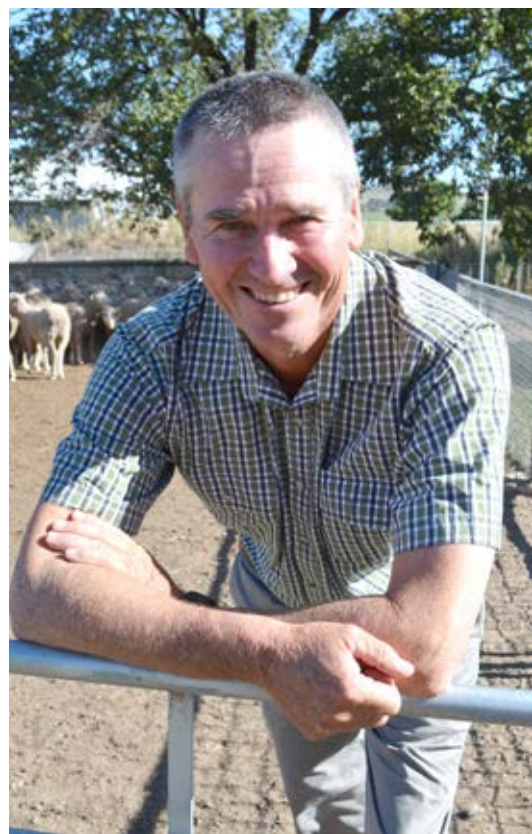
"LambEx attracts more than 900 delegates and 70 exhibitors and is a great opportunity to promote NSW's world-class lamb industry," Chairman of LambEx Rodney Watts says.

"All sectors of the lamb industry have come together to build on the event's previous success and ensure the Australian sheep and lamb industry continues its proud tradition of showcasing its industry."

As a co-sponsor of LambEx, AWI has the opportunity to promote the role of Merinos within lamb enterprises and influence sheep producers who might not normally associate with Merino or wool enterprises. It is also important for lamb producers to see the value of Merinos contributing to the rebuilding of the national flock.

AWI is sponsoring a session 'Bring the paddock to life' at which: consultant Jason Trompf will challenge ewe management and productivity, woolgrower Vicky Geddes will show how investment in genetics and perennial pastures has facilitated growth in her predominantly Merino enterprise, and Paraway Pastoral Group's manager at 'Borambil' Matt Browning will tell how they have achieved a 10-year average of more than 110% lambs marked to ewes joined.

The two main LambEx conference days are 11 and 12 August, with registration and welcome events from 4pm until 8pm on 10 August. Pre-conference tours are also available on 10 August. Fees apply to attend LambEx. **B**



LambEx 2016 chairman Rodney Watt: "LambEx is an opportunity to hear a range of cutting-edge speakers on topical issues to the Australian producer."

MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.lambex.com.au to view the program and register.



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

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Quentin Whitehead

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Simple & fast sheep-crutcher



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

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



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A large number of woolgrowers attended the 'Elders Balmoral' sire evaluation site field day in April to view the latest sire evaluation progeny, including the Merino Lifetime Productivity project's first drop of ewe progeny.

MERINO LIFETIME PRODUCTIVITY

PROJECT UNDER WAY

The first drop of ewe progeny in the **Merino Lifetime Productivity project** attracted strong interest from across the country at the 'Elders Balmoral' sire evaluation site field day in April.

This nine-year project launched last year is collecting data to evaluate lifetime Merino productivity including the relationships between reproduction, meat and wool production, how to best select for lifetime productivity and the role that genetics plays in generating lifetime returns.

The demands being placed on the Merino ewe by Australian sheep and wool producers are changing. These days, many commercial Merino producers are looking for a ewe that can produce a high value fleece throughout life, be naturally resistant to parasites, produce more lambs than they once did and on top of this, turn off lambs with good carcase weight and yield at an early age.

For selection systems to be successful in delivering such an animal, it is important that the industry understands and can accommodate the lifetime relationships between all these production elements and commercial reality. The Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project is set to increase the understanding of how sheep representing a range of Merino types and breeding objectives perform for this wide range of traits, over their lifetimes across different locations.

MLP PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The MLP project is a long term partnership between AWI and the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA).

The project was launched last year and leverages off the current sire evaluation program funded by ram breeders and supporters. The extension of four standard sire evaluation sites to collect a wide range of lifetime productivity data will assist in answering many of the questions often raised within the Merino industry.

"Woolgrowers around Australia have been considering the impact of selection at a young age and particularly whether animals selected early retain performance throughout life," said AWI Program Manager - Genetics, Neil Judd. "Answers to this question are known for some traits, but not for others. It is also clear that this needs exploring across different

types of sheep, across different environments and across more production traits.

"There are also questions about selection systems involving ASBVs, indexes, genomics, sheep classers – and combinations of these actions/systems as to whether or not they are adequately selecting for lifetime performance and lifetime commercial superiority.

"In addition, many commercial wool producers and AMSEA participants have been questioning if a measure of sheep 'fitness, robustness and do-ability' could add value to selection programs to help describe sheep with the ability to perform commercially over their lives. The MLP project may help to find an answer to this question as well."

The broader aims of the project are to:

- where necessary, provide the evidence and data that the current systems can be enhanced to more accurately predict lifetime productivity

- demonstrate to the industry in a commercial environment the cost benefit relationship of measuring multiple adult traits throughout the lifetime of an animal
- validate the current breeding value technology across sheep types and environments
- provide a substantial amount of reproduction records to the MERINOSELECT database, allowing the industry to more accurately assess the relationship between all the components that make up lifetime productivity
- provide a common focus for a wide range of ram breeders with differing breeding philosophies.

FIRST DROP OF EWE PROGENY

The Craig family's 'Tuloona' property at Harrow in Victoria was the first location selected to host a Merino Lifetime Project trial. This first MLP site, 'Elders Balmoral', joined in 2015 with 24 sires entered. It has an additional 24 sires entered for 2016.

The first drop of ewe progeny from the site attracted strong interest at the 'Elders Balmoral' sire evaluation site field day on 8 April. Woolgrowers from across the country joined the Victorian locals to inspect the progeny and discuss preliminary results on offer.

"These field days are essential to present the industry with the latest in genetics research," Classings P/L professional classer Bill Walker said. "The whole industry will benefit by the great way we can network and learn at these events."

The seven-month old ewes on display had been DNA sampled, body weighed, fleece tested, extensively classed and visually scored.

The ewes were subsequently shorn for the first time in mid-April to record fleece weight and off shears visual scores. Worm egg counts and carcase scanning will also soon be taken to complete the first year of assessment for the ewe drop.

For the next six years, this extensive list of assessments will be repeated along with an annual joining to Merino rams.

Discussions are still taking place to determine the future of the wether drop from the trial



Mid-side sampling at the 'Elders Balmoral' sire evaluation site in March. The seven month old ewes on display at the site field day in April had been DNA sampled, body weighed, fleece tested, extensively classed and visually scored.

joining. The next step for these wethers will be to be shorn and fleece sampled at yearling stage to complement the post weaning assessment undertaken on the ewes. With post weaning ASBVs now available through Sheep Genetics it will be valuable to see how the post weaning and yearling ASBVs compare on the wethers and ewes.

TRIAL SITES REPRESENT WIDE COVERAGE

In addition to the 'Elders Balmoral' site, which has a fine wool ewe base, two further sites have been approved in the past year. 'Pingelly' in Western Australia has a fine-medium carcase orientated ewe base, and has 15 sires entered for 2016. 'MerinoLink' at Temora in NSW has fine-medium ewe base, and has 13 sires entered for 2016.

'Pingelly' and 'MerinoLink' sites have already completed their first round of artificial insemination programs with lambing due later in 2016. The selection process is under way to add a fourth site to complete the initial phase of the project.

To maximise the geographic spread and environmental coverage of the MLP, it is anticipated that the fourth site will be located in a high summer rainfall, fine wool environment.

"Across the four prospective trial sites and over 8 joinings, it is expected that a total of 135 sires will be used in the project to generate a critical mass of approximately 4,000 ewe progeny to form the basis for lifetime assessment," Neil said.

"Sires have been carefully selected to represent a range of breeding strategies, breeding philosophies, types, trait combinations, performance and to provide linkage across project sites and industry databases. The diversity of sires evaluated will facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the attributes affecting lifetime performance."

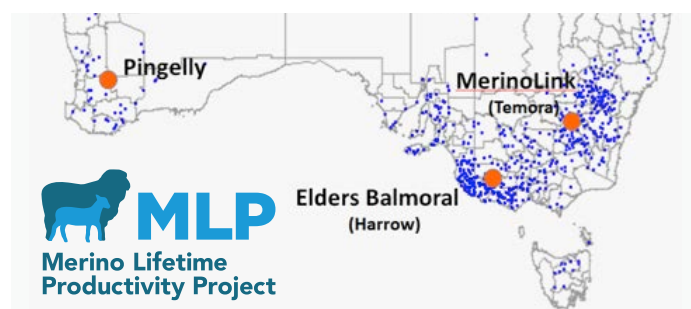
The sites involved in the project will operate like standard sire evaluation sites – following the rigorous and independently assessed measured and visual assessment protocols.

"The MLP project would like to gratefully acknowledge the host sites for their commitment to the project and their willingness to accommodate the project requirements," Neil added. "For the recent Elders Balmoral field day, particular thanks to the site committee, the Craig family and the committed staff of 'Tuloona', and the chairman of that site Tom Silcock for delivering on the first year of project requirements under challenging conditions."

Ram breeders wishing to nominate for the 2017 joining are encouraged to contact the MLP Project Manager Anne Ramsay or individual site managers.

