

Beyond the bale

ISSUE 71 JUNE 2017

PROFIT FROM WOOL INNOVATION

www.wool.com



TENNIS ACE
RAFAEL NADAL
**SPORTS
MERINO WOOL**



Beyond the bale

www.wool.com/btb

EDITOR

Richard Smith
E richard.smith@wool.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Lisa Griplas
E lisa.griplas@wool.com

Australian Wool Innovation Limited

A L6, 68 Harrington St, The Rocks,
Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 4177, Sydney NSW 2001
P 02 8295 3100
E info@wool.com W wool.com
AWI Helpline 1800 070 099

SUBSCRIPTION

Beyond the Bale is available free.
To subscribe contact AWI
P 02 8295 3100 E info@wool.com

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

COPYRIGHT

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

DISCLAIMER

To the extent permitted by law, Australian Wool Innovation Ltd excludes all liability for loss or damage arising from the use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this publication.
The Woolmark symbol is a certification mark registered in many countries.
© 2017 Australian Wool Innovation Ltd. All rights reserved.

ADVERTISING SALES

Max Hyde, Hyde Media Pty Ltd
P 03 5659 5292
E max@maxhyde.com.au
Advertising is subject to terms and conditions published on the ratecard, which is available from Hyde Media.

ISSN

1447-9680

FRONT COVER

Tennis ace **Rafael Nadal** fronts the latest AWI-supported marketing campaign by premium apparel brand **Tommy Hilfiger**, stepping out in three Woolmark-certified suits crafted from Australian Merino wool. See page 4.



18 COUNTRY ROAD WINTER CAMPAIGN



36 MERINO LIFETIME PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

OFF-FARM

- 4 Rafael Nadal and Tommy Hilfiger**
- 5** Farage suits the Sydney Swans
- 6 Wool Week Australia**
- 10** Burton and Merino snowboarding
- 11** XTM's Merino snow gear
- 12 ORTOVOX traceability campaign**
- 14** New knitting technologies
- 15** Australian's Merino tennis apparel
- 16** GQ China shoots in Melbourne
- 16** Wool given the royal treatment
- 17** Merino wool's passage to India
- 18 Country Road's winter woollies**
- 20** International Woolmark Prize
- 21 An enduring relationship with wool**
- 22** Smitten with Merino
- 23** Huntsman on Savile Row
- 24** Double Rainbouu debuts wool
- 25** Ten Pieces: ten out of ten
- 25** Bradford Textile Society awards
- 26 Japanese set on Aussie wool**
- 27** AEG's care label project
- 28** Educating textile students
- 30** Hong Kong Wool Resource Centre
- 31** Wool springs into Korean bedding

AWI INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

- Marketing
- Sheep Production
- Woolgrower Services

WOOL.COM

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

- twitter.com/woolinnovation
- youtube.com/AWIWoolProduction
- wool.com/podcast



ON-FARM

- 32 The Truth About Wool national tour**
- 34** Profitable wool in WA's Wheatbelt
- 35** MyMobTracker app
- 36 Merino Lifetime Productivity update**
- 38** Wild dog and fox workshops
- 39** New Farmer Footrot Tool
- 40 Breeding for breach strike resistance**
- 42 Treating lice on pregnant ewes**
- 44 New shed an investment in the future**
- 46 Training website to improve shearing**
- 47** Code of conduct woolshed poster
- 48** Shear-jitsu helps prevent injury
- 49** Shearing showcased to the public
- 50** Sophie Huf: Aussie wool handler
- 51** Making More From Sheep
- 52 Trends in wool quality discounts**
- 53** Nuffield Scholarships close soon
- 54** Jackaroo training course to expand
- 55** Monaro Farming Systems trainee
- 56 EMI's stellar run continues**
- 57** Merino segment continues its rise
- 58** An insider's view on China
- 59** Market insights from Stuart Ford
- 60 Woolgrower trip to China**
- 62** Readers' photos

WOOLMARK.COM

MERINO.COM

- facebook.com/TheWoolmarkCompany
- twitter.com/woolmark
- instagram.com/TheWoolmarkCompany
- youtube.com/TheWoolmarkCompany

BTB 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

POSITIVE WOOL PRICES CONTINUE

Wool prices have continued their strong start to 2017. While the EMI surpassed 1,400c for the first two months of the year, it has gone on to reach above 1,500c for almost all of the subsequent three months. We all hope these prices can be sustained over the long-term to reward the hard work and loyalty that woolgrowers have demonstrated towards the fibre. With supply having not diminished, I believe the strong prices are due to a consistent and steady long-term shift in consumer sentiment towards the fibre and appreciation for its premium natural qualities. With international retail spending down, other competitive fibre prices depressed, four per cent more wool on the market this year and wool prices continuing to go up, we are clearly seeing genuine and significant demand which demonstrates our market strategies have had an effect.

UPHOLDING STANDARDS IN THE SHED

Adequate numbers of highly skilled professional staff to harvest and handle the Australian wool clip is vital to the Australian wool industry. For its part, AWI provides funds for shearer and wool handler training, and shearing competitions, to help encourage better techniques and professionalism in shearing and woolhandling. Just as vital – not only in every shearing shed in Australia but for the entire wool industry – is woolgrowers having their sheep and shed well prepared for shearing, upholding the best in animal welfare, and setting standards for their entire shearing team. Good communication between woolgrowers, contractors and shearing teams is essential, and displaying the industry's 'code of conduct' poster in the shed can help woolgrowers ensure standards are met. Copies of the poster are available from AWI (see page 47).

MIXED ENTERPRISES

How and where wool fits into a mixed enterprise has often been a difficult question

for many producers, but those producers who fit wool within their business are finding it works well and is an important additional enterprise. Given the recent past experience of variable seasonal conditions, plus the high input costs of cropping, producers in the wheat-sheep zone and low rainfall areas are seeing the benefit of having a wool enterprise to manage their risk.

NEW STRAIN OF RABBIT CALICIVIRUS

A strain of rabbit calicivirus (RHDV1 K5) new to Australia was released in March at 550 sites across the country. Laboratory tests on samples recently collected from dead wild rabbits in NSW, Victoria, ACT, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, indicate that they had the K5 strain. While it is still too early to see how widespread the impact of the K5 release will be, it is encouraging to hear that release sites have reportedly seen an impressive 42 per cent average reduction in wild rabbit numbers and there has been confirmation that K5 has already spread from some release sites. This initiative will boost other biocontrol activity and help woolgrowers increase their productivity.

WOOLGROWERS HIGHLIGHTED IN MARKETING

The source of Australian wool and the stories of the woolgrowers that grow the fibre are increasingly being used by industry partners in their marketing to consumers. Australian lifestyle brand Country Road and German mountainwear company ORTOVOX are two examples of companies that are using Australian wool's provenance story as a core ingredient in their high-value end product. You can read about their latest marketing campaigns on pages 18 and 12 respectively. Australian wool has a wonderful story and I am confident that we will continue to see an increasing enthusiasm of leading brands to use the farm to fashion narrative to help market their wool products to consumers.

AUSTRALIAN WOOL WEEK

Australian retailers came together for Wool Week which was held in May to coincide with the start of the Australian winter retail season. An initiative that arose from the global Campaign for Wool, Wool Week champions the eco-credentials of the fibre, making it the perfect choice for today's conscious consumer – for products from luxurious fine Merino wool apparel through to beautiful hardwearing interior products for the home. This year, AWI also collaborated with leading shopping centre Westfield for its winter fashion campaign, celebrating Australian wool, the growers who produce the fibre and the designers who use it. It was pleasing to see so many store fronts promoting wool – we are fortunate to have great brands to help do this during Wool Week.

AWI PODCAST FOR WOOLGROWERS

AWI's free podcast, The Yarn, which was launched last year, has been well received by Australian woolgrowers. It is an audio report designed to be listened to on a smartphone or on a computer, and complements our other regular communications to woolgrowers such as *Beyond the Bale*, monthly e-newsletter and market intelligence updates. The Yarn includes reports from our staff across the world on marketing initiatives to increase the demand for Australian wool, plus our on-farm and off-farm R&D results. I recommend that you take a listen. Further details are available at www.wool.com/podcast

NEW AWI GENERAL MANAGER, RESEARCH

After a thorough search for suitable candidates for the significant role of General Manager, Research, I am delighted to welcome Dr Jane Littlejohn back to AWI. Having previously held the role of General Manager, On farm Research at AWI, Dr Littlejohn has a strong and proven track record in managing this portfolio and delivering on-farm results for woolgrowers. She has spent the past year managing the National Wild Dog Action Plan.

GAME,

Tennis ace **Rafael Nadal** fronts **Tommy Hilfiger's** latest campaign, stepping out in three Woolmark-certified suits crafted from **Australian Merino wool**.

AWI has partnered with Tommy Hilfiger for its latest THFLEX campaign, as part of the high-end brand's Tailored Collection for Spring/Summer 2017.

Tennis ace Rafael Nadal returns as the face of the collection, who for three seasons has fronted the THFLEX campaign. The current campaign takes suiting to innovative new heights, unveiling three lightweight, high-performance, Woolmark-certified suits that are perfectly tailored to move and invites consumers to ace the everyday.

"Woolmark sets the gold standard for luxury wool and their innovative fabrics blend

comfort and flexibility with the modern, sophisticated feel of Tommy Hilfiger Tailored," said Tommy Hilfiger.

"We are honoured that Nadal continues to partner with our brand. He is an amazing athlete and the THFLEX suits perfectly reflect his modern and effortless approach to style."

The THFLEX collection is both wrinkle-free and lightweight, naturally elastic and highly breathable, making it perfect for those on the go and celebrates Tommy Hilfiger's long history of weaving athletic influences into their designs.

Rafael Nadal wearing one of the Woolmark-certified suits in marketing from the **Tommy Hilfiger** campaign.



A billboard at **Frankfurt Airport** in Germany, in situ 2-29 May, in a location that receives **traffic of 3.2 million people per month**. There were similar billboards at the airports in **Barcelona** and **Madrid** in April, **Amsterdam** in May and **Paris Charles de Gaulle** during the Roland-Garros tennis tournament 28 May-11 June.

SET, MATCH

TO NADAL AND MERINO WOOL

"We're extremely pleased to partner with such an authentic brand like Tommy Hilfiger, and one which prides itself on quality and attention to detail," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "The three suits as part of the THFLEX collection perfectly represent the innate versatility of Merino wool, and marry together the traditional craft of fine tailoring with attributes more commonly found in performance garments such as the flexibility to move."

The campaign had strong digital support, with Tommy Hilfiger running a series of 'fun wool facts' on its social media channels, including: "Crafted from finest Australian wool, THFLEX suits are certified by The Woolmark Company, which provides a mark of quality. Naturally elastic and crease resistant, wool is the original all-natural, high-performance fabric".

Tommy Hilfiger is one of the world's most recognised premium designer lifestyle groups. With the support of strong global consumer recognition, Tommy Hilfiger has

built an extensive distribution network in more than 115 countries and more than 1,600 retail stores throughout North America, Europe, Latin America and the Asia Pacific region. Global retail sales of the Tommy Hilfiger brand were US\$6.5 billion in 2015.

The three innovative Woolmark-certified suits which are designed to provide a sophisticated look with a relaxed ease and comfort are:

THE PERFORMANCE SUIT

Crafted from 97% stretch wool for ultimate liberation of fit. Unconstructed and unlined, with mesh detailing and pants with a jogger-inspired elasticated waistband.

THE ULTRA-LIGHT SUIT

Ultra-light 65% wool-cotton blend, this fully-lined suit jacket weighs less than a shirt. Micro-geo jacquard lining, with grosgrain signature stripe tape details.



Rafael Nadal during the filming of the Tommy Hilfiger campaign.

THE TRAVEL SUIT

100% wool with natural stretch finishing in 3D knit-style texture. Fully lined and wrinkle free, with lightweight construction. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.tommy.com

SYDNEY SWANS DRESS TO IMPRESS IN FARAGE



Sydney Swans players **Dane Rame, captain Josh Kennedy, Luke Parker and Kieran Jack.**

A new campaign from Australian label Farage sees leading AFL players from the Sydney Swans running through Sydney's CBD dressed to impress.

Swans captain Josh Kennedy and teammates Dane Rame, Luke Parker and Kieran Jack suit-up to promote the latest range of Farage's Micro Weight collection, with the campaign highlighting similarities between the performance abilities of these star players and the technical attributes of Merino wool.

"The campaign is very focused on the performance of wool," explains Farage owner/designer Joe Farage. "The Micro Weight suits

are lightweight in construction – about half the weight of a traditional suit – resistant to wrinkles and water, and are perfectly suited to the man on the run."

Farage's relationship with the Sydney Swans started eight years ago, when the brand was approached to design suits for all staff and players.

"We then became their official sponsor four years ago, and now all Swans staff and players are dressed in Farage. The Swans are so proudly Sydney and with Farage being intrinsically Australian, it's so important for us to align with other like-minded, iconic Australian brands. AFL players are also the

The latest campaign from Australian tailor and new Woolmark licensee **Farage** – which is an **official sponsor** of the **Sydney Swans** – showcases the agility of the AFL players teamed with the **performance benefits of Merino wool.**

perfect fit for Farage suits; with their athletic build they epitomise the modern-day man."

Farage is the latest brand to join the Woolmark licensing program, gaining Woolmark certification across its range of men's suits.

"For us, Woolmark is all about heritage and authenticity, and it is the most significant like-minded Australian brand with global reach," says Joe. "Its focus on quality aligns to us and what I love most is its rich history and provenance." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.farage.com.au



Marketing imagery from Westfield's Winter 2017 marketing campaign, a collaboration between Westfield and The Woolmark Company, which was released in conjunction with Wool Week. Shot at Anlaby Station in South Australia, pictured (left to right) are: Anlaby co-owners Peter Hayward and Andrew Morphet, Westfield fashion ambassador Kitty Callaghan, international fashion model Stephanie Field, Kitty's brother Monty Callaghan, Stephanie's mother Angela of Benangaroo Station, NSW, and Stephanie's twin cousins Macleay and Hudson.

WESTFIELD'S WINTER CAMPAIGN

Westfield shopping centres across the country threw their support behind Wool Week, promoting the initiative alongside **the retail giant's own Winter 2017 fashion campaign**, which **celebrates Australian wool**, the growers who produce it and designers who use it.

Westfield's four-month winter campaign supports local retailers, heroing wool in a curated selection of winter apparel and accessories. Marketing imagery for the campaign was shot by Westfield at the beautifully restored Anlaby Station in South Australia, one of Australia's oldest Merino studs.

The campaign features new-season fashion worn by real wool-growing families including Anlaby co-owners Andrew Morphet and Peter Hayward, alongside international fashion model Stephanie Field with her mother, Angela, of Benangaroo Station in NSW – see top image.

"I'm proud to be a Westfield ambassador and to share the important story of Australian wool-growing families," said Stephanie. "This campaign resonates so strongly with me and my family because Westfield and The Woolmark Company are telling the 'farm to fashion' wool story, recognising the people who produce one of the most important fibres for fashion worldwide."

Bill Burton, Group General Manager, Brand & Media Experience, Scentre Group which owns Westfield, says: "This season, Westfield and The Woolmark Company have partnered to celebrate a story of Australian provenance,

working together to bring the modern wool story alive. This campaign gives customers inspiration on how to integrate wool into their new season wardrobe, alongside a wide range of winter footwear, accessories and apparel from a number of Australia's favourite brands, all available at Westfield."

Winter apparel from **more than 30 retailers**, **all available to buy at Westfield shopping centres**, are featured in the campaign including Wool Week partners: **Bianca Spender, Country Road, Jeanswest, Kookai, M.J. Bale, R.M. Williams, Rodd & Gunn, Saba, Sportscraft, Cue and Trenery.**

"Following last year's successful collaboration, The Woolmark Company has once again partnered with Westfield to shine the spotlight on wool this winter retail season," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

"In addition, being able to showcase the best Australian winter fashion on one of Australia's oldest Merino farms is truly a special and unique story. Anlaby Station represents just one of many wool-growing families across Australia who work tirelessly to produce this precious, innovative and versatile fibre, and we are proud to share this story with consumers across the country.

FAST FACTS

- Retailers threw their support behind Australia's seventh annual Wool Week, held last month (13-21 May) to coincide with the start of the winter retail season, with many having in-store events, window installations and online promotions.
- An initiative of AWI and its subsidiary The Woolmark Company, Wool Week arose from the global Campaign for Wool that aims to educate consumers about the natural benefits of wool and increase sales of wool product.
- The campaign was joined for the second year running by shopping centre giant Westfield which aligned its own Winter 2017 fashion campaign with Wool Week to champion the natural fibre.

A video shot at the Anlaby Merino Stud was played on a **giant TV billboard** by Westfield in the central atrium of its Bondi Junction store.



AUSTRALIA



Jigsaw



Ted Baker



Sheridan

RETAILERS BACK WOOL WEEK

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



SABA



Kookai



Myer (pictured is the bedding department)



M.J. Bale



Rodd & Gunn

TURN OVER FOR MORE WOOL WEEK NEWS >>

EXAMPLES OF WOOL WEEK ACTIVITIES



This **Giant Sheep** installation created by Sam Gazal Installations was on show at **Westfield Bondi Junction**. It incorporates a Merino sheep's head covered in 20 kilograms of wool top, a body made of the latest wool fashion from **Country Road**, **SABA**, **Farage**, **M.J. Bale**, **Rodd & Gunn** and **R.M. Williams**, and pasture made of wool felting, knitting and other creative techniques.



Country Road's "Stay ahead of the flock" installation at **Westfield**.



Four handwoven woollen artworks by sisters **Lauren and Cassandra Hernandez** of **Crossing Threads** were on show at **Westfield Bondi Junction**.



In South Australia, **Westfield Marion** held a Q&A with Westfield ambassador and model **Samantha Harris** to discuss the latest wool trends. Source: Instagram



For the second year, **KPC Yarns** held an exhibition in line with Wool Week along with a series of workshops to explore artists' relationships with wool colour. At the exhibition launch, in Paddington in Sydney, artists and foodies **Jacqui Fink**, **Meredith Gaston**, **Julie Gibbs** and **Indira Naidoo** discussed the healing power of stitching, growing and creating in our daily lives.



Australian label **Jac+ Jack**, known worldwide for their luxury knitwear, released an online video in line with Wool Week. Educating consumers on how to properly wash wool, the video uses imagery, music and story to weave a humorous narrative that takes you step-by-step through the process of how to correctly care for your favourite knits. View the video at www.jacandjack.com



In Victoria, **Westfield Doncaster** commissioned a stunning 100 per cent Merino wool installation by extreme knitter **Jacqui Fink**. It comprised more than 145 kgs of hand knitted pieces of Australian Merino wool tops. This picture is taken from a fascinating time lapse video, available on the Westfield Doncaster Instagram channel, which compressed the five hour install into a mere 28 seconds. Jacqui also held some hugely popular extreme knitting classes at Westfield Bondi Junction. Source: Instagram



Smart screens throughout **Westfield** promoted **brands selling wool products** (example right) and the benefits of wool (example left).

Sportscraft
www.sportscraft.com.au



Godfrey Hirst
www.godfreyhirst.com

Country Road
www.countryroad.com.au

Rodd & Gunn
www.rodandgunn.com

WOOL WEEK ONLINE

As well as promoting their wool products in their 'bricks and mortar stores', brands and retailers also participated in Wool Week online via social media and their **websites** which provided consumers with **direct links to wool products to purchase online**. Here is a small example of some of the retailers' online promotions.

#WOOLWEEK Woolgrowers, brands, consumers – they all had the chance to **celebrate Wool Week** on **social media** using the #woolweek and related hashtags. Here is a small example of some of the images posted.



Amanda Michael
(‘Carriewerloo Station’, Port Augusta, SA)



Lucy Shorter
(‘Boola’, Burren Junction, NSW)



Tracey Kruger
(Penshurst, Vic)



LoveMerino
(Glenwood Merinos, Wellington, NSW)



Azulant Akora
(fashion label, Perth, WA)



Rodd & Gunn
(featuring Geelong’s Tom Hawkins)

BURTON AND MERINO PROVIDE THE ULTIMATE SNOWBOARD EXPERIENCE



Source: Instagram



Source: Instagram



Leading snowboarding brand **Burton** has expanded its range of **Merino wool apparel and accessories**, saying “with wool, Mother Nature got it right and we want more of it”.



Source: Instagram



Source: Instagram



The Woolmark Company's sheep mascot and the Woolmark logo was regularly seen by the public on the slopes and at the Woolmark booth – pictured here with first place getter **Anna Gasser** signing autographs.

The annual Burton US Open Snowboarding Championships is undoubtedly one of the world's most prestigious snowboard tournaments across the world. Attracting the likes of two-time Winter Olympic Gold Medalist Shaun White, who bagged his seventh win for the Burton US Open Halfpipe event, and Aussie rider Scotty James who came in second.

But for Australian woolgrowers, it's Merino wool which really brought home the gold.

In a new partnership with Burton, AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company sponsored this year's competition in March, in Vail, Colorado, giving riders and spectators the opportunity to preview an upcoming collection of 100% Australian Merino wool base-layers, shirts, bottoms and accessories co-developed with Burton. The apparel is due to hit the stores in October, just in time for the northern hemisphere's ski season.

"Our company founder, Jake Burton, requested Merino wool base-layers in our product lineup as the pinnacle offering," said Burton Category Manager for Innovation, Sourcing and Raw Materials, Colin Alger. "Following both Jake's lead and the current trend in wool, we implemented the fibre into our range.

"Wool by nature is inherently technical in so many ways, with attributes including thermoregulation, anti-odour, moisture-transport, stain resistance, easy care, soft, stretch and recovery. At the same time, wool is an all-natural, renewable fibre that we sustainably source through our supply chain. This, matched with Burton's positioning in the market as a premium alternative mountain lifestyle brand, found wool perfectly complement and successfully transition across our on-snow performance-based products into our year-round lifestyle products.

"With the success of our sell in year one with just a small offering of Merino wool products, we have increased our product footprint for the next season, and plan to double our volume. With wool, Mother Nature got it right and we want more of it."

At The Woolmark Company's booth in Vail in March, visitors not only got up close with Burton's forthcoming Merino wool collection, but were also educated on the natural benefits of wool, were able to take a photo with a life-sized photo of AWI's ram-bassador Fred, and could attend an autograph signing with Austrian snowboarder, Anna Gasser, who won first place in the slopestyle event.

The Woolmark logo was visible across the mountain, shown on the side of the halfpipe, on the Woolmark booth in the sponsors' village at the mountain's base, and seen on a sheep mascot who hit the slopes in style. The sheep mascot also promoted the social hashtag #RideWithMerino and was so popular that he was often spotted on Fox Sports riding around the halfpipe. On social media, hundreds of people uploaded images with #RideWithMerino and close to 50,000 people saw our Snapchat geofilter promoting the Woolmark brand.

Britteny Cox of Australia, who wears **XTM** Merino wool base-layers, winning the **Women's Moguls at the FIS Freestyle Ski & Snowboard 2017 World Championships** in March in Sierra Nevada, Spain. *PHOTO: David Ramos/Getty Images*

EXTRA PERFORMANCE WITH XTM

With the **2018 Winter Olympics** just eight months away, the prospective members of the **Australian team** are **staying warm on the slopes** thanks to Merino wool base-layers from **Australian ski and outdoor brand XTM**, which is a proud sponsor of the Australian team.

At the Winter Olympics in South Korea, Australian Olympic athletes will be wearing 100% Australian Merino wool 230gsm base-layers and Merino wool blend socks supplied by XTM, which is confident the garments will help facilitate peak performance during the Games.

XTM has a long connection with the Olympic team with founding partner Pete Forras representing Australia in the 1988 Olympics as a downhill skier. Pete started XTM in 1999 with his two mates Bill Dalton and Gary Rae. They have an abundance of ski industry knowledge between them and were determined to create a brand that focuses on high quality ski and outdoor wear at an accessible price point.

From humble beginnings with a few carefully created pieces, the brand expanded into Merino wool in 2007 and launched its Woolmark-certified Australian Merino wool range in 2009. General Manager Paul Manders drove this move recognising the "strong sense of credibility" and quality assurance the Woolmark logo delivers to an expanding company.

While the brand is better known overseas, it still enjoys a loyal local fan base in Australia and in the Australian Olympic team. Not only have competitors like Britteny Cox (see picture above) noticed the lightweight warmth and comfort that

Merino wool delivers, but during long hard training sessions the thermal regulation and odour resistance properties are appreciated by all.

Paul says a highlight of working with wool is the fact it is a natural and renewable fibre, which increasingly appeals to modern consumers.

"Our customers value knowing where the wool is grown, the story of how it was shorn and following manufacture through to the final product," he said.

"In addition, technical innovations and clever blends have revolutionised the use of Merino wool performance wear in the sports industry."

