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PROFIT FROM WOOL INNOVATION
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AWI INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

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

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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.

WOOLPOLL 2015
I encourage all eligible wool levy payers to cast their votes when the poll opens on 14 September. It is the opportunity for woolgrowers Australia-wide to choose what percentage of their clip proceeds are used to fund AWI – their research, development and marketing company – for the next three years. The ballot paper will be posted to eligible levy payers in September, along with a Voter Information Memorandum that outlines information about WoolPoll 2015 and how AWI proposes to invest levy funds at each levy rate option. During September and October, I will be on the road hosting seminars in key wool-growing areas across the country (see page 5) to give woolgrowers the opportunity to ask questions to me and AWI senior managers.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE
AWI has published on its website an independent Review of Performance, which is required to be conducted every three years, to assist woolgrowers determine the value for money they receive from their funding of AWI. The report produced by Deloitte Private shows that for the three years from July 2012 to June 2015 AWI’s actions and investments created value for woolgrowers through increased market demand, higher wool prices and improved on-farm and off-farm productivity. Woolgrowers will receive a summary of the report with their WoolPoll Voter Information Memorandum.

LIFETIME EWE MANAGEMENT
AWI is providing funding for another round of Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) training. The LTEM course is aimed at wool and sheep producers who want to improve the management of their breeding ewes to improve ewe and lamb survival, and reproductive performance. The funding will enable another 120 groups of Merino producers (with an average of five woolgrowers in each group) to undertake the 12 month training course. This is an example of the wool industry supporting better lambing and better welfare of breeding ewes. In the past financial year, 100 groups completed LTEM training, resulting in an 11% increase in the number of lambs weaned, a 36% reduction in ewe mortality and a 23% increase in stocking rate.

WOOL SELLING SYSTEMS REVIEW
The Wool Selling Systems Review (WSSR) panel released a discussion paper on 6 July and held a one-day stakeholder workshop in Melbourne on 21 July. The workshop provided industry participants with the opportunity to debate the panel’s discussion paper and provide further input into the review and its direction. Final submissions to the panel will be received up until 4 September, before the panel releases its final document to AWI and industry towards the end of this year. The discussion paper is available at www.wool.com/wssr.

ERMENEGILDO ZEGNA WOOL TROPHIES
The competitions for the Ermenegildo Zegna Wool Trophies are open to all Australian and New Zealand woolgrowers. All entrants must be Superfine Merino ewe or wether skirted fleeces. The Vellus Aureum is open to fleeces with a minimum weight of 750 grs and tested as 13.9 micron or finer. The Wool Trophy is open to fleeces of 18.5 micron or finer. Full entry details are available at www.zegna-wool-trophies.zegnagroup.com, the AWI website www.wool.com or from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.

INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE
The regional finalists have been announced for the 2015/16 International Woolmark Prize global finals, to be held next year in Florence for menswear and New York for womenswear. The interest in this award from the fashion communities and media globally continues to be phenomenal. It is helping put wool back on the agendas of fashion designers across the world, and consequently into retail stores for consumers to purchase. The winners have the opportunity to be stocked in the most important retailers around the globe including David Jones in Sydney.

CAMPAIGN FOR WOOL
The Campaign for Wool will be celebrated on an unprecedented global scale during the northern hemisphere autumn this year with many countries creating their own programs of activity to celebrate International Wool Week. This will include some of our key consumer markets such as China, Japan, the UK, Italy, France and the Netherlands. The Campaign for Wool has been instrumental in driving a new demand for wool of all microns on an international scale.

AWI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)
The AWI 2015 AGM will be held on Friday 20 November at the Swissotel Sydney at 68 Market St, Sydney. Formal notice and meeting papers will be sent to AWI shareholders in October. AWI shareholders who are unable to attend the AGM in person will be able to view the AGM proceedings via webcast. Further details are available on the AWI website at www.wool.com/agm. The AWI 2014/15 Annual Report will also be released in October.

IWTO CONGRESS IN SYDNEY
The International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) Congress is next year being held in Sydney, 4-6 April 2016. It is the must-attend event each year for wool industry leaders and participants across the supply chain. As the world’s largest wool producer and exporter, Australia provides an ideal backdrop for this Congress. I encourage you to attend the Congress to discuss global trends, innovations and opportunities. For more information visit www.iwto.org/events
Farmers and politicians alike have been discussing recently the value and benefit of levy investment, and the industry structures and processes of collecting these levies.

Of particular interest to woolgrowers has been the Senate Inquiry into industry structures and systems governing levies for research and development (R&D) and marketing in the agriculture sector.

Among other things, the Senate examined opportunities levy payers across all industries have to set and review the rate of levy and influence investment.

We’re fortunate in the wool industry to have an opportunity every three years to have a say on the level of levy rate we want to pay. It’s an opportunity many other industries have to set and review the rate of levy and influence investment. It’s an opportunity we all should take full advantage of.

Woolgrowers can vote from 14 September until 30 October 2015.

The 2015 WoolPoll Panel – a diverse and independent group of growers charged with overseeing the levy vote – is encouraging every woolgrower to take the time now to discuss this important decision with business partners and family.

Put simply, it’s a decision about how much of your annual wool income you want invested in research, development and marketing over the next three years.

Now is the time to think about the value of that investment, and what it has and will continue to contribute to the industry as a whole, and your business individually. An independent Review of Performance was recently conducted into AWI, and I encourage growers to read the summary of the findings to assist in making their decision at WoolPoll.

Every farmer who has paid wool levies of $100 or more in the past three years – whether they run predominantly Merinos, produce prime lambs or have a mixed farming operation – is eligible to vote.

WoolPoll Panel members come from a range of wool-growing properties, spread across the country. We recognise paying a wool levy means different things to different people and businesses, and we encourage you to attend an AWI Roadshow event to have your individual questions answered.

Events will be held in more than 20 locations across the country – the dates and locations are on the WoolPoll website (and on the page opposite). They are a great opportunity to talk with AWI about local issues and opportunities, and hear about investment priorities for the next three years.

If you’re not able to get to an event, make sure you take a look at the woolpoll.com.au website from 28 August to find all the necessary information to make an informed vote.

The Panel has worked hard to make sure the actual process of voting is as simple as possible in 2015.

In late August you will receive a voter entitlement letter. Double check the details and call the voter helpline on 1800 113 373 if your entitlement needs updating.

Once the vote opens, you’ll have the option of voting in the traditional manner – by post – or at the click of a button on woolpoll.com.au.

I encourage you to have a chat with your neighbours and mates about the WoolPoll vote, read the Voter Information Memorandum from cover to cover, and keep an eye out for other opportunities to see and hear how AWI has been investing your levy.

And when your voting papers arrive in the mail, I encourage you to vote straight away.

Voting closes on October 30. Make the most of the opportunity.