MORE INFORMATION

The MLP project website at www.wool.com/MLP includes project updates, information on the current sire entrants, and contact details for the individual site managers. MLP Project Manager Anne Ramsay, 0400 368 448, stenhouseconsulting@bigpond.com



Location of the current Merino Lifetime Productivity project trial sites. The diversity of sites and sires evaluated will facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the attributes affecting lifetime performance.



AWI supported a 'Future of the Fine Wool Merinos' panel discussion at the field day, which included industry experts from the NCWSBA, NSW DPI, Australian Merino Exports, Mecardo and AWI.

BREECH STRIKE

R&D UPDATE

Breech strike R&D continues to be the highest priority for AWI's on-farm R&D and extension portfolio. It centres on breeding for breech strike resistance, more recently bacteria and odours; breech modification to reduce breech wrinkle, urine stain, dags and breech wool cover; new fly chemical control products; and improved pain relief options.

BREEDING

While dags, urine stain, wrinkle and wool cover are key breech strike risk factors, some sheep that have high dag, stain, wrinkle and wool cover do not get struck and some sheep with low dag, stain, wrinkle and cover do get struck. It is suspected that the "as yet unknown" risk factors are differences in odour and bacteria between sheep. Studies continue into determining what it is that is attracting female blowflies (*Lucilia cuprina*) to some sheep, and how and why its larvae parasitise sheep while other larvae do not.

A breakthrough in the odour and bacteria work is proving elusive despite considerable effort. As sniffer dogs were still able to differentiate between old wool samples grown from resistant and susceptible sheep, it was thought that this would also be the case for gravid flies. However it has recently been found that fresh wool samples are needed.

Using gas chromatography technology the number of likely odour causing chemicals compounds are being reduced. Then an electro-antennogram that measures the gravid fly's response to each compound is used to identify the odour chemicals that attract the flies.

The goal is to be able to select and breed sheep that don't emit the attractant odours along with the known key breech traits, and therefore reduce their exposure to and risk of breech strike.

BREEDING VALUES

In late 2009, MERINOSELECT released the first breeding values for the key breech traits. Since then breeders have been able to add these traits to their selection criteria and better manage the antagonistic traits with fleece weight such as wrinkle, fat and muscle. Increasingly there are high productivity sires with improving breech strike resistant traits

— see table 1 opposite. Dags continue to be the most difficult breach trait to make progress.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

Use of increased breech strike prevention chemicals along with crutching and breeding is the main way woolgrowers have been able to move to a non-mules operation. Chemical prevention is very important for all woolgrowers in high dag regions and while cyromazine and dicyclanil are very effective in controlling breech strike, with increased use and reliance, there are increased risks that resistance to these products will emerge.

AWI is co-funding projects with the University of Melbourne and CSIRO Brisbane to better understand the fly genome and the potential for new and better targeted, long term effective chemical control compounds. Greater understanding of the genes that are unique to and active in the gravid fly and larval stages of the *Lucilia cuprina* species could uncover new control methods and compounds.

SKINTRACTION®

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has registered the SkinTraction® intradermal, but there have been a few trials where the product moving into underlying tissues, has led to very tight label use requirements which have stalled commercialisation. Discussions continue between AWI and the Directors of Cobbett Technologies Pty Ltd which owns SkinTraction®.

LIQUID NITROGEN

Steinfort Agvet Pty Ltd, with co-funding from AWI, is investigating ways to improve the consistency of application of liquid nitrogen to raised folds of breech and tail skin (to reduce breech and tail wrinkle dags and wool cover), increase the hourly rate of the application, and get the process to a state where it is ready for commercialisation.

In trials to date, significant wrinkle and wool cover reduction has occurred resulting in nearly all sheep well under the targets of



Pictured are Department of Agriculture and Food (WA) senior research officer **Dr Johan Greeff** (left) and senior veterinary officer **Dr Dieter Palmer** with **Dr Shimin Liu**, University of Western Australia, and Chinese visiting scholar **Dr Zhong Quan Zhao** discussing the importance of conducting faeces testing for long term reduction in worm egg count along with reducing dags, in the department's South Perth animal laboratories.



AWI Breech Strike RD&E Program Reviewers: Dr Peter James, Dr Forbes Brien, Dr David Hucker and Dr Bruce Allworth.

wrinkle scores 2 and less and breech cover 3 and less. The results are not as good as mulesing – but close (see images on opposite page). Further improvements are planned.

PAIN RELIEF

AWI is currently conducting a trial with CSIRO Armidale and Troy Laboratories Pty Ltd assessing a range of pain relief options. For surgical mulesing, the treatment groups being evaluated are (1) No Pain Relief, (2) TriSolflen alone,

(3) Buccal Meloxicam alone, (4) Tri-Solflen and Buccal Meloxicam and (5) Sham (no treatment but handled). Buccal Meloxicam is on the market now for calf marking and is likely to be on the market for lamb castration and tail docking for 2017.

Buccal Meloxicam is also being evaluated for the Liquid Nitrogen Process.

Increasing competition and broadening the use patterns of registered pain products is a focus of a range of ongoing discussions.

KEY MESSAGES REGARDING CEASING TO MULES

- Target scores: Breech Wrinkle 2 or less, Dags 2 or less, Breech Wool Cover 3 or less – but the lower the better.
- Plan, plan, plan – just don't stop – need to rebalance basket of control measures.
- Work in with other like-minded breeders.
- Have a clear focus on a balanced profitable Merino.
- Rotate control chemicals and apply well.
- Proactively market wool and surplus sheep sales.
- The whole business needs to be on board.
- Considerable progress has been made – more to go.

FLYBOSS AND NMAP TRAINING

FlyBoss is a website that contains a range of updated information regarding breech and body strike – see flyboss.com.au. WoolProducers Australia, Animal Health Australia, and the Livestock Contractors Association are in the process of revamping the National Mulesing Accreditation Program (NMAP) and its training manual. **B**

Table 1: Rams on the MERINOSELECT website that had been selected for use as a Sire were identified as having high productivity, good carcass and breech traits. The ASBVs of the top 5 sires are listed, as are the average of the top 5 and the top 20 sires and their percentile ranking compared to the Merino Breed Average. The top 20 sires collectively average -0.6 for breech wrinkle, -0.6 for breech cover and -0.1 for dags and are in the top 1% for the indexes. While there is a general negative relationship between breech wrinkle and fleece weight some breeders are starting to bend the curve and increasingly breed sheep that are both low in wrinkle and high fleece weight. The negative relationship is harder to "bend" in true fine and super fine type sheep. [Source: MERINOSELECT website].

SIRE	AWT kg	YEMD mm	YFAT mm	YCFW %	AGFW %	AFD (um)	YSS N/Ktex	YWEC %	NLW %	EBWR Score	EBCOV Score	LDAG Score	FP+	MP+	DP+	POLL
1	11.4	1.4	0.3	21.8	12.1	-2.4	1.2	-35	4%	-0.4	-1.2	-0.1	172	184	194	PP
2	10.4	1.5	0.6	22.5	9.6	-0.9	7.4	-69	7%	-0.3	-0.7	-0.3	165	181	196	
3	4.1	1.5	0.8	38.3	18.0	-0.8	4.7	-95	4%	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	169	187	194	
4	10.3	2.1	0.9	22.3	10.8	-0.5	4.3	-37	7%	-1.1	-1.6	-0.1	151	168	187	PP
5	8.8	3.5	1.9	20.8	3.3	-0.1	5.9	-81	8%	-1.0	-0.9	-0.6	151	165	193	
Top 5 Sires Ave	9.0	2.0	0.9	25.1	10.8	-0.9	4.7	-63	6%	-0.6	-0.9	-0.3	162	177	193	
Percentile of top 5 Sires	5%	1%	10%	5%	20%	60%	5%	5%	10%	10%	1%	5%	1%	1%	1%	
Top 20 Sires Ave (not listed)	8.7	0.8	0.6	24.3	12.3	-1.4	0.8	-8	5%	-0.6	-0.6	-0.1	156	173	181	
Percentile of Top 20 Sires	5%	30%	20%	5%	20%	40%	40%	50%	20%	10%	1%	20%	1%	1%	1%	
Merino Breed Ave	2.6	0.2	0	9.3	4.1	-1.1	0.3	-3	1%	0.1	-0.2	0.1	125	132	132	

LONG WOOL LICE TREATMENTS

WHEN ARE THEY COST-EFFECTIVE?

If you have found lice on your sheep, the **LiceBoss Long Wool Tool** is a simple online tool that can help you decide whether it is cost-effective to immediately apply a long wool treatment or wait until next shearing. The tool is available free on the **LiceBoss website**.

If lice have been introduced to your previously lice-free flock, should you immediately treat, or simply wait until next shearing?

The Long Wool Tool at LiceBoss.com.au provides a simple way to help you answer this question.

The important factors that first must influence your decision are:

- The number of mobs (and the proportion of the flock) that have become infested with lice.
- The impact of lice on the flock and your reputation (aside from wool value).
- A long-wool treatment will NOT eradicate lice; this can only be done with an off-shears/short wool treatment.
- The cost in wool damage compared to the cost of applying a long wool treatment.

Occasionally, shearing straight away and treating off-shears will be the best option. For instance, to maintain the reputation of a stud flock or where only one mob out of many on a property has become infested. However, it is generally an expensive option, due to wool value loss from premature shearings.

Applying a long wool treatment will stop most further wool damage from occurring, but it does not eradicate lice. Therefore, an off-shears/short wool treatment will still be needed next shearing, and without effective isolation, lice can still spread to other mobs or neighbouring properties with straying sheep.