XTM are constantly on the lookout for new technologies and innovations and are keen to expand the Australian Merino wool range. The brand mainly focuses on 100 per cent Merino wool, a collection Paul assures us is here to stay. The core base-layers and accessories are made from 230gsm fabric of 20 micron, with a lightweight active range of 170gsm and 17.5 micron.

The newest product to hit the market is a 100 per cent Australian Merino wool sleeping bag liner designed for any adventurer wanting to sleep in luxury. There are more exciting products in the pipeline, with a focus on waterproofing and incorporating Merino wool into gloves and jackets.

ORTOVOX SHOWCASES ITS MERINO WOOL FROM TASMANIA



Dave Taylor of 'Kenilworth' near Campbell Town in Tasmania sells half of his clip to ORTOVOX.

German mountainwear company and **Woolmark licensee ORTOVOX** is using the stories behind **Tasmanian wool-growing properties** to help market its large range of Merino wool products.

Founded in 1980 in Munich, ORTOVOX's philosophy since 1988 has been "always wool". Since then, the company has grown in size, now selling its products in more than 1,750 stores across Europe, North America and Japan.

Transparency and traceability are a top priority at ORTOVOX when it comes to the origin of the wool it uses in its products. The mountain sports supplier knows exactly where its wool is grown and maintains close relationships with the farmers that supply it.

The source of ORTOVOX's Merino wool clothing lies in six selected properties in Tasmania (see opposite).

In April, to coincide with the launch of its spring/summer 2017 range, the company started using new marketing material that showcases the sheep, the farms and the Tasmanian woolgrowers behind the fibre. The marketing material – including videos and imagery – is available on the ORTOVOX website at www.ortovox.com and is also being used in-store in the form of point of sale material and window displays.

"When consumers enjoy a glass of wine, they know where it comes from. Similarly, they also know where their fruit was grown. Now they are also becoming increasingly interested in knowing where and how the fibre in their clothing is produced," said ORTOVOX Head of Mountainwear, Thomas Moe.

"Through ORTOVOX's 'Merino from Tasmania' campaign, we are providing a comprehensive insight into the production of the Merino wool that we use. With reports, farm profiles and videos, we tell the story of animal and man, a story characterised by friendship and a sense of responsibility.

"We completely trust the six farms from which we source our fine Merino fibres – our most important raw material. As well as producing quality wool in a beautiful environment, they treat their sheep so well that we can process and wear their wool with a clear conscience.

"It is important to us to stay in contact with the woolgrowers and their families, so ORTOVOX employees often make on-site visits to receive and provide

feedback, which helps ensure productive and cooperative relationships."

The ORTOVOX website includes information on the rest of ORTOVOX's supply chain, from shearing through to garment production.

"At ORTOVOX, a lot of effort is put into ensuring consumers receive a high-quality product that they can enjoy for a long time. To this end, we take charge of quality assurance over the individual steps spanning from the Merino sheep to product delivery.

"We are also proud to be a Woolmark licensee and work closely with AWI. Our company and many of our textile suppliers receive briefings from AWI on R&D and product development matters – most recently in April during our visit to Australia to see the Tasmanian wool-growing properties."

The ORTOVOX website provides direct links to the company's product range and online store (dependent on where you are located in the world).



MORE INFORMATION
www.ortovox.com

ORTOVOX SHOWCASES ITS TASMANIAN SUPPLIERS

ORTOVOX obtains its Merino wool from these six farms in Tasmania. View the stories – including images and videos – about the sheep, people and environment of these farms at www.ortovox.com



MONTECUTE

The Hallett family has been working on Llanberis Pastoral since 1880 and produce 16-20 micron wool from their 25,000 Merino sheep that graze over the open, partly wooded pastures of the farm. The Halletts emphasise that they regard themselves as guardians of their land, and the most important objective is to pass on the land and animals to the next generation – in the same or even better conditions than they themselves received them.



ASHBY

The Bennetts have lived at Ashby for more than 100 years. Will and Nina Bennett and the children Alice, Percy and Dougal now run approximately 9,000 Merinos on 2,800 hectares of land. Ashby supplies 50% of its wool to ORTOVOX, which is about 20,000 kilograms per year. Not a typical farm, the Bennett family live at Ashby in a splendid sandstone property built in 1835 surrounded by a wonderful garden.



LEWISHAM

Lewisham was purchased by the Young family in 1946. The current owners, Lindsay and Rae, extended the land bit by bit and use their combined resources to look after their 4,600 flock of sheep across 1,000 hectares. Rae has a degree in botany and so she uses the analytical approach from research for the benefit of the farm. Lewisham consequently has become a showcase farm for sustainable management.



ROTHAMAY

Rothamay is now managed by the fifth generation of the Campbell family. Duncan, his wife Anita and children Will, Mollie and Oscar live and breathe Merino wool at Rothamay. 11,000 Merinos graze across 3,500 hectares providing wool with a diameter of 18 to 19 microns. Duncan feels a responsibility to pass on the farm to the next generation in an even better condition and therefore to operate on a sustainable basis.



KENILWORTH

Kenilworth has a special story. It is a farm that formerly belonged to the famous Eliza Forlonge who was the first person to import Merino sheep from Saxony to Australia and Tasmania. Kenilworth extends across 1,400 hectares of land. Dave Taylor, who runs the farm with his family in what is now the sixth generation produces about 43,000 kilograms of wool a year, with about 50% going to ORTOVOX.



STONEHENGE

Stonehenge has belonged to the McShane family since the beginning of the 20th century. Elliot and Felicia McShane now manage the farm that has 7,000 sheep grazing across 3,800 hectares. They produce 18 micron wool which is in demand in the sports sector. In Elliot's opinion, farmers are the guardians of their land and they must do everything in their power to manage it in a sustainable and future-oriented way.

EXAMPLES OF ORTOVOX PRODUCTS CONTAINING TASMANIAN MERINO WOOL

ORTOVOX products aim to protect wearers against the elements and offer superior climatic comfort even in extreme mountain activities.

The company's layering system shows the entire functionality of Merino wool: a base layer helps keep you warm and dry, the middle layer ensures breathability and warmth, the outer layer helps keeps out wind and rain.

These products are just three out of a very large range of Merino products available now at www.ortovox.com



BASE LAYER

ROCK'N'WOOL
T-SHIRT
100% Merino wool



MID LAYER

FLEECE LIGHT
MELANGE ZIP NECK
Merino wool blend



OUTER LAYER

PIZ BADILE SHIELD
SHELL JACKET
Merino wool blend outer
100% Merino wool inner

NEW KNITTING TECHNOLOGIES HELP WOOL'S STRONG PERFORMANCE

The rise of seamless garment knitting and flat knitting technologies is helping enable wool's growth in the **activewear market**.

Traditionally, wool base-layer apparel was 'cut and sew' production with limited possibilities for variety. Now however, thanks to advancements in technical know-how and machinery, 'seamless' and 'flat' knitting technologies are being employed to manufacture not only base-layer garments, but an extensive range of mid- and outer-layer garments.

Seamless and flat knit apparel are well-suited to high-intensity sports such as running, cycling, climbing, skiing and cross-fit. With the versatility of knit structures and compression panel effects, garments can be engineered with reinforced zones to provide a more technically constructed, functional yet comfortable garment with cutting-edge style.

New patterns have been developed that uses body mapping – a design technique that enables different areas of the garment to be constructed to suit the shape, motion and functional requirements of the corresponding part of the body.

"Whilst not a new process, seamless knitting and flat knitting technologies to produce technical, functional garments in Merino



Seamless knitting can also be used for lifestyle pieces like this Merino wool blend **Yamba Cable Zip Jacket** from Australian brand **MerinoSnug** (www.merinosnug.com.au).

wool apparel has been gaining ground during the past few years and we have now reached a point where there are a greater number of options on the market," explains AWI General Manager, Processing Innovation & Education Extension, Julie Davies.



Santoni's **SM8-TR1 machine** that enables the knitting of **single seamless garments for sportswear**.

"We are now enjoying unprecedented interest in this area from brands and designers and thanks to the continued development of new technologies and machinery there are unlimited opportunities for wool."

Santoni, Stoll and Shima Seiki are examples of manufacturers leading the way with this new machinery.

AWI has worked closely alongside its partners to take advantage of wool's recent growth in popularity within the performance market, and companies throughout the supply chain are also acknowledging the importance of this new area of growth. New wool-rich yarns are being developed specifically for this type of seamless knitting, with enhanced yarn strength through core or wrap-spun spinning technologies.

"This greater engagement by spinners on developing new yarns, and more importantly engaging directly with sports brands, reflects the growth in this area," Julie said. "At the Outdoor Retailer and ISPO trade shows earlier this year, we saw a greater number of wool spinners, knitters and weavers exhibiting than in previous years, suggesting the level of excitement for innovations in wool continues to be on the rise."

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com



Seamless Merino wool long sleeve top from Brubeck. In a seamless knitting system, small diameter circular knitting machines are used to make body-sized tubes of fabric, which only need seams to attach the sleeves or to hem. The machines are versatile in terms of stitch structure which can be altered within the garment to create for example areas of high compressions for sportswear.

MERINO WOOL COLLECTION

Australian's new collection was available to purchase at the Italian Tennis Open. The following are three items from the collection that are also available to buy from the online store at www.australian.it (shipping to Europe only). *PHOTOS: Australian*



100% Merino wool "Umpire" polo shirt (men's and women's available).



Merino wool blend "Player's" Wool Tek T-shirt.



100% Merino wool "Ball-boy's" T-shirt, with the Woolmark logo on the sleeve (men's and women's available).



Leading Italian tennis player **Paolo Lorenzi** is the **face of a new campaign** by a leading brand in Italy to increase sales of Merino wool tennis apparel.

'AUSTRALIAN' HITS ANOTHER WIN

Leading Italian tennis player **Paolo Lorenzi** has returned to front the latest marketing campaign of **Italian sports brand 'Australian'**, in conjunction with AWI, showcasing activewear made from the **innovative new Wool Tek fabric**.

Following last year's successful marketing campaign at the Italian Open tennis tournament, iconic Italian sports brand 'Australian' was once again the technical sponsor of the 2017 tournament in May, showcasing a collection of wool sports apparel in conjunction with the Italian office of AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company.

The two companies have developed a wool blend T-shirt, made from innovative new Wool Tek fabric, featuring raglan sleeves to ensure maximum comfort and freedom of movement.

Wool Tek comprises 36 per cent Merino wool, with this natural performance fibre utilised on the inside of the garment, providing softness next to the athlete's skin. A naturally technical fibre, wool's inherent benefits allow for natural elasticity and ease of movement. Lightweight, resistant to both odour and UV rays and moisture-wicking properties, the Wool Tek Australian T-shirt helps the players remain cool and dry even during intense exercise.

This T-shirt is part of a larger wool collection developed by Australian, including 100% Merino wool polo shirts and T-shirts, and a

wool blend jumper and jacket. These were worn by line umpires, ball-boys, tournament officials, tennis staff and cameramen during the tournament.

The collection was developed together with leading companies in the wool industry: Zegna Baruffa, Marzotto Textile Fabrics and SuedwolleGroup Safil.

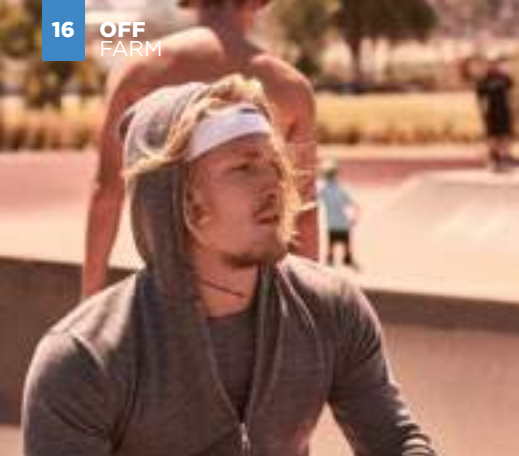
An advertising campaign featuring leading Italian player Paolo Lorenzi wearing the Wool Tek Australian T-shirt (see image above) was run in high-profile Italian magazines to promote the collection.

Australian has kitted out Paolo Lorenzi and the rest of Italy's ATP team in the Merino wool blend performance gear, and Paolo will next wear the gear at the French Open (Roland-Garros) tournament in Paris.

Inspired by tennis champions Rod Laver and Ken Rosewall, Australian grew from the ground up and today the brand's apparel is distributed in 16 different countries and more than 400 stores in Italy.

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.australian.it/en



Two of the *GQ China* images shot in Melbourne of models wearing Merino wool apparel from leading global brands. The model above is wearing a Merino wool zipper hoodie by **Officine Générale** from **Mr Porter**, Merino wool T-shirt from **Rapha** and Merino wool pants by **Z Zegna**. The model below is wearing a Merino wool top by **Rapha** and Merino wool pants by **Club Monaco**.



MELBOURNE CITY IS MY GYM

GQ China recently visited Melbourne for a photoshoot featuring **activewear from top global brands**, and proclaimed Merino wool a **highly versatile** and **high-performance fibre**.

In an initiative to increase the demand for Australian Merino wool in China's premium sportswear market, AWI supported the inclusion of Australian Merino wool apparel in a 12-page feature by *GQ China*.

Under the title 'The City is My Gym', in the magazine's April edition, activewear is featured in the outdoor urban environment of Melbourne, with four images featuring Merino wool apparel seeing the models skateboarding, cycling, running and doing yoga.

The premium global brands using Merino wool include **adidas**, **Z Zegna**, **Rapha**, **Club Monaco**, **Givenchy by Riccardo Tisci**, and **Officine Générale** from **Mr Porter** – reinforcing the fact that performance and luxury now go hand in hand.

Readers are educated about Australian Merino wool's performance benefits – including moisture management, odour

resistance, breathability and natural elasticity – and are reminded they need not give up elegance, even when training.

"As activewear gains pace in the world of high-end fashion, more and more traditional sports brands are turning to premium fibres, such as Merino wool, to add a touch of luxury to their performance apparel," said AWI Country Manager Jeff Ma.

"The fibre's ability to combine comfort and flexibility with casual elegance, is making it well placed to cater to the growing market for 'athleisure' – a term used for activewear that can be used for non-active and casual, everyday use – with a modern, comfy and stylish look.

"The 850,000 readership of *GQ China* mainly comprises young, urban and affluent males, so was a perfect fit for this feature and Merino wool."

B

WOOL GIVEN THE ROYAL TREATMENT

Long-time supporter of the global wool industry, **HRH The Prince of Wales**, was shown the **latest Merino wool innovations** during a recent visit to Florence, Italy.

During a visit to Florence, Italy, in April, the Patron of the Campaign for Wool, HRH The Prince of Wales, met with the representatives from the very best Italian wool mills and AWI to discuss the global wool industry.

HRH The Prince of Wales met with representatives from some of Italy's most important wool companies – including **Paolo Zegna**, **Pier Luigi Loro Piana**, **Ercole Botto Poala**, **Nino Cerruti**, **Alessandro Barberis Canonico** – who showed to him their latest innovations in wool.

Included in the presentations was a viewing (pictured right) of AWI's The Wool Lab Sport – a collection of the latest innovative, commercially available Merino wool fabrics and yarns for a mix of both performance and athleisure apparel.

The visit was supported by the Ideabiella and Pitti Immagine Filati trade shows.

"We were delighted to showcase to His Royal Highness a selection of innovative high-performance products that illustrate the work that weavers and spinners are doing for contemporary and future consumers with this marvelous and sustainable fibre," said AWI's Global Strategy Advisor, Fabrizio Servente. B

(TOP PHOTO) AWI Country Manager Italy, **Francesco Magri** welcomes **HRH The Prince of Wales** to a viewing of AWI's **The Wool Lab Sport** collection of the latest Merino wool sports fabrics. Also pictured are AWI's General Manager – Western Hemisphere, **Stuart Ford**; Campaign for Wool COO, **Peter Ackroyd**; AWI's Global Strategy Advisor, **Fabrizio Servente**.

(BOTTOM PHOTO) **Paolo Zegna** meeting **HRH The Prince of Wales**, with AWI's Global Strategy Advisor **Fabrizio Servente**.



AUSTRALIAN MERINO WOOL'S PASSAGE TO INDIA

Merino wool in **sportswear and athleisure** apparel is being **promoted in India by AWI** with the help of renowned Indian actor **Shravan Reddy**.

Actor Shravan Reddy is playing a key role in representing AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, in India as it champions Australian Merino wool's place in the country's activewear market.

"After winning many hearts on the small screen in India, and having a strong fan base and digital following, Shravan Reddy personifies the Woolmark brand's appeal and is very relevant to our target youth-centric market," explains AWI Country Manager India, Arti Gudal.

"The Woolmark Company and Shravan Reddy have a strong mutual interest in the sportswear and athleisure markets and together we form the perfect foundation to educate consumers about the versatility of Merino wool and increase demand for the fibre.

"Merino wool is a technical fibre and is perfect for the Indian market due to its unique natural benefits include breathability, temperature control, moisture management, elasticity and resistance to odour."

An exciting new digital campaign has been under way over the past few months, including conversations using the hashtag #DareShravanTo in which fans had the

opportunity to dare the actor to perform a series of fitness challenges – which were filmed and uploaded to social media site Instagram – all while dressed top-to-toe in activewear made from Merino wool.

All the apparel that Shravan has worn during the promotion comprises wool and wool blends from brands including **adidas, Bounipun, Peter England, Louis Philippe, Raymond** and **Lavos**.

Shravan Reddy was announced in April as The Woolmark Company's latest ambassador for Australian wool in India at the India Fashion Forum 2017 trade show, India's largest fashion retail intelligence event.

"It is an honour and I am overwhelmed to begin this journey with a trusted not-for-profit enterprise like The Woolmark Company," said the actor.

"The brand has always introduced path-breaking innovations and campaigns that have influenced youth who believe in socio-economic change. An advocate for sustainable fashion, the company is a befitting representation of the striving woolgrowers that form the very core of this iconic brand. Identifying with a brand has never been easier for me and therefore my association with The Woolmark Company has stemmed almost naturally."

The announcement garnered much attention from the media including *GQ India*, *The Times of India* and *IndiaRetailing.com*.

The announcement at India Fashion Forum 2017 was held in conjunction with a catwalk show presented by The Woolmark Company that highlighted leading brand in Indian fashion **Louis Philippe**, along with renowned designers **Dhruv Vaish, Nachiket Barve** and **Bounipun**. B

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmark.com

Indian actor **Shravan Reddy** sporting Merino athleisure and sports wool apparel during a recent promotion in India.





Country Road's Winter 2017 collection features garments crafted with **Woolmark-certified** Australian Merino wool.

COUNTRY ROAD TELLS THE STORY OF WOOL

The **provenance of Australian wool continues to be of great relevance** to brands, retailers and consumers. This season **Country Road** pays homage to the versatility of **Australian Merino wool** and to the people who produce winter's favourite yarn.

Country Road's promotional campaign titled 'Close Knit' features imagery shot on Bruny Island, just off the coast of Tasmania. The campaign theme is played out against the rugged, dramatic landscape of the island and talks to the threads that bind us: family, friends, shared experiences, a way of thinking and the place we all call home.

Country Road's campaign features premium quality woollen products, and leverages the farm to fashion story by highlighting three of the many people who work to produce wool: a woolgrower, a shepherd and a shearer.

The featured woolgrower is Julian von Bibra, the fourth generation of von Bibras to run sheep on 'Beaufront' – a sprawling farm situated in Ross, near Launceston in Tasmania. He and his wife Annabel oversee the property that produces 180 tonnes of fine Merino wool a year sourced from the more than 25,000 sheep that run on their property.

Once the wool leaves their farm, it is taken to Italy, where it is processed by a Tollegno mill to produce the softest, finest garments.

A limited-edition Men's Merino polo featuring extra fine Merino wool sourced exclusively from 'Beaufront' is also available online and at selected stores.

The campaign imagery and content can be viewed online and in an exclusive Close Knit Magazine available at selected stores nationally. The magazine features interviews with wool producers, and local artisan food and wine makers.

To celebrate Wool Week, Country Road partnered with Tourism Tasmania to offer customers a chance to win a Bruny Island Long Weekend escape to Tasmania for two, plus a \$1,000 Country Road shopping experience.

"Wool is key to our winter collection because it's incredibly versatile, it's soft, breathable, elastic, static resistant and responds to changes in body temperature. It helps you stay cool when it's warm, and warm when the weather's cold."

Country Road

Sharing a commitment to Australian wool, Country Road and The Woolmark Company have enjoyed a collaborative relationship since the 1980s. Every year the companies work together to create beautiful garments crafted with Woolmark-certified Australian Merino wool.

"Wool is close to our heart at Country Road. We are committed to designing and creating premium quality knitwear that wears well and is beautifully soft to touch," says Darren Todd, General Manager, Country Road.

AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said it is significant that Country Road uses the farm to fashion story as a core ingredient in its high-value end product.

"Helping consumers make the connection of how their clothes are made and where the fibre comes from is important, as it not only shines the spotlight on the source of Merino wool, but it also recognises the efforts of Australian woolgrowers who work tirelessly to constantly perfect their product," he said.

MORE INFORMATION
www.countryroad.com.au



Todd the shepherd featured in the campaign:
"Day to day we go around to all the sheep and make sure they're all healthy and happy. Anything we can do for them, we do. We try to make their life as easy as possible."



Country Road's promotional campaign – titled '**Close Knit**' – emphasises **family, friends and shared experiences**, as well as **beautiful woollen winter knits**.



Woolgrower **Julian von Bibra**, on his '**Beaufront**' property: "It's a pretty special place. The key to it is a lot of native bush where the sheep can run; that's definitely unique."



The promotional campaign was shot on a **working sheep farm**, on **Bruny Island in Tasmania**, to emphasise the origin of the fibre that is heavily featured in the collection.

Duncan the shearer is featured in the campaign:
"The sheds have a great environment and energy; I really enjoy working as part of a big team."



Country Road's winter collection features woollen products for **women, men, children and the home**.

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE NEW INNOVATION AWARD



This year, the **International Woolmark Prize** has launched a **new Innovation Award**, shining a spotlight on the textile mills who develop **innovative wool fabric and yarns** for the global designers.

AWI is reinforcing its commitment to supporting emerging design talent by this year enhancing the structure of the competition.

A newly introduced Innovation Award has been created to celebrate outstanding creative and innovative fabric or yarn development in wool. The new award aims to inspire the designer finalists to be more experimental when developing fabric or yarn for their final collections, and shines a spotlight on the textile mills assisting in developing the innovative wool fabric and yarn.

The designer who wins the Innovation Award will be granted \$100,000 as well as being presented with commercial opportunities. The textile mill responsible for the exciting development will also be promoted via The Woolmark Company's global trade promotion program with benefits including global trade advertising, being featured in The Wool Lab sourcing guide and highlighted within The Woolmark Company's stand at global trade shows.

"Each year, I am truly amazed with what our finalists present to the judges. Just when you might think you've seen it all, along comes an exciting new fabric or innovative new yarn, and that's why we have established the Innovation Award," explains AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

"It not only keeps competition fierce but it also allows for our prestigious trade partners to get global recognition and ultimately increases the market share of wool. The Innovation Award also provides AWI with another opportunity for its subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, to engage and celebrate the work of our trade partners."

In another change to the International Woolmark Prize this year, each of the recently announced 65 global nominees competing in the six regional events will receive \$2,000 to assist in the development of their submission piece, ahead of the regional finals to be held in Sydney, London, Milan, New York, Seoul and Dubai in July and August. Each regional menswear and womenswear winner will receive \$70,000 to go towards their final collection. Prize money for the two eventual winners has also increased.

"Due to increasing pressures on young designers, we have restructured our program spend with a greater focus on the design talent and our partners," Mr McCullough said.

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

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

The award also engages a global community of consumers across social media, with conversation about the award and the benefits of wool. The 2016/17 International Woolmark Prize reached more than 129 million people across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

MORE INFORMATION
www.woolmarkprize.com

(TOP PHOTO) The nominees to compete in the Australian and New Zealand regional final of the 2017/18 International Woolmark Prize in August: **Thomas Puttick** (womenswear), **Chris Ran Lin** (menswear), **Elissa McGowan** (womenswear), **Blair Archibald** (menswear), Jessica Grubiša and Madeleine Harman of **Harman Grubiša** (womenswear), and Jason Alexander Pang of **AMXANDER** (menswear).



A design from **Rahul Mishra** at **Paris Fashion Week** in March 2016.

RAHUL MISHRA – 2013/14 WINNER

Since winning the 2013/14 International Woolmark Prize competition, Indian designer Rahul Mishra has launched many collections showcasing Australian Merino wool. His Autumn/Winter 2016 collection, which he launched at the prestigious Paris Fashion Week highlighted exquisite hand-embroidered Australian Merino wool eveningwear that has fast become synonymous with the Rahul Mishra brand. The collection, which weaves ancient techniques with modern silhouettes, was inspired by the birth of his first daughter, and was titled *It Felt Love*.



A design from **Teatum Jones** at **London Fashion Week** in February.