WILL ROBERTS
Chairman of the WoolPoll 2015 Panel and woolgrower from Queensland

“Woolgrowers are a really diverse bunch of people, including women and family operations, all enthusiastic. We’re all busy but voting is a very simple process and only takes a few minutes – and we should all have a say.”

BINDI MURRAY
WoolPoll 2015 Panel member and woolgrower from WA

“Younger growers have an enormous amount to offer as they are the future of this industry. We all have different ideas and should have a say in the conversation now. So step up and get involved.”

ADELE OFFLEY
WoolPoll 2015 Panel member and woolgrower from NSW

“I am a sixth generation wool producer on the same holding. I am proud of this magnificent, resilient, beautiful fibre we produce. The levy is about the future. Our vote is a family decision because it’s all about my son and grandson’s future.”

ROBERT INGRAM
WoolPoll 2015 Panel member and woolgrower from NSW

“We encourage all woolgrowers – from young to old, from ultrafine to broad – to vote in the 2015 WoolPoll. As a levy payer you have the right to vote and have a say in the future of our wonderful industry. It’s your hard earned money so exercise your right to vote and set the levy.”

GEORGINA WALLACE
WoolPoll 2015 Panel member and woolgrower from Tasmania
Voting in WoolPoll 2015 opens on 14 September, giving woolgrowers a chance to have a say on the future of their industry.

Eligible wool levy payers have a vital role in determining the level of industry investment in research, development and marketing through AWI by voting on the levy rate for the next three years.

Over the coming weeks woolgrowers will receive a range of information to help them make an informed decision on their vote in WoolPoll 2015.

This information includes the 2013-2015 report to woolgrowers Your Levy Working for You, the Voter Information Memorandum, WoolPoll voting papers and a summary of the independent Review of Performance that will be sent directly to eligible levy payers.

The Your Levy Working for You report provides woolgrowers with valuable information about how levies were invested over the past three years, the benefits delivered to woolgrowers and an insight into AWI’s future investment plans.

The Voter Information Memorandum contains information on the WoolPoll voting process, the independent WoolPoll Panel, AWI’s recommendation, and how AWI proposes to invest levy funds over the next three years.

The WoolPoll voting papers will be sent to eligible levy payers with the Voter Information Memorandum.

Wool levy payers can vote by post or online from 14 September until 5pm AEST on 30 October 2015.

Over the coming week, levy payers will start to receive their voter entitlement letters. If you have not received this by 1 September, please call Link Market Services on 1800 113 373.

AWI Chairman, Wal Merriman thanked the independent WoolPoll Panel 2015, chaired by Queensland woolgrower Will Roberts, for its tireless work in ensuring WoolPoll has been managed in line with the WoolPoll Regulations and statutory requirements.

“Voting at WoolPoll 2015 places the ongoing stability and success of Australia’s wool industry firmly in your hands. Your voice is valuable and we need to hear it. I urge you to vote in WoolPoll 2015,” he said.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF AWI’S PERFORMANCE

AWI is required to have an Independent Review of Performance (ROP) conducted every three years, to assist woolgrowers determine the value for money they receive and benefits delivered.

Deloitte Private has recently completed the report for the three years from July 2012 to June 2015, which shows that AWI’s actions and investments over the past three years have contributed to increasing market demand and rising wool prices.

The ROP concluded that organisational improvements, including engagement and collaboration, governance and operations, strategy and structure had created value for woolgrowers in several ways:

- Increased market demand through AWI’s marketing and promotion activities
- Higher wool prices, in part attributed to AWI’s marketing and promotion activities
- Improved on-farm and off-farm productivity through AWI’s R&D activities
- Cost savings as a result of AWI’s on-farm and off-farm R&D activities.

Woolgrowers will receive a summary of this ROP report with their WoolPoll Voter Information Memorandum. The full ROP report is available at www.woolpoll.com.au

MORE INFORMATION: www.woolpoll.com.au

RETURNS ON INVESTMENT

AWI is committed to providing quantifiable returns on investment. Independent analysis of AWI’s current investment programs shows significant benefit to woolgrowers, including:

- AWI’s Lifetime Ewe Management training program, which returned up to $44 on every $1 invested.
- The Wild Dogs control program returned $7 on every $1 invested by AWI.
- Supply Chain Diversification returned $4.10 on every $1 invested.
- The Cool Wool marketing program returned $3.10 on every $1 invested.
- The development of the Sports and Outdoor category returned $6.30 on every $1 invested.
- The China Luxury program returned up to $3.80 on every $1 invested.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about venues and times, and to register, visit www.woolpoll.com.au or call the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099.
For more than 12 years between the mid-1990s and the start of the current decade, the Australian wool industry did very little marketing of its fibre. In 2009, the supply chain expressed its concern that consumers were losing touch with the fibre. So in 2010, following its acquisition of The Woolmark Company, and in pursuit of support at WoolPoll 2012 for investment in marketing, AWI began to reconnect with the supply chain and consumers.

AWI recently canvassed the opinions of some major brands about their recent experience with AWI’s marketing programs.

“I am always conscious of not just the consumer impact of our marketing activity but the level of engagement and support we can build with partners,” said Rob Langtry, AWI’s Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer.

“Considering the results of AWI action in the past few years, we can say we are very satisfied about the interaction between the customers like ours, distributors and AWI itself. I think everything has been done in the right direction because you push very strongly on communication to the consumer and B2B company to company. Particularly we are reaching the consumer which is the most important thing.”

Pier Luigi Lora Piana
Deputy Chairman, Lora Piana

“I do believe that after a very quiet period for The Woolmark Company and the Woolmark symbol, it is now out there again. I had meetings in London with your representatives four or five years ago and I was very critical of them really abstaining, but I now see the Woolmark symbol out and about and I think people are recognising it. The new generation, who are buying a lot of the suits because it’s all about fashion, are now realising that if you’re buying a suit it should be in wool. That’s what we need to do more of.”

Simon Berwin
Berwin & Berwin

“We just need to explain to them why wool is the best thing they can get … They will finally get it, and once they get it they will be prepared to buy it and buy it in a big way.”

Richard Boide
Director, Dormeuil

This interview process was a vital step in formulating not just a scorecard on where we have been, but where we, our customers and their consumers see priorities for the future.”

Here is a snapshot of what they said, in their own words...

MORE INFORMATION
View a video of the interviews on the Woolmark YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/WoolmarkOnline

WOOLMARK IN CHINA

“The Woolmark Gold label allows us to go into a market such as China where there is this aspiration to wear luxury and to have the best. To be part of the Woolmark Gold group of companies allows us to demonstrate that we are producing the best fabric in the world.”

David Gallimore
MD, Luxury Fabrics

“It’s more and more important that not just the B2B business relationship but now the B2C the consumer is identifying with the Woolmark symbol. Particularly with our 100 stores in China, the Woolmark Gold symbol is now a real mark of authenticity in terms of where we source our materials from and the kind of fabric mills we use. Our premium product sales have definitely risen as a result of being able to do better marketing campaigns, and raise our game as a brand as well.”