LICEBOSS LONG WOOL TOOL

The LiceBoss Long Wool Tool is a very simple way to assess whether a long wool treatment is warranted. It calculates the

cost of wool value loss if no treatment is applied, as well as the approximate cost of a long wool treatment, including chemical, labour and current wool value loss.

The following example, using the LiceBoss Long Wool Tool, estimates the costs where lice have been found in a mob of 1000 ewes with 1% of the sheep rubbing and an average lice-free fleece value of \$60.

Figure 1 opposite shows the inputs into the Long Wool Tool. These are simply month and week of last and next shearing, the month and week when you see sheep rubbing, number of sheep in the mob, the likely value of fleeces at next shearing and the number or percentage of the mob seen rubbing.

The resulting report, Figure 2, allows you to compare the cost of lost wool value to the cost of treating the sheep in long wool.

A key input to the tool is the time when rubbing is seen in relation to the previous and next shearing. This reflects when the sheep have become infested; rubbing is not generally noticed until at least a few months after lice have been introduced.

Varying the time when 1% of the sheep were seen to be rubbing shows how the decision to apply a long wool treatment changes in regard to the time from and to shearing. In Table 1, the month when 1% of the mob is seen to be rubbing (in relation to next shearing) is varied. The costs for each scenario reported by the Long Wool Tool are shown in the right hand columns.

Table 1 shows that when a small number of sheep are first seen rubbing when there are still many months until next shearing, then the eventual damage to the wool value will be much greater than when rubbing starts close to the next shearing. This is because the lice have a greater time to build up on individual animals and spread to more animals within the mob, so causing more damage.

In this scenario (where the average fleece value was predicted to be \$60), it is cost-effective to apply a long wool treatment if 1% of this mob were seen to be rubbing



Extinosad® being applied to long wool. PHOTO: Elanco Animal Health.

Long Wool Lice Tool

This program is for use when some mobs are affected by lice and may need treatment before shearing. It uses the current level of wool damage to estimate the wool damage that might occur if the sheep are not treated. This is compared with the costs of treatment that could be used.

The user can then decide if it is worth treating the sheep or leaving them untreated until shearing.

Long wool treatment will not eradicate lice, so even if sheep are treated before shearing they will also need treatment after shearing.

The program uses the proportion of the flock that are now rubbing to estimate the progress of wool damage. Rubbing can be due to a variety of causes, so if lice have not been seen then it is essential to check whether rubbing is due to other causes.

If in doubt, use the Rubbing Tool to check whether the rubbing is due to lice or some other cause.

Enter Your Mob Details

Mob Name (optional)

Sheep Last Shorn

Date Inspected

Next Shearing Due

Wool value \$/head
Normal (lice-free) wool value for this mob at their planned shearing date.

Number in Mob

Number Rubbing or % Rubbing

Don't include any stray sheep, when counting the number with wool damage.

Calculate Results

Figure 1. Simple inputs are used to assess the costs of no treatment versus a long wool treatment in a lousy mob.

Long Wool Lice Tool

Results for 4 tooth ewes

Generated 20th of May 2015

Based on these details:

Sheep Last Shorn: August — Mid-Month
Date Inspected: June — Mid-Month
Next Shearing Due: August — Mid-Month
Wool value \$/head: \$60
Number in Mob: 1000
% Rubbing: 1%

It may not be necessary to treat the sheep before shearing.

If you treat the sheep in long wool, remember that long wool treatments cannot eradicate lice, so you must still treat all the sheep carefully after the next shearing.

To avoid increasing chemical resistance in the lice, use a different chemical group after the next shearing from the chemical used for long wool treatment.

Try to avoid letting affected mobs contact other mobs and remember that ewes treated close to lambing will infest the lambs.

Estimated \$ Cost of wool loss if no treatment

\$ 220 No treatment

Approximate \$ Cost of chemical, labour and wool loss

\$ 1,200 SP backline
\$ 1,300 ML jetting
\$ 1,300 Spinosyn jet
\$ 2,000 Spinosyn BL

Restart

Print

Figure 2. The Long Wool Tool report shows costs of various long wool treatment options against the cost of wool damage.

Months until next shearing when 1% of the mob are seen rubbing	Cost of wool loss if no long wool treatment is applied	Approximate cost of various long wool treatment options including chemical, labour and current wool loss					
		IGR jetting	ML jetting	IGR backline	Spinosyn jetting	SP backline	Spinosyn backline
10	\$14,300	\$1,400	\$2,100	\$2,700	\$5,200	\$7,300	N/A
8	\$8,600	\$940	\$1,300	\$1,900	\$2,400	\$3,200	N/A
6	\$3,500	\$890	\$1,100	\$1,700	\$1,400	\$1,800	N/A
4	\$1000	N/A	\$1,200	N/A	\$1,200	\$1,300	\$2,100
2	\$220	N/A	\$1,300	N/A	\$1,300	\$1,200	\$2,000

Table 1. Results from the LiceBoss Long Wool Tool showing scenarios with a mob of 1000 ewes, with an average (lice-free) fleece value of \$60, when 1% of the mob are first seen rubbing at 10, 8, 6, 4 and 2 months before shearing.

more than 4 months before shearing, but when this was closer to next shearing the cost of damage does not outweigh the cost of treatment.

In summary, the LiceBoss Long Wool Tool is very simple to use and provides the costs that allow you to decide whether it is cost-effective to apply a long wool treatment to lousy sheep. It can be found at www.liceboss.com.au, then choose Tools from the main menu. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

LiceBoss is Australia's lice control resource, providing practical information on prevention, monitoring, treatment, products, and decision support tools. LiceBoss is available at www.liceboss.com.au

liceboss

BEST PRACTICE ADVICE FOR MANAGING SHEEP PARASITES

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

The LiceBoss, WormBoss and FlyBoss 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. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.paraboss.com.au

paraboss
manage sheep parasites
advice online, anytime

NEW BAITING OPTION

FOR WILD DOG AND FOX CONTROL



Wild dog photographed with a night camera. PHOTO: NSW Office of Environment and Heritage

Baits containing a new toxin – known as PAPP – are now commercially available to landholders across the country. This is another tool in a range of options that woolgrowers can use to combat wild dogs and foxes. PAPP was developed with funding support from AWI.

An additional baiting option for reducing wild dog and fox numbers is now available to woolgrowers and other landholders across Australia.

Para-aminopropiophenone (PAPP) is a new chemical (toxin) that is now being manufactured and sold in baits by Animal Control Technologies Australia Pty Ltd (ACTA) under the product names DOGABAIT for wild dog control and FOXECUTE® for fox control.

Once the bait is eaten and the PAPP is absorbed into the bloodstream, it is converted to a secondary compound that stops effective oxygen transport to the heart and brain. This occurs in wild dogs and foxes more readily than in most other animals.

The affected wild dogs and foxes become lethargic and sleepy before quickly becoming unresponsive and dying. The doses of PAPP in baits have been optimised so unconsciousness generally occurs within 60 minutes of bait ingestion, and death occurs up to an hour later. Poisoned animals do not exhibit signs of pain or distress.

AWI On-farm Program Manager Ian Evans says this new control tool is the result of a major investment in R&D by AWI,

the Australian government through the Invasive Animals CRC, and ACTA.

“The new baits are an example of how woolgrowers’ and other industry R&D funds have been used collaboratively with a commercial provider to bring a product through to market,” he said.

Field trials of PAPP consistently demonstrated that target animal populations were reduced by more than 70 per cent under operational conditions with good baiting procedures and have the potential to control all wild dogs and foxes in the control area if programs are run thoroughly.

“However, PAPP is not a silver bullet,” Mr Evans cautioned. “It is an additional control method – along with 1080 baiting, trapping, fencing and shooting – that woolgrowers have the option of choosing. The success of control also relies on a co-ordinated effort of all landholders working co-operatively with government wild dog controllers.

“As with other control techniques, PAPP has its limitations but the addition of a new control tool will allow greater flexibility and strategic management of pests across a much broader range of landscapes.”

PAPP COMPLEMENTS 1080

Since PAPP is lethal to wild dogs and foxes, it is also highly toxic to all working and domestic dogs, depending on the dose ingested.

“If a working or domestic dog eats just one wild dog bait, it will die unless treated. This means that the distribution of PAPP baits requires careful consideration. The PAPP dose in fox baits is less, meaning an average-sized working dog will be less affected after eating fox bait(s) but treatment should still be sought immediately,” Mr Evans said.

“The good news is there is an antidote for PAPP. The chemical methylene blue, ‘Blue Heeler’, immediately reverses the effects of PAPP poisoning, with full recovery usually occurring within one hour.”

However at present, due to the need for intravenous administration, methylene blue can only be purchased and administered by a veterinarian. As PAPP acts quickly, it will be imperative to intervene as quickly as possible in an emergency. This means that it might not be possible to get the affected dog to a veterinarian quickly enough in remote areas.

It is strongly recommended to use muzzles



DOGABAIT will be available in pails of 10 baits (total 600g) or 50 baits (total 3kg).



FOXECUTE® will be available in pails of 10 baits (total 350g) or 40 baits (total 1.4kg).



The DOGABAIT bait. A feature incorporated into PAPP baits by ACTA is the inclusion of small plastic marker beads. These remain in the stomach or gut of an animal that is killed and can even be found in a long-decayed carcass. The marker beads used in PAPP baits are yellow/orange whereas those used in 1080 bait manufactured by ACTA will be red. If a dog is presented to a vet it can be made to vomit and the nature of the poison immediately determined by the colour of the beads.

whilst working or restrain working dogs and pets if they are near a baited area.

NATIVE ANIMALS AND PAPP

In Australia, wild dogs, foxes and cats are the animals most susceptible to PAPP.