TEATUM JONES – 2015/16 WOMENSWEAR WINNER

The designers at London Fashion Week in February breathed freshness into knitwear, playing with its proportions and the ways it can be worn. Teatum Jones is masterful in its approach to knitwear, having won last year's International Woolmark Prize for the designers' interest in pushing the boundaries of the form. This Autumn/Winter 2017 season, the British design duo took those ideas to new heights, fusing colours (off white and navy, for example) with knits (waffle with twilled stripe stitches) in off-the-shoulder and three-dimensional sweaters.

AN ENDURING RELATIONSHIP WITH WOOL

The **International Woolmark Prize** imbues the participating designers – and judges – with a **long-term knowledge and love of wool** that is continuing throughout their professional lives. Here are examples of the latest womenswear collections from some of the **International Woolmark Prize alumni** that have recently been on show at Fashion Weeks across the world.



A design from **Gabriela Hearst** at **New York Fashion Week** in February.

GABRIELA HEARST – 2016/17 WOMENSWEAR WINNER

Although based in New York, International Woolmark Prize winning designer Gabriela Hearst was raised on a Uruguayan Merino stud, so she has a great appreciation for the fibre. In her first show, Hearst further explored some of the ideas laid out in her International Woolmark Prize capsule collection, with wool coats nipped in at the waist to give an hourglass silhouette, off-the-shoulder button-down wool dresses (worn atop ultra-lightweight wool bodysuits), and her signature two-piece power suit, shown above in rich red Merino wool.



A design from **Dion Lee** at **New York Fashion Week** in February.

DION LEE – 2012/13 FINALIST

Dion Lee, who won the Australia regional final for 2012/13, regularly uses wool in his collections. Tailoring is the forte of this young Australian-born designer, so it's no surprise that his Autumn/Winter 2017 collection felt perfectly on-trend in a womenswear season that seems unofficially dedicated to the exploration of how women can wear suiting. Here, the designer used double-faced Merino wool in garments that were cleverly folded and layered, such as with sleeveless coat dresses with flap pockets, safari jackets with epaulettes, and oversized full-length, peak-lapel coats.



A design from **Jason Wu** at **New York Fashion Week** in September.

JASON WU – 2016/17 AUSTRALIA REGION JUDGE

At New York Fashion Week, Taiwanese-born American designer Jason Wu showcased a collection of wool pieces for Spring/Summer 2017. "Wool is a staple in my work. I think a lot of us think of wool for a fall/winter collection, but lightweight, featherweight wools are becoming very important," he said. In his new collection, the designer presented a series of expertly tailored pieces in easy-to-wear Merino wool. Special finishes, such as metallic taffeta pleats and banding, added a sense of summery femininity to the pieces.



A design from **J KOO** that was released at **Seoul Fashion Week** in March.

J KOO – 2015/16 WOMENSWEAR FINALIST

Former International Woolmark Prize finalist label J KOO unveiled its Autumn/Winter 2018 collection, at Seoul Fashion Week in March. Headed by Jinwoo Choi and Yeonjoo Koo, after whom the label is named, J KOO has become known for its contemporary take on classic suiting. This aesthetic is evident in the latest collection, which is a fusion of feminine and street styles. "Wool plays a key element in this collection, and what we really wanted to do with the fibre was to show its versatility beyond the traditional," the designers said.

Carl and Nicola Mason's daughter **Holly** modelling a **Smitten** Merino wool drape cardigan and scoop top against a background of Tasmanian Merino sheep.

SMITTEN WITH MERINO

Ten years ago, husband and wife team **Carl and Nicola Mason** had a dream to design lightweight **Merino clothing** that was stylish, comfortable and practical – and have it manufactured in their home state of Tasmania. A decade later, their **business is flourishing**.

Smitten Merino is a family business born in Hobart in 2007.

"We had recently moved from WA and loved the climate, the people, the whole island and the sheep," Carl says. "But we didn't actually have any jobs, so we sat down at a coffee shop to plan our future.

"I happened to be wearing some modern Merino wool thermals from New Zealand and Nicola was talking about how she'd like to start a fashion business. We came up with the idea there and then that we should put the fashion and Merino together and create our own Merino fashion business here in Tasmania. And that's how Smitten was born."



Carl, Holly and Nicola Mason – the family behind **Smitten**.

It is still very much a family business. Carl looks after the marketing, Nicola is the designer, and their daughter Holly is the face of Smitten and part-time salesperson. Their other daughter Brooke and son Daniel also lend a hand where they can.

Despite its humble beginnings, the business has grown steadily to now have an annual

turnover of \$2 million dollars with 22 people manufacturing its apparel in Tasmania.

The business primarily sells its products online through its website www.smittenmerino.com although it is also stocked in several retail outlets, especially in Tasmania.

Carl and Nicola occasionally exhibit at shows such as the Australian Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo and Sheepvention in Hamilton where they have not only won best exhibitor awards but also built up a good rapport with the wool-growing community.

THE SMITTEN RANGE

Smitten uses superfine Merino wool throughout its extensive collection of women's fashion and performance outdoor clothing for men and women.

Nicola says about 80 per cent of Smitten apparel is women's fashion.

"We have a large range for women – including T-shirts and tops, knits and cardigans, dresses and skirts, pants and leggings, coats and ponchos – in a variety of colours and sizes. Our best-selling items are our scoop neck tops and cardigans.

"For women's fashion, Merino wool is lightweight and luxurious, keeps your body temperature constant and comfortable, it drapes and looks beautiful, and will last for years and years. It is also machine washable.

"Merino wool also has unparalleled performance for sports and outdoor adventure while at the same time having the most luxurious feel against the skin."

AUTHENTICALLY TASMANIAN

Carl says Smitten designs are inspired by a passion for Tasmania – its incredible landscapes, produce, people and natural playgrounds.

"We wanted to support Tasmania and be local; we wanted to create a unique brand, and offer visitors and locals a Tassie souvenir that they could wear for years to come," he said.

"Spun from superfine Merino, our wool is sourced from Tasmanian and Australian premier wool-growing regions and all manufacturing is undertaken in Tasmania.

"Our philosophy is to try and keep everything in the business really local, so we can support the local economy as well as our local woolgrowers."

A NATURAL CHOICE

Nicola and Carl say that they were originally attracted to Merino wool due not only to its performance and luxurious feel, but also to the fact that it is a natural and renewable fibre.

"There are a growing number of consumers adverse to cheap throw away clothing that has been made in sweat shops and eventually clogs up landfill sites in the Western World after being worn once or twice," Nicola says.

"Our customers love to support the fact that Merino wool is natural and renewable. They like to know that the garment will last a long time and get real value in their purchase. They have less clothing doing a better job. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.smittenmerino.com

15,000 km from the sheep stations of Australia lies the historic tailoring strip of **Savile Row in London**, where some of the **finest fabrics made from Australian Merino wool** are used. Here we take a look inside the premises of one of the tailors, **H. Huntsman & Sons**, whose history is as exclusive as the premium fibres used in its suits.



The interior of **H. Huntsman & Sons** on **Savile Row** in London.
PHOTO: Jonathan Daniel Pryce



Huntsman was the **inspiration and the filming location** for the movie **Kingsman: The Secret Service**. A sequel is scheduled for release in September.

HUNTSMAN ON SAVILE ROW

Surely, there is no more arresting repository of curios on Savile Row than Number 11, home to H. Huntsman & Sons since the company moved here in 1919 following its work during the First World War, supplying uniforms to the British military, and its attentions about to turn to the roaring twenties instead.

The two stag heads gazing down from either side of the main mirror on the left were left behind by a customer who nipped out to get some lunch in 1921, got caught up in some kind of boisterous revelries and never returned. The framed, faded Royal Warrants on display testify to the impressive number of European monarchs who have, over the decades, crossed the threshold of a house often seen as the epicentre of British bespoke tailoring.

While plenty of Savile Row establishments double as sartorial museums, the selection of garments on display here is truly eye-popping: a lapel-less frock coat bearing two large, sequinned peacock feathers, originally commissioned for David Bowie; Eric Clapton's old hunting garb, returned to its birthplace following purchase at an auction; the frock coat Gregory Peck wore in *The Million Pound Note*.

Head Cutter and Creative Director, Campbell Carey, says that he's learned an abundance of trade tricks during his time with the tailoring house he's always regarded as "the jewel in the crown" of London tailoring. "I thought I knew it all, but coming here I saw so many new little nuances and techniques – unique to Huntsman and passed down generations – that are part of the fabric of the place," he said.

"We do a lot of shooting clothes, field clothes, and there are pockets and details I'd never seen before until coming here: things like pinch pleats under a half-belt, rather than full shooting pleats, which gives lots of shape and ease of movement across the back of the jacket, and pockets with box pleats so that when you put cartridges in it, there's plenty of room, but when you're wearing it around town the pocket's completely flat."

It's such technical prowess, along with the inherent romance of garments being handcrafted in the UK (on the premises, in the case of Huntsman's bespoke orders), that is currently making Huntsman a huge hit in Asia, according to Robert Bailey, a Senior Cutter who looks after the trunk shows there and typically spends about four months a year in the region. "People there are

really well educated about tailoring, and know about the Huntsman silhouette," he said.

Another draw for discerning bespoke buffs is the vast number of exclusive, often markedly unusual fabrics available. "In 2007 Anthony Peck, Gregory's son, was cleaning out his father's estate and gave us over 160 garments, made by Huntsman from the early 60s right through to the 2000s, which gave us access to all these amazing old, forgotten house checks," Carey said. "There was one jacket with a particularly distinct, unusual pattern that we all now call 'The Peck Check'."

Perhaps the core ingredient of Huntsman's hefty kudos, though, is the glossy names found in its archives. The jazz-era client list – The Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII), the Duke of Kent, Lord Charles Cavendish, Viscount Churchill, Rudolph Valentino, Ivor Novello – was followed by a strengthening of the house's bond with Hollywood (think Laurence Olivier, Clark Gable and President-to-be Ronald Reagan).

Much more recently, any notion of the house's links with Hollywood were a thing of the past was dispelled in 2013, when Huntsman turned out to be the inspiration behind Hollywood spy thriller *Kingsman: The Secret Service* with Colin Firth and Samuel L Jackson, director Matthew Vaughn being a loyal customer since he was 18.

Is the era-spanning celebrity factor an essential part of Huntsman's identity and appeal? "It's super-important, because everyone wants to dress like people they find aspirational and elegant," says Pierre Lagrange, who purchased the house in 2013 and is currently Chairman of the Savile Row Bespoke Association.

"Style icons are normally from the generation above, and yet everything improves. A gentleman's suit has not changed that much in the last 100 years, but the Huntsman cut has been refined, purified, over the years by each new generation of cutters."

B

MORE INFORMATION

www.huntsmansavilerow.com
www.merino.com/fashion/man-style/the-savile-row-guide/

Using Merino wool for the first time, Bondi fashion brand **Ten Pieces** showcased its fifth instalment of wardrobe essentials at **Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Australia** in Sydney in May.

Fashion brand **Ten Pieces** has used wool in its collection for the very **first time**.



TEN OUT OF TEN FOR TEN PIECES

Ten Pieces is a unisex brand co-designed by Maurice Terzini – well known as the restaurateur behind the iconic Icebergs Dining Room and Bar at Bondi Beach – and his partner, fashion designer Lucy Hinckfuss.

As its name suggests, Ten Pieces produces collections in groups of ten. This year, collaborating with AWI for the latest ten items in their lifestyle clothing line, the design duo has created a Merino wool jersey collection with knitted Cashwool® pieces.

Through working with The Woolmark Company, Ten Pieces connected with one of the world's most important spinners, Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia, which is one of the single largest buyers of fine and superfine Australian Merino wool. This partnership is another example that highlights the close

connection between the Australian wool industry and top Italian manufacturers.

After visiting the Zegna Baruffa factory in Biella, Italy, the design duo was inspired to introduce Zegna Baruffa yarn into some knitted additions to the Ten Pieces range, elevating the collection and evolving their brand.

When asked what the designers loved most about working with wool, Hinckfuss said: "The aspect of sustainability and its technical ability".

Ten Pieces has delivered a collection which serves up modern comforts in a uniquely simple, sophisticated and accessible way. References to the Sharpies subculture from the 1960s and 1970s see the collection having a raw and quintessentially Australian edge, while their sporty punk

muse has a refined overall look, suggested through detailed finishes.

Modern day monochrome twin-sets have been designed to offer the wearer a simple and elegant choice that not only reflects the brand's minimalist aesthetic but also the fibre's innate versatility.

"AWI is committed to supporting home-grown talent and takes pride in being able to work with these designers to help them discover the versatility of wool and the wool supply chain," said AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

The collection will be also showcased at Pitti Uomo this month (see below), and will be available to buy at www.tenpieces.com.au and various international retail stores. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.tenpieces.com.au

AUSTRALIA SHOWCASE AS PITTI UOMO'S GUEST NATION

In a first for Australia, seven emerging Australian designers will be on show together this month in Florence, Italy, at a special presentation dubbed 'Guest Nation Australia' during the world's most important trade show for menswear, Pitti Immagine Uomo.

Each of the Australian designers are required to present their Spring/Summer collections, highlighting the adaptability of Australian Merino wool and its suitability for all climates.

The project is a special project by Fondazione Pitti Immagine Discovery

in collaboration with AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, with the designers selected with the Australian Fashion Chamber.

"AWI provided each of the designers with introductions to the Merino wool supply chain", explained AWI CEO Stuart McCullough. "This is a wonderful opportunity for the designers, and spotlights the Merino wool fibre within one of the most important forums for men's fashion in the world."

It is the first time that a project of this scale has been presented internationally.

The seven designers involved are:

- Ten Pieces – see above
- Double Rainbouu – see opposite
- Chris Ran Lin (International Woolmark Prize nominee 2016/17 and 2017/18)
- Ex Infinitas (International Woolmark Prize finalist 2016/17)
- STRATEAS.CARLUCCI (International Woolmark Prize finalist 2014/15)
- Commas
- P.E Nation

A Merino wool jumper by Sydney fashion label **Double Rainbouu**, unveiled at **Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Australia** last month.



AWI has partnered with Sydney fashion label **Double Rainbouu** – a brand that is playful but has some attitude – to create a six-piece Australian Merino wool **knitwear collection**, titled **UUOOLL**.

Australian fashion label Double Rainbouu unveiled its first line of luxury unisex knitwear, made from Australian Merino wool, at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Sydney last month.

Having attracted a cult following worldwide – including popstar Justin Bieber – the Sydney-based label is better known for its loud, fresh prints and beach club threads, yet has expanded into knitwear after forming a relationship with AWI.

Designers Toby Jones and Mikey Nolan (former art and creative directors at

cult denim label ksubi) created a line of statements knits, with the capsule collection aptly titled UUOOLL.

“People can be loud and colourful with knitwear,” said Nolan. “There’s interesting challenges being a beachwear brand with juggling the different seasons. We had such a good response from wholesale accounts and they asked about what we’d do for winter. We’re going to keep running with it; two drops of knitwear per year and we have different weights and gauges. We’re trying to be non-seasonal – it’s summer all the time in our mind.”

WOVEN WOOL A WINNER AT BRADFORD TEXTILE SOCIETY AWARDS

Through sponsorship of the **prestigious Bradford Textile Society Awards**, AWI continues to promote Merino wool to tertiary students in the **UK’s thriving textile industry**.

Textiles postgraduate student Samantha Yang of the Royal College of Art has won this year’s The Woolmark Company Award as part of the Bradford Textile Society Awards. Entrants must create a woven or knitted fashion fabric containing a minimum of 60% Merino wool.

Samantha’s winning double-sided heavyweight fabric has been designed for outerwear, and was finished by washing, pressing and brushing to bring out the luxurious softness of Merino wool.

“As a woven textile designer, I am always interested in the geometry of repetitions,” explained Samantha. “The winning fabric took inspiration from the organic shapes found on urban architecture. I created the artwork using Adobe programs, and developed it further using jacquard software. The design was then finalised through experimentation with the scales, weave structures, and colour combinations.

“Wool is a strong yet versatile material with wide applications among fashion and interior design. The fibre from different sheep breeds can be created into entirely different looking yarns, which I find is truly magical. It is also sustainable, breathable and water repellent along with many other benefits. I would definitely like to continue working with wool not only because of its positive qualities but also its versatility: you can achieve countless effects with it

through printing, felting, brushing, embossing and embellishing.”

As part of the prize, Samantha has the opportunity to complete one week’s work experience with London-based fashion designer Sadie Williams.

The Bradford Textile Society, established in 1893, is the oldest of its kind in Britain and continues to open doors to the next generation of designers and technicians.



A sample from **Samantha Yang’s** award winning entry.

Its annual design competition provides encouragement and inspiration to textile students and practicing textile designers to stimulate new developments in textile design and construction.

AWI’s subsidiary The Woolmark Company’s sponsors an award to promote Merino wool amongst the next generation of designers. The awards offer an excellent opportunity for future textile designers to have their work recognised by the most important people within the industry. **B**

AWI supported Double Rainbouu in product development and introductions along the wool supply chain and provided support with media engagement. The duo will also present the six-piece UUOOL as part of Pitti Uomo’s Guest Nation this month in Florence (see bottom of opposite page).

“We are super excited about Pitti Uomo and we’re really happy to have face time with our stockists. It’s great to get out there, especially since we’re only one year old so the exposure is going to be excellent for us.” **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.doublerainbouu.com

JAPANESE SET ON AUSSIE WOOL

Representatives from five of **Japan's largest menswear retailers** have recently **visited Australia** to see first-hand where quality wool garments and products begin their life.

During February, a group of nine representatives from Japanese retailers **Aoyama, Aoki, Haruyama, Konaka** and **Futata** received a whole-of-pipeline education about the Australian wool industry and the virtues of the fibre.

The trip included a visit, guided by AWI Corporate Communications Manager Marius Cuming, to Doug Paterson's 'Woodlands' property at Nulla Vale, 100km north of Melbourne, and a briefing at the AWI office in Sydney. The Japanese delegation's trip also included visits to AWTA, auction rooms and showfloor, the National Wool Museum and retail outlets.

This annual education program has been led by the All Japan SiroSet Processors Cooperative Association for the past 16 years. The SiroSet process, which was developed by CSIRO in the late 1950s and is still widely used in the industry, enables the permanent creasing and pleating of wool fabrics – see box to the right.

SiroSet is an example of how R&D investment in the wool industry is still delivering value to Australian woolgrowers.

Approximately four million pairs of men's pure wool trousers are processed using the SiroSet treatment each year for the Japanese market – a reflection not only of the popularity for machine washable suits in Japanese retail outlets but also of the ongoing successful education of Japanese retail staff.

The delegates on this trip represent retailers who between them sell more than five million men's suits in Japan annually, representing 50 per cent of Japan's suit market.

Secretary General & Technology Manager of the All Japan SiroSet Processors Cooperative Association, Mr Takayuki Tanaka, said it was critical that the retailers experience first-hand where Australian wool comes from and how it ends up in the product they value and promote in Japan.

"The participants had a first experience to watch and learn sheep farming, sheep breeding, shearing, wool testing by AWTA etc so they can talk with confidence about the benefits of wool to their customers and thereby improve their sales performance," he said.

"In Japan, SiroSet is an indispensable technology for machine washable suits, shower clean suits, and shape retention suits. The SiroSet treatment is used mainly in the menswear market, but it is also used for school uniform skirts, for women's trousers and skirts for students in job-hunting and new employees these days."

Marius Cuming said AWI is very committed to promoting Australian wool as the best and finest fibre in the world.

"While brochures and videos can be great marketing tools, there is nothing better than for someone to feel the wool themselves and see the passion and skill that goes into growing it," he said.

"Tours to Australia are unbelievably effective – it is not just the few that come out that benefit, they go back and tell their teams about their experience with wool."

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.si-ro-set.jp



SIROSET PERMANENT PLEATING

The development of the SiroSet process in 1957 has **helped enable woollen fabrics** to remain **internationally competitive** with synthetic fabrics for the past 60 years.

The requirement for a process of permanent pleating wool fabrics arose in the 1950s when wool was under considerable pressure from synthetics, particularly polyester, that could be heat-set to give permanent creases and pleats.

Accepting the challenge, Arthur Farnworth and his colleagues of CSIRO at Geelong developed a chemical process, named SiroSet, that changed the structure of the wool fibres.

The process involved the spray application of a limited quantity of dilute ammonium thioglycollate at pH 7.0 immediately before steam heating. It set rapidly and resulted in permanent creasing and pleating of wool fabrics, allowing woollen clothing to hold its shape, even after washing.

The SiroSet process was welcomed by the international wool industry and rapidly adopted worldwide, with it is still being used

AEG'S CARE LABEL PROJECT

Laundry appliance manufacturer **AEG** has launched a call to action for **consumers to learn how to care for wool garments** and **change the misconception** that delicate garments cannot be washed and dried in a machine.

"We must stop labelling our delicate fabrics with 'Dry Clean Only', stop washing in high temperatures and stop being afraid of putting wool in our machines," states AEG in its campaign.

At the heart of the project is a new care label: 'Don't Overwash'.

Joining the campaign are 14 European emerging designers putting garments to the test in line with AEG's updated care claims and appliances.

"Wool is the most important fabric of them all – but people think it is difficult to care for," says AEG ambassador and 2016/17 International Woolmark Prize finalist Tim Labenda. "People think you can't machine wash or tumble dry it, but you have these new technologies where you can tumble dry wool in a very easy way and you don't have to fear the care of wool."

"My grandmother always told me 'buy one piece which is expensive and it will last longer than if you buy two cheap pieces' and I think that's something we should remember. A garment should live for a lifetime and this is only possible if you care for it in the right way."

The Care Label Project was heavily supported online, with AEG running a strong digital campaign to encourage consumers to rethink how they care for clothes. Media events in key markets such as Berlin, Munich, Amsterdam, Brussels and Stockholm were also held, and a series of designer videos were created to champion the care claims. **E**

MORE INFORMATION

www.aeg.co.uk/care/inspiration/care-label-project

The retail delegation from Japan had a go at shearing during their visit to Australia – pictured is **Ayaka Menda** from the **Aoki** retail chain.

The Electrolux Group is spreading the word on more sustainable clothing care habits through its Care Label Project, launched in March by its AEG brand along with key partners from the fashion industry, including AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company.

As one of the longest-standing Woolmark Apparel Care licensees, AEG and Electrolux remain at the forefront of technical innovation in the apparel care market.

Each year, AEG and Electrolux together sell almost two million washing machines and dryers that carry the Woolmark Apparel Care logo.

The Care Label Project is their way as appliance makers, designers and manufacturers to inspire, educate and update the way we all care for our clothes.

According to AEG, apparel care habits inherited from the 1950s have become outdated, and caring for your clothes has never been easier with the right appliance and wash cycle.



2016/17 International Woolmark Prize finalist **Tim Labenda** champions **AEG's Care Label Project** and the ease of caring for wool garments, including this amazing all-wool look of his that was the hero garment of the campaign.



The skirt produced using the **Siroset** process is on the right (modelled in this 1950s photo by Arthur's research assistant at the time Valene Tomljanovic); the skirt produced without the Siroset process is on the left (modelled by CSIRO Geelong laboratory's librarian Jan Kroger).
PHOTO: CSIRO

more than half a century later. SiroSet has repeatedly been acknowledged in lists of significant Australian inventions.

For his role in the development of SiroSet, Arthur Farnworth was created a Member of the Order of the British Empire. In 1961 Arthur became Technical Director of the Australian Wool Board, Deputy Managing Director in 1970, and General Manager of Corporate Services and Research Division at the Australian Wool Corporation in 1974. **E**

MORE INFORMATION

<http://csiropedia.csiro.au/siroset>

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

AWI continues to foster the education and development of tertiary textile and fashion students – inspiring them in the early stage of their careers about the properties and benefits of Merino wool, and encouraging them to continue to use the fibre in their designs as they progress through their professional lives.

INTERNATIONAL WOOL EDUCATION CENTRE

AWI continues to educate university students about **wool manufacturing**, at the **International Wool Education Centre** that was established in 2014 in China.

The International Wool Education Centre (I-WEC) was established in October 2014 by AWI in cooperation with Yantai-Nanshan University and one of China's leading wool textile enterprises The Nanshan Group.

The courses being run at the I-WEC highlight AWI's commitment and dedication to ensuring that technical education remains readily available in a market as important as China. The collaboration between Nanshan and AWI helps drive the expansion of the Chinese wool textile industry.

Examples of educational initiatives under way at the moment include a series of lectures on worsted topmaking and spinning being delivered by Gary Robinson (formerly of CSIRO) to third year textile engineering students as well as technicians from the local

topmaking plant. Mr Robinson also confers with wool processors on current issues and opportunities for process improvement in worsted topmaking and spinning.

"The realignment of wool manufacturing operations in global regions over the past decade and its shift to Asia, has highlighted the need for investment in tertiary education of design and textile engineering students. This is to ensure a future generation of wool experts and specialists to support the wool industry," explained Julie Davies, AWI General Manager, Processing Innovation & Education Extension, Trade Education.