Ray Clacher
MD Gieves & Hawkes
“We’re very fortunate that the High Street is now showing wool product. In particular I could mention companies that are internationally known such as Marks & Spencer, John Lewis which is a very well-known company and brand within the United Kingdom; also the likes of Topshop that all young people seem to enjoy.”

Nicholas Coleridge  
President International, Condé Nast

We’re on a sort of rush at the moment and it’s one of the most exciting moments in men’s fashion because it’s just apparent that there’s this desire to look good, dress good … I think wool fits into modern fashion like it always has … There will always be a place for it, there will always be a place for that kind of quality.”

Gordon Richardson  
Creative Director, Topman (Topshop)

“We are by far the largest [UK] retailer in terms of the usage of wool… Wool remains very important. For menswear we’re talking about coats, we’re talking about suits, we’re talking about knitwear and in womenswear we’ll see more and more utilisation of wool. It is actually, to put it very clearly, it’s our preferred [fibre].”

Marc Bolland  
CEO, Marks & Spencer

“I think we need to think about broadening the appeal. I think at the very top end of the market, the most educated consumers, they understand why woolen textiles are important. But all the way down the chain there’s a huge market, as we’ve seen with our Hammond & Co collection at Debenhams. It features an English wool cloth from Alfred Brown, it’s an Australian Merino, it’s a little bit more expensive. But people have been prepared to pay that 20 per cent premium to get a fabric they understand, that has a great quality, that will have a longer life, that will look better, wear better, and I think it’s that side of the market that’s important.”

Patrick Grant  
Norton & Sons

“Wool is our blood and everything that represents the company, and we think it’ll be more and more so in the future.”

Dominic Dormeuil  
President, Dormeuil

“I think that it’s incredible the way that The Woolmark Company has got right into the heart of the fashion industry. Everywhere you go you feel that people are pushing the story of Merino wool and people are receptive to it too. What Woolmark has been very clever at doing is reminding people that wool is better and it lasts longer and it’s the real deal. All these are positive steps forward. Younger fashion editors … talk very enthusiastically about wool and the properties of wool and have become a little bit more disdainful of fibres that aren’t wool.”

Nicholas Coleridge  
President International, Condé Nast

“A lot of younger designers … [now] use wool in incredibly different and varied ways, so actually I think wool is moving forward.”

Dylan Jones  
Editor in Chief, British GQ

“I think Woolmark are doing a wonderful thing supporting young designers, and not just from Britain or Europe, this is the whole world, we have people from Australia, China, Japan and that’s great, to treat the world as one.”

Victoria Beckham  
Fashion Designer

“Since we’ve had sheep wandering down Savile Row, to setting on fire garments and duvet covers at Clarence House by His Royal Highness Prince Charles, the interest in wool has been quite amazing.”

Lindsay Taylor  
Sales Director, Holland & Sherry

“Campaign for Wool was a great boost for us, because it brought all wool’s attributes and qualities out into the public realm, but in a fun way, so you felt that it was less about teaching and more about enjoying and sharing. It was and continues to be a very positive initiative for us.”

Anda Rowland  
Vice Chairman, Anderson & Sheppard

“I think that the Prince of Wales lit a touch-paper and we’ve been able to all latch on to this thing in some way. Apart from being highly useful for wool and the sheep industry, it’s been enormous fun. Everyone has a spring in their step at the moment. And I also think it has objectively had some success.”

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President International, Condé Nast

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Victoria Beckham  
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Dominic Dormeuil  
President, Dormeuil
Scabal has released a new collection of ‘Noble Fleece’ fabrics produced by ultrafine woolgrowers that are members of its newly established Noble Wool Club. The club aims to create a closer relationship between Australian ultrafine woolgrowers, leading bespoke tailors of Savile Row and the ultimate end consumer.

For close to 500 years, luxury weaver Scabal has been producing some of the world’s finest cloths made using the finest Australian Merino wool. In its ongoing quest for perfection Scabal has collaborated with The Woolmark Company (owned by AWI) to release an innovative collection of Noble Fleece fabrics, produced by the newly formed Scabal Noble Wool Club.

As a leading marketer of sophisticated, ultrafine wool products, Scabal feels both a responsibility and long-term opportunity to establish a privileged relationship with the best woolgrowers.

The idea of establishing this illustrious club was born after Scabal Executive Chairman Gregor Thissen visited Australia in late 2013 in a bid to bridge the gap between ultrafine woolgrowers and their ultimate consumers.

To qualify to be a member of the Scabal Noble Wool Club, woolgrowers must satisfy rigorous standards including bloodlines, crimping criteria and heritage.

To celebrate the launch of Scabal’s Noble Wool Club, prestigious menswear publication The Rake with AWI support produced a two-part feature, highlighting the fibre to fashion journey and re-establishing the emotional connection between the exquisite fabrics and their origins. Accompanying the two-part feature were two short films: the first explores Scabal’s mill at Huddersfield in Yorkshire, England; whilst the second journeys to Australia, to Murray Picker’s ‘Hillcreston’ property in Bigga, NSW.

"For me, it’s the first in a hopefully long series of fabrics that are going to be based on a new focus in the selection process for wool,” Mr Thissen tells The Rake. "So far in the ultra-fine business, we’ve always focussed on micronage, and I want now to go beyond that and add a lot of other different characteristics to the wool we’re selecting.

"More and more menswear consumers are concerned about what goes into the product they buy and the sustainability of the supply chain, so I think there’s a real opportunity for our industry and for us to inform people about what goes into their suits.”

During the collaboration, AWI has been able to impart its knowledge of the entire wool supply chain with Scabal and it is evident that both organisations share similar core values, underpinned by providing the highest quality that is possible.

"AWI is, and always has been, dedicated to quality,” explains AWI’s Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer Rob Langtry. "Our collaboration with Scabal demonstrates to consumers that, when they buy a Scabal product made from the very best Merino wool, designed by experienced fabric designers, woven by the best English weavers, they are the proud owner of the world’s finest natural quality fibre in terms of provenance, performance and luxury.”

For Mr Picker, a sixth generation woolgrower, he knows all too well that Australia’s history is all about wool, and for those in the game it’s a family affair: “It’s not something you can just walk into and do,” he says. “You don’t see many people from any other upbringings going into wool – it’s very rare. Even now, my father is still teaching us some pointers here and there.”

And so it’s obvious that all players involved in pursuing perfection – from sheep through to shop – are participating in a multifaceted affair and embracing it with open arms. After all, says The Rake, a perfectionist’s work is never done.
Italian weaver Reda is marking its 150th anniversary by showcasing the luxurious attributes of superfine Merino wool and the company’s close working relationship with Australian woolgrowers.