However, PAPP is known to affect some native animals, particularly goannas, if ingested. The material used to make PAPP baits has been shown to have extremely low palatability to herbivores.

Care will therefore be needed when developing control programs using the toxin. The risk to goannas can be managed by altering the timing and presentation of baits, such as baiting at cooler times when reptiles are less active.

The risk of secondary poisoning is also very low, as a susceptible animal would need to eat the bait from the stomach or vomit of a poisoned animal – before the toxin degrades.

If the poison is eaten slowly then a lethal dose is not achieved.

PAPP is not considered to pose a threat to the environment. It is broken down in soil and water by microorganisms, is non-toxic to earthworms and other soil-dwelling life.

AVAILABILITY AND USE

While DOGABAIT and FOXECUTE® PAPP baits are new products, they are a supplement to existing control options. In this context, ACTA says its supply of the products will be tailored to the needs in each state and will be sent out on a needs basis initially until demand is better known. ACTA advises to expect a day or two delay if you request baits from your merchant or local government-based bait distribution point, as ACTA does not expect them to take on stocks in advance.

DOGABAIT and FOXECUTE® will be available, in pails of 10 or 50 baits for DOGABAIT and 10 or 40 baits for FOXECUTE®. They will only be

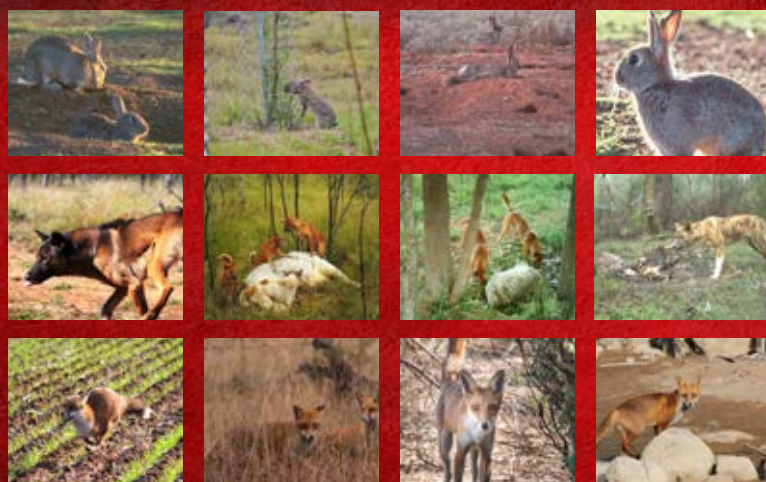
available to users approved for purchasing 1080 baits and from the established suppliers of 1080 baits in all states.

Legal instructions and restrictions for use are found on the approved product labels. In addition, some constraints differ between states, so local instructions must also be followed.

Immediate neighbours must be notified 72 hours before PAPP baits are applied. Signs must be put up at property entrances before the start of a baiting program and remain in place until four weeks after the end of the program, or until residual baits are recovered.

There are also restrictive requirements for placement of baits. They must not be placed within 150m of a dwelling, 20m of a watercourse and 5m from boundaries or roads. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.animalcontrol.com.au
www.wool.com/wilddogs
www.invasiveanimals.com



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Strategic planning, management and control of key agricultural and environmental pest animals, include rabbits, wild dogs and foxes.

All resources are available FREE and online for you to read, watch or download.

DOG BUSTERS

The construction of **cluster fencing** around Morven in South West Queensland is helping local sheep producers **combat wild dogs** and **increase sheep and lamb numbers**.

As recently as two years ago, the sheep enterprise on the 13,000 hectare 'Victoria Downs' property of Will and Narda Roberts had been very close to becoming one of the casualties of increasing wild dog numbers across Queensland.

Despite their best efforts, Will and local producers who wanted to stay in sheep were under tremendous pressure from wild dogs. Prior to shearing in August 2014, Will was suffering significant sheep losses, and from August to February 2015 (shearing to crutching) he lost more than 1,000 grown sheep and only managed to raise 15% of lambs from his scanned ewes.

"However, things started to turn around for us after our property was included as part of a cluster fencing project, the first finished in Queensland," Will said in a presentation to the International Wool

Textile Organisation (IWTO) Congress.

"The cluster fence was completed on 7 January 2015 and following a baiting program our dogger came in to catch what dogs remained inside the fenced area.

"In 2015 we managed to mark 87% of lambs to ewes joined; we were on track to mark 100% of lambs but there was a dog coming in that we had no knowledge of. From lamb marking to weaning we lost no more lambs than we would normally expect to lose from a variety of natural causes.

"This year we will be dog-free at lambing and we expect to have our best lambing ever.

"We are doing an AI program this year, the first for many years and we will now be able to get into selling reasonable numbers of surplus sheep; and our sheep, who will be much less stressed, should cut more wool."

MORVEN CLUSTER FENCING

The Morven cluster fence encloses about 400,000 hectares and is more than 450 km long, including 79km of the Great Barrier Fence. The cluster involves 48 landholdings of which 43 are commercial properties operated by 32 landholders.

The fence is approximately 1.7 m high including a top barb wire. 150cm of this netting is in a vertical position, which gives a 30cm apron that is essential for the integrity of the fence.

"Being one of the first clusters will mean that other fences will hopefully honeycomb off our perimeter and provide us with more and more protection.

"I reckon cluster fencing will prove to be a revolution for grazing land management.



Will Roberts with his daughter Candice alongside the cluster fence on 'Victoria Downs' at Morven, Queensland. PHOTO: Andrea Crothers

Not only will we remove and exclude pests but we will also get control of total grazing pressure, and it will be a huge benefit from a biosecurity point of view should we end up with an exotic disease outbreak in Australia."

OTHER CONTROL MEASURES

Will has used and will continue to use a series of other complementary wild dog control measures – including baiting, trapping and shooting – coordinated with other landholders.

"1080 baiting has been an incredible asset to us as landholders in trying to control feral pests. We have two co-ordinated baiting programs a year in our Shire. They are always very well attended, but alone it doesn't let us get on top of the dogs.

"You have to understand that these dogs are predators not scavengers and their preferred choice of meat is a fresh kill. So our baits are really only getting new pups and or old dogs that can't fend for themselves.

"In 2010 we started a trapping program in what is now our cluster group and each year from 2010 to 2014 we caught somewhere between 160 and 190 dogs a year."

Prior to the cluster starting, Will said some people had already started to individually fence themselves to allow them to get control of total grazing pressure.

"Since the completion of the fence, more properties have continued to individually fence themselves and by 2020 I would expect that our whole cluster will be individually fenced either by design or through neighbours doing this. We ourselves have fenced 28kms of our boundary and we have the material to finish the last 17km."

ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

As a result of reduced wild dog and fox predation, Will said producers have seen the return of a lot of native animals: echidnas, koalas, bettongs, ground-nesting birds, bustards (plains turkeys), lizards and snakes. There has also been a pig footed bandicoot found in the cluster, an animal that had been presumed extinct.

"South West Natural Resource Management is to be congratulated for initiating this concept," Will said. "AWI too have at times provided us with help in addressing the wild dog problem. At the moment they are providing us with funding to train new trappers and also helping to clean the last of the dogs out of our cluster."

Will said the reduction in wild dog numbers is a real winner not only from a landholders' point of view but from a general public point of view. "A revival of the Merino industry will generate much improved circumstances for towns around western Queensland."



James Schmidt demonstrating to producers the fencing trailer on 'Wallen', Cunnamulla.

FENCING BUS TRIP HITS THE MARK

AWI's Leading Sheep network in Queensland have organised another successful bus trip for producers to **learn about practical fencing options from other producers** as part of their strategies to combat wild dog predation on their livestock.

An opportunity for sheep producers in south-west Queensland to visit the properties of other producers that have constructed exclusion and electric fencing to help combat wild dogs has been declared a resounding success.

The focus of the bus trip was to show producers what fencing options were available (both netting and electric), hear first-hand from the producers who erected these fences and learn from their experiences.

It was organised by AWI's Leading Sheep network in Queensland (with support from the Making More from Sheep program) and held in February around the Cunnamulla/Wyandra region.

A range of equipment and trailers used by the producers to make the job of fencing easier were demonstrated. Fencing company representatives also attended.

Five properties were visited that have installed exclusion fencing for the control of wild dogs, pigs and total grazing pressure: 'Overshot' with a 10-wire electric fence, 'Wallen' and 'Goolburra' with Clipex fencing, 'Offham' with a Southern Wire fence, and 'Northam' with a 4-wire Bi-Polar electric fence.

"This was a golden opportunity for producers that are considering exclusion fencing for their property to benefit from the hindsight and experience of others," said Nicole Sallur, Leading Sheep project manager and Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Queensland (DAF) senior extension officer.

"Participants saw a range of fence types and products and talked with the producers who have constructed these fences about benefits and costs, construction tips, the results and any problems or issues, and lessons learnt."

The relevance of the topic and timing of this field day was highlighted with 53 people attending (and three buses needed), with many travelling a four hour return journey to participate.

Evaluation results found that the event was rated 9.1 out of 10 for satisfaction and 100% of attendees would recommend it to others. All producers said that they learnt something new and 89% indicated an intention to make a change on their property, with 53% very likely to make this change.

"Leading Sheep organised a fantastic fencing bus trip, focusing on a potential solution to the predator problem, rather than just the problem itself," producer John Sommerfield of 'Canegrass' near Charleville said.

"The best thing about this trip was that it focused my attention on fencing and I got the chance to learn from the experiences and knowledge of those people who have erected these predator fences. The producers who spoke to us told us the whole story, both good and bad, and it helped us identify which fence was going to best suit our needs."

Participants on the bus trip represented 820,000 hectares of land, 35,000 sheep and 21,000 cattle.