"To fill this void and address both current and future needs, AWI and Nanshan agreed to closely collaborate in the creation of the International Wool Education Centre almost



Gary Robinson, formerly of CSIRO, teaching students at the **International Wool Education Centre** at Yantai-Nanshan University in Nanshan, **China**.

three years ago. The centre now runs a whole series of courses, up to degree level, covering most aspects or sectors of wool manufacturing supply chain."

The I-WEC complements the Wool Development Centre which was also set up at Nanshan in 2013 with co-funding from AWI.

The Woolmark wool education program in China now involves five universities, including those in Xian, Wuhan and Beijing. The program utilises the considerable talents and expertise of consultants such as Gary Robinson (CSIRO) and Dr Jock Christoe (CSIRO), as well as that of staff from AWI and Deakin University. **B**

NATURALLY INSPIRING GOES WEST

Since 2014, AWI has hosted **Naturally Inspiring seminars** for tertiary textiles and design students across the world. The seminars not only offer students the chance to **learn about wool** and the variety of ways to work with the fibre, but also give students a rare **insight into the fashion and retail industry** from those in the know.

AWI's Naturally Inspiring seminars extended their reach this year, travelling to Perth for the first time as Curtin University and Perth TAFE students were educated on the versatility of Merino wool. Speakers included International Woolmark Prize global finalist Lukas Vincent of fashion label Ex Infinitas, and sourcing expert Natalie Skubel.

"The seminar was very interesting," said Perth TAFE student Catherine Kelly who is studying a Diploma of Fashion. "I discovered so many new techniques and I also liked how they discussed where you would buy and source your wool – that was really helpful."

More recently, students from NSW attended a Naturally Inspiring seminar in Sydney.

INSPIRING YOUNG DESIGN TALENT IN JAPAN

AWI collaborates with the Japanese branch of international fashion design and business institute **ESMOD** to encourage its students to **use wool in its designs**, now and in the future.

ESMOD's story began in 1841 when it opened as the world's first school of fashion design in Paris. In 1984, ESMOD JAPON was founded and it now has branches in Tokyo and Kyoto. Its alumni include many leaders in Japanese fashion design.

AWI's subsidiary The Woolmark Company has recently organised workshops at ESMOD JAPON to provide students with insights into the production pipeline of Australian Merino wool – from fibre to garment – and detail the unique attributes and performance benefits of wool and wool products.

The Woolmark Company is also on the jury of the students' annual graduation show and gave advice and feedback to the graduating students on techniques of using wool. Wool fabrics from a Woolmark licensee were donated to the students to produce their collections.

AWI arranged wool fabrics to be donated by a Woolmark licensee to **ESMOD** students for their graduation collections.



The Woolmark Company also recently supported a visit to Japan by British designer duo and International Woolmark Prize 2015/16 finalists Agi & Sam, and organised

a session for students at ESMOD JAPON in which the designers imparted their knowledge and experience of wool in fashion design.

Miyuki Takamatsu of ESMOD JAPON said, "We are very pleased that ESMOD JAPON has created such a strong partnership with The Woolmark Company and are jointly supporting young design talents. By further strengthening our partnership in the future, I expect that we will be together producing the next stars of the fashion industry."

Samuel Cockedey, AWI Country Manager Japan said, "The cooperation with ESMOD JAPON enables us to have special opportunities to deliver valuable knowledge to the students about the uniqueness and attractiveness of wool. We are delighted to provide inspiration to the young talents who are anticipated to play important roles in the fashion scene."



40 ESMOD students attended a **Wool Education Course** presented in **Tokyo** by AWI.

In the northern hemisphere, more than 150 Turkish students recently attended a Naturally Inspiring seminar in Istanbul, learning about wool in sports, bedding and fashion markets. It was opened by the Ambassador of Australia in Turkey, James Larsen, with speakers including adidas Senior Director – Running Apparel, Craig Vanderloef, and International Woolmark Prize alumni. Many students commented that before the seminar, they were unaware of wool's trans-seasonal benefits.

"Prior to attending the seminar, I had only known wool for winter, but now I wish to experience the use of wool in summer as well," said Marmara University student Duygu Bankoglu. "This seminar proved to me that wool has a very wide range of uses."

The seminars bring together an expert panel of speakers from AWI and industry professionals working with wool, such as fashion designers, product buyers, creative directors and fabric suppliers – each bringing to the mix their own career journey and assisting AWI nurture the future talent of the wool industry.



Students at **Curtin University** and **Perth TAFE** listening to **Lukas Vincent** of fashion label **Ex Infinitas**.

Turkish students at the seminar in **Istanbul** using virtual reality headsets to see what life is like on an Australian Merino wool-growing property.





The **SCAD** University for Creative Careers (Hong Kong) visiting the Wool Resource Centre.

Fashion Design **Professor Ryan Mercer** of **SCAD** said, "The Hong Kong Woolmark office is a beautiful space filled with inspirational materials, and expert staff who are gracious and happy to impart their knowledge to young minds. My class was provided in-depth and engaging information about the origins, farming practices, characteristics, innovations, trends, and current industry use of wool. It was a truly enlightening experience about this natural and sustainable fibre."

Student **Yasmin Baratova** said, "Using wool as a fabric in summer and in athleisure wear was the most exciting and innovating aspect of the presentation. It was interesting to learn how the fibre/fabric is created from the raw wool and the sustainable aspects of the industry."

WOOL RESOURCE CENTRE PROVES POPULAR IN ITS FIRST YEAR

While **AWI's Wool Resource Centre in Hong Kong** has welcomed many companies through its doors since officially opening in April last year, many educational institutions have also visited the Centre to **learn about Australian wool**.

The Wool Resource Centre (WRC) in Hong Kong has quickly become a global hub for the textile and apparel industries – including spinners, knitters, weavers, retailers, designers and garment makers – seeking knowledge and support to develop, produce and market wool products.

It has hosted more than 200 events in its first ten months. Visiting brands include **Hugo Boss, Lane Crawford, Gieves & Hawkes, Banana Republic, Lululemon, H&M, Abercrombie & Fitch, LL Bean, Brooks Brothers, Dunhill, and DKNY.**

The WRC is also a popular destination for fashion and business students to learn about the versatility of Australian wool and the supply chain for wool products. By inspiring students in the early stage of their careers about wool and the wool industry, AWI aims to encourage them to use and promote wool as they progress through their professional lives.

The WRC serves as the permanent office for AWI's Hong Kong staff who host seminars and training workshops to anyone who is interested about understanding the benefits of wool. They also provide technical

innovations, market intelligence and sourcing information for the supply chain.

Hong Kong is the ideal location for the WRC due to the region's importance in the sourcing of Australian Merino wool. All global brands travel to Hong Kong for sourcing trips, and the city is also a key manufacturing hub for spinners and knitters. 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.

Australian woolgrowers travelling to Hong Kong are also welcome to visit the Wool Resource Centre and utilise it as an office space for meetings or presentations – see page 60 for an example.

MORE INFORMATION

HKresourcecentre@wool.com

PROMOTING MERINO IN CHINESE TRADITIONAL DRESS

As part of a new AWI project promoting the use of Merino wool in the market for Qi Pao (aka Cheongsam) – the body-hugging one-piece Chinese dress – seminars and workshops have recently been hosted by AWI at the WRC.

Wool felt designer Debbie Leung and Cheongsam Connect advisor Dr Brenda Li presented, along with AWI's Key Account Manager Daniel Chan, to 50 attendees.

"Due to the inherent special qualities of wool and a unique felting technique, seamless fitted outfits are made possible," Ms Leung said. "This project reveals a perfect marriage using wool

felt as a medium to 'sculpt' figure-hugging cheongsam dresses without a single dart. Everyone was amazed with the magic of wool at the end of the workshop."

Attendee Winnie Au said she learnt a lot about the attributes and benefits of Merino wool by attending the seminar and workshop.

"Thanks for introducing all participants to a whole new concept of the versatility of wool. I hadn't known until I attended the seminar that besides keeping us warm, wool can be made into T-shirts for workouts and water-resistant windbreakers!"



Debbie Leung with **Dr Brenda Li**, with two examples of traditional Chinese dress, at a seminar and workshop held in the WRC.



White Suffolk producer **Allan Piggott** showing Meriqueen director **Mr Ho Seung-moon** and marketing manager **Ms Yu Min-jeong** around his property near Taillem Bend in South Australia.

Korean bedding company and Woolmark licensee **Meriqueen** is increasingly sourcing wool from Australia for its products, due to the **superior quality of the Australian fibre** compared to that from other countries.

AUSTRALIAN WOOL SPRINGS INTO KOREAN BEDDING MARKET

Meriqueen is the largest Woolmark-certified bedding manufacturer and retailer in Korea, operating 80 retail stores nationwide. The company has been a Woolmark licensee since 1991 and uses the Woolmark logo throughout its marketing to consumers as a mark of guaranteed fibre content and quality assurance.

The company uses Australian Merino wool for its luxury pile bedding products, but has in the past used 32-35 micron French wool for its duvets, spreads and comforters – importing 200 tons annually.

However, the company has had some troubles with the European wool, such as with impurities that are costly to remove, and so has recently begun using Australian downs-type wool as a substitute due to its superior quality.

The company has recently ordered five tons of 32 micron downs-type from Michell Wool in Adelaide (carbonised in Australia and superwashed in China) for a trial production of the duvet/spreads/comforters.

The Australian wool products will be launched with a marketing campaign in the upcoming autumn/winter retail season in Korea. The campaign will also showcase the provenance of Australian wool, and will include instore promotions, retail staff training and social media activities.

Meriqueen plans to gradually increase its use of Australian downs-type wool for the Korean duvet/spreads/comforter market during the next two years (while continuing to use Australian Merino wool for its luxury pile bedding products).

MERIQUEEN VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

Meriqueen director Mr Ho Seung-moon and marketing manager Ms Yu Min-jeong visited Australia in February to learn more about the availability and attributes of wool from Australia. While here, they visited Michell Wool in Adelaide to investigate the feasibility and logistics of sourcing Australian wool.

They also took the opportunity to visit Allan and Sue Piggott's property 'Illoura' at Taillem Bend to see the source of downs-type wool. Allan is a 3rd generation sheep farmer who runs about 4,000 White Suffolks on his 2,000-hectare property.



Michell Wool **CEO Steven Read** with the Meriqueen representatives and AWI Country Manager for Korea, **Hyunwon Lee**.

"My grandfather purchased the property as a bush block in 1922, with extra land purchased in recent years. Sheep have always been a very important part of the business mix," says Allan.

"In the past, the wool from our White Suffolks have been more of a by-product from our

prime lamb enterprise, but with improved wool prices over the past few years, income from the wool (which is 30-32 micron) has been an important part of the business.

"It's always a pleasure to showcase our sheep and the natural environment in which they live, because the provenance of products is becoming increasingly important to consumers across the world."

Allan Piggott, sheep producer, South Australia

"The downs wool we produce is well suited to home textiles such as quilts and underlays because the broader micron fleece has memory – there is a springiness and elasticity in the wool which doesn't get compressed.

"It was a pleasure to show the delegation from Meriqueen around the property. Despite it being a 40° day, they really enjoyed seeing where the sheep that grow the wool come from – the big open spaces and large properties of Australia are quite different to Korea. The natural environment in which the sheep live is something about which consumers are increasingly interested and something that companies such as Meriqueen can use in its marketing.

"We happened to be doing some LAMBPLAN scanning on the day they visited so we had a lot of sheep in the yards, and our guests were very interested in seeing some of the more practical aspects of sheep farming too." **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.meriqueen.co.kr

Chantel McAlister, pictured while shooting in the Central West of NSW during her **The Truth About Wool** photography tour. PHOTO: Kirsty Elms

THE TRUTH ABOUT WOOL

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

Wool classer and professional photographer **Chantel McAlister** is **promoting the Australian wool industry** through **photography** in her **The Truth About Wool** campaign.

Masterclasser Chantel McAlister hung up her woolclassing stencil in February and set off on a national tour across Australia to visit woolsheds – taking photos and collecting the stories of the people, the sheep, the landscapes and the wool.

“My aim is to showcase wool to the rest of the world in all its beautiful truth and educate the world about our versatile, sustainable fibre, the shearing process and the dedication of wool-growing farmers and families,” Chantel said.

“Wool has played such an important part in Australia's past and it is my mission to make sure that it is part of our future.”

You can follow Chantel on the road on a daily basis via her website and social media, to which she regularly uploads stories and photos taken during her tour.

The idea behind the national tour was sparked after Chantel posted a ‘The Truth About Wool’ video she had filmed about crutching on her Facebook page in April last year. Another video on shearing followed in May that has been viewed more than a quarter of a million times.

“The videos were well received and feedback suggested that a lot of people were unaware of the whole on-farm wool process. And that's how my idea about The Truth About Wool National Tour was born,” she said.

“Throughout the tour, I am showcasing the wool industry to the rest of the nation and globally. I also aim to incorporate my photographs into a book and create more of my The Truth About Wool short video documentaries.”

The first leg of the tour kicked off in February and included parts of NSW and Victoria. The following legs were in Western



Chantel on location at ‘Ooma’, Forbes, NSW – pictured preparing for a photo of shearer Ben O'Malley – has a close connection with and enthusiasm for the Australian wool industry. PHOTO: Kirsty Elms

Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. A South Australian leg is scheduled for August, followed by NSW and Victoria again during September and October, plus southern WA and Queensland.

“I’m on a personal mission to showcase our wool to the rest of the world – beautiful, honest, truly Australian.”

Photographer and wool classer
Chantel McAlister

“The tour was created to educate the world about our wool industry and give a bit of recognition to all the people (and animals) who contribute, but what I didn't know when I started was that even I would be learning so much more about the wool pipeline and what drives people to dedicate their lives to our industry.

“One question that I always ask people I visit is, ‘Why, of all the jobs in the whole world would you choose to work in the wool industry?’ Every single person includes ‘Because I love it’ in their answer.

“I always feel deeply inspired by the hard

work, dedication and sacrifice made by all of those I come across. If I had to sum them all up in one sentence it would be – wool is life.

“Thank you to all the people who have opened up their farm gates, homes and lives for me. I have enjoyed sharing your stories with the rest of the world and am incredibly proud to work alongside you in the industry that we love.”

While The Truth About Wool is Chantel's own campaign, it is sponsored by AWI and Bisley Workwear plus donations from supporters (woolgrowers are able to donate to her campaign at www.gofundme.com/thetruthaboutwool). This funding helps her carry out the tour – by putting fuel in her ute, giving her a place to sleep at night, putting food in her mouth and helping publish her book and videos.

MORE INFORMATION

If you would like Chantel to visit your wool-growing property and tell your story, you can email her at thetruthaboutwool@gmail.com to check availability.

To view Chantel's photos and stories, and purchase prints and canvases visit www.thetruthaboutwool.com

EXAMPLES OF CHANTEL'S PHOTOS SHOT DURING HER TOUR



Based in **Pingelly, Western Australia**, **Callum O'Brien** is a father of two who is never content standing still. With both his dad and uncle being shearers, Callum followed closely in their footsteps at a young age. Learning to shear at his agricultural high school at Narogin and fine tuning his skills at the Rylington Park shearing school, fast forward 13 years and Callum now has five open Sport Shears titles and is in his third year of representing his state in the national Sport Shears competition.



Andrew Green in the woolshed pen at 'Aloeburn', **Boree Creek in NSW**, which he runs with his wife and college sweetheart **Jodie**. 'Aloeburn' has been in the Green family for four generations. Securing the sustainability of the land and animals for generations to come is what drives Andrew and Jodie to succeed. This means ease of management and optimum animal welfare and production, coupled with their passion for restoring and maintaining the soils and pastures of 'Aloeburn'.



John Conlan from **Lancefield in Victoria** has been an integral part of the shearing scene for more than 40 years. He is the winner of world and Australian championships and holds the record (he set in 1979 with his late brother Mark) of shearing the most amount of sheep in a single day: 852 sheep in 7¼ hours, with no back aid and a narrow comb. In April of this year, John was inducted into the Australian Shearers Hall of Fame. He is still active in the industry and runs a shearing contracting business.



Scott Jones might well be the only one of his kind. He's not only a wool masterclasser but also a biochemist. Working in the woolsheds since 17, Scott knew exactly what he wanted to be when he finished school – a wool classer. So, that's what he did, for many years. Then the wool market crashed. So, he did what he had to do – he hung up his stencil and jumped into university life as a biochemist. But now that wool is on the up again, he's back in the sheds and loving it.



Nick and Karen Van Elk are a respected name in shearing contracting around the **Benalla** district of **Victoria** and beyond. Of the 28 shearers, wool handlers, pressers and wool classers working for Nick and Karen, half of them are under the age of 27. N K Shearing strongly encourages traineeships early in their employees' wool industry careers and works closely with industry training bodies to provide the best education available. They're getting it right, right from the start.



Wool handler **Racheal Boyce** working at **Wongamine**, a sheep and cropping property out at Northam in **Western Australia**. The daughter of a shearer and sister of a wool classer, she has been following in her family's footsteps since she was 16 years old. Now 29 and a mother raising 5 children under the age of 11, she is still in the sheds with a tenacious work ethic and drive to provide for her family; so much so that she has seen her waters break while woolhandling, not once but twice.



PROFITABLE WOOL IN SOUTHERN WHEATBELT OF WA

Scott Ewen from **Darkan** in WA plans to grow his Merino flock to 5,200 breeding ewes this coming year to capitalise on high wool prices.

Mixed enterprise farmers **Scott and Melanie Ewen** from **Darkan** in Western Australia's southern wheatbelt region are **pleased they retained their Merino flock** after venturing into cropping eight years ago because wool is now the most profitable part of their farming enterprise.

The highest wool prices in decades have seen a surge of confidence in Australia's wool industry, with farm consultants predicting growers will increase their Merino flocks by up to 10 per cent in the coming 12 months.

Western Australian wool producers Scott and Melanie Ewen are doing exactly that, with plans to grow their Merino flock to 5,200 breeding ewes this coming year, capitalising on wool prices that they say, are as good as those seen back in the late 1980s.

"Wool is the most profitable part of our farming enterprise," Scott says. "It's much more profitable than the cropping part of the business."

In what many believe is a long overdue turnaround in wool prices, this sentiment is being echoed across mixed farming business throughout Western Australia.

Scott says two years of high prices have put his farm business in a solid financial position.

"In 2016 we banked around 860 cents/kg greasy sweep the floor, with top prices over 1,000 cents/kg, so that was pretty exciting for the business," he says.

"2015 was also very profitable, with averages up around 780c/kg, so wool has been very profitable for several years now.

"There certainly has been a level of confidence injected into the industry as a result of the stronger prices over the last few years. And it's been long overdue."

FOCUS ON MERINOS

Scott and Melanie farm 2000 ha of owned and leased land north west of Darkan in Western Australia's southern wheatbelt region.

Scott says he will be increasing his Merino flock this year, despite venturing into commercial cropping only eight years ago.

Prior to 2009, the business was 100 per cent sheep, as a combination of cross breeds and Merinos.

These days, the Ewen's sheep business is all Merinos.

"We no longer have any cross bred sheep," he says. "We are keen to concentrate all our efforts on value adding our Merino flock."

Scott says 2016 grain prices meant wool was easily the winner for their business.

"That became particularly obvious when the bottom fell out of the oat and barley market halfway through harvest," he says.

"We made the decision to move into cropping eight years ago to increase our cash flow opportunities, and while it's been a good move and a huge learning curve, sheep and wool are the more profitable business for us now."

With so much rainfall received last year, and so much available feed, the Ewens cut around 6 kg of wool per head, which, according to Scott, is a 25 per cent total fleece increase on 2015.

Scott says the downside to the availability of excess feed was the broadening of the micron across the flock.

"The hoggets ended up at about 19 micron in 2016, whereas in 2015 they were 18 micron," he says.

"The ewes also blew out to 21.5, compared to 20 micron in 2015."

But Scott says the increase in fleece weight more than compensated for this broader average micron.

SHEEP AND WOOL MORE PROFITABLE THAN CROPPING

Manager of AWI's Sheep's Back program in Western Australia, and farm consultant with Icon Agriculture, Andrew Ritchie, agrees sheep and wool are now more profitable than a typical crop rotation, particularly in the Southern Wheatbelt.

"High prices combined with the much better season locally have seen some wool clips double in value with the sheep gross margin reaching record levels by a considerable number," he says.

"It's routine to see sheep gross margins reach \$45/dry sheep equivalent (dse) to \$50/dse at the moment, with the previous five and 10 year averages being \$25/dse and \$23/dse for our client base."

But Andrew says sheep numbers will inevitably rise over coming years.

"We are seeing more growers retain more ewes, generally at the expense of cropping land that has got weedy, or instead of growing oats and barley, and I anticipate average ewe numbers to go up by 10 per cent.

"Many farmers have paddocks that they really should not be cropping and the recent highs are giving them the opportunity to switch back to sheep in some way."

While Andrew is positive about the longer-term outlook, he says nothing defeats high prices like high prices.

"While nominally we are at 30 year highs, we are still at levels below 2011 values in terms of the US dollar, and it will take a while to increase supply.

"Regardless of the high prices and increasing flock numbers I am optimistic the price can last for a few years."

ADDRESSING PRESENCE OF OJD

While strong wool prices are now taking centre stage, the road to wool profitability hasn't always been smooth for the Ewens.

Scott and Melanie purchased a property that had a widely documented Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) problem, and like many farm businesses tackling the devastating disease, they had to make the tough financial decision to invest in a wide scale vaccination program.

"While we never did have a positive OJD test, we knew the disease was present, so we had to sort that out before we could improve and increase the flock," he says.

"This farm used to be a depot for sheep coming in from the eastern states, so we think that is how it originated.

"But we purchased the property knowing the disease was present, so we knew we were in for a major clean-up program."

The Ewens reduced stocking rates to destress the sheep and to reduce the severity of the disease, to between 10 and 11.5 dse – a relatively low rate for an area that receives upwards of 600 mm of rainfall in a year.

Since the control of the disease, Scott can now increase his rates to back to 14.2 dse this coming year.


"There is light at the end of that tunnel, that's for sure," he said.

POSITIVE FUTURE

Scott says he looks forward to continuing to run Merinos in the future.

"This is an exciting time to be in the wool industry, and we are hoping prices and confidence continue to remain high."

Andrew believes lower world supply availability combined with a market need for quality wool is driving the price spike.

"It may also be that the great story about wool as a premium fibre is finally starting to get traction," he says. 

"Our Merino wool enterprise is much more profitable than the cropping part of the business."

Scott Ewen, WA woolgrower



MY MOB TRACKER APP KEEPS YOUR FLOCK IN YOUR POCKET

Sheep producer **Allan Wilson** has created and launched an **online tool** that can help woolgrowers **record details** of their flocks and **share the information** with their farm staff.



Katanning sheep producer **Allan Wilson** who produced the **MyMobTracker** smartphone app.

The MyMobTracker app was featured by Mr Wilson at the Sheep Easy Field Day, organised by AWI's producer network The Sheep's Back, in September at Northam in Western Australia.

"MyMobTracker is a simple, accurate and easy to use web-based app that can be used on a smartphone. It keeps track of stock movements, numbers, and actions such as marking, joining, pregnancy scanning, condition scores and weaning," explained Allan Wilson from Katanning in Western Australia, who created the app.

"It also tracks water quality and quantity and automatically calculates stocking rates. All sheep are identified according to the NLIS colour coded year, which is now standardized across Australia.

"Using a drop-down treatment menu, which includes all chemicals available in Australia, farmers can record dips, drenches and vaccines, even down to the batch number.

"MyMobTracker is effectively the modern version of the old notebook in the ute – it's your flock in your pocket."

The app also includes a sales and purchase function, to record stock bought and sold, and

has the capacity to enter National Vendor Declaration codes to aid traceability.


Information input is date stamped to ensure data integrity.

Mr Wilson said one of the key benefits of MyMobTracker is its mobility and simplicity, and its capacity to share recorded actions with other members of the enterprise by using their mobile phones.

"MyMobTracker means all farm staff will know exactly what's happened to every mob as soon as it's happened, and as principal, I will know what they've done and when they've done it, simply by viewing the activity log. It also creates a historical record of the enterprise," he said.

While MyMobTracker is a web-based app that operates through the use of mobile phones, it is backed up online through the website. That means that even if there is no mobile coverage in the paddock, once there is connectivity again it will automatically update the website, as well as the mobile phones of other users.

MyMobTracker is available for a free three-month trial period.

Mr Wilson said there has been a huge amount of interest shown to date with people utilising the three-month free trial period. 

MORE INFORMATION

www.mymobtracker.com.au
www.facebook.com/mymobtracker

MERINO LIFETIME PRODUCTIVITY

PROJECT UPDATE

FAST FACTS

- The AWI-funded Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project is an \$11 million (including \$4 million of support from project partners), 10-year partnership between AWI, the Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA), nominating stud Merino breeders and site hosts.
- The project aims to increase the understanding of the genetics, and economic interactions, of a diverse range of Merino types delivering high quality wool, lambs and meat through life.
- The MLP project runs at five sites where sire evaluation trials operate for the first two years and then continue tracking performance of ewe progeny as they proceed through four to five joinings and annual shearings.
- A full suite of independent visual classing and productivity traits will be assessed.