Established in 1865 in the hills above Biella in Italy, luxury weaver of superfine Merino wool, Reda, is this year paying tribute to the premium qualities of the natural fibre that has been so integral to the company throughout its 150 year history.

An exclusive exhibition, produced by Reda in collaboration with AWI, is showcasing the fabric maker’s rich history with artful images of Reda’s wool supply chain – from farm to fabric – shot by five influential Magnum Photos Agency photographers.

The visual and tactile exhibition – simply titled ‘150’ – focuses on the Merino wool, yarn, and fabric in a sequence of exhibits and images, revealing the purity of the finest wool in the world.

‘150’ opened at Milan’s Palazzo Clerici in February and was attended by global media and luminaries from the Italian wool industry. The exhibition traveled to the UK for the London Collections Men fashion week in June, to New York in July and will move on to Berlin later this year.

The events are conceived as an engaging, multi-sensory experience that originates from Merino wool to depict the pureness of every single yarn and the sophistication of the finished fabric.

Reda has collated the images shot by the Magnum photographers in an exclusive book, also titled ‘150’. It portrays a passionate visual narrative of the source of Merino wool in the vastness of Australia through to Reda’s wool mill in the foggy valleys of Valle Mosso, masterfully capturing the balance between traditions of craftsmanship and technological innovation.

In Australia, Magnum photographers Alex Majoli and Paolo Pellegrin took photos for ‘150’ at four properties in New England: Annie Hutchison’s ‘Kentucky Station’ at Kentucky, Leo and Judy Blanch’s ‘Westvale’ at Wollun, the Hawksford family’s ‘Glenburnie’ at Kentucky, and Fred Cameron’s ‘Englefield North’ at Walcha. As a curtain-raiser to Reda’s 150 year anniversary, Reda’s global directors Fabrizio, Francesco and Ercole Botto Poala headed an international media tour to Australia in 2013, with the support of AWI, to highlight the source of 1PP bales – the best superfine wool – to the world.

Fabrizio Botto Poala said the company greatly values the qualities that Australian Merino wool brings to its renowned fabrics.

“We have always believed that quality is one of the main factors; we are always trying to push quality. New England is the most important place all over the world where we can find our top wool,” he said.

“We cannot compare this fantastic fibre with a synthetic product. We have to compare our fibre with the ultra-elite fibres like cashmere or silk.

“The target of everybody that works in wool is to try and increase the consumption of wool, especially the consumption of good wool. But the most difficult thing is to teach the final consumer about wool. If we want to see a better price in the market we have to increase the demand, this is the only way.

“We believe in wool. We will never leave wool. We are a ‘maniac’ for wool!”

AWI continues to have a strong relationship with the prestigious manufacturer.

“It is both a source of wonder and pride to the Australian wool industry that Reda – with its own tradition of innovation, continuous improvement and passion for perfection – turns our wool into some of the world’s most beautiful fabrics and apparel,’ explained AWI Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer Rob Langtry.

“We are encouraged by the continued support and level of interest in the story behind superfine wool which we receive from our supporters in Italy and across Europe.

“Globally supported initiatives such as this are being driven by the industry and reinforce AWI’s efforts to strengthen demand for superfine and ultrafine Australian wool at a sustainable price.”

Reda CEO Ercole Botto Poala and AWI Italy Country Manager Francesco Magri at the exhibition that showcases the premium qualities of Merino wool.
The International Woolmark Prize remains **AWI’s most successful marketing strategy** and provides design talent across the globe with the opportunity to be stocked in some of the world’s most influential retailers.

The winner of the Australia regional final for menwear was **Patrick Johnson** of P.Johnson tailors whose passion for **Australian Merino wool** stems from his childhood growing up on a sheep station north of Adelaide.

The finalists to compete in the 2015/16 International Woolmark Prize were decided in July during six regional competitions that were held across the world in Asia; Australia; the British Isles; Europe; India, Pakistan and Middle East; and the USA. The six menswear and six womenswear regional winners will compete in the finals being held respectively in Florence in January 2016 and New York in February 2016.

Since its launch in 2012, the International Woolmark Prize has become AWI’s most successful marketing strategy, increasing the global demand for Australian Merino wool by promoting the versatility of the fibre and aligning young talent with commercial opportunities.

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

The interest in these awards from fashion communities and media globally has been phenomenal which is important to help increase the global demand for Australian wool.

Australians woolgrowers will be especially interested to hear that the menswear winner of the Australia regional final, Patrick Johnson of P.Johnson tailors, grew up on Merino sheep station ‘Buckland Park’, near Two Wells, north of Adelaide.

Johnson focused purely on superfine Merino wool of 14 to 17 micron for his collection, even when using a waterproof bonding technology of Teflon coating. Presenting a lightweight white Merino wool deconstructed blazer and navy trouser combination, Johnson’s tailoring perfection impressed the judging panel.

“Patrick Johnson’s construction was beautiful; the make was exquisite and there was some really great innovations with Merino wool,” said judge Edwina McCann, Editor-in-Chief of Vogue Australia. “People don’t really think of Australian fashion for fine tailoring but this is a slightly more relaxed tailoring, it’s very light.”

The continued support of some of the global fashion industry’s most significant representatives on the judging panels of the International Woolmark Prize underlines the importance of the initiative and also helps attract enormous media attention worldwide to expose the innovative nature and versatility of Australian wool.

“The prize continues to highlight the most innovative and modern interpretations of Australian wool in the hands of some of our future’s brightest talents,” AWI CEO Stuart McCullough said. “It remains AWI’s commitment to educate the next generation of fashion industry leaders about the extraordinary potential of Australian Merino wool, and we congratulate the 12 global finalists on their win.

“With the number of countries represented the largest yet, the International Woolmark Prize is a truly global celebration of emerging talent and most importantly provides the winning designers with a unique opportunity for commercial success on a global scale.”
ASIA WINNERS

Menswear winner Munsoo Kwon from South Korea with menswear model; womenswear winners Yeonjoo Koo and Jinwoo Choi of J Koo from South Korea with womenswear model (centre).

EUROPE WINNERS

Menswear model with menswear winner Jonathan Christopher from The Netherlands; womenswear winner Nanna van Blaaderen also from The Netherlands with womenswear model.

BRITISH ISLES WINNERS

Menswear winners Sam Cotton and Agi Mdmulla of Agi & Sam and menswear model; womenswear model with womenswear winners Catherine Teatum and Rob Jones of Teatum Jones.

AUSTRALIA WINNERS

Womenswear model with womenswear winner Bianca Spender; menswear winner Patrick Johnson of P.Johnson with menswear model.

USA WINNERS

Menswear model with menswear winner Siki Im; womenswear winner Tanya Taylor with womenswear model.