This bus trip follows on from three previous fencing bus trips (two in central west and one in south west Queensland) which have all been an overwhelming success.

Leading Sheep is a joint initiative between AWI and DAF, with the support of AgForce. Making More from Sheep is joint program of AWI and Meat & Livestock Australia.

MORE INFORMATION
www.leadingsheep.com.au

PASSING ON SKILLS IN WOOL HARVESTING

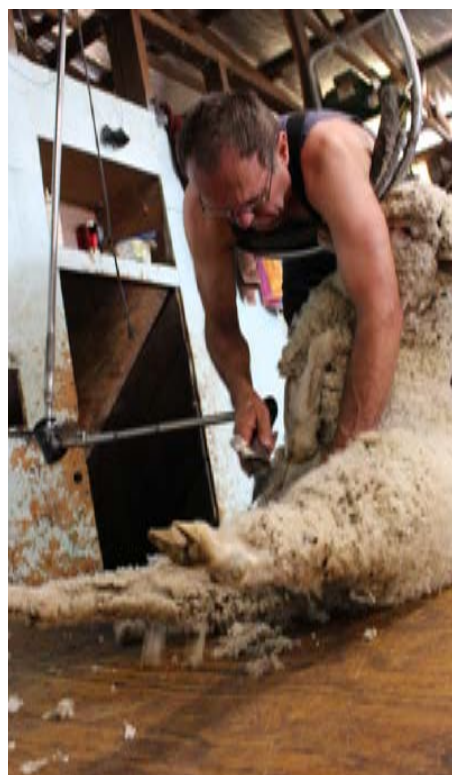
Rob Harris and **Bill Kimber** from the **Riverina of NSW** take great enjoyment in passing on their shearing and wool handling skills to a new generation of youngsters keen to enter the wool industry.

Throughout their long careers in the wool industry, TAFE NSW Sheep and Wool teacher Rob Harris and shearer trainer Bill Kimber have remained committed to equipping students with knowledge and skills to pursue a career in the wool industry.

Bill has a long association with the industry, starting out as a wool handler in 1965 and progressing to shearing full time in 1968.

In 1987 he began working as a shearer trainer with the former Australian Wool Corporation and in 1990 began working as a shearer trainer for TAFE NSW.

"It is good being a shearer trainer as you can see the students improve so much in just a fortnight; many start out and haven't even stepped foot in a shed before," Bill said.



Shearer trainer **Bill Kimber**.

"It is good being a shearer trainer as you can see the students improve so much in just a fortnight."
Bill Kimber

Rob is a wool classer by trade, and this is Rob's 31st year teaching wool classing and wool handling.

TAFE NSW Riverina Institute's Primary Industries Centre (PIC) generally operates three schools a year including two on site at its Wagga Wagga campus, with on average 12 students attending each school. All sheds used for the schools have raised boards.

Bill and Rob also operate a shearing and wool handling school at the Riverina Juvenile Justice Centre using a portable shearing trailer built by inmates at the Junee Correctional Centre.

The TAFE PIC has had excellent local support from generous woolgrowers within the Wagga region who provide their sheep for use in the training.



TAFE NSW Sheep and Wool teacher **Rob Harris**.

"I've seen a lot of change in the industry but I still love working with wool and enjoy imparting knowledge to students."
Rob Harris

"The students learn on whatever is available at the time; it might be ewes, wethers, lambs, Merinos or crossbreds," Bill said.

Students of all ages and all walks of life attend the schools which cater for beginners and improvers.

Rob said the majority of the students are learners, but that some students can reach their first 100 after three weeks of shearing.

"We have had students come through from as young as 15 years-old to a 60 year-old retired school teacher who wanted to learn how to crutch his own sheep and clean up fly blown sheep," Rob said.

"A few years ago we had a 35 year-old wool handler come and do the course as he wanted to shear to earn more money to support wife and his five children. He had never picked up a handpiece but he has stayed with it since the school and now consistently shears 150 sheep a day."

The students start off learning about the hand piece, combs and cutters and by mid-morning on day one of the school the students are shearing bellies and crutching if it's required.

They work in pairs and one shears to the long blow and then the other one finishes off. They take turns at this technique until they can proficiently shear the entire sheep on their own.

The school operates similar hours to a regular shed – a 7.30am start and it wraps up at 5.15pm. Students also have theory lessons, on topics such as grinding, during their lunch break.

"I've seen a lot of change in the industry but I still love working with wool and enjoy imparting knowledge to students," Rob said. "I like to see people, particularly young people, coming into the industry."

"Bill and I have a sense of accomplishment when we see former students develop professional careers within the wool industry. Five to thirty years on, they are still contributing, whether they are shearers, wool classers/shed staff and even beyond in the broking and buying side. We are now seeing the next generation of family members coming through."

See opposite for an article about Nicki Guttler who went through a shearing school last year taught by Bill Kimber and Rob Harris.

SHEARER TRAINING SHOWS RESULTS

Nicki Guttler from Lockhart in NSW received her training from **Bill Kimber** and **Rob Harris** last year (see opposite page). After working as a wool handler Nicki, has now progressed to be part of a regular shearing team.



Young shearer **Nicki Guttler** from Lockhart in the **Riverina Region of NSW** has benefited from training at a shearing school.

It's just over 12 months since Nicki Guttler completed the two week shearing school through TAFE NSW Riverina Institute's Primary Industries Centre (PIC) – see opposite – and she's now chalking up 130 ewes on her daily tally.

Nicki, who hails from Merino, crossbred lamb and cropping property 'Arrawatta' at Lockhart in the NSW, took to the board like a natural and was employed by Temora contractor Trevor Gibbs who operates AAA Shearing after she finished the shearing school.

She worked as a wool handler with the team for seven months and when a position became available Trevor gave her a start on a stand.

Five months on and Nicki can shear about 100 Merino ewes a day or 130 crossbred ewes a day.

"I feel pretty exhausted after a day of shearing, but it's such a good exhaustion," she said.

Nicki's aware she's a bit of a novelty when she takes to the stand at a new shed.

"I always feel eyes on me, everyone is always watching, but the woolgrowers are always encouraging me and come and shake my hand and tell me I have done a good job."

Nicki's yet to shear alongside another female (with the exception of competitions), but it doesn't worry her.

"I always get treated very well, I almost get treated like a bloke, we all laugh, joke and muck around," she said.

In fact it was Nicki's mother Helen who first taught Nicki some basics of shearing and encouraged her to learn the trade.

Earlier this year Nicki was pitted against her mother in a shearing competition at Nicki's former secondary school, Yanco Agricultural High School.

Much to her delight Nicki beat her mother in the intermediate level competition.

Nicki also competed in the novice shearing at Yass Show this year where she placed second in a field of eight.

Shearing has been a major change of pace for Nicki, who was working as an in-home carer prior to attending the shearing school, however she plans to stay with the trade as long as possible and said there was no shortage of work.

Whilst sowing was under way in the Riverina, she had picked up work with teams at

Gilgandra and on the Monaro.

Nicki's currently on a six-week holiday in the United States and is scoping out shearing opportunities in the country for next year.

"I would like to shear overseas next year in the US or England and Ireland," she said.

"There are always new styles to learn and ways to improve shearing Merinos and crossbreds in Australia. It will be another challenge to learn to shear overseas as the sheep are different and will require different styles of shearing."

Nicki shored at the Peter Westblade Memorial Challenge at Wagga Wagga in March and was given further advice and training from AWI shearer trainers.

Nicki also uses her skills to encourage other wool handlers to try shearing.

"I have recommended the shearing school to other wool handlers and classers I work with. I pass on my knowledge so they can have a practice on the stand before they attend the school."

Nicki is keen to obtain wool classing qualifications in the future.

BUILDING SKILLS IN STOCKMANSHIP AND VISUAL CLASSING

Due to limited opportunities now available in the jackaroo/jillaroo system, AWI has launched **a new set of educational resources** for workshops that aim to highlight the importance of the core skills of **stockmanship** and **Merino visual classing** in running a successful Merino enterprise.

AWI has developed new educational resources in stockmanship and Merino visual classing to help build the skills of young people interested in the Australian wool industry.

The content is designed for late secondary school, university and TAFE students, as well as new entrants to the industry. The resources, which are intended for use in a workshop setting, are available via the AWI website and include PowerPoint slides for each of the two topics along with presenter notes.

Practical activities are a key element of the workshop design.

AWI's Woolgrower Extension and Adoption Manager, Emily King, said the decline in the jackaroo and jillaroo system in recent years has led to less opportunity for young people to learn and build their skills in the industry, and this new resource is intended to help fill the gap.

"Due to a combination of factors including reduced sheep numbers, competing youth employment and the move away from larger Merino flocks, the traditional way for many young people to enter the industry has waned," she said.

"Woolgrowers have provided AWI with feedback that training of the next generation in fundamental sheep observation and appraisal skills is important for the running of Merino enterprises.

"This new workshop package helps address this concern by focusing on skill development in the key areas of stockmanship and Merino visual classing, which both contribute to on-farm profitability, and sheep health and welfare."

The stockmanship resources highlight the importance of animal observation and understanding natural sheep behaviour to effectively handle sheep. The aim is to teach skills that minimise stress on both the

sheep and the handler.

The Merino visual classing topic covers the principles of visual classing (including practical activities in the yards), flock objectives and selection for a 'type' to suit the environment, and the importance of balance between visual and objective assessments.

The resources are designed to provide the presenter with flexibility to deliver the workshop as a half-day Introduction to Merino Visual Classing and a half-day Introduction to Stockmanship, or as stand-alone full-day workshops with practical hands-on activities.