Described as one of the largest and longest Merino projects in the country, the Merino Lifetime Productivity (MLP) project recently opened its doors to industry at three of its five sites.

The MerinoLink (Temora, NSW), Elders Balmoral (Harrow, Vic) and Pingelly (WA) sites held annual field days that showcased the F1 ewe progeny, involved industry presentations, and provided demonstrations of the latest in sheep handling and data collection technologies.

Field days are a highlight of the sire evaluation

calendar providing an opportunity for existing and potential sheep and wool producers to compare firsthand the progeny of sires entered at the sites. Sires selected at MLP sites are carefully chosen to be industry representative in that they reflect the main industry sheep types, breeding directions and breeding methodologies.

The range in types entered creates an opportunity to closely explore the drivers of lifetime productivity as ewe progeny are shorn, classed and joined throughout life.

It is expected that the diverse types being

examined in the trial will offer a learning outcome for just about every sheep and wool business imaginable using the Merino ewe as the base.

Initial project results will be most relevant when examined at an individual site basis. As the MLP project moves past the standard sire evaluation phase, the results from the project will develop into more general decision support information with the goal of delivering greater lifetime productivity and profitability for commercial wool/meat producers.

MerinoLink hosted 75 attendees at their mid-March field day at Temora, NSW, with the crowd made up of commercial breeders, ram breeders and industry service providers. The well grown 9-month old ewe progeny from the 13 diverse industry sires showed a range in performance for many attributes. The latest in DNA collection technology, sheep handling and data collection technology was also displayed, all of which is being utilised by the MLP project to generate the valuable dataset.

In Western Australia, the **Pingelly** site welcomed a strong crowd of 60 attendees to inspect their first drop of ewes from 15 sires. Brett Jones, the chair of the site, pronounced their inaugural field day a great success: "We had a great mix of people attending the day with breeders using a range of selection approaches represented. The sheep looked

2017 **MerinoLink** field day, 'The Vale', Temora.



fantastic and were a credit to farm manager Steve Wainewright and his team."

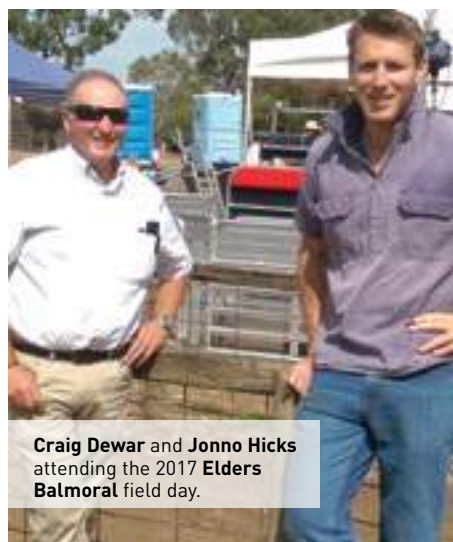
Brett added that the site is particularly interested in comparing conception rate and lamb survival differences between sire groups next year. "The first year of reproduction data from these ewes will be interesting, but I guess we really need the next five years of natural mating to complete the full reproduction picture to add the wool story," he said.

For **Elders Balmoral**, this was their second annual MLP field day and another chance to inspect the first ever drop of F1 ewes in the MLP Project. The site hosted around 160 attendees and was described by Tom Silcock, the site's chair, as the biggest and best their site has ever hosted in the 20 years of running sire evaluations. "With 25 sires entered in the 2015 and 2016 drops the 50-way draft was a feat in auto drafting and many hands-on deck to pen up the 50 groups."

When asked about the project results to date Tom offered: "As we thought, the sheep are changing as they get older, we are litmus testing early measurements and the second year of testing is challenging some of these predictions – and that's what this project is all about."

Considerable work goes into hosting a sire evaluation field day and the MLP team would like to acknowledge and thank the site hosts and site committees for their tremendous efforts in making these days a great success.

With the fourth and fifth sites having just completed their first joinings at Macquarie (Trangie, NSW) and New England (Armidale, NSW), the MLP project will have all five sites on display during 2018. To keep in touch, visit www.wool.com/MLP.



Craig Dewar and Jonno Hicks
attending the 2017 **Elders Balmoral** field day.

The Merino Lifetime Productivity project is being undertaken in partnership between AMSEA and AWI. AMSEA and AWI would like to acknowledge those entities who also contribute funding, namely woolgrowers through sire evaluation entry fees, site committee in-kind contributions, and sponsors of AMSEA. A special acknowledgement is also made to the Australian Government that supports research, development and marketing of Australian wool.



2016 drop F1 ewes and attendees at the **Pingelly** field day. PHOTO: Farm Weekly



A 9-month old 2016 drop F1 **Pingelly** ewe.

HAVE YOUR SAY...WE NEED YOUR HELP

Noting the diverse range of sheep types and selection strategies utilised by the MLP project's participants, are there any particular traits or questions relevant to your business, or the greater sheep industry, that you would like explored? If so, we would like to hear from you.

The following table captures the annual data collected on all 5,000 F1 ewes in the project. Are there particular traits or qualities that are not listed?

Wool Measurements	Fleece weight, yield, fibre diameter, fibre diameter SD, fibre diameter CV, staple strength, staple length, comfort factor and curvature
Growth and Carcass	Live weight, eye muscle and fat depth
Disease and Welfare	Worm egg count, faecal moisture, dag, urine stain, breech cover, crutch cover, breech wrinkle
Visual Wool Traits	Fleece rot, wool colour, wool character, dust penetration, staple weathering, staple structure, fibre pigmentation, non-fibre pigmentation, recessive black and random spot
Visual Conformation Traits	Face cover, jaw, legs/feet, shoulder/back, body wrinkle
Classing	Two classings with independent sheep classers
Joining, Pregnancy, Lambing	Sire, dam, pregnancy scanning, number of lambs weaned, live weight and condition score [at pre-joining, pregnancy scanning, pre-lambing, weaning]

The project includes sires from horned and polled backgrounds; MERINOSELECT and non-MERINOSELECT breeders; ASBV trait leaders and many show winners; breeders with objectives to produce large quantities of quality wool with less emphasis on carcass attributes, while others are improving both quantity of wool, lambs and carcass; others are seeking to reduce micron and increase wool production simultaneously.

The project seeks to cover the broad range of potential commercially important objectives. BUT are your needs covered or are there attributes, groups of traits or analyses that we should be carrying out in the project or perhaps should consider in the last two joinings in the project?

Please pass on your ideas to AMSEA, AWI or the MLP Project Manager using the details provided below:

NAME	ROLE	CONTACT	EMAIL
Anne Ramsay	MLP Project Manager	0400 368 448	stenhouseconsulting@bigpond.com
Ben Swain	AMSEA Executive Officer	0427 100 542	ben_swain@bigpond.com
Neil Judd	AWI Program Manager Genetics	0429 852 575	neil.judd@wool.com

Mark Lamb from Mark Lamb Trapping demonstrates the correct use of a **Canid Pest Ejector (CPE)** to attendees at the **Pooncarie 1080 CPE training** and wild dog control workshop.

WILD DOG AND FOX WORKSHOPS

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND ACCREDITATION

Woolgrowers and other landholders have increased their knowledge of wild dog and fox control and received important accreditation, following recent workshops including **1080 and Canid Pest Ejector (CPE) training** held in south-western NSW.

A series of free workshops recently held by Local Land Services Western Region and supported by AWI have increased woolgrowers' and other landholders' knowledge about wild dog and fox monitoring and control, and the effective application of 1080 baits, CPEs and foothold traps.

A total of 64 landholders attended workshops at Anabranch, Pooncarie, Ivanhoe, Hillston and Balranald, with participants providing overall positive feedback, including woolgrower John McKeon from 'Disalie', Trida, who was at the Hillston event.

"I think it has been a fantastic day, on-topic and informative for everyone here," Mr McKeon said. "It has covered a wide range of pests so that fits in well with people from different areas. These workshops are vitally important and the best way to get some action in your local communities."

The training sessions had theory and practical components, with Mark Lamb from Mark Lamb Trapping giving a variety of demonstrations and providing hands-on training.

Whilst the agenda was relatively flexible and tailored towards the audience, the main focus points included:

- identifying scats, sign and other evidence
- monitoring techniques (including sand pads and motion sensor cameras)
- effective placement of baits, CPEs and foothold traps
- the key principles of effective pest control (broadscale, integrated, cooperative and coordinated).

Mark pointed out three key take home messages from the day:

1. **To be effective in pest control, landholders and land managers must be coordinated.** Mark encouraged the participants to begin to form groups and undertake coordinated, cooperative and broadscale pest control activities.
2. **Monitor your property.** Mark encouraged participants to go home and begin monitoring using some of the techniques discussed on the day to gauge the distribution and abundance of pest animals on their respective properties.
3. **Take the control activities to the pest.** Mark emphasised to the group to be more efficient with pest control activities. By using simple monitoring techniques and assessing the landscape, landholders can begin to pick and choose locations where control activities will be more effective.

Attendances at these five workshops resulted in a total of 64 people either gaining or updating their 1080, CPE, PAPP and Pindone accreditations.

The positive feedback received from participants and the high number of attendees suggests that this training package is an effective way of helping woolgrowers update their skills and knowledge about controlling wild dogs and other pest animals.

Evaluations of these workshops showed that, on average, participants scored the day 8.7 out of 10. Of those who completed evaluations, 96% of participants (representing a total of >1,130,800 ha of managed land) indicated that they would now be making changes to their

canid predator control as a result of attending the day.

Changes to be made mainly included purchasing and using CPEs, commencing monitoring for wild dogs and fox populations to determine the scale of the issue, beginning coordinated and integrated control programs and improving their use of motion sensor cameras.

Local Land Services Western Region Land Services Officer Shae Brennan, who was at the Ivanhoe and Hillston workshops, thought the participants took a number of important messages away including how important it is to work collaboratively with each other.

"It is crucial landholders share information about what they are seeing on their property and in their area when it involves the management of wild dogs, foxes and other pest animals," Ms Brennan said.

"Forming or joining a local pest control group is a great way to keep informed about pest animal activity and we know from past experience that having a coordinated plan in place between landholders and their neighbours delivers the best results."

MORE INFORMATION

www.western.lls.nsw.gov.au



Subsidised CPE kits were offered as an incentive to the training/workshops due to funding provided by AWI. CPE kits consisted of five CPE units and additional equipment. A total of 32 subsidised CPE kits were purchased as a result of the training/workshops.

NEW TOOL TO ASSESS COST OF FOOTROT STRATEGIES

A new **Farmer Footrot Tool** will help enable producers with footrot-affected sheep to understand the financial cost of the disease on their farm and to evaluate the cost effectiveness of different strategies to control or eradicate the disease.



Footrot management strategies can include footbathing. PHOTO: James Tyson

A simple assessment tool is now available to enable producers to calculate the cost-benefit of different footrot management strategies specific to their own circumstances. The tool was built by Macquarie Franklin under the direction of the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE), with funding from AWI.

"In general terms the cost of virulent footrot for an individual farmer is a combination of the productivity impacts and the cost of treatment. Productivity impacts are a combination of loss of stock trading income and reduced wool income – themselves associated with lower body weight, lower lambing percentages and increased mortality," said program manager Bruce Jackson of the Biosecurity Operations branch of DPIPWE.

"Eradication strategies, either conventional or using vaccines, have a high initial cost but (if successful) lower ongoing costs than simply containing the disease. Containment has lower up-front costs but ongoing productivity and annual treatment costs.

"Vaccine eradication tends to be the lowest cost option, less than for conventional eradication. Conventional eradication is often unsuccessful and the property reverts to containment; in this case it becomes the highest cost option."

The Excel-based tool available at www.wool.com/footrot has been developed to assist farmers in arriving at a considered decision in relation to footrot control and eradication options for their own situation. There are four steps involved in using the simple tool:

Step 1: Describe what your footrot-free enterprise would look like.

If there was no footrot on your farm what would the sheep gross margin be? This is the base case against which footrot impacts and cost of control is measured.

Step 2: Assess the impact of footrot - before control/eradication measures

The overall impact is a combination of the per head impacts on infected sheep and the proportion of the flock affected.

Step 3: Assess the costs and effectiveness for the three control/eradication options

1. Containment

A combination of treatments to minimise lameness, but with culling limited to chronically affected sheep. The disease is curtailed but not eradicated.

2. Conventional eradication

A combination of treatments to initially reduce incidence, followed by an inspection and culling regime to identify and remove all animals that fail to

respond to treatment. This strategy is not always successful.

3. Vaccination eradication

Administration of a specific vaccine along with the conventional eradication program to speed up and improve the overall result.

Step 4: Review overall costs

The tool calculates the gross margin under each control/eradication option over 10 years. The containment option has a better gross margin earlier on, because treatment costs and culling etc are lower, but has a lower ongoing gross margin because of some continuing impact of the disease and ongoing treatment costs. **B**

MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/footrot

NEW VACCINE AVAILABLE

After years of research and development by the University of Sydney School of Veterinary Science, a serogroup specific footrot vaccine is being manufactured by Tréidlia Biovet Pty Ltd and is now available to Australian sheep producers.

"The vaccine can only be used after testing has been conducted to determine which virulent serogroups of footrot are present in the flock," said Professor Richard Whittington from the University of Sydney.

"This involves taking swabs from feet with footrot and culturing them in the laboratory and then applying tests to determine which of the 10 (A to I or M) serogroups are present, and how virulent that isolate is. The correct serogroups can then be incorporated into the vaccine."

Senior Research Fellow Om Dhungyel, who conducted most of the field research, emphasised that only one or two serogroups could be incorporated into the vaccine at a time.

"Very good cure rates and at least six months' protection result if no more than two serogroups are injected at one time," Om said. "Additional 'rounds' (a priming and booster shot four weeks apart) of vaccination can start three months after

the first round if more than two serogroups are present in the flock. It is still crucial to follow up vaccination with several rounds of thorough foot inspection and culling of any remaining infected sheep."

Mark White, Director of Tréidlia Biovet Pty Ltd, said vaccine was available now for all but the rare M serogroup. A couple of weeks' notice between ordering and supply is required to do the final customisation for each farm. "Your veterinary practitioner must authorise the supply of the vaccine as well, so it is best to involve your vet right from the start at the sampling stage. Approval of the Chief Veterinary Officer is also required in WA, SA and NSW where virulent footrot is a notifiable disease, so discuss this option with your Departmental Veterinary Officer if you are in one of these three states and would like to use vaccine".

Sheep Veterinary Consultant Dr Paul Nilon from Nilon Farm Health said: "We have used the serogroup specific vaccines on a number of flocks in Tasmania now, and usually achieve a good result if we have identified all the virulent serogroups present and the flock manager is meticulous with the post vaccination inspections."

AWI funded some of the early work evaluating the serogroup-specific footrot vaccine and the University of Sydney and Tasmanian DPIPWE supported on-going studies leading to commercialisation of the vaccine.

LOWER WRINKLE AND DAG REDUCE THE RISK OF BREECH STRIKE

Breech Wrinkle and Dags are the key breech strike risk traits. Every 0.1 reduction reduces the lifetime risk of breech strike.

As there is a general unfavourable relationship between fleece weight and wrinkle, it is important to pursue sires that are good for both (as well as fertility, growth, structure and the other resilience/welfare traits, in a balanced approach). There are sires and studs that bend this relationship; these “curve benders” are relatively higher in fleece weight and lower in wrinkle.



Wrinkle and Dags are the main causes of breech strike followed by Breech Cover and Urine Stain. AWI-funded research conducted at Armidale NSW (CSIRO) and Mt Barker WA (DAFWA) shows that every 0.1 reduction in breech trait scores, lowers the risk of lifetime breech strike for both mulesed and un-mulesed animals.

Table 1 opposite is a summary of the Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs) of 158 AI sires from 27 Merino studs, from the MERINOSELECT website, listed in increasing Breech Wrinkle order. The variation in AI sire stud averages are large for Wrinkle, Cover and the key production indexes; Breech Wrinkle averages ranges from -1.2 to +0.9, Breech Cover from -1.3 to 0.3 and the indexes around 60 index points.

The Wrinkle ASBV required to move to a non-mules operation without a large increase in chemical control, varies with factors such as climate, management systems, the size of the commercial property and nutritional value of the pastures. Wrinkle ASBVs can be higher for sheep raised on low protein and low energy country as the sheep ‘express’ less wrinkle when run in these environments. In production systems with high nutritional levels, more emphasis needs to be placed on lower Wrinkle ASBVs. There are 5 non-mules studs listed in the table with differing wrinkle scores; Studs Nine and Ten have an AI sire average Wrinkle ASBVs of -0.3, Stud Five

averages -0.8 and Studs Two and One average -1.0 and -1.2.

However, for sheep that are moderate or high in the key breech trait scores, any reduction in Wrinkle, Dag and Cover will reduce the lifetime risk of breech strike. The lower the score pre-mulesing, the lower the score post-mulesing.

Breeding for good productivity as well as welfare is important for the commercial viability of the stud and its clients. There is a trend in the table that shows the lower Wrinkle studs have lower Adult Fleece Weight. But some studs buck the trend. Stud Seven has the highest Adult Fleece Weight at +24 with a relatively low Wrinkle at -0.4 showing the extent to which some studs and sires are bending the curve. and thereby reducing lifetime welfare risks and not sacrificing fleece weight.

Studs with similar Adult Fleece Weight and Fibre Diameter can have considerable variation in Wrinkle. Studs Eight, Fourteen, Nineteen and Twenty Three have reasonably similar Adult Fleece Weights (+17, +15, +15 and +14) and Fibre Diameter (-0.8, -1.1, -1.1 and -0.7) but large variation in Wrinkle (-0.3, 0.0, +0.1, +0.4).

There is also considerable variation between the studs’ AI sires for dags and worm resistance. These traits can be important in high worm and dag country and not

important in low dag and low worm country.

There is a trend for lower Fertility with increasing Wrinkle and Fleece Weight. However Studs Thirteen, Seventeen and Twenty Two have similar NLW (5%, 4% and 3%) and Fleece Weights (9, 7, 11) but have reasonable differences in Fibre Diameter (-0.2, -2.0 and -1.1) and Wrinkle (0.0, 0.1 and 0.4), which again shows there are curve bending sires.

Studs Twenty Four, Twenty Six and Twenty Seven have low Fibre Diameter (-3.0, -3.0 and -2.5) and high Wrinkle +0.5, +0.6 and +0.9. The path to non-mules without a high reliance on chemicals and other Dag reduction tools is a long one for most low Fibre Diameter Fine and Super Fine studs, but every 0.1 reduction improves lifetime welfare.

As ASBVs become more robust with increasing data being collected by breeders (particularly Adult Fleece Weight, Breech traits and Fertility, at joining, scanning, lambing and weaning) and with the outcomes of the AWI Merino Lifetime Productivity project, the confidence and speed which breeders will be able to improve productivity as well as welfare traits will increase.

Knowing how genetics and environment interact to create an animal’s phenotype on a commercial property is an important step in knowing what targets to set, to maximise lifetime productivity and welfare.

TABLE 1. AVERAGE ASBVS FOR AI SIREs LISTED BY STUDS ON THE MERINOSELECT WEBSITE AI SEMEN CATALOGUE

DEFINITIONS

YWT Yearling Body Weight; **AWT** Adult Body Weight; **YEMD** Yearling Eye Muscle Depth; **YFAT** Yearling Fat; **YCFW** Yearling Clean Fleece Weight; **AGFW** Adult Greasy Fleece Weight;**YFD** Yearling Fibre Diameter; **YDCV** Yearling Fibre Diameter Coefficient of Variation; **YSL** Yearling Staple Length; **YSS** Yearling Staple Strength; **YWEC** Yearling Worm Egg Count; **NLW** Number of Lambs Weaned; **EBWR** Early Breech Wrinkle; **EBCOV** Early Breech Cover; **LDAG** Late Dag; **FP+** Fibre Production Plus Index; **MP+** Merino Production Plus Index; **DP+** Dual Purpose Plus Index; **NM** Not Muled.

2000 is the base year for Wrinkle, Cover and Dags and 1990 is the base year for all other traits

Stud	Mules status	YWT	AWT	YEMD	YFAT	YCFW	AGFW	YFD	YDCV	YSL	YSS	YWEC	NLW	EBWR	EBCOV	LDAG	FP+	MP+	DP+
Stud 1	NM	9	8	2.3	1.2	14	5	1.6	-1.0	17	1.7	-18	4	-1.2	-0.6	-0.2	100	119	141
Stud 2	NM	12	10	2.8	1.4	18	3	0.4	-1.5	25	0.8	-5	5	-1.0	-1.3	0.2	114	137	161
Stud 3		9	8	-0.1	-0.1	21	6	-1.4	-1.7	20	1.2	-5	3	-1.0	-0.2	0.1	144	157	156
Stud 4		9	8	2.1	0.7	13	3	-0.2	-1.9	11	3.9	0	-1	-0.8	0.0	0.0	127	138	150
Stud 5	NM	9	9	2.5	1.2	18	4	0.7	-0.9	22	-0.5	0	1	-0.8	-1.2	0.3	107	125	149
Stud 6		5	5	1.5	1.0	8	-1	0.0	-2.7	13	3.1	-37	8	-0.7	-1.1	0.3	119	126	142
Stud 7		3	2	0.1	-1.0	31	24	-0.9	0.1	16	2.4	-14	-1	-0.4	0.1	0.2	163	174	172
Stud 8		7	7	-0.7	-0.3	30	17	-0.8	-0.5	13	1.6	6	6	-0.3	-0.3	0.1	145	165	163
Stud 9	NM	5	4	1.3	0.8	10	1	-1.2	-1.1	13	-1.8	-7	3	-0.3	-0.8	0.2	118	126	136
Stud 10	NM	1	1	0.2	-0.1	13	7	-1.0	-0.7	9	1.3	-4	2	-0.3	-0.1	0.0	136	139	139
Stud 11		11	8	2.2	1.5	25	10	-0.1	-1.5	14	3.6	-71	3	-0.2	-0.6	-0.1	142	157	173
Stud 12		10	9	0.5	0.4	24	11	-1.8	-1.5	11	0.6	-13	10	-0.1	-0.3	-0.1	166	184	191
Stud 13		7	9	0.7	0.3	18	9	-0.2	-0.7	8	1.2	-21	5	0.0	-0.1	0.1	128	145	155
Stud 14		6	4	0.6	0.1	27	15	-1.1	-0.3	7	-0.8	23	0	0.0	-0.2	0.2	144	161	162
Stud 15		5	4	0.1	0.4	14	3	-1.6	-1.8	7	0.9	-37	1	0.1	-0.1	0.0	146	148	143
Stud 16		3	3	-0.4	-0.2	17	12	-0.7	-1.7	10	2.5	16	0	0.1	-0.1	-0.1	138	144	138
Stud 17		3	2	-0.1	0.0	14	7	-2.0	0.2	2	0.1	20	4	0.1	0.1	0.0	144	152	151
Stud 18		8	7	0.6	0.1	23	11	-1.0	-0.3	10	-1.1	0	0	0.1	-0.5	0.2	136	149	152
Stud 19		7	6	-0.2	-0.2	23	15	-1.1	-0.2	13	-0.3	7	1	0.1	-0.2	0.2	145	158	159
Stud 20		4	2	-0.9	-0.7	21	16	-1.7	-0.8	8	0.8	20	-1	0.2	0.0	0.1	150	159	147
Stud 21		3	2	-1.0	-1.3	18	12	-1.5	-0.9	1	0.0	20	-3	0.3	0.2	0.5	142	150	136
Stud 22		11	11	-0.1	-0.3	23	11	-1.1	-0.8	7	0.5	0	3	0.4	-0.4	0.3	143	161	164
Stud 23		4	3	-0.6	-0.6	20	14	-0.7	1.1	5	-1.9	0	1	0.4	-0.1	0.1	131	144	140
Stud 24		3	1	0.1	-0.3	17	6	-3.0	0.4	6	-3.1	-22	-1	0.5	0.1	-0.1	156	159	149
Stud 25		3	2	-0.8	-0.3	22	13	-2.1	-0.6	2	-1.0	-9	0	0.6	0.3	0.3	158	165	155
Stud 26		3	1	0.2	0.2	15	6	-3.0	-1.4	1	0.3	-35	-2	0.6	0.1	0.0	162	158	148
Stud 27		4	2	-0.9	-0.7	28	20	-2.5	0.0	6	-2.3	0	-2	0.9	0.2	0.1	163	172	157
Min		1	1	-1.0	-1.3	8	-1	-3.0	-2.7	1	-3.1	-71	-3	-1.2	-1.3	-0.2	100	119	136
Max		12	11	2.8	1.5	31	24	1.6	1.1	25	3.9	23	10	0.9	0.3	0.5	166	184	191
Range		10	10	3.7	2.8	23	24	4.6	3.7	24	6.9	94	13	2.0	1.6	0.7	66	65	55
2015 drop percentile ranges																			
Top 1%		11	11	2.8	1.7	29	21	-3.6	-2.6	22	7.1	-72	13	-1.0	-0.8	-0.4	160	173	176
Top 5%		9	8	2.1	1.2	24	17	-2.7	-2.0	16	5.0	-53	9	-0.8	-0.6	-0.3	150	159	161
Top 20%		6	6	1.1	0.6	18	12	-1.9	-1.1	11	2.8	-34	5	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2	140	147	146
Top 50%		6	3	0.2	0.0	12	6	-1.1	-0.7	6	0.6	-14	1	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	129	134	133
Top 80%		6	0	-0.5	-0.5	5	0	-0.3	0.1	1	-1.6	9	-3	0.2	0.1	0.1	117	120	121

See www.sheepgenetics.org.au/MerinoSelect and then select 'Sale and semen catalogues'.