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND MIDDLE EAST WINNERS

Menswear model (far left) with menswear winner Suket Dhir (third from left) from India with his wife and business partner Svetlana Dhir, womenswear winners Riccardo Audisio and Yago Goicoechea of Taller Marmo from the UAE with womenswear model.
In the 12 months since Melbourne label Strateas.Carlucci scooped the pool at both the menswear and womenswear International Woolmark Prize Australia regional final, the design duo has also been named GQ Fashion Designer of the Year and awarded a Prix De Marie Claire. Yet perhaps the most life-changing honour of all was being the first Australian menswear label to be on the official Paris Fashion Week schedule.

Alongside the likes of Louis Vuitton and Valentino, designers Peter Strateas and Mario-Luca Carlucci weaved their way into fashion history as they debuted on Day One of Paris' prestigious fashion schedule to present their Spring/Summer 2016 collection for both menswear and womenswear.

Called Myopia, the collection rings true the brand's DNA, which is grounded in both structure and minimalism. Hailing form the creative hub of Melbourne, the duo aims to convey the relaxed, approachable Australian attitude using beautiful fabrics produced in Italy and Japan. Enter Australian Merino wool.

A long-time favourite fibre of the brand, the designers' relationship with AWI was strengthened during the International Woolmark Prize journey and has continued to blossom in the months after the award.

"It gave us the opportunity to explore Merino wool and experiment with new techniques and applications, some of which we have still continued to use in our mainline collections today. We have learnt and continued to learn more and more about this incredible fibre, which has fuelled our creativity and allowed us to continue this journey with Merino."

The International Woolmark Prize is the pinnacle of AWI’s activities to promote the use of Australian Merino wool in fashion and strengthen its position as the ultimate ingredient in luxury apparel in both menswear and womenswear. The fibre’s incredible natural properties mean AWI has a great story to tell fashion designers and brands, who in turn can assist in passing on this knowledge to consumers by championing its benefits and changing consumer attitudes.

"A common misconception about wool is that it’s used only for winter collections. For us, it’s trans-seasonal, as we play to the fibre’s properties and enhance them depending on the season. For example, for summer we focus on wool’s breathability and how it can cool as much as it can warm the wearer. We worked with superfine gauges for our suiting and shirting, however we also recreated a jacquard knit and a similar process to what we created for our Woolmark Prize final collection this season, which was one of the collection’s highlights”
Her visit to this year’s Australian Sheep and Wool Show in Bendigo might have been the first time Jenny Kee had been up close with a Merino ram, but the iconic Australian fashion designer is no stranger to Australian Merino wool.

For the past 40 years she has had a remarkable presence within the Australian fashion industry, with a passionately joyous and distinctly Australian approach to wool knitwear.

For the past 40 years she has had a remarkable presence within the Australian fashion industry, with a passionately joyous and distinctly Australian approach to wool knitwear. Working alongside AWI and The Woolmark Company, she has recently released a new collection of jumpers, cardigans, scarves and beanies, made from 100 per cent Australian Merino wool, which references seminal works from her vintage knitwear, including the new Blinky Knit which is a modern adaption of the original koala knit famously worn by Princess Diana in 1982.

Titled A New Beginning, her Woolmark-certified collection marks a wool revival and a trip down memory lane, continuing to draw inspiration from Australia’s cultural and natural landscape, and her love for Australian flora and fauna.

Adding a kaleidoscope of colour to the annual Women of Wool lunch at the Australian Sheep and Wool Show, Jenny helped illustrate the farm to fashion journey by not only giving the audience a rare insight into her colourful life, but also presenting her latest collection.

“Wool is the most incredible, beautiful fabric,” Jenny exclaimed. “And wool is a great product of this country.”

Jenny told how she first came into contact with the Woolmark brand more than 30 years ago when she was asked to make a hand-knitted outfit, comprising a skirt, jumper and poncho.

“It had the Woolmark logo going through it and my collaboration with Woolmark stayed there for over 30 years. I’ve had a wonderful association with them and it just seemed a natural thing that I would do knitwear again, with a little encouragement, and the collaboration grew into A New Beginning. It’s been the most incredible journey and I really love doing it.”

Using modern knitting technology, Jenny explained how digital knitting now allowed her to produce a collection with a “modern take”.

“The industry has changed in the past 40 years. Designs are now digitally knitted and not hand-knitted anymore. This collection is a global meld of exactly who I am,” she said, referencing her mother’s Italian heritage and her father’s Chinese background, highlighted by the Australian wool being spun in Italy by Zegna Baruffa and then going to the artisans of Hong Kong, before returning to Australia.

Joining Jenny on stage at the Women of Wool event as guest speakers were Influential Women founder and rural women advocate Catherine Marriott from Western Australia, innovative superfine wool producer Nan Bray from Tasmania, and Knit a Square charity founder Sandy McDonald. Each of these four women has greatly contributed to Australia’s wool industry, ensuring it remains as innovative and dynamic as possible.

“This is a community of women who love working with wool, working on the farm with wool, knitting with wool,” said Jenny. “This is a community of women working with wool, and it is WOW.”

It is events such as the Women of Wool that tie the entire industry together. Yet it is the fashion element of the show that really allows woolgrowers to see, first-hand, the end product of their premium wool. With A New Beginning gaining broad media attention, it sparks the interest of everyday consumers to think about the story behind the product, with their attention rightly directed to the Australian wool industry and all the people who contribute to it.

MORE INFORMATION
www.jennykee.com
www.womenofwool.com.au
ACCLAIMING CERRUTI AND MERINO WOOL

IL SIGNOR CERRUTI EXHIBITION

AWI has supported a groundbreaking exhibition that showcases the great Nino Cerruti and Merino wool to international press and fashion influencers.

For three weeks in June, the Marino Marini Museum in the heart of Florence presented ‘Il Signor Nino’, the first-ever exhibition dedicated to Nino Cerruti, his ideas and his style.

As a major partner, AWI played a key role in the exhibition, which launched during the influential men’s tradeshow Pitti Uomo. The beauty and the quality of Merino wool was well-expressed throughout the exhibition, underlining the strong relation between this noble fibre and Signor Cerruti, who has always preferred it, not only for his textile collections, but also for his everyday wardrobe.

The exhibition extended across three floors, exhibiting about 60 outfits selected from the personal archive of Signor Nino, amongst images, audio-visual content and high-quality fabrics, illustrating the aesthetic value and craftsmanship which set the foundations of the ‘Made in Italy’ ethos.

“I have kept my clothes in an archive for personal reasons,” Signor Cerruti said. “Throughout the years, they became my second skin, a suggestion in aesthetics, and respect towards the principles of craftsmanship and the art of fabrics, a testimony of man’s evolution in time. It is history, my story, including all that has happened around me and my experiences.

“It has always been in the tradition of this company (Lanificio Fratelli Cerruti) that we have worked at a high level, and to do high level fabrics you have to use high level wool. Let’s not forget if you want to make clothes you have to use fabric and if you want to do fabric in the tradition of European culture, wool is certainly the primary fibre.”