The presenter can modify the workshop materials to suit the level of industry knowledge, understanding and experience of the participants. The resources also include short video clips to demonstrate the stockmanship activities, and hand-outs with pointers to further reading. The AWI website

also points to further training opportunities and relevant links with other programs.

The workshop package is currently a pilot version and will be updated as AWI makes improvements to the content following further feedback. AWI encourages suggestions, which should be emailed to mark.scott@wool.com

"This package aims to promote career pathways in the Australian wool industry and enhance AWI's education and extension program that already includes Wool4School and Learn About Wool," Ms King added. B

MORE INFORMATION

PDF versions are available to download from the AWI website at www.wool.com/workshop-resources. PowerPoint files and other resources are available from AWI on application to mark.scott@wool.com



Screenshot from one of the educational videos on stockmanship in AWI's new workshop materials on stockmanship and Merino visual classing.

A POSITIVE APPROACH TO SUCCESSION AND BIG PICTURE PLANNING

Succession planning can be challenging, but a new **Pastoral Profit group in Hay** is helping local livestock producers and their families address the issue.

With three children aged 17 to 20, woolgrowers Peter and Lisa McCrabb from the western Riverina district of NSW certainly recognise the importance of succession planning and developing long term goals for their business.

Home is 'North Bundy', a 12,500 hectare property at Booroorban, where Peter and Lisa run a large self-replacing Merino flock. Peter's parents bought the property in 1974 and expanded it, with Peter and Lisa taking over the property in 1997.

Mid last year, Peter and Lisa were inspired to take a proactive approach to learning more about succession and business planning, after listening to two webinars, hosted by the Pastoral Profit program (and available to view on the Pastoral Profit website), about how to create an economically sustainable livestock business in the pastoral zone.

Peter contacted the Pastoral Profit NSW regional coordinator Mark Gardner and together they set up a Pastoral Profit activity in Hay that has a 'Big Picture Planning' focus, with an emphasis on helping bring younger family members into a farming business.

COMMUNICATION IS VITAL

"A key message that participants learnt is the importance of opening up lines of communication with other family members," Peter said. "Succession planning is often a complex issue for farm businesses, but the facilitated group discussions really helped in enabling individuals to communicate openly about their personal and business goals.

"Lisa and I have two children at university and another one close to finishing school, and they all attended at least one of the sessions. This whole of family approach worked well with open communication continuing back at home on the farm. We are now goal setting as a family – it's now a reality."

Understanding the different motivations, characteristics and needs of family members is essential for constructive planning to occur.

"While the major goals for the business are similar for all family members – long-term profit and viability, sustainability, animal welfare – there can be natural differences of opinion about how to achieve those goals. So it's important to find a productive communication pattern that works for your business and family so that everyone can

share their views. We find the structure of writing down our goals and business plan very useful."

BUSINESS PLANNING

Each family situation is unique and legal and accounting advice should be obtained to work through the succession process. It is important to consult and communicate openly with professionals as well as other family members.

Simon Sellars of Boyce Chartered Accountants attended an activity in February to talk through business structures, financial statements and his experience of succession planning. A financial planner will present at another session this month.

"It's important to learn about the roles of these professionals who contribute to the succession planning process," Peter said. "It was also useful to learn from other participants about the variety of business structures that they use, which can affect taxation for example, and also their experience with different professional advisors in the area.

"During another activity, we also learnt some useful information on farm viability, such as performance targets for livestock enterprises, financial benchmarking and general profit drivers."

To help with business planning, participants were encouraged to examine how their businesses were currently performing, identify the business and personal goals of all family members, and determine what business options were available in the future.

"Many of the participants learnt a lot from these business planning sessions, which have helped them get a long-term plan under way, with the help of professional advisors."

GROUPS AN IMPETUS FOR CHANGE

Lisa says each of the farming families in the group has been very keen to get practical benefits out of the group sessions, which have been well attended and have motivated the families to keep moving their businesses forward.

"As well as educating us about new business options and skills, the groups have been a real stimulus to prompt us to make some immediate changes, such as updating our superannuation arrangements.

"Wherever you are in the family or the business cycle, the time to start looking at ways to run a successful multi-generational business is now. The earlier you look at these things, the better off you are."



Peter and Lisa McCrabb with their three children at 'North Bundy', Booroorban, NSW.

PASTORAL PROFIT: FOR MIXED GRAZING PRODUCERS

The Pastoral Profit program is funded by AWI and MLA and is for mixed grazing producers in the pastoral zone. It directly addresses the challenges facing many pastoral livestock producers and encourages the adoption of new business management skills to improve bottom lines, applicable to their region and situation.

Pastoral Profit operates throughout Qld, NSW, SA and WA. To keep up to date with upcoming activities and to get involved visit the Pastoral Profit website. Alternatively, if there aren't any events listed, contact your local coordinator on the details provided on the website. **B**

MORE INFORMATION

www.pastoralprofit.com.au
Pastoral Profit national coordinator
Pene Keynes, (08) 8841 4500,
pastoralprofit.com.au/ruraldirections.com
NSW regional coordinator
Mark Gardner, 0419 611 302,
mark.gardner@vbs.net.au

NATIONAL MERINO CHALLENGE

- AWI's recently held National Merino Challenge (NMC) was a success, with more than 140 students from across Australia heading to Sydney to compete in the educational initiative.
- The NMC connected the future of the wool industry with industry professionals, highlighting an array of careers which involve working with wool.
- Yanco Agricultural High School was the Champion Team in the secondary school division, whilst the University of Melbourne was the Champion Team in the tertiary division.



More than 140 students from 21 schools, colleges, universities and TAFEs from across Australia last month came together in Sydney for the National Merino Challenge (NMC), now in its fourth year.

An AWI initiative, the NMC involves presentations and demonstrations from industry professionals to enable young people to develop their industry knowledge, skills and networks. Students participated in seven 'mini-challenges' across two days, testing their knowledge of Merino fleece, production and breeding and selection principles.

The mini challenges were:

1. AWEX typing
2. Wool valuing
3. Visual score assessment
4. Condition scoring
5. Nutrition and feed budgeting
6. Ewe selection
7. Ram selection

Techniques from several well-known industry initiatives, such as MERINOSELECT, Lifetime Ewe Management and Visual Sheep Scores, were used throughout the NMC, giving students a realistic and practical insight into the tools available to growers to make more informed decisions.

Other highlights of the NMC program included a shearing demonstration from shearer Dayne West, a presentation by

Australian Wool Network on the importance of effective woolhandling techniques for good clip preparation, and a careers session in which students were provided with advice on entering the agricultural sector from a panel of seven young professionals already in the industry.

Students enjoyed the NMC Industry Dinner and said they relished the opportunity to spend the evening with a range of wool industry participants, from woolgrowers to wool brokers and researchers. The keynote speech was delivered by AWI director David Webster.

With a growing list of sponsors and continued growth in participants every year, the NMC has quickly established itself as a leading education program for young students interested in a career in the wool industry. Nearly three times the number of students participated this year's NMC compared to its inaugural year in 2013.

AWI manager of woolgrower extension and adoption Emily King said the NMC had grown rapidly since its inception because it met the demands of a new generation.

"There is a strong wave of young people coming through who are increasingly enthusiastic about the wool industry," she said. "These are the young minds that will take the industry forward with new ideas and new leadership. It's exciting to see and great to be involved."

Participating schools and tertiary institutions this year included 20 students from Western

Australia. Kristy Walters from Murdoch University won the Tertiary Division.

"It was a privilege to be able to travel over east and compete in the 2016 National Merino Challenge. What a fantastic opportunity for young people interested in the Merino industry to directly engage with industry professionals and meet others studying similar courses across the country, at the same time competing to develop skills and knowledge.

"It's great to see the event growing each year and inspiring such enthusiasm and passion in the future generation. For myself, it was an inspiring opportunity to begin the transition from my last year of studying Animal Science at Murdoch University, WA, to entering the workforce and beginning my part to play in the agricultural industry next year."

Participating secondary schools were:

- Burra Community School, SA
- Cummins Area School, SA
- Hay War Memorial High School, NSW
- Molong Central School, NSW
- Mulwaree High School, Goulburn, NSW
- New England Girls' School, Armidale, NSW
- WA College of Agriculture – Cunderdin, WA
- WA College of Agriculture – Harvey, WA
- WA College of Agriculture – Narrogin, WA
- Woodleigh School, Langwarrin South, Vic
- Yanco Agricultural High School, NSW



A WA College of Agriculture student showing her skills at **fleece throwing and wool handling**.



Students undertaking the **ram selection** activity.

Participating TAFEs and universities were:

- Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW
- La Trobe University, Melbourne, Vic
- Murdoch University, Perth, WA
- TAFE New England, Armidale, NSW
- TAFE Riverina, Wagga Wagga, NSW

- TAFE Western, Dubbo, NSW
- The University of Adelaide, SA
- University of Melbourne, Vic
- University of New England, Armidale, NSW
- University of Sydney, NSW

AWI thanks the 2016 NMC sponsors – Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, Australian Wool

Education Trust, Australian Wool Network, NSW Stud Merino Breeders Association, Michell Wool, NSW Department of Primary Industries, and Bralca – for making this event possible, as well as the dedicated volunteers for their time and expertise and the woolgrowers who provided their sheep: Roseville Park, Hillcrest Park and the University of Sydney.

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Yanco Agricultural High School was the winning team in the secondary school division.



The University of Melbourne was the winning team in the tertiary division.