TREATING LICE

ON PREGNANT AND LAMBING EWES

When lice are found in late pregnant ewes or ewes that have lambs at foot, lice management strategies are complex. The **LiceBoss Ewe-Lamb Treatments Tool** can help woolgrowers to choose an appropriate treatment strategy for these ewes and lambs.

Lice management strategies on late pregnant or lambing ewes are complex. Dipping heavily pregnant ewes may not be possible and many backline treatments take six weeks or more to kill all lice.

After a backline treatment and before it has killed the lice on the ewes, lice can spread from the ewes to any untreated newborn lambs. The lice can then spread back to the ewes after the protection from their treatment has worn off. A lengthy lambing period exacerbates this problem.

Further complexity arises from differing product claims: variations in periods of protection against new infestations, how soon after shearing they must be applied, and whether or not they can be used on unshorn lambs. Attention to the product label is required.

Selection of ewe and lamb treatments needs careful consideration to avoid starting a new infestation in lambs or failing to eradicate an infestation in ewes. The LiceBoss Ewe-Lamb Treatments Tool can assist your decision.

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR EWES

Long wool treatments of ewes will not achieve eradication and these ewes remain a potential lice risk.

Dipping is best done at least six weeks before lambing with ewes in good condition while ewes are able to move safely through a dip. It also reduces the risk of treatment failure from carry over of lice from ewes to early born lambs. But dipping must also occur two to six weeks after shearing (ideally, between weeks two and four).

If ewes are not in good condition or lambing is imminent, a backline treatment must be used after shearing (most within 24 hours, one up to seven days after shearing), but these often require six weeks to remove all lice.

Insect Growth Regulator (IGR) products require even longer and it is recommended that lambs born to IGR-treated ewes be treated in the first three months of life.

Unless you are certain of their effectiveness

against the lice on your property, avoid using chemicals to which chemical resistance is known.

Knowing protective periods of a product may be useful when treated ewes contact untreated lambs, or when treated lambs contact untreated lousy ewes. Few products have protective period claims: some IGR products claim protection from reinfection for 12 weeks after treatment. One neonicotinoid-based pour-on product claims to protect treated sheep from reinfestation for a period of four weeks.

See Table 1 below for more information about chemical groups and their method of application.

Also check that withholding periods can be met before using a product. The meat withholding period (WHP) and Export Slaughter Interval (ESI) will restrict the choice of chemicals when treated sheep or lambs are to be sold for slaughter for the domestic or export markets, especially in prime lamb flocks.

TABLE 1. CHEMICAL GROUPS AND METHODS OF APPLICATION REGISTERED FOR THE TREATMENT OF LICE IN BREEDING EWE FLOCKS

CHEMICAL GROUP	REGISTERED METHODS OF APPLICATION							
	OFF-SHEARS/SHORT WOOL		LONG WOOL					
	OFF-SHEARS BACKLINER	SHORT WOOL DIP	BACKLINE UP TO 6 MONTHS	BACKLINE UP TO 10 MONTHS	BACKLINE UP TO 12 MONTHS	HAND-JET UP TO 6 MONTHS	HAND-JET UP TO 10.5 MONTHS	HAND-JET UP TO 12 MONTHS
NEONICOTINOID	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
SPINOSYN	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
ORGANOPHOSPHATE	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
PYRETHROID	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
INSECT GROWTH REGULATORS	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
MACROCYCLIC LACTONE	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO
MAGNESIUM FLUOROSILICATE, SULPHUR AND ROTENONE	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

Note: Despite products being registered for control of lice on sheep, not all will be effective. This is due to the development of resistance to certain pesticide classes in some lice populations.

Treatments applied in long wool will not eradicate lice. Re-treatment off-shears or in short wool after the next shearing is recommended.

YES indicates that there is at least one product from this group registered for this purpose. Check the LiceBoss Products Tool available via www.liceboss.com.au/tools

NO indicates that there are no products from this group registered for this purpose.

ALWAYS CHECK THE LABEL CLAIMS BEFORE CHOOSING A PRODUCT

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR LAMBS

Unless lice are eradicated from ewes prior to lambing, there is a high risk that lice will transfer from ewes to lambs.

Where possible, use the same method of treatment for ewes and lambs. Use of dipping products for ewes and backline products for lambs, or vice versa, may not eradicate lice because, for example, the protective effect of dipping may lapse before all lice on the backline-treated sheep have died.

Products also vary in whether they can be used on unshorn lambs and on the age/size of the lambs:

- One neonicotinoid insecticide can be used on unshorn lambs up to two months of age.
- Some insect growth regulator (IGR) backline products can be used on lambs up to three months of age.
- The macrocyclic lactone backliner should only be applied to shorn lambs and not be used on lambs less than 10 kg bodyweight.

Dipping young lambs is usually inadvisable as smaller and weaker lambs can get knocked down in the yards or be caught under other sheep in the dip.

If ewes are treated with an IGR product in later pregnancy, treat the lambs in the first three months of life.

FIGURE 1: AN EXAMPLE OF THE QUESTIONS AND OUTPUT FROM THE LICEBOSS EWE-LAMB TREATMENTS TOOL.

Lice Treatment for Breeding Ewes and their Lambs

Treatment of ewes about to lamb or with lambs at foot makes eradication more difficult. This section is only for use after you have decided to treat breeding ewes. It suggests the type of treatment for the ewes and considers whether their lambs may also require treatment. Work through the options below, clicking on the button appropriate to your situation. Further choices will appear after each question has been answered.

Will the ewes be treated within 6 weeks after shearing?

☒ Ewes are less than 6 weeks offshears or can be shorn before treating

☐ Ewes cannot be shorn now and will need to be treated in long wool

Breeding ewes to be treated in short wool

When will the ewes be shorn and treated?

☐ While the ewes are in lamb more than 6 weeks before start of lambing

☒ While the ewes are in lamb within 6 weeks of lambing

☐ When the ewes have lambs at foot

☐ Breeding ewes treated in short wool after weaning

Can the ewes be dipped?

☒ Yes, it will be possible to dip the ewes

☐ No, dipping is not an option for the ewes

Ewes will be treated within 6 weeks before lambing and dipping is possible

When the ewes are going to be dipped, ensure that this is safe for the ewes.

Dip the ewes in Extinsod, an organophosphate (OP) or MgFSi. If using an OP, take particular care of health and safety issues.

The lambs will not need treatment after birth because the ewes should be clean of lice by then.

MAKE THE DECISION EASIER WITH THE EWE-LAMB TREATMENTS TOOL

The LiceBoss Ewe-Lamb Treatments Tool guides you through a series of questions to help you decide the best course of action to suit your particular circumstance. These relate to the time until lambing and the time since or when the ewes will be shorn and whether and when lambs can be shorn or treated. Figure 1 below shows an example of some of the questions the tool asks and a recommendation.

Above all, check ewes for lice well in advance of shearing and lambing so that your treatment options are not restricted.

The **Ewe-Lamb Treatments Tool** is available via www.liceboss.com.au/tools **B**

PARABOSS: 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 subscribe 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



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Jeff Edwards and his daughter Chloe in their new shed at Kweda, east of Brookton in the Southern Wheatbelt region of Western Australia.

The gleaming new shearing shed on the property of wool producer Jeff Edwards of Kweda in Western Australia is evidence of his unwavering belief in the future profitability of the wool industry.

"Sheep prices are high, wool prices are at record levels, and our workers and contractors are happy because we can now provide them with a state of the art working facility," Jeff says on his 'Brooklands Park' property at Kweda, about 45km east of Brookton in the Southern Wheatbelt region of WA.

That facility is a \$300,000 monument to Australia's wool industry – a huge, modern shed and yards that will outlast numerous future generations of the Edwards' farming dynasty.

It's an investment that Jeff says is his tangible commitment to Merino sheep remaining in the business for the long term.

Farming 8,400 ha with his wife Lear and daughter Chloe, Jeff says being in the new shed at shearing time is an exciting place to be.

"There is nowhere else I'd rather be," Jeff says.

"To invest in something of this magnitude was a huge emotional decision, but it wasn't a gamble at all."

According to Jeff, the wool industry was heading in only one direction.

"Here we are surrounded by continuous croppers – there are less and less sheep, and

there is more and more demand. That's just simple maths," he says.

"So combine those higher prices for both meat and wool with lower costs than a grains enterprise, and all of a sudden, the sheep industry is a very profitable place to be."

Jeff says in the same year they finished building the new shed, the business also signed up for a new harvester for the same amount of money.

"But this shed won't depreciate in value, while a machine, be that a header or a tractor or a sprayer, will drop a quarter of its value in the first 12 months," he says.

MODERN FACILITY

The galvanised steel structure is unlike most traditional shearing sheds found on any average wool-growing property.

"This shed was a huge outlay for our business, but it's now paying dividends and I'm incredibly glad we made the decision to invest in our wool enterprise."
Jeff Edwards, wool producer, WA

While the enormous building was a big enough investment on its own, it's the

internal fit out, plus the professionally designed yards, that really makes this structure a sophisticated facility.

"It's a 5-stand raised board horse shoe design, so it's much easier, physically, on the shearers and shed hands than a traditional design, and being a horse shoe shape, everyone can see what is going on, at all stands, at all times," Jeff says.

The shed can hold 850 sheep, which allows for a whole day of shearing despite the weather.

"Older sheds were designed when shearing was much slower, using the narrow combs," Jeff says.

"I haven't seen any other shed that can hold this many sheep, and in terms of productivity, it's been fantastic, and generally our shearing goes smoothly."

RETAINING SHEARERS

In 2012, Jeff admits his relationship with his shearing contractor hit a fork in the road.

"Our old shed had been built out of discarded scrap wood, the sheep yards were homemade, and we could see there wasn't much life left in the old building. Our head contractor gave it two years at most," he says.

"We knew then that we had to do something significant to make the sheep side of the business work for us.

"We have been using the same shearing contractors for many years, and since we now provide such a modern facility, we are confident of retaining this team into the longer term."

RELIABLE SOURCE OF INCOME

Stepping back to the 1990s, Jeff's sheep enterprise consisted solely of trading wethers. When wool prices hit rock bottom, he says he almost made the decision to get completely out of sheep.

"I've always been interested in sheep, and so this would have been a massive decision for our business," he says.

Jeff's passion for sheep was re-ignited in 2003 when he purchased an additional property, which came with 1,500 mated ewes.

"That was certainly a turning point for me. I saw how much you could make from sheep and how little you had to spend."

Jeff says while sheep may not have seen the massive highs of the grain industry over the past few decades, they also haven't suffered the recent lows.

"In our business, the profit line for the sheep has been stable and the cost of running a Merino flock has been low."

Both of which, he says, have made his entire business sustainable.

Jeff estimates that in his grain enterprise, his costs average between 45 and 65 cents for every \$1.00 return. In stark contrast, his sheep business costs him just 25 cents per dollar return.

"The stakes are much higher in the grains industry," he says.

FAMILY BUSINESS

Head stockman, and Jeff's daughter Chloe, has been back in the family business since 2013. A self-confessed animal lover, Chloe is now driving the livestock enterprise for the business.

"I know most people don't love working with sheep," she laughs. "But I really enjoy it."

"Drenching is physically the hardest of the jobs, but my capable team of dogs do a lot of the hard work for me."

During shearing time, Chloe is more than happy to be in the professionally designed yards backlining the sheep after they have been shorn.

"We've put concrete down on large parts of the yards to reduce the dust, so the work is much more enjoyable these days," she says.

PROFITABLE BUSINESS

Chloe says the business recently achieved wool forward contracts at levels around 1,500 c/kg greasy.

"We were up around 1,330 cents last year, so wool has been very profitable for some time now," she says.

The farm has significant areas of lighter soils, which translates to lower yielding flocks. It also means the clips are, on average, around 21 micron and Chloe says the business isn't focusing on reducing micron levels.

"We are achieving between 65 and 66 per cent yields, which we are extremely happy with given that so much of our country is lighter sandier soils," Chloe says.

"On the heavier country, the yields are in the high 60s.

"Fleece yields are our focus rather than reducing the micron levels."

The business produced 350 bales in 2016, but Jeff is hoping for an even bigger clip this year.

"We've certainly come a long way since my grandfather tried, unsuccessfully at the first attempt, to secure a bank loan to purchase this block of land which, back then, was considered in the middle of nowhere," he says.

"This shed was a huge outlay for our business, but it's now paying dividends and I'm incredibly glad we made the decision to invest in our wool enterprise."

MORE INFORMATION

Further images of the shed are available in an image gallery in the online version of *Beyond the Bale* available at <http://beyondthebale.wool.com>



The new shed has a **5-stand raised board horse shoe design**.



The business produced **350 bales** in 2016, but **Jeff** is hoping for an even bigger clip this year.



The **shed** can hold **850 sheep**, which allows for a whole day of shearing.



Chloe is more than happy to be backlining the sheep in the **professionally designed yards**.

TRAINING WEBSITE

TO IMPROVE SHEARING

A new **online learning resource for shearers** has been launched by skilled international trainers to help perfect shearers' techniques, which will in turn improve the quality of woolgrowers' clips.



Top trainer and world record holder **Dwayne Black** from WA, pictured here training face to face, has launched an **online learning resource** to help shearers – wherever they are located – to **improve their technique**.



A clip from one of the **lojik.com.au** videos with **Dwayne Black** showing how the simple concept of **weight transfer** can efficiently **minimise footwork**.

As one of Australia's top trainers and the holder of multiple shearing records, Dwayne Black knows more than most about how to make the job of the everyday hard working shearer easier.

Dwayne and his father, Peter, have been involved in the shearing industry for many years as experienced trainers, both in Australia and overseas.

They have taken part in organising many world shearing records, with Dwayne himself having held five world shearing records. He has been coaching shearers for the past 10 years and is a trainer through AWT's Independent Coaching Program. Peter has trained in three countries and been selected as coach for two countries at four world shearing championships.

To impart their knowledge and advice to shearers across Australia and overseas, they launched an online training resource in October last year, incorporating a subscription-based website at lojik.com.au with a private Facebook group.

"We have tried over the years to find a way to get factual information to shearers wherever they are located, as we can't service the demand face to face. But with the technology available today we believe this can be done through our lojik.com.au website and Facebook group," Dwayne said.

"The aim is to provide information that can help any shearer become more efficient and make their job easier. The information is aimed primarily at the everyday shearer, rather than the beginner, to help them improve from the level they're at to the level they want to be.

"Quality shearing has flow-on benefits for the woolgrower. Better handling of sheep leads to happier animals; and better shearing techniques with the blade closer to the skin creates a better product, with minimum second cuts and a full-length fleece."

The lojik.com.au website includes a range of information with simple tips and tricks for shearers, covering the three areas of: shearing technique, shearing gear, and looking after your body. The shearing videos cover topics such as the best starting position, transitioning, shearing different parts of the body, speed shearing for professionals, and getting stubborn sheep down the chute.

"Grinding is also extensively covered in an hour-long module to help shearers (and farmers) set up a grinder properly and get their tools sharp, such an imperative part of the job."

The website also includes a 'monthly focus' (such as shearing the belly), video profiles of top shearers, a tally calculator (that calculates your average shearing time per sheep), an image gallery and a webstore.

"Information is regularly added to the website, in many different formats including video and graphics. As it is online, it is available for easy access anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

"The website is supported by a private Facebook group that provides a communication forum where shearers can ask questions or upload videos of themselves shearing and then get personalised feedback and advice. We cover all breed types.

"We aim to be the source of credible information that can answer any shearer's question. We deal in facts not opinions, and show techniques that are proven and simple."

STILL GOING STRONG

Dwayne is 44 years old now and still going strong. He spends half his time doing regular shearing jobs, and the other half training shearers. He says that it's important for all shearers, no matter what their experience, to keep refreshing their skills.

"There are always ways to sharpen up technique, especially if a shearer has learnt on the job and hasn't ever received any coaching from an experienced trainer.

"I've been around the industry for more than 20 years and have learnt from some of the best in the business – but I'm always on the lookout for new ways to approach the job. This includes better shearing techniques to improve quality and speed, but also to help keep your body in the best condition so that you can do a better job and stay in the profession longer."

A 12-month subscription to lojik.com.au (including membership of the private Facebook group) costs \$99 excluding GST – which Dwayne notes is "equivalent to just a couple of cartons of beer, or less than one sheep a week over the year, a no brainer really" – or \$30 for three months.

"Getting a trainer out to a shed can be an expensive exercise, so online training can be very cost effective as well as handy," he adds.

AWI will be providing all shearers that complete one of its own training courses with a free one-month subscription to lojik.com.au. B

MORE INFORMATION
www.lojik.com.au

CODE OF CONDUCT WOOLSHED POSTER



The **code of conduct poster** is being used in shearing sheds across Australia. The poster is available from AWI.

A '**code of conduct**' poster is available from AWI that can help woolgrowers set standards for their entire shearing team – regarding animal welfare, workplace health and safety and the prohibition of drug use.

Having sheep and the shed well prepared for shearing, and upholding the best in animal welfare are all vital, not only in every shearing shed in Australia but for the entire wool industry.

Good communication between contractors, shearing teams and woolgrowers is essential.

A 'code of conduct' poster was issued in March last year that provides woolgrowers with a good starting point to discuss with their shearing team behaviour in the shed that ensures a positive outcome for everyone including the woolgrower's sheep.

The poster outlines a code of practice in line with relevant state laws regarding animal welfare, workplace health and

safety and the prohibition of drug use. It can be a point of reference for everyone in the shed and help ensure they are all on the same page.

A copy of the poster was sent to woolgrowers with the March 2016 edition of *Beyond the Bale*, but replacement or extra copies are available free from AWI.

The poster is a joint initiative between AWI, Shearing Contractors' Association of Australia, the WA Shearing Industry Association, and WoolProducers Australia. B

MORE INFORMATION

You can download a copy of the A2 size shearing shed poster at wool.com/shearingresources or to get a free copy of the poster posted to you contact the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.

SHEAR-JITSU

HELPS PREVENT INJURY TO SHEARERS

Pera Davies demonstrating his technique of moving sheep from the pen that minimises potential injury to the shearer.

A new series of **four training videos** highlights ways that shearers can **prevent injury** and increase the longevity of their careers. The videos feature **Pera Davies** who developed the **'Stand and Deliver - Shear-Jitsu'** technique which is a new way to perform the catch and drag.

"Stand and deliver! Ned Kelly said stand and deliver, or suffer the consequences. Well the consequences for shearers if they don't stand and deliver the sheep from the pen properly is that they could get injured and be out of a job."

So says Pera Davies, a shearer of 38 years who has shorn nearly two million sheep in his career. Pera has developed a technique – which he calls 'Stand and Deliver - Shear-jitsu' – that makes the catch and drag (which is where injuries often occur) easier on the shearer's body.

He also emphasises the importance of body management and provides advice on how to best manage shearers' time during smoko,

which includes a simple 15-minute stretching and relaxation regime.

"In 1986 to 1989 I suffered severe back injuries from shearing that prevented me from working. My brother, who runs karate dojos, suggested I learn ju-jitsu and together we were able to adapt some ju-jitsu techniques to the catch and drag," Pera said.

"Shear-jitsu is about longevity, health and wellness. Since I've been using it over the past 28 years, I haven't had a back injury and I've suffered no back pain at all."

In collaboration with Pera, AWI has produced four short 'Stand and Deliver – Shear-jitsu' training videos that complement AWI's other

shearer training videos available via the AWI website.

CATCHING PEN DYNAMICS

A key element of Shear-jitsu, explained by Pera in one of the videos, is the best way for the shearer to move a sheep from the pen to the stand.

"Shearers have traditionally dragged the sheep from the pen to the stand in a rotation – a curved direction – meaning the shearer is leaning over (to the left or right) and thereby putting their back, knees, hips, shoulders and elbows at an unnatural and potentially damaging angle.

Pera Davies demonstrating two of the stretches that shearers can do during smoko to help **recover** from the hard work of shearing.



"Using Shear-jitsu, shearers avoid the rotation and bring the sheep in a straight line to the pen door and then another straight line to the stand. By keeping their body upright, they can help avoid the common catch and drag injuries, which include ligament damage, hip and lower back strain, and tendon damage."

BODY AND TIME MANAGEMENT DURING SMOKO

In another of the videos, Pera provides advice on how shearers can best utilise their half hour smoko to refresh their tired bodies.

"As soon as you've finished your sheep, take your comb and cutter off, give your handpiece a brush and just put it down. Then go straight to have a wash and change out of your wet gear. Then you should eat; the sooner you eat the more time it gives your food to digest.

"13 minutes into your smoko, you should set your handpiece. The comb and cutter should have been prepared the previous night.

"For the remaining 15 minutes of smoko, you should undertake injury prevention through a simple stretching and relaxation regime. First lie on your back with your feet elevated; this lowers your heartrate and decreases your body temperature. Then do the three relaxing stretches outlined in the video – the supine twist, the cobra pose and the child pose – which will elongate the spine, rehydrate your discs, increase flexibility, increase digestion rate, increase oxygen and blood circulation to the pelvic and spinal areas, open the hips and calm the mind."

RESPECT TO ALL

Pera says the philosophy of Shear-jitsu is all about respect.

"We must respect the farmer, without them we don't have any work. We must respect our workstation, that's our office. We must respect the sheep, they are our clients. We must respect our workmates, we want respect from others so we must also give respect. Respect your body and your ability to provide and sustain. We must respect our coaches, they have all the ability to train you."

B

MORE INFORMATION:

If you are interested in a workshop relating to 'Stand & Deliver Shear-jitsu' contact 1800 SHEARS.

The four videos (1. Introduction 2. Injury awareness and prevention 3. Body and time management 4. Catching pen dynamics) are available on the AWI YouTube channel www.youtube.com/AWIWoolProduction and the AWI website at www.wool.com/shearingresources

SHEARING SHOWCASED TO THE PUBLIC



The 922,827 members of the public that went through the gates of the **Sydney Royal Easter Show** this year had the opportunity to see AWI **shearing demonstrations** by world-class shearers, with a few lucky audience members invited to help lend a hand.

AWI's shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray led a team of shearers who collectively have vast experience and knowledge of the shearing and wool industries. They showcased their expert skills, reminding those in the crowd that there is work for professional shearers in all corners of Australia.

The multiple shearing demonstrations each day attracted large crowds throughout the duration of the show. While the many audience members watched on while listening to yarns about where wool comes from, a few lucky people also had the opportunity to help shear the sheep and collect some wool to take home.

Pictured are AWI shearing demonstrators Dayne West (machine shearing) and Courtney Sutherland (blade shearing) displaying their shearing skills with audience members, and Jim Murray (top left) with some of the sheep in his show.



B



Sophie Huf (with compatriot **Mel Morris** behind) on the way to earning Australia a second place in the woolhandling competition at this year's **World Championships** in **New Zealand**. Back in Australia, has Sophie (and Mel) has conducted wool handler training funded by AWI. *PHOTO: Pete Nikolaison Photography*

SOPHIE HUF

AUSTRALIAN WOOLHANDLING CHAMPION AND TRAINER

Australian woolhandling champion **Sophie Huf** from the Western District of **Victoria** has helped **promote excellence and professionalism** in the wool shed through woolhandling competitions and wool handler training funded by AWI.

2016 was a year of firsts for Australian woolhandling representative Sophie Huf.

The 25-year-old Victorian won her first Australian national woolhandling title in October last year, gaining Sophie her debut selection in the Australian team and a maiden trip to the 2017 World Shearing and Woolhandling Championships at Invercargill, New Zealand, in February.

This year has also started exceptionally well for Sophie with her reaching 4th in the finals at the World Championships. Along with Mel Morris of Tasmania, Sophie also won Australia the highly creditable runner's-up spot in the team event.

It's also worth adding the arrival of her first child at the end of 2015 to her list of recent highlights. Baby Axel is a calming influence for the proud new mother at competitions and he and husband Paul joined Sophie on the trip across the Tasman for the World Championships.