The storytelling exhibition was co-curated by Nino Cerruti himself and Angelo Flaccavento and enabled AWI to not only talk about Merino wool to influential journalists such as Susy Menkes and the fashion industry, but showcase real-life examples of clothes made by a true master of the craft.
When Nino Cerruti’s grandfather Antonio founded his first weaving workshop in 1881 in Biella, nobody could have imagined it would evolve into one of the world’s finest producers of luxury wool cloth. In 1950 Signor Nino Cerruti became the head of Lanificio Fratelli Cerruti, a position in which he still remains.

AWI collaborates with the company to help build the demand for wool by showcasing how the natural born elegance of both Nino Cerruti and Merino wool are as relevant today as they have been for the past 65 years.

NEXT GENERATION EMBRACES CERRUTI!

With AWI support, UK menswear designer Lou Dalton works closely with leading Italian mill Lanificio Fratelli Cerruti to include Merino wool wovenwear in her collections.

At 84 years old, Nino Cerruti is proof that there is no true retirement age for a fashion designer. He first stepped foot into his father’s business when he was just 10 years old, when his father thought the young Nino should put his long school holidays to good use.

“So I started learning about how to make wool fabric,” Signor Cerruti explains. “I have had a long intimacy with wool.”

Today, he is still an active member of the iconic mill, working with the team to create the perfect cloth and perfect what Lanificio Fratelli Cerruti stands for. Yet Signor Cerruti is not only imparting his wealth of knowledge with his colleagues, but also with emerging fashion designers such as UK menswear designer Lou Dalton.

Nino Cerruti welcomes UK menswear designer Lou Dalton to his mill at Biella in Italy that produces some of the world’s finest wool fabrics.

For the past three seasons Dalton has forged a relationship with Signor Cerruti, a relationship that has come into fruition thanks to the efforts of AWI’s global network.

Working closely with leading mill Lanificio Fratelli Cerruti, Dalton has shown Merino wool looks on the runways of London for both her spring/summer and autumn/winter collections and has sourced beautiful Merino wool fabrics from Cerruti including Cool Wool wovenwear cloth.

“During my apprenticeship I came in contact with some of the finest wools in the world and from there on I was hooked,” says Dalton, who admits she would be lost without wool in the collections she produces, both summer and winter. “I’m obsessed with wool.”

It was Dalton’s Spring/Summer 2015 collection that first saw her collaborate with Cerruti, something she admitted to wanting to do for a while.

“I’m very excited about working with Lanificio Fratelli Cerruti this season, it’s something that I have wanted to happen for the last two seasons and it has finally come into fruition,” said Dalton. “It’s incredible to work with a company that is highly regarded in the industry for fabric innovation.”

And what does Signor Cerruti think of passing on his talents to the next generation?

“There is always a combination of inventiveness with young people. That is much more free from prejudices and conditions than it is with a person that has long experience.” he says. “In creativeness you don’t have an age; you have creativeness or you don’t have it.

“I think the collaboration between worlds that have a lot of history and a lot of tradition … and the freedom of thinking of young people is an ideal match.”

WOOL ON TREND AT PITTI UOMO TRADE SHOW

In addition to the launch of the ‘Il Signor Nino’ exhibition, AWI also attended the Pitti Uomo trade show to unveil the latest edition of The Wool Lab – AWI’s guide to the best wool fabrics and yarns in the world – and showcase Merino wool to the textile and fashion trade.

“Pitti Uomo is always the best occasion to not only meet with the most important brands, but also connect with fashion and trade journalists,” explains AWI Country Manager, Italy, Francesco Magri. “Trade shows are the ultimate in connecting with designers, brands, retailers, journalists and design schools. The most important people always attend and we not only showcase our latest developments but also gauge interest for future possibilities.”

Highlighting the demand for unisex fashion, a key section at Pitti Uomo was called ‘No Sex’, presenting androgynous apparel as a key trend for the next Autumn/Winter season. Similarly, the most popular theme presented in the Autumn/Winter 2016/17 edition of The Wool Lab was titled Androgynous, which leverages from traditional made-to-measure suits tailored for the contemporary and classy woman.

“Presenting the theme Androgynous at a time when a major theme at Pitti Uomo is ‘No Sex’ further demonstrates how in-tune The Wool Lab is with current trends and just how relevant the sourcing guide is to the industry,” Mr Magri added.

And what says Signor Cerruti of the biggest trend, ‘No Sex’, at Pitti Uomo?

“The fabrics can look similar, but the constructions must be different,” he said. “Man and woman are made different; they can play looking the same but they need different fabrics and shapes. It’s physical!”
Luxury Italian fashion house Missoni, well known across the world for its colourful knitwear designs, is holding a high profile exhibition that incorporates a showcase of Merino wool.

The benefits of Australian Merino wool and the role of the fibre in the history of leading Italian knitting brand Missoni are being showcased at a grand exhibition ‘Missoni, Art, Colour’.

The exhibition is at the MaGa museum in Gallarate, the small town 40 minutes away from Milan where Ottavio and Rosita Missoni first established their company in 1953.

The undisputed leader of knitting wool, Missoni, is holding this retrospective exhibition to provide the public, the fashion and textile industries, and the media with an insight into the company’s innate sense of style.

On show are nearly 100 mannequins dressed in Missoni knitwear from the archives, plus artworks and tapestries. Also showcased for visitors to admire and touch are 800 pounds (360kg) of wool top and Cashwool® (extra fine Merino wool) in nine striking colours from Zegna Baruffa Lane Borgosesia, exhibited as a celebration of the creativity and colours of the historic Italian fashion house.

“Wool yarns are the medium for colour which, when knitted, gains depth and emphasis,” Luca Missoni, son of Ottavio and Rosita Missoni, said at the launch.

The Woolmark Company (owned by AWI) has supported the Missoni initiative to stimulate the market to sell more Merino wool, thereby benefiting Australian woolgrowers.

“In order to weave the softest knits in wool we need to use wool with ultrafine, long and glossy fibres,” said Luca Missoni. “These are qualities that you only find in Merino wool, which comes from Australia where Merino sheep have found their natural habitat and this enables us to get the best wool in the world.

“The quality of this wool is guaranteed by The Woolmark Company brand with which our company has established an excellent relationship based on mutual respect and collaboration.”

The exhibition was timed to coincide with Expo Milano 2015 which expects to welcome more than 20 million Italian and international visitors during its six month duration. The Missoni exhibition is included in the Expo’s grand tour program and runs until 8 November.

An official book of the Missoni family has been created and published, with four complete pages dedicated to woolgrowers and The Woolmark Company.
Woolmark licensees back wool in China

Chinese companies certified to use the Woolmark brand recently gathered in Shanghai to learn more about the opportunities for wool in the region and thereby increase sales of their wool products.