SECONDARY SCHOOL DIVISION AWARDS

Champion	Tessa Runting, Woodleigh School
Second Place	Lauren Rayner, WA College of Agriculture – Narrogin
Third Place	Deanna Johnston, Yanco Agricultural High School
Champion Team	Yanco Agricultural High School
Top Performer in Wool Section	Ella McCarthy, Woodleigh School
Top Performer in Breeding Section	Tessa Runting, Woodleigh School
Top Performer in Production Section	Lauren Rayner, WA College of Agriculture – Narrogin

TERTIARY DIVISION AWARDS

Champion	Kristy Walters, Murdoch University
Second Place	Sarah Hain, University of New England
Third Place	Wendy Parish, University of Melbourne
Champion Team	University of Melbourne
Top Performer in Wool Section	Wendy Parish, University of Melbourne
Top Performer in Breeding Section	Sarah Hain, University of New England
Top Performer in Production Section	Kristy Walters, Murdoch University



Condition scoring was one of the seven activities in the National Merino Challenge competition.

MARKET INTELL

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON

THE EMI CONTINUES TO PERFORM WELL

Tchart 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 (February 2016 – April 2016) in Australian dollar terms compared with the past five years January 2011 to January 2016 (circles) and the previous decade January 2001 – December 2010 (squares).

From February 2016 – April 2016, the monthly EMI averaged at \$12.52, tracking at the 83rd percentile against the past five-year monthly EMI. The percentile value (83rd) indicates that the five-year monthly EMI recorded a price lower than \$12.52 for 83 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 \$12.52 (February 2016 – April 2016) for only 17 per cent of the time.

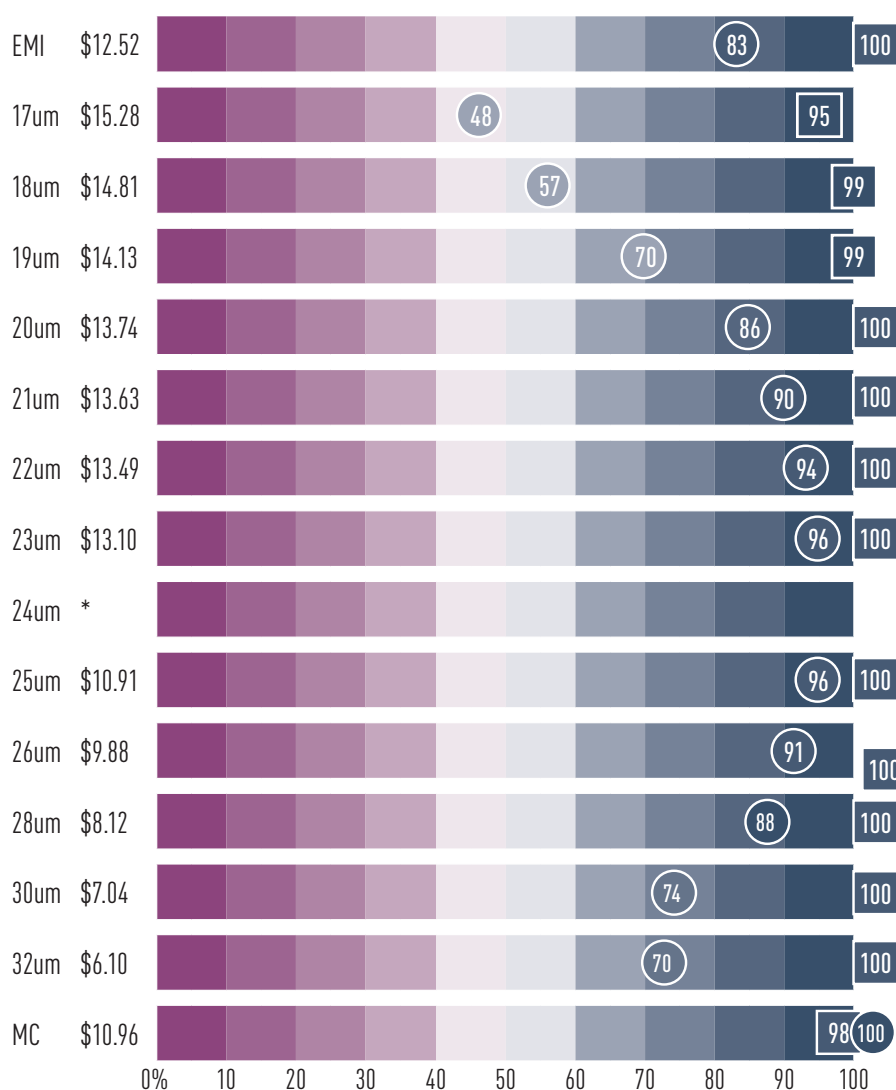
While the EMI is tracking at the 83rd percentile over the past five years, it is at the 100th percentile when compared to January 2001 – December 2010. This means the current EMI of \$12.52 (February 2016 – April 2016) is higher than it was at any time during that decade.

The mid microns and Merino Cardings (MC) have performed particularly well recently. For the past three months (February 2016 – April 2016) Merino Cardings averaged at \$10.96, operating at the 100th percentile for the past five years and the 98th percentile for the first decade of the century.

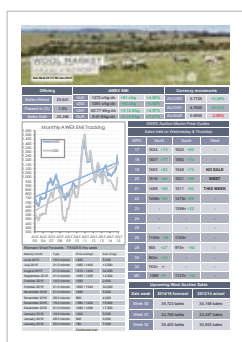
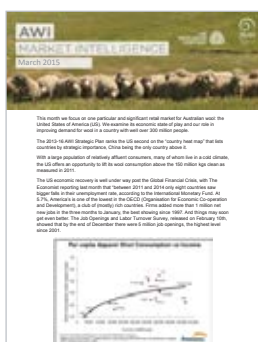
For the same period, 18 micron averaged at a monthly value of \$14.81 (57th percentile and 99th percentile respectively), 21 micron averaged at \$13.63 (90th percentile and 100th percentile), and 28 micron averaged at \$8.12 (88th percentile and 100th percentile). **B**

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI FOR FEB 2016 - APRIL 2016 COMPARED WITH

● PAST 5 YEARS JAN 2011 - JAN 2016 ■ THE DECADE JAN 2001 - DEC 2010



*Insufficient data



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

MICRON PROFILE CHANGES OVER PAST DECADE

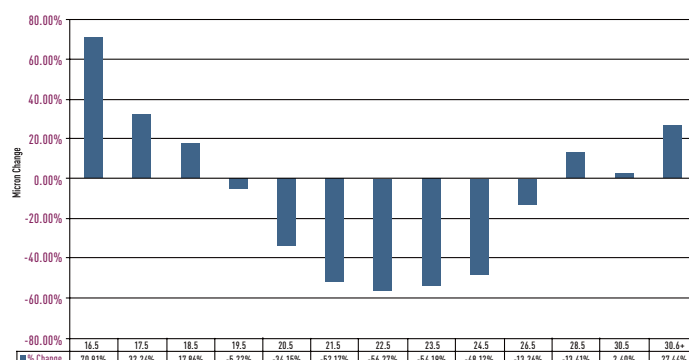
The graphs below show the evolution of the micron profile of the Australian wool clip, nationally and state by state, from the 2005/06 season to the 2015/16 season.

They show a massive shift towards the finer end of Merino wool production as well as a trend to increasing volumes of crossbred wool, basically a by-product of the lamb meat production. Significantly, the charts also show a reluctance of land owners to move towards medium and broad wool Merinos, creating a national under-supply of wools of 20 to 24 micron.

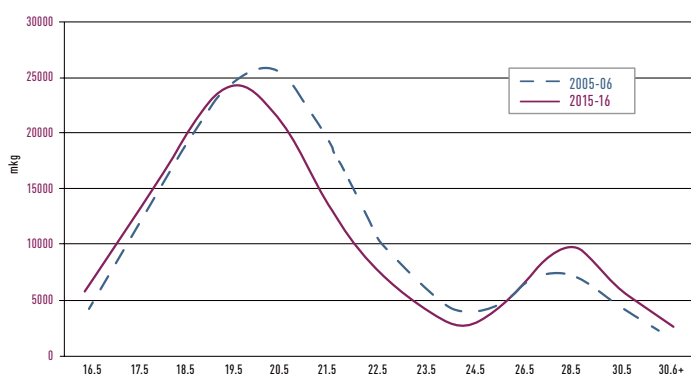
When looked at in conjunction with the price percentile bands on the opposite page, it is clearly evident as to the relevance that supply has as one factor in the price determination of wool, both to the positive and negative effects.