Sophie has shearing in her genes. Her father was a shearer for 25 years, and her mother was a wool-classer for 22. She grew up around a woolshed so it's little surprise that she was in the Huf family shed on the day Baby Axel decided it was time to enter the world.

"I went home around 4 o'clock because I wasn't feeling that well. I was absolutely buggered

and my labour started at 10 o'clock that night, so I was glad I went home when I did," she said.

Husband Paul is also a shearer so there's every chance baby Axel will follow the family tradition into the industry.

TRAINING OTHERS

Prior to taking some time off to look after Axel, Sophie has been a woolhandling instructor in south-west Victoria working for RIST— with which AWI contracts for the delivery of shearer and wool handler training in the region. She was teaching in both woolhandling schools and coaches out in the shed.

Education is a key method for helping attract and retain staff in the industry— and Sophie has been happy to do her part.

"The majority of my role has been to get students started, in learner schools. They may never have been in a woolshed before and so I would be getting them started right from scratch," she said.

"I would also go out into the shed and visit people who are already working in the industry fulltime and give them some pointers to make their job a bit easier or to help step up the quality which hopefully makes the woolgrower a bit more money at the end of the day."

COMPETITIONS

Her passion for the industry that has been her life is clear. So too is the pride in her performance during her World Championship campaign.

"I had absolutely no expectations whatsoever but I really enjoyed the experience and the atmosphere. I was lucky with having Mel Morris as my team mate. She's also a trainer for AWI, a good friend and a very good competitor. She's got good experience behind her and has taught me a lot too," Sophie said.

This year marks ten years since Sophie first started competing, and she is still hoping to continue despite its demanding nature.

"There's a lot of physical and mental preparation that goes into the lead up to competition and a lot of the muscles used in woolhandling or shearing can't be trained in a gym. The only way those muscles get a workout is when you're in the shed doing the job."

Sophie said she competes because she enjoys the sport and it gives her the opportunity to showcase wool to the best of her abilities.

"I'm passionate about publicising the wool industry in a positive way," she said. "I want to show the professionalism we have within the industry and the pride we take in our work." **B**



"Making More From Sheep events that I attended were fantastic really – they gave me some hard evidence to back up our gut feel and also the tools to be able to assess things accurately."

Woolgrower Simon Wheaton
Kangaroo Island,
South Australia.

MAKING MORE FROM SHEEP PROVES ITS VALUE

An analysis of the recently concluded **Making More From Sheep** (MMFS) project shows that most targets of the project were over-achieved and **\$4.70 was gained for every \$1 spent**.

A joint initiative of AWI and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), the MMFS program provided woolgrowers and sheepmeat producers with a **best practice** package of information and management tools, and was supported by a range of events and workshops.

The resources from the program will continue to be available on the MMFS website at **www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au**.

Significant investment by industry R&D corporations, state agriculture departments and universities from the 1960s onwards resulted in a considerable amount of information, technology and tools to assist sheep and wool producers to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability. However, most of this information tended to be disaggregated and delivered in a piecemeal fashion.

In response, AWI and MLA instigated in 2005 the development of the Making More From Sheep (MMFS) project that consolidated this information into a best practice package of information and management tools for Australian wool and lamb producers, to assist them achieve profitable and sustainable sheep production.

Teams made up of industry experts wrote each of the 12 manual modules and 'road tested' each module with producer groups in all sheep production zones. The modules were produced originally as a hard copy manual and have also been made available online on the MMFS website – see box right for a list of available modules.

Following an initial investment over four years starting in 2005 (Phase 1) the project was extended, after which a second phase began (Phase 2: 2011–13) and was also subsequently extended (Phase 2 extension: 2014–16), with the project ending in December 2016 (although a few ongoing webinar activities continue to be delivered).

THE RESULTS OF THE MMFS PROGRAM

MMFS has generally been considered a good investment by AWI and MLA for sheep producers.

Most MMFS targets were over-achieved and the benefit-cost ratio (BCR) (calculated twice during the project) showed a BCR of 3.9:1 at the end of Phase 1 rising to a BCR of 5.6:1 at the end of Phase 2 and a net present value of \$13.98 million. Overall, \$4.70 was gained for every \$1 spent.

Evaluation of the MMFS manual showed that 62% of participants rated the manual as either 'very useful' or 'useful'.

The website was well supported and 1,300 copies of the full manual were downloaded in Phase 1, compared to sales of the hard copy manual of approximately 1,400. There were around 16,000 visits per month to the website by the end of the project.

20,361 participants attended 1,035 MMFS events over nine years. MMFS events were generally considered outstanding, with 97% of participants rating events as either 'useful' or 'very useful'.

Participant confidence in their ability to

implement change rose from 56% prior to events to 73% after events. 89% of all participants reported increased knowledge and skills.

Evaluation of practice change and adoption from Phase 2 found 76% of producers interviewed had made on-farm change after attending a MMFS event (extrapolated to 56% of all producers attending MMFS events).

While the delivery phase of the MMFS project has now concluded, its useful set of resources is still available to be downloaded by wool producers to help them increase productivity, profitability and sustainability.

A report of the MMFS project has been produced that provides a detailed history of the project and its achievements. The report is recommended as a resource for any extension professional engaging in new project development.

MORE INFORMATION

www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au

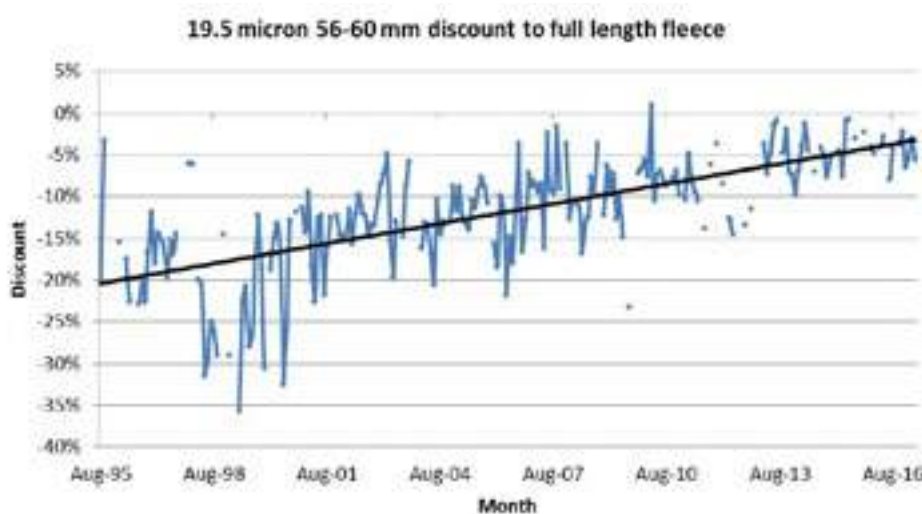
MAKING MORE FROM SHEEP MODULES

The 12 modules in the program are still available for you to view or download (free) from the MMFS website **www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au**

BUSINESS BASED MODULES	1. PLAN FOR SUCCESS
	2. MARKET FOCUSED WOOL PRODUCTION
	3. MARKET FOCUSED LAMB AND SHEEPMEAT PRODUCTION
	4. CAPABLE AND CONFIDENT PRODUCERS
RESOURCE & PASTURE BASED MODULES	5. PROTECT YOUR FARM'S NATURAL ASSETS
	6. HEALTHY SOILS
	7. GROW MORE PASTURE
	8. TURN PASTURE INTO PRODUCT
SHEEP TECHNOLOGY BASED MODULES	9. GAIN FROM GENETICS
	10. WEAN MORE LAMBS
	11. HEALTHY AND CONTENTED SHEEP
PASTORAL MODULE	12. EFFICIENT PASTORAL PRODUCTION

TRENDS IN WOOL QUALITY DISCOUNTS

A **recent webinar** provided an assessment of present day **wool quality discounts** in a historical context to help woolgrowers understand what the future may bring, and what this might mean for the management of their wool flocks and marketing of their clip.



A slide from the webinar. Short staple length is one of several wool characteristics that have enjoyed decreasing discounts over the past two decades.

Woolgrowers who tuned in to a recent webinar run as part of the Making More From Sheep (MMFS) Summer Webinar Series learnt some useful insights into the latest trends in wool price discounts.

The guest speaker on the webinar was wool market analyst Andrew Woods from Independent Commodity Services in Wagga Wagga, NSW.

For those who missed it, the 'Wool Quality Discounts' webinar was recorded and is available free via the MMFS website. It comprises a half hour presentation by Andrew, plus a half hour Q&A session in which Andrew answered approximately 20 questions from webinar viewers.

"Woolgrowers can avoid discounts at auction by producing wool with the characteristics that are valuable to buyers, processors and consumers," Andrew explained.

"While micron remains the major driver of price premiums and discounts – accounting for about two-thirds of the variation in price for clean fleece wool – the price of wool sold at auction varies according to several other characteristics. These include staple length and strength, point of break and vegetable matter. However, the degree that some

of these characteristics have an effect is changing over time."

OBJECTIVELY MEASURED CHARACTERISTICS

Andrew explained that discounts for staple length and strength in the Merino market have been shrinking over the past two decades.

"Discounts for length and strength have become markedly less. We were absolutely hammered for selling overlength, underlength and low strength wool in the late 1990s – in the case of 19.5 micron 56-60mm wool for example, discounts for the short length could be 25-35%, whereas now they'd be around only 5%," he said.

"Short and long staple prices tend to be similar – where short staple discounts go, long staple discounts tend to follow. Hence long staple discounts have been shrinking over time in step with shrinking short staple discounts. Discounts for Merino pieces have also tracked short staple length, and therefore become smaller over time.

"Length and strength are generally interchangeable (although there can be some

slight variation). A drop of 5mm in length but with a rise of 5N in strength will create a reasonably similar outcome. Consequently, low strength wools have also had shrinking discounts over the past couple of decades.

"The current low discount for staple strength won't change the value of your wool by much, especially at the finer end. This can have implications for longer term budgeting, such as if you are chasing genetics for staple strength then there might be a large opportunity cost in doing so."

Andrew said discounts for mid break are tied in with staple strength premiums and discounts.

"However mid-break is highly seasonal – peaking around about Christmas time – and its pricing tends to correspond to that supply.

"Discounts in c/kg terms for vegetable matter (VM) haven't changed much over time, but discounts have decreased as a percentage of wool's value because the EMI has increased over time. Occasionally there are a couple of good seasons back to back which leads to VM levels markedly above the average, especially in the pastoral zone. This is when discounts for VM increase in response to the extra fault in the clip."

SUBJECTIVELY ASSESSED CHARACTERISTICS

Subjectively assessed characteristics cover a wide range and include colour, water stain, mycotic dermatitis, cott, jowls, stain, mud, medullated fibres, fribs and dags. Supply varies with seasonal conditions.

Andrew said discounts vary depending on supply and the buyers' assessment – when wool supply exceeds demand, these characteristics can become a big issue for a buyer, but when the supply is scarce these characteristics don't worry the buyers so much.

PREPARATION AND UNSKIRTED FLEECES

Andrew said crossbred wool suffers from variation in preparation quality, associated with unskirted wool (about 30% of crossbred wool is sold unskirted) – and poorly prepared crossbred wool tends to sell for 300 cents clean or less.

For unskirted Merino fleeces (only about 1.9% of Merino wool is sold unskirted), Andrew said it can be tricky to predict how large the discount is going to be on the day.

LOT SIZES

Amongst the questions in the Q&A section of the webinar, was a question regarding how lot sizes affect price.

"The key thing here is to deliver wool in a lot that exporters can use when trying to meet their averages for consignment specifications," Andrew replied. "So when packaging up a lot, you've got to think about how the exporter is going to be using it. Is he going to be using it as a base type to build his consignment and put other wools with it, or is he going to have to seek out a spot for the wool? If it's a base type, you can have a larger size, but if it's an 'awkward' type wool, you'll want it in a smaller sized lot."

B

MORE INFORMATION

A recording of the webinar is available at www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au/webinars

For further information on discounts and premiums, Andrew recommends woolgrowers refer to the AWEX weekly regional premium and discount reports, or speak to their broker. Andrew also recommends the 'The Economic Value of Wool Attributes' report prepared for AWI by the University of Sydney, which is available on the AWI website at www.wool.com/publications.

MAKING MORE FROM SHEEP SUMMER WEBINAR SERIES

Other webinars in the MMFS Summer Webinar Series, and their guest speakers, included:

- **Wool business benchmarks update** (Dr David Brown, Holmes Sackett)
- **Joining management of sheep** (Associate Professor Bruce Allworth, Charles Sturt University)
- **Joining Merino ewe lambs - the biology** (James Whale, Meridian Agriculture)
- **Pre-joining ram inspections** (Dr Matt Playford, Dawbuts)
- **Simplifying ram selection through the use of emerging sheep genetics technologies** (Lu Hogan, Sheep CRC)
- **Reproductive problems in sheep - diseases and trace elements** (Associate Professor Bruce Allworth, Charles Sturt University)
- **Lice management** (Dr Peter James, University of Queensland)
- **Summer worm management** (Dr Rob Woodgate, Charles Sturt University)
- **Prioritising pasture expenditure** (Phil Graham, NSW DPI).

Recordings of the webinars are available to view via www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au/webinars

The MMFS program provides woolgrowers and sheepmeat producers with a best practice package of information and management tools, supported by a range of events and workshops. MMFS is a joint initiative of AWI and MLA – see page 51.

APPLICATIONS FOR 2018 NUFFIELD SCHOLARSHIPS CLOSE VERY SOON

AWI invites people from the wool industry across Australia to apply for the 2018 AWI Nuffield Wool Scholarship. Applications close on 16 June 2017.

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

To apply for the scholarship, or to access Nuffield students' reports, visit www.nuffield.com.au

For more information about previous recipients of the AWI Nuffield Wool Scholarship, visit www.wool.com/nuffield.



Sheep-handling just got easier!

1-800-750-584

New 2017 Model

DrenchMaster



CrutchMaster



Anti-Backer



SMART INNOVATIONS SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

Effective, efficient and safe solutions for all your drenching, crutching and handling needs.

For more info go to www.perkinz.com.au

Sandra Ireson, who helped found the Hay Inc Rural Education Program, is the NSW-ACT winner of the RIRDC Rural Women's Award.

JACKAROO/ JILLAROO TRAINING COURSE SET TO EXPAND

A successful **hands-on stockmanship training course** being run at Hay for young people is set to be replicated in other rural communities, thanks to **Sandra Ireson** of the **Hay Inc Rural Education Program** who has been awarded a \$10,000 bursary as the NSW-ACT winner of the **RIRDC Rural Women's Award**.

Sandra Ireson, who helped found the Hay Inc Rural Education Program in 2014, has been awarded the 2017 NSW-ACT Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) Rural Women's Award.

Sandra, who farms near Booligal in the Riverina of western NSW with husband Matt, wins a \$10,000 bursary which she will use to develop an adaptable model of the Hay Inc program that can be implemented in other rural communities across Australia.

The Hay Inc program was launched in 2014 in response to concerns about the decline in the traditional jackaroo/jillaroo system in the region and the associated lack of essential rural skills being handed down to the younger generation. AWI has supported the Hay Inc program each year since its inception.

"The initiative was first established in Hay to address the markedly reduced numbers of young people entering or staying in the agriculturally dependent community," Sandra said.

"Through the Hay Inc program young people are being given the opportunity to learn the practical agricultural skills needed for them to get jobs on rural properties. It focuses on wool and livestock production and takes place in a practical setting in partnership with local woolgrowers.

"The program is delivered by trainers who have many years of experience on extensive

rural properties, covering topics based around the production calendar for sheep, wool production and cattle. There are 15 youngsters enrolled in this year's program that will conclude on 17 June at the Hay Merino Sheep Show."

Since its inception, the Hay Inc program has proved very successful for the Hay region. Sandra says that thanks to the new bursary, an adaptable model will be developed to allow for similar positive benefits to be realised across other NSW rural communities.

"The Hay Inc program has received a lot of positive publicity, and so I quite often receive queries from people in other regions asking

for information and advice on how to set up a program like Hay Inc in their community. This was especially the case following the ABC's Landline feature on the program in 2015.

"Furthermore, we have a limit of 15 trainees in the Hay Inc course, to keep it practical and hands-on, so it would be great to expand the model into other areas and give more young people an opportunity to enrol in such a course.

"I'll be creating a toolkit that explains how to go about setting up a course similar to Hay Inc, including the best ways to obtain volunteers, engage with agencies and seek funding. I'll then be promoting the toolkit with the result hopefully that similar courses will be set up by locals in other areas of the country.

"As well as helping train young people the practical skills needed to work in agriculture, it will also hopefully create a network of young people across the country telling their friends and peers about the benefits of a career in agriculture."

Sandra was presented with the Rural Women's Award at a ceremony in April – attended by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro and NSW Minister for Primary Industries Niall Blair – where she credited and thanked all the fantastic volunteers involved in Hay Inc and the local land holders including TA Field Estates' 'Wyvern' who are paramount in the success of the rural education program.

"Sandra recognised there was a need in her community and co-developed an educational pathway that provides hands-on training, mentoring and networking for young people starting out in primary industries," Mr Blair said.

"We know it is the next generation that will take what we do today and see it succeed in the years to come so programs like this, particularly in our regional areas, are vital."

Sandra will now go on to compete for the National RIRDC Rural Women's Award later this year, in which she could win additional bursaries.

B

MORE INFORMATION
www.hayinc.com.au



Some of the participants in this year's **Hay Inc program** being instructed in stock water maintenance. PHOTO: Cara Jeffery, ABC Rural.

MONARO TRAINEESHIP LINKS WITH RIVERINA

This year's **Monaro Farming Systems** trainee, **Georgie Constance** from **Bombala**, joined young people from the Riverina in the **Hay Inc Rural Education Program**. This is an example of AWI's training investments in two important wool-growing regions working well together.

Having completed Year 12 at Yanco Agricultural High School last year, Georgie is the third generation on her family's sheep and cattle property at Nimmitabel, south of Cooma.

She plans to study Agricultural Science at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga next year but her focus this year remains closer to home on the Monaro Farming Systems (MFS) traineeship gaining invaluable practical skills working on a variety of farms across the Monaro.

The MFS Agricultural Traineeships Program was initiated in 2012 by woolgrower Craig Mitchell of 'Gaerloch' at Numeralla, east of Cooma, to address the growing concern of retaining and attracting local young people to choose a career in the agricultural industry as well as the increasing age of the average farmer. Craig was a major driver of the program in the first few years.

The trainee is 'shared' across a group of 8-9 host farmers on the Monaro and spends 12 months learning not only the practical side of farming like fencing, stock handling, worm control, machinery use, pasture improvement and budgeting, but also the diversity of farming practices across the region and their business success strategies.

"It's often very hard for youngsters straight out of school to build up the experience needed to get them their first job," said MFS Executive Officer Nancy Spoljaric.

"MFS believes investing in the traineeship will provide young people with invaluable experience during a gap year between school and work or further education, as well as promote the profile of agriculture as an attractive, prosperous and long-term career option.

"The traineeship also includes a formal qualification. Georgie will receive a Certificate IV in Agriculture after completing her year."

AWI has supported the MFS traineeship program for four years by contributing to the cost of trainees attending a shearing and woolhandling school. AWI funding put MFS trainees Emma Tangye (Cooma, 2016), Kelsey McDonald (Bunyan, 2015), Cameron Johnson (Cooma, 2014) and Kate Connolly (Bredbo, 2014) through the AWI shearing school at 'Coolringdon', Cooma.



Georgie Constance gaining experience on one of the host farms during her **Monaro Farming Systems** traineeship.

This year for the first time, MFS funded their trainee to attend the Hay Inc Rural Education Program (a program that AWI supports – see story opposite) as part of the MFS traineeship. Georgie joined 14 other agricultural focused youths on rural properties in the Hay district, learning skills in sheep handling and yard work, pregnancy scanning, fence construction, livestock water repairs, motorbike maintenance and many other areas.

Through the MFS trainee program, AWI supported Georgie to attend the shearing and woolhandling portion of the Hay Inc program. This was held in March at Paraway Pastoral's 'Steam Plains' station under the guidance of AWI trainers Brian Sullivan and Sam Walker.

"Farming has been my passion since I can remember. While I'm interested in working in the fields of AI embryo transfer and animal reproduction, in the long term I aim to follow in my father's and grandfather's footsteps and eventually take over the family farm," Georgie said.

"I've loved the Hay Inc program; the different trainers and mentors have been amazing. I have learnt a broad range of practical skills in areas such as water infrastructure maintenance that I haven't been exposed to before. I'll be able to use these skills in

the MFS traineeship program and later in my career.

"At Steam Plains, we learnt how to crutch which I'd never done before, and we really got back to basics learning things like loading the handpiece. I'd previously received some shearer training from AWI while at Yanco Agricultural High School, and after my time at Steam Plains I'm keen to undertake further training at 'Coolringdon'.

"Although I'd already got shed experience at home, at Steam Plains I was able to learn woolhandling and classing tips to fine-tune my skills – such as the importance of removing stain before it gets to the table. There's no substitute to getting taught by experienced professionals like the AWI trainers Brian and Sam."

Brian and Sam say they are extremely grateful to be given the chance several times a year to run shearing schools at Steam Plains.

"AWI along with Paraway Pastoral jointly enable us as trainers to use the great facilities and pass on our industry skills and knowledge," Brian said. "These skills can be taken and used for a long time and in some cases used as a stepping stone to get into one of the oldest industries in Australia."

B

MORE INFORMATION

www.monarofarmingsystems.com.au

MARKET INTELL

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON

EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE FOR FINER AND MID MICRONS

EMI'S STELLAR RUN CONTINUES

The chart opposite provides a snapshot of how well the AWEX monthly Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) and a range of microns have performed for the past three months (January 2017 – April 2017) in Australian dollar terms compared with the previous five years February 2012 to January 2017 (circles) and the decade previous to that, February 2002 – January 2012 (squares).

For the past three months, the monthly EMI averaged at \$14.84, tracking at the 100th percentile against the previous five-year monthly EMI. The percentile value (100th) indicates that the five-year monthly EMI recorded a price lower than \$14.84 for the whole period. Or to put it another way, in the previous five years the monthly EMI has never recorded a price higher than the current \$14.84 (January 2017 – April 2017).

As well as tracking at the 100th percentile over the previous five years, the EMI is also at the 100th percentile when compared to the decade February 2002 – January 2012. This means the current EMI of \$14.84 (January 2017 – April 2017) is higher now than it was for all that decade.

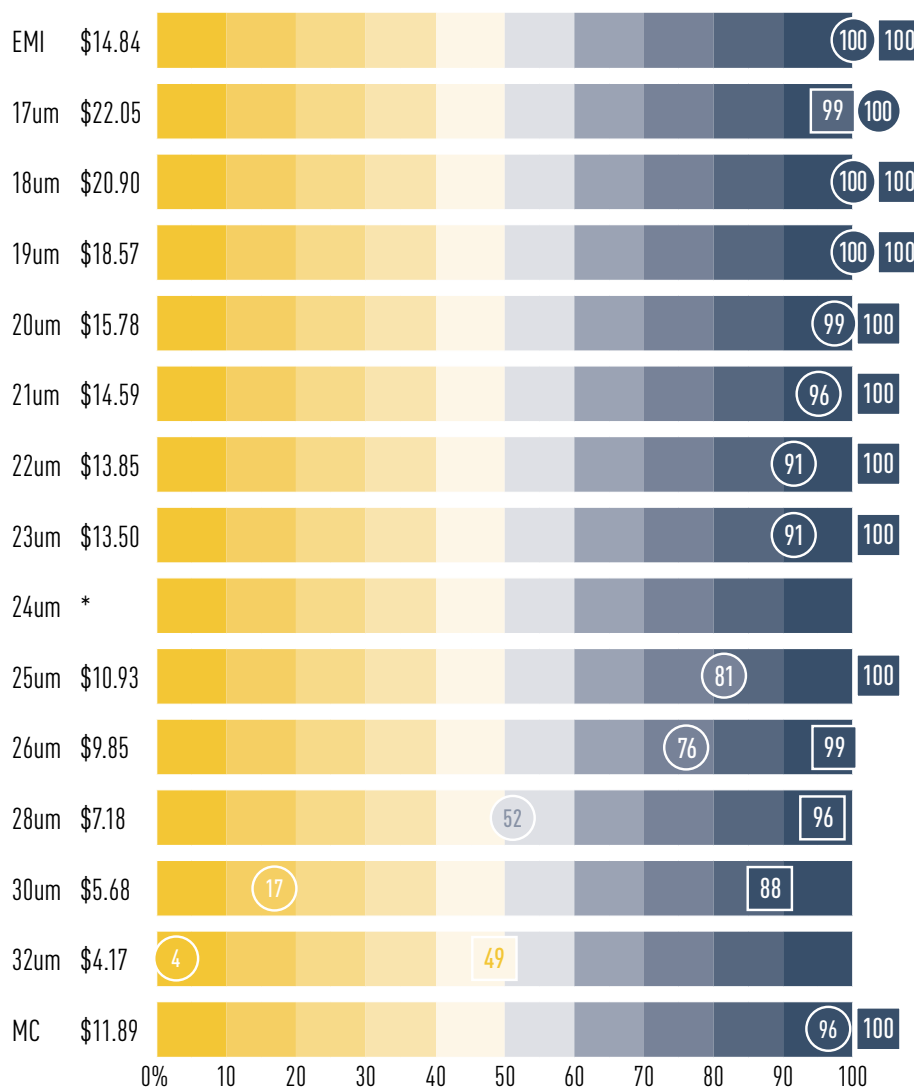
The finer and mid microns and Merino Cardings (MC) have performed particularly well recently. For the past three months Merino Cardings averaged at \$11.89, operating at the 96th percentile for the previous five years and the 100th percentile for the previous decade.

For the same period, 18 micron averaged at a monthly value of \$20.90 (100th percentile for both periods), 21 micron averaged at \$14.59 (96th percentile and 100th percentile respectively), and 28 micron averaged at \$7.18 (52nd percentile and 96th percentile respectively).

AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI FOR JANUARY 2017 – APRIL 2017 COMPARED WITH

● PAST 5 YEARS FEBRUARY 2012 – JANUARY 2017

■ THE DECADE FEBRUARY 2002 – JANUARY 2012



*Insufficient data

MARKET INTELLIGENCE: FREE VIA SMS

In an initiative launched in March this year, AWI is sending wool prices and market intelligence direct to nearly 5,000 woolgrowers' mobile phones.

The woolgrowers receive the latest movements in the EMI in a simple text message (see left image), including a link to a full price report that provides more detail about price movements (see right image).

If you would like to subscribe to the free SMS service, visit www.wool.com/sms where you will be asked to input your name and the mobile phone number to receive the SMS.

You can unsubscribe from the service at any time by replying to the AWI SMS message.

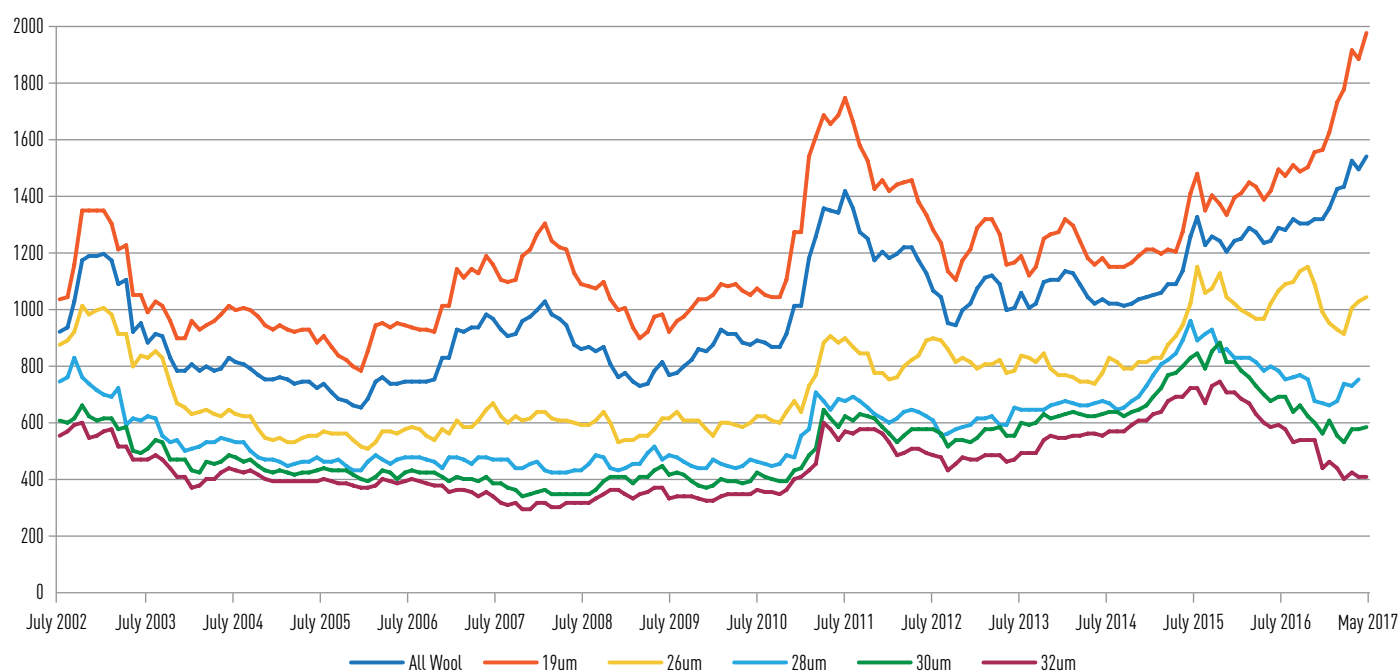
MORE INFORMATION
www.wool.com/sms



IGENCE REPORT

MERINO SEGMENT CONTINUES ITS HISTORIC RISE

15 YEAR WOOL PRICE COMPARISON



In this edition of *Beyond the Bale* we look at the current market situation as the Merino segment continues its rise while the crossbred market has seen a drop off in demand which sees it back at average historic prices.

The Ultrafine market has seen prices continue to increase, however now at a steadier rate than has been seen over the past two years. AWEX indicates that the monthly average of wools of <16.5 microns sits at around 2,384 au c/kg. Although almost 810 c/kg higher than one year ago, prices have been steady since February and increasing at a more sustainable rate for exporters. AWTA test data shows that these wools represent 3.7% of the wool tested in the 2016/17 season.

Wools of 19 micron and finer have followed suit over the past four months as prices have become more consistent. Superfine demand is at record levels, and is reflected in the prices reached in the sale rooms over the past year. Next to skin garments have been

a large contributor to this as the demand for this type of product by consumers is having an effect right through the pipeline. Year on year, 17 and 18 micron wools are both up more than 800 c/kg while 19 microns are 500 c/kg in front. These wools account for 37.8% of the wool tested by AWTA during the current season.

In the medium wools, demand has seen a less exaggerated rise over the past season, however they still continue to climb nevertheless. The monthly average price of 20 micron wools has climbed 200 c/kg over a one-year period, while 21 micron wools have seen a 130 c/kg rise and 22 micron a rise of around 80c/kg in the same period. Notably, AWTA has tested 12.3% (20 micron), 21.1% (21 micron) and

23.4% (22 micron) more wool of these types throughout this season compared to last.

The crossbred sector has seemingly backed off over the past months as the hangover from high demand for the double-faced fabric in China lingers. This fabric saw a quick increase in demand for broad wools throughout 2015 where demand in China pushed the price of 26 micron wools to more than 1,000 c/kg and 28 micron wools to more than 900 c/kg. Demand for the fabric has since retreated and many Chinese mills are well stocked with a healthy supply of broad wool from across the world. This has seen crossbred wool prices come back to levels, which historically, are very much on par with broad wool returns.



China-based wool agent
Lizzy Shen

AN INSIDER'S VIEW ON CHINA

What is the consequence of higher wool prices? Woolgrowers are receiving better returns and profits. On the other hand, the wool users or importers are having a tough time in financial terms. They need more money to buy the same quantity of wool, but where does the extra money come from?

With the ever-rising prices of real estate in China during the past fifteen years, all capital tends to be invested in property, with manufacturing ignored. Although the Chinese government encourages the banks to support manufacturing industry, banks are not interested in expanding loans to any kind of textile mills. Indeed, thank goodness if they don't cut off the previous year's loan figure.

With this background, we see wool importers opening the letter of credit (L/C) to the wool exporters slower than the same time last year. The general view is there are more delays. For a single mill which buys around 5,000 clean tons of Australian greasy wool per year, I can see hardly any of their L/C reach a wool exporter before the vessel cut-off date. While they were on time one year ago, there is now, in effect, at least a two-week delay.

If a wool exporter cannot receive the L/C in time, he will be short of finance to buy wool at auction. Sometimes a delayed L/C of USD500K can prevent a wool exporter from buying its normal quantity.

This is the situation we are facing. Many mills are short of both L/C facilities and cash. It will not improve in the short term because banks will never expand their loans to the textile industry which is often called a "sunset industry" here in China.

June is a traditional month when all banks are tight in liquidity for settling accounts. All mills are busy producing during July and August, which are the hottest months in temperature. It is only when the weather turns cold from late October, when garments start to sell, that payments will gradually come back.

The buying of wool for railway uniforms is complete. There are now talks about uniforms for the police, China Mobile and other areas using 50-70% wool. 21.0 micron plays the main role. Almost all uniforms are dark blue so dark fibre contamination has less effect; hence alternative wool fibre origins can be used including China domestic. Now that 19.5FNF is USD2/kg higher than 21.0FNF, we see 19.5 micron selling slower than six months ago. Some fabric makers are using 20.0 micron instead of 19.5 micron since their fabric buyers would only follow about a third of the price rise. Fabric prices normally stay stable regardless of whether greasy wool prices go up or down.

I cannot see 18.0 micron and finer fleece going up in price in the short and mid term. The demand for superfine fleece is scarce now and although there is better demand for 52mmh (mm hauteur = length after top making) types, some merchants have taken in a good quantity of stocks since last October, trying to sell either wool tops or greasy in the China domestic market. Throughout this whole season, 52mmh and shorter superfines have always been in better demand than full fleece. My guess is this trend will keep going in the new season. A lot of the shorter superfines are used to blend with skin wool or any origin coarse wool to make open tops of 19.5-17.5 micron, which are the main types in demand for cardings.

Unfortunately, we have not seen a real improvement in crossbred demand in China. Some Merino users usually buy a small quantity of 26.8 and finer xbrids, so the price of that part of xbrids has been lifted up along with Merino price rises. Users of coarser and real xbrids are mostly blended with synthetic fibres, enjoying good and

consistent business. Sometimes when they find 32.2 or 36.0 offers really low, they bid me 20USC/kg down for investment only. Those prices are definitely in the bottom area now according to my records of 28-year sold prices.

This past summer in China (July and August), fake fur product using 100% Australian wool pushed the prices of 21.0 high, which also brought up the prices of neighbouring microns as some buyers allow for big micron ranges. Will it happen again? The majority said no. The sales of these garments were not as good as expected, so all related producers are holding stocks of garments, fabrics or yarns. The wool usage of that particular fabric will be half of last season at most. There is no comparison with double face which is widely accepted all over the country, from the very south to very north.

The oddment market will stay good as I see consistent demand and buying interest from fabric makers, carbonizing mills to small dealers. The only reason I can find for its recent lower USD sold prices is the lower exchange rate of AUD. By the way, more end users have found value in high VM greasy for carbonizing - average VM above 20% is workable and they are happy with the final result.

Chinese young people, 16-35 years old, are the main internet shoppers. While shopping on internet, they care about style, colour, price, ignoring the material type in the garments. After 10-20 years, they will become real middle class and strong spenders. I believe by that time, they will care more about the content in the cloth and therefore wool will win in the long term in the consumer market in China.

BUILDING DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN WOOL



Stuart Ford, AWI General Manager
– Western Hemisphere

AWI's General Manager for the Western Hemisphere, Stuart Ford, who is based in our Paris office, recaps some recent projects undertaken by AWI in the region to increase the demand for Australian wool.

It is a busy time for AWI in Europe and North America. Influencing the demand for wool in these Northern hemisphere retail markets is sometimes a flurry of divergent and winding paths and projects. Sometimes it feels like trying to ride a whirlwind, but I want to give you a quick round up of a few of the things we have been doing lately.

In the press, we saw the announcement of the 'new-and-improved' International Woolmark Prize (see page 20) which always excites the trade and the media. This year sees the scale and impact of the competition increase and the addition of an Innovation Award. This seemed to certainly interest the journalists I was talking to this week. Regional competitions get under way next month driving towards the grand final next year. This is a global campaign that just keeps getting bigger and whose influence keeps growing.

In other areas, AWI's subsidiary, The Woolmark Company, was a partner for the 32nd International Festival of Fashion and Photography at Hyères in southern France. This prestigious event attracts the best of the Paris and Europe fashion crowd and involves household names like Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Dior and Chloé. The Woolmark Company assisted ten emerging designers to create a series of looks in wool which were showcased in a runway show in front of the best and brightest of the fashion world and media, which helps support Australian wool's positioning at the pinnacle of the fashion industry.

At another point of global interest, we helped support the Campaign for Wool's activities in Florence, Italy, where HRH The Prince of Wales visited a wool showcase

demonstrating the versatility and cutting edge of wool in Italian design (see page 16). HRH was shown AWI's The Wool Lab demonstrating the full extent of wool fabrics, treatments and options available, which the media dutifully reported to further enhance the reputation and influence of wool in these key retail markets.

In London, in another sphere, we undertook a series of meetings with key sports brands trying to arrange collaborations to promote wool to their active and lifestyle oriented audiences. At the same time, in the US, wool was front and centre at the US Open Snowboarding Championships (see page 10) where a leading brand demonstrated the versatility and functionality of wool snowboard apparel to the excited millennial crowd. New markets, new locations, new horizons and challenges every day.

April saw the launch in-store of the Tommy Hilfiger-Rafael Nadal suiting collection, crafted in wool and wool blends (see page 4). This promotion includes massive billboards in key airports, malls and other high profile locations bearing Nadal, Tommy Hilfiger and the Woolmark logo to promote the performance of wool in modern-day suiting.

We also saw a global campaign with Max Mara with wool promoted across their flagship stores. These campaigns coupled with leading global brands are extremely impactful and help influence consumers to search out wool options for their wardrobes.

We are now also starting to head into the trade show season with a very brief summer respite before the various Fashion Weeks get under way.

It is the sheer diversity of the projects we do, the volume of engagements we generate and the global nature of the collaborations in which we get involved that keeps wool at the front end of the demand curve.

We also must keep an eye on markets that hold more opportunities. We are currently researching how we can better serve and optimise the German and Scandinavian markets for example. This area sees access to a catchment of around 125 million consumers which equates to about half the size of the US market and an opportunity we need to maximise.

We also have to watch macro-economic and political trends such as the French elections and Brexit, retail closure rates in the US not seen since 2008 but apparel sales climbing as sales move online, smaller emergent brands chipping away at old established brands, the possibilities of the athleisure sector and so on... All these factors and more have to be included in our planning as markets are ever changing and evolving.

Our staff try to reach all – ranging from the traditional heritage brands, the designers of the future, the innovative sports brands and even through to collaborations with emerging tech apparel system creators.

We are keeping busy up here trying to find more, innovative and exciting ways to promote wool to the retail brands and consumers that create demand and hopefully maximise the yield to Australian woolgrowers.

The markets are certainly volatile at the moment but we will continue to do our best to make sure that wool remains the fibre of choice for all seasons and all reasons.



The suit production line at **Nanshan** where each person is responsible for sewing a particular part of the suit – **visited by the woolgrowers.**

GROWERS EXPERIENCE THE STRENGTH OF CHINA'S WOOL INDUSTRY

Young woolgrowers from across Australia enjoyed gaining a greater understanding of the Chinese wool industry during a recent **self-funded study trip** organised by AWI to **China and Hong Kong.**



Woolgrowers on the trip visiting the **Wool Resource Centre** in Hong Kong.

Close to 80 per cent of Australia's raw wool production is exported to China for early stage processing. Half of this wool is consumed in China at retail, making the Chinese wool processing and retail economy extremely important to Australia's \$3.6 billion wool industry.

Funding their own trip, more than a dozen woolgrowers from across Australia travelled in February on a two-week study trip organised by AWI to learn more about the Chinese market.

They met with key vertically integrated mills such as Sunshine and Nanshan, key processors such as Tianyu, the Wool Development Centre set up in collaboration between Nanshan and AWI, and knitting facilities including the Knitwear Development Centre setup by Xinao in collaboration with AWI.

In Shanghai, Nanjing and Hong Kong, woolgrowers met with key AWI staff as well as retailers and designers who all work to sell wool in this key market.

Encouraging the next generation of wool industry workforce participants is critical to the prosperity of the Australian wool industry. AWI 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.

The woolgrowers that travelled to China and Hong Kong were:

VIC

Warren Russell, Daniel Rogers, Sue & Rod Miller, Cameron Mibus

NSW

Ed Morgan, Alex Willson, Ian Cameron

SA

Syd Lawrie, Tom Davidson

WA

Todd Mullan (see opposite), Mitchell Hogg

TAS

Anna Cotton (see opposite)

Q&A WITH WOOLGROWERS TODD AND ANNA

Beyond the Bale caught up with two of the young woolgrowers, **Todd Mullan** from **WA** and **Anna Cotton** from **Tasmania**, to get their feedback about the trip.



Todd Mullan works at the Mullan family's 'Eastville Park' property at East Wickiepin in the Upper Great Southern Region of Western Australia. It is a mixed enterprise of Merino sheep and grain growing. The family now runs Eastville Park and Quailerup West Merino studs.



Anna Cotton works on her family's property 'Kelvedon', south of Swansea on Tasmania's east coast, where they farm approximately 8,000 superfine Merinos as well as nine hectares of grape vines for table wine.

HAS THE TRIP GIVEN YOU A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IT TAKES TO CONVERT RAW WOOL INTO FINAL PRODUCT?

Todd Mullan (TM): Absolutely. Prior to the trip, and similar to I suspect many woolgrowers, I had no idea what happened to our wool after it was loaded onto the truck at home. So the trip was invaluable to see the many processes the wool goes through to become the end product. AWI took us over and we toured about 4-5 different wool mills to see these processes, from the raw wool getting scoured and combed, right through knitting and weaving the yarn, and the making up into the end product. It is a surprisingly long and involved process.

Anna Cotton (AC): Yes, it definitely gave us a great insight into the Chinese wool industry. Visiting the Chinese wool mills gave me a greater understanding of the milling process and the time and attention to detail that

goes into producing a saleable product. The highlight of the tour for me was visiting Nanshan, purely because of the hospitality and the time Nanshan took explaining to the group each machine and how it works.

WERE YOU IMPRESSED BY WHAT YOU SAW OF THE CHINESE WOOL INDUSTRY?

AC: I was extremely impressed by what I saw. The level of investment that the Chinese have placed into these mills in terms of modern machines and technology is amazing. This was very encouraging from a woolgrower's point of view and I felt that the Chinese are confident in the future of wool processing.

TM: The scale of the operations is indeed massive. I was surprised by the infrastructure and all the machines set up just for wool; there are hundreds of machines and it is all relatively new and modern. They have definitely invested a lot of money in the wool industry.

WHAT ARE THE CHINESE MILLS' OPINIONS OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL AT THE MOMENT?

AC: The Chinese love Australian wool, and they would like more than Australia can currently supply. The issues that concern them are the rising wool price and uncertainty over continuity of supply – they have noticed the increasing trend of Australian wool-growing properties moving out of wool into other enterprises. The Chinese were thrilled to see our group of young woolgrowers though; I felt it gave them confidence and reassured them that the wool industry has a strong future and the relationship between Australia and China will continue to build over the years.

TM: Yes, it is wonderful to see that the Chinese have a great love for Australian wool as a product and an industry that even rivals our passion as growers. I believe that the things that they require from us to make their processing easier and more efficient – in regards to length, strength and good quality fleeces that handle well and open up well – are what we are already trying to achieve with our breeding and genetics as an industry, which gives me a lot of confidence. If the price of wool continues to go up then their costs of production will go up but they won't necessarily be looking to shift to alternative fibres as all their infrastructure is set up for wool. What they really want is a sustainable price and less volatility in the market, which is what we want as growers as well.

WHAT IS DRIVING DEMAND AT RETAIL IN CHINA?

TM: Wool is becoming more affordable to the ever-expanding middle class, which is fantastic because, for the Chinese, buying wool products is a show of wealth. Even if a small percentage of their population is buying wool products it is still a massive market because of their huge population.

AC: From what I saw, the specific sectors driving demand in China are next to skin apparel, sports and activewear, casual wear and baby products. The increase in washing machine ownership is also driving the demand for easy care machine washable wool products.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE WORK BEING DONE BY THE AWI OFFICES IN HONG KONG AND CHINA?

AC: The research and development being done by AWI was great to see. I particularly liked the developments in water resistant wool outerwear. There was also a large focus on wool education – training the wool industry's future generations through competitions was encouraging to see. I would highly recommend anyone who is offered the opportunity to participate in an AWI young grower tour to do so. It was a fantastic experience to visit the AWI/TWC offices as well as the wool mills and the Knitwear Development Centre set up by AWI and Xiniao.

TM: Yes, it was very interesting to see the innovations AWI is working on with processors and garment makers to develop water resistant wool garments; also wool being incorporated into sportswear, sneakers, next to skin shirts, and machine washable wool garments. The Knitwear Development Centre is absolutely state of the art – it's fantastic to see the Chinese looking to the future like us. AWI also does a lot education work with processors, retailers and students so they can gain a greater understanding of the industry as a whole from the sheep's back to the end garments.

HAVING NOW COMPLETED THE VISIT, DO YOU AS A YOUNG WOOLGROWER FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN WOOL INDUSTRY?

AC: Definitely. I have returned from China confident and excited about the future of wool-growing in Australia. I believe the next few years will be rewarding as the demand for wool increases. The tour was also a great opportunity to network with other young woolgrowers, forming friendships Australia-wide.

TM: The wool industry has some good times ahead if we continue to work with and invest in China and it's great to see AWI ahead of the game. It gives me confidence as a grower that our wool levies are invested in the right areas and broadening the uses for wool is increasing demand for our product.



WIN!!!

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.

LOOKING THE PART!

Sue Lamb from Stonehaven in Victoria sent in this photo of 5-year-old Fred helping Grandpa with sheep work. Sue says Fred always likes to look the part!



CHECKING THE COMFORT FACTOR

Hayley Graham sent in this photo of her daughter Hannah checking the comfort factor of the Harold Park Dohne wool at Cray Brook, Mayanup in the South West region of WA.



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.

SHEEP AHEAD!

Sue and David Stockfeld sent in this photo of droving down Fordes Lane at Kyneton in Victoria. Sue and David have been using this route for droving for 32 years.



COR.D BY CORDELIA GIBBS

Fashion designer Cordelia Gibbs, who was brought up on her parents' Merino stud in the regional town of Beverley in Western Australia, sent in some photos of her designs at Malaysian Fashion Week in November last year. Cordelia has recently launched her label COR.D by Cordelia Gibbs, which incorporates her passion for wool and inspiration from Australia's history.



SMILE

Lea Payne of Mudgee in NSW sent in this photo of a pet lamb Boof – with the cutest smile – who was born in September last year on her sister-in-law's farm in Mendooran NSW.



TAKING A BREAK

Jayne Wilson sent in this photo, taken 26 years ago on a property in the north east of Tasmania, of sheepdog Rosie taking a break after filling the race.



FATHER AND SON

Marion Drew of Bethungra in NSW sent in this photo taken by her daughter Christine of her brother Tom aged 15 and father Pat. Marion said Tom loves shearing and crutching sheep with his dad, who really appreciates Tom's help. The photo shows Tom's first time crutching – he did 80 sheep out of a mob of 250.



CLASSING SUNSET

Sheep classer Bill Walker of Murray Bridge in South Australia sent in this photo of the red raddled heads at David and Gwenda Eckert's property near Lake Alexandrina at sunset after a big day's classing.



HELPING OUT

Liz Preece sent in this photo of her two-year-old daughter Annie helping with crutching at 'Little Forest' in Cressy, Tasmania.



A GREAT LIFE ON THE FARM

Kirsten Fenton sent in this photo, saying how a hard day's work, and a love of sheep make for a great life on the farm at 'Tara' at Trunk Creek, NSW.



WOODY IN THE WOOL BIN

Will Taylor from 'Birrahlee' at Kentucky in Northern NSW sent in this photo of his son Woody relaxing in the wool bin. Woody is four months old in this photo and is one of the seventh generation of Taylors to be born at Birrahlee.



BOSS OF THE BOARD

Christian Brown sent in this photo of 18-month old Joshua overseeing local shearer Ben Layton shearing some stragglers at the Brown family property 'Glen Accron' at Bundarra, NSW, in January.



NO LICE. NO FLIES. NO WORRIES.



DUAL-ACTION LICE AND FLY STRIKE PROTECTION.

You can't be too careful about protecting your borders these days from those lousy, lice carrying, fly-blown mongrels from next door.

That's why you need to arm yourself with Avenge. With 100% lice knockdown and four weeks protection*, and now with fly strike protection on both long wool and off shears.

Don't let your guard down, talk to your stockist, or visit farmadvisor.com.au today.

AVENGE

DO IT ONCE. DO IT RIGHT.



© Bayer Australia Limited 2017. 875 Pacific Highway, Pymble NSW 2073. ACN 000 138 714. Avenge® is a registered trademark of the Bayer group. To find out more, call our customer information line on 1800 678 368, 9am to 6pm (EST) Monday to Friday
* When applied within 24 hours of shearing.