For more than 50 years the Woolmark brand has built its reputation as being one of the world’s leading textile fibre brands. Its enduring appeal continues to deliver significant returns to Australian woolgrowers who own the brand through their ownership of AWI.

AWI-commissioned research shows that awareness of the brand and its value by consumers varies by the market. Chinese consumers in particular (that are aware of the brand) regard the Woolmark logo as a symbol that ensures quality, is something they look for when buying clothes, and regard clothes with the Woolmark logo as worth paying more for.

With around three quarters of the Australian wool clip exported to China, there are a significant proportion of companies located in China that are certified to use the Woolmark logo on their products.

In June, AWI brought together 95 of its Chinese Woolmark licensees and 16 other partners in China to attend a one-day Woolmark Licensees Seminar in Shanghai. The event highlighted the ever-increasing opportunities in wool textile innovation and marketing, and provided the opportunity for the companies across the supply chain to communicate and cooperate together.

As well as AWI presentations, the seminar included two guest speakers. Amy Cai, Head of Product Marketing from Fast Retailing (China) Trading Co Ltd, which is the fourth largest retail apparel group in the world, highlighted the quality control undertaken at its Uniqlo brand. Uniqlo has more than 1600 stores in 16 markets worldwide, including more than 350 in mainland China. Mandy Luang, Vice President of Sales & Marketing from SML, which is the supplier of Woolmark tickets and labels, spoke about new technology on the labels to ensure authenticity.

Presentations by AWI staff included:

- Creating the wool future of fashion – Jeff Ma, AWI’s Marketing Vice President Greater China
- Wool innovation in progress – Junny Zhu, AWI Project Manager Knitting
- Changes to Woolmark specifications 2016 and marketing support – Zhang Sheng, Woolmark Manager.

The session ended with a lively open discussion and networking session, which encouraged licensees and partners to share information, provide updates on their respective industries as well as build new supply chain links.

Attendees indicated their satisfaction with the event on the e-questionnaire that was provided, as well as noting their appreciation to AWI for hosting the seminar that provided such an opportunity to connect with other licensees and partners.

Furthermore, social opportunities both online through WeChat chatrooms and offline through group photo sessions enhanced the close relationships between AWI and its Woolmark licensees and partners.

THE WOOLMARK BRAND

The Woolmark brand and The Woolmark Company are owned by AWI. The Woolmark brand provides a unique, global fibre quality assurance scheme for manufacturers and consumers alike. No other fibre offers this type of scheme.

The value of the Woolmark brand is well established and highly regarded across the world in the apparel, interior textiles and home laundry sectors. Since the creation of the original logo in 1964, more than five billion products have carried the Woolmark logo as a symbol of fibre content and quality assurance.

Through the Woolmark Licensing Program, Woolmark certification allows licensees to use the Woolmark logo, Woolmark Blend logo or Wool Blend logo depending on the fibre content of their wool products. The Woolmark logo provides consumers with guaranteed fibre content and an assurance of quality. The Woolmark brand is backed up by technical specifications for a wide range of wool products and wool care products and stringent testing carried out by independent authorised laboratories.

The income from the sales of Woolmark licenses to companies provides AWI with about ten per cent of its revenue each year, which it invests into further marketing of Australian wool.

As well as being essential to the Woolmark Licensing Program, the Woolmark brand is central to most of the marketing that AWI does to build the demand for Australian wool – from the Campaign for Wool, that uses a stylised green Woolmark logo to reinforce the ‘eco’ credentials of wool, to the International Woolmark Prize that has attracted phenomenal interest from the international fashion communities and media.

MORE INFORMATION

www.woolmark.com
AWI joined forces with the bespoke tailors of Savile Row at an event during June’s London Collections Men fashion week to highlight the importance of Merino wool in men’s suiting. The event, along with an Ambassadors Project, offers consumers an insight into the world of bespoke tailoring.

AWI has once again collaborated with the artisanal tailors of Savile Row to promote Merino wool at London Collections Men fashion week, this season at an event that showcased the craftsmanship required in hand-tailored bespoke suit making.

Laying bare the processes shaped by centuries of history and tradition, the ‘Inside Out’ event, under the artistic direction of British GQ, included displays and demonstrations by tailoring houses – such as Dege & Skinner, Davies & Sons and Gieves & Hawkes – which gave an insight into the rigorous standards set out by Savile Row Bespoke.

AWI supported the event to help build the demand for Australian Merino wool in suiting, especially within the British fashion and textile manufacturing industry, and put the spotlight on the fibre’s natural performance properties and versatility across all four seasons.

The event was an opportunity for carpet leader Brintons to roll out the wool velvet carpet and remind buyers and the international press that the fibre of choice and key ingredient in bespoke tailoring is wool.

“A major part of AWI’s global marketing strategy is to reposition wool as a desirable ingredient in luxury fashion,” explained AWI Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer Rob Langtry. “And where better to highlight this than Savile Row, the home of luxury tailoring.

“The importance of Savile Row never fades and we look forward to continuing working together to bring the expertise and heritage associated with this sector of the menswear industry to the forefront, whilst championing the versatility of Merino wool to an international audience.”

Crowds at the Savile Row ‘Inside Out’ exhibition, supported by AWI.

A demonstration of bespoke tailoring at the ‘Inside Out’ exhibition.

Savile Row tailor Edward Sexton with menswear stylist and fashion writer Tom Stubbs.

Pattern making as part of the bespoke tailoring demonstration.
WHilst we often think of beautiful clothes being crafted by fashion designers, it’s also the fabric itself that brings these clothes to life. Textile design is a crucial part of the global fashion industry, creating beautiful designs for woven, knitted and printed fabrics.

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. Its prestigious annual design competition provides encouragement and inspiration to textile students and practicing textile designers to stimulate new developments within this field of work.

AWI once again sponsored The Woolmark Company Award as part of the 2014/15 competition, asking entrants to design a knitted or woven fabric for fashion— including accessories— containing at least 60 per cent Merino wool. This year’s winner, Sharon Porteous, scooped the pool with her innovative wool-rich woven fabric.

“My entry was a treble cloth with a bold zigzag pattern, softened by the subtle colours used,” explains Sharon. “The fabric was woven on a jaccuard loom combining soft white cotton warp ends and hand-dyed Merino weft picks. Once off the loom, the fashion fabric was hand-finished to create soft, felted and layered textures.”

The University of Derby Master’s in Fashion and Textile student, who is also a lecturer at Newcastle-under-Lyme College, won one-week internship with leading London-based womenswear designer Holly Fulton, who has previously worked closely with AWI to incorporate Cool Wool items into her collections.

“As both a designer and lecturer, I am really looking forward to my work placement. It is important for teaching staff to be able to pass on real industry experience to students.”

The awards offer an excellent opportunity for future textile designers to have their work recognised by the most important people within the industry. They also are crucial in ensuring the textiles industry remains strong and relevant by supporting the education of emerging designers. With new talent pivotal to the future of the wool industry, AWI actively believes in education and has devoted time and resources to ensure it remains a priority.
AWI has expanded its **Wool4School student design competition** overseas into Hong Kong to help the next generation in this important textile region to champion **Australian wool**.

Following the success of AWI’s Wool4School student design competition in Australia – launched in 2011 and which has grown to this year receive more than 9,000 registrations from high schools across the country – the competition has been launched in Hong Kong.

Collaborating with the Hong Kong government’s Education Bureau (HKEB), AWI encouraged students from junior and senior secondary schools to take part in the real-life fashion design experience. The partnership with HKEB greatly assisted AWI’s Hong Kong office to promote and introduce the Wool4School competition into more than 600 schools across Hong Kong, educating a new generation about the benefits, properties and versatility of Australian wool.

Under the competition’s theme **Live Life, Love Wool**, students were asked to choose either New York City, Sydney, Paris, Moscow or Shanghai and design an outfit – comprising more than 80 per cent Australian Merino wool – suitable to the chosen city’s climate. Along with the design illustration, submissions had to also include a mood board and annotations for evaluation.

“With Hong Kong being a significant market for Australian wool – as both a manufacturer and a consumer of luxury apparel – launching Wool4School in Hong Kong was a natural progression for the student competition,” AWI Wool4School Project Coordinator Ashley Hollis said.

“It is important to nurture the education of budding fashion designers in secondary schools in the region and encourage them to start thinking about wool from a young age. This project complements the strong relationship that AWI has built over many years with university students in Hong Kong.”

Teachers were encouraged to register for the competition and in return were sent a Wool4School resource pack that included fabric swatches, videos and the all-important lesson plans to implement into classrooms.

“We visited junior and senior secondary schools across Hong Kong to brief the teachers about the competition and the versatility of the fibre,” explained AWI Country Manager for Hong Kong Alex Lai. “We received very positive feedback from teachers, who also reported that students were excited to learn about the fibre and were amazed that wool is not just a fibre for winter, but a fibre for all seasons.”

Out of the 335 student entries, 10 finalists were chosen from each the junior and senior divisions, with each student invited to an exclusive wool workshop to further their education and appreciation of the fibre.

Each of the finalists’ sketches will also be displayed at the HKEB.

“We were lucky to have two professional designers from Hong Kong join the judging panel,” Mr Lai said. “Ms Jo Poon from the Hong Kong Design Institute and Ms Florence Tang from Wiseknit Factory Limited each said they were surprised to see the overwhelming number of submissions and the talent and creativity of each entrant, including colours and fabric co-ordination illustrated via sketches, mood boards and annotations.”

The final decision for both the junior and senior winners was made by influential Australian designer Jonathan Ward, who has been an integral Wool4School partner in Australia each year the competition has been held.

“The junior winner has presented an amazing design utilising wool on a velvet, reflecting the style and sophistication of Paris,” explained Mr Ward after reviewing the finalists’ submissions. “The senior winner showcased excellent overall presentation and embraced all features and benefits of wool innovation and design creativity. This is shown through her flamboyant reflection of New York’s Broadway.”

MORE INFORMATION

[www.wool4school.com](http://www.wool4school.com)
For the past seven years a group of South Australian woolgrowers, known as Flinders Merino, has sponsored a scholarship award at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University’s (HKPU) Institute of Textiles and Clothing (ITC).

The Australia Study Tour Scholarship award aims to nurture the use of Australian wool within the collections of the university’s fashion students, encouraging them to continue to use wool in their designs as they continue with their career after graduating.

AWI also sponsors an award, the Best Use of Australian Merino, at the HKPU ITC. The winners of both awards have been invited to Australia to learn more about wool fibre and the Merino wool supply chain, including a visit to the Flinders Merino wool-growing properties.

Representing Flinders Merino, woolgrowers Reuben Solly, his sister Amey and wife Stefanie travelled to Hong Kong in June to present the award and learn more about the wool industry in the region.

As one of the world’s major knitwear exporters, Hong Kong is the gateway for southern and eastern Chinese wool processors and manufacturers, as well as a global hub for sourcing wool garments for major international brands. Raising the awareness of Australian wool’s benefits amongst the younger generation of design talent in the region is a key activity of AWI’s Hong Kong office, which has also built a strong relationship with HKPU.

Fifth generation woolgrowers on ‘Yednalue Station’ near Carrieton, Reuben and Amey work hard to develop family traditions into modern practice. Following in the footsteps of their father Darren, who was a founding member of Flinders Merino in 2000, the pair have also become active in promoting Australian Merino wool in Hong Kong.

“It is crucial to invest in today’s generation and provide education about the benefits of using natural fibres such as wool, which are renewable and ecologically friendly,” Reuben and Amey said after the visit to Hong Kong. “Wool is one of the unique fibres that will not only sustain the planet but will also provide advances in fashion technology, whilst providing a future for our wool-growing industry.

“We noticed a lot of new techniques especially in knitwear, and wool is now being used in the students’ accessories as well. The students put a lot of time and effort into their garments to get every little detail perfect and it’s so great to see the younger generation incorporating wool into their garments.”

For Amey and Stefanie, this visit was their first to Hong Kong, with AWI’s Hong Kong team providing support to the group and showcasing to them what happens to wool once it leaves the farm gate. AWI Technical Manager Brenda Yang highlighted some new projects and techniques currently in development and AWI also arranged for the group to visit Novetex – one of China’s biggest spinners.

“Novetex told us about their joint ventures with Gostwyck Merino and we learned about their new joint venture KPC Yarn Studio, where they hold workshops for those interested in spinning, weaving or knitting their own yarn.”

“We were also fortunate enough to have the opportunity to visit the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI) University and got to see all the hard work and effort put into all the garments that are made and the many machines and equipment involved in the process. The facilities at the HKDI are all very modern and produce modern wool and fashion design. It was wonderful to know that these students have such outstanding resources to maximise their studies.”

South Australian woolgrowers Amey and Reuben Solly presenting the Australian Study Tour Scholarship award to this year’s scholarship award winner Jan Kwok.

PHOTO: ITC, HKPU
With a heritage dating back to 1946, Rodd & Gunn has had a long and healthy relationship with wool. And so it is a natural progression for the menswear apparel brand to align itself with the iconic Woolmark brand, becoming a Woolmark and Woolmark Blend licensee and affirming its commitment to source quality fabrics and yarns.

“All our woollen yarns are spun in either Italy or Austria, using a variety of wool types depending on the garments,” explains Rodd & Gunn General Manager of Design, John Prikryl. “We produce heavy gauge knits in Merino and lambswool as well as blends with other noble fibres. Sourcing fabrics from Biella, our suiting range focuses on wool with a micron of around 15 to 18, allowing us to achieve our Super 100’s through to Super 130’s.”

With more than 85 stores and concessions across Australia and New Zealand