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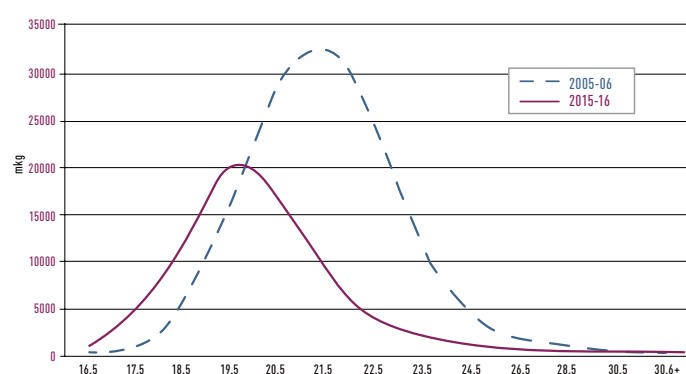
NATIONAL



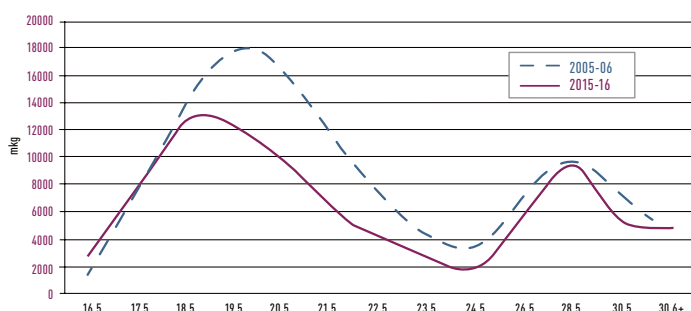
NEW SOUTH WALES



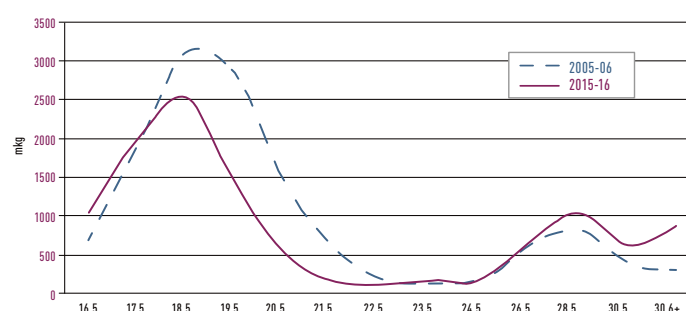
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



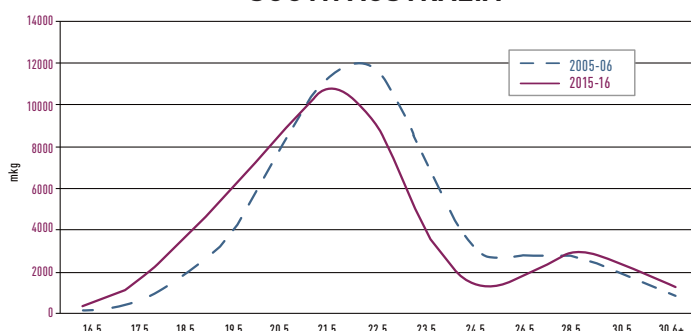
VICTORIA



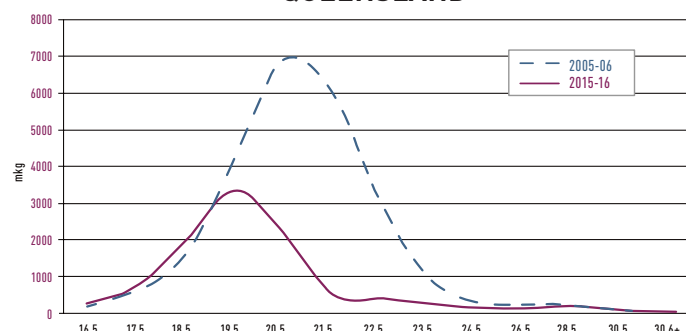
TASMANIA



SOUTH AUSTRALIA



QUEENSLAND



A VIEW FROM THE FRONTLINE



Stuart Ford, AWI General Manager
– Western Hemisphere

Continuing our series of feature articles written for *Beyond the Bale* by industry experts, in this edition **Stuart Ford**, AWI's General Manager for the Western Hemisphere, who joined the company in March, provides his perspective on the complexities of international marketing and the challenges faced by the international offices of AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company.

With a realigned corporate structure and executive team, I thought it might be timely to describe the landscape from the perspective of your team in the field.

We operate against the backdrop of a retailing world beset with challenges such as online competitors, capricious consumers, manic discounting, extreme currency fluctuations, unseasonable weather patterns, volatile macro-economic pressures, and inflated market expectations, just to name a few. Grabbing the attention of a pressured senior retail executive to talk about wool as an integral element of their business strategy can be quite the challenge. In the field, the only way it works is to carefully tease out the retailer's pain point – whether that be margin pressure, greater yield per square metre, price point elevation, competitive differentiation or others – and spinning a story (no pun intended) about how wool can be a solution to that particular ill.

That skill and depth of understanding of retail sensitivities and metrics is often not native to those not born into that world. In the best of times it is hardly simple, and in the crazy confusion of the current retail reality, then it is even harder. We are tasking our international Woolmark teams to not only be expert in wool as a fibre but to master the nuances of the complex global channel that distributes it to consumers. Ultimately, that takes time, expertise and training. We are constantly upskilling our people through a structured process of support, counselling, best-practice modelling and mentoring so that they have the best chance to grab the attention of our retail brand partners.

Our engagement is also rarely at a single level in the brand. We have to be flexible enough to change our language to match the

audience – from educating designers about wool's unique characteristics, championing supply chain optimisations, providing the tools for merchants to sell end product, helping marketing teams plan promotions, and training the store personnel to support sell through efficiency. We also have to be familiar with multiple segments including haute couture, womenswear, bespoke heritage men's tailoring, cutting-edge sports and performance wear, emerging contemporary trends and on, as well as how that spills down to the shoulder and mass merchants.

To top off all this, these representations and presentations need to be made in multiple languages, across grueling time zone restrictions, accounting for often subtle cultural priorities, differing body type fits, and actively engaging partners with marketing budgets (and egos) that often dwarf our own. That is what makes this particular industry both annoyingly complex and ultimately so interesting.

We also operate in two distinct capacities. We are on one hand defending existing markets, such as suiting for example, from attack from competitive fibres, economic pressure and price sensitivities of brands. However, we are also on the offence trying to find ever-new market opportunities for wool to be presented in new categories as the fibre for all reasons and all seasons. This requires us to engage with brands to ferret out their needs and liaise with our trade and supply partners to help them optimise their innovation investments to address these needs.

This is why the new structure – Western and Eastern Regional management – is so critical to the future success of AWI and The Woolmark Company. Our Western Region team (Europe and the Americas) primarily relate to our retail partners maximising

opportunities for wool consumption and discovering latent fibre performance or characteristic needs. Our Eastern Region team (India, Australia and ASEAN countries) optimise our supply chain alignment ensuring our trade partners produce the products and innovations that the brands need so as to maximise consumption. However, in a global business like ours, those divisions are not simple or absolute. We end up supporting both trade and retail brands across worldwide initiatives on both sides of the globe where consumers and producers meet. We have to remain nimble, agile, fully informed and efficient.

The Woolmark Company's team has some of the most passionate and engaged people I have ever worked with. They are eager to learn, willing to pull the long hours, dedicated to the outcomes and proud ambassadors for wool. They are guided by a team of executives with a balanced skill set across marketing, brand, trade, training and innovation. This range of disciplines is required to ensure best representation of the myriad of opportunities that wool represents.

Timing is also ideal with a groundswell of interest in ecologically sustainable products that won't end up clogging landfill sites and that have a heritage value beyond a single season use. Consumers are better educated and more informed about their choices with an ever increasing set of purchase options available to them. It is the right time for wool, aligned so well with these cultural movements. We are selectively working with the right calibre brands and trade vendors that best represent our noble fibre and its heritage. We look forward to continued success for wool.

Best Wishes from your team in the field. **B**

READERS' PHOTOS!

Have you got any interesting photos that you'd like to share with other readers of *Beyond the Bale*?

If so, please email the image and a brief

description to the editor of *Beyond the Bale* Richard Smith at richard.smith@wool.com.

Here are a few photos that we have recently received from readers.

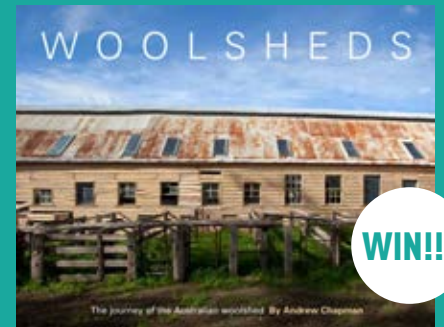
WOOL MAKING ITS MARK IN AFL

AFL club presidents at the launch of the 2016 AFL season, all wearing their 100% Australian Merino wool club scarves developed as part of AWI's Fibre of Football campaign.



SMOKO!

Andrea Mitchell of 'Kilpa' at Savernake in the southern Riverina region of NSW sent in this photo of her daughter Sophia on a smoko while droving sheep 20kms from their property to agistment.



If you submit a photo that gets published in Readers' Photos, you'll receive an autographed copy of Andrew Chapman's 'Woolsheds'.

This 216-page hardback book is an invaluable historical record of an Australian icon. It is also available to purchase from www.andrewchapmanphotography.com and good bookshops.

COOL WOOL!

Alice von Pein of 'Bellalie' at Kogan in the Darling Downs region of Queensland sent in this cool photo of her pet sheep Claire who is now grown up and has just had her first lamb.



PEEKABOO!

Liz Blechynden at Boyup Brook in the south-west of WA sent in this photo of an inquisitive ewe that ended up in a strainer-post hole that had just been dug. The ewe didn't look concerned and, after a lot of heaving, was safely returned to her usual 'above ground' position!



INNOVATIVE SHEARING CONVEYORS

Geoff and Helen Wurst's 'Wurralea' shearing shed at Laura in South Australia's Mid North region, with travelling shearing conveyors shown in front of the shearing stands. They are designed to ease the burden on backs, taking shorn fleece from the shearer and ready to throw on the table for classing.





You can make a difference
to their lives and yours
by using Tri-Solfen.

Angus Carter and
his daughter Mary,
Calliope, Kentucky, NSW

As woolgrowers we want what's best for our animals. Complications from mulesing can put their welfare at risk, which is why I use Tri-Solfen. Tri-Solfen provides rapid pain relief for at least 24 hours and reduces bleeding and stress. You can also let buyers know your wool is ethically produced, by declaring you use pain relief on the National Wool Declaration. So join me and make a difference to the welfare of your animals and our industry by using Tri-Solfen when mulesing. Become a Better Choices member and find out why pain relief is a better choice.



Pain relief is a better choice.

To become a Better Choices member visit www.betterchoices.com.au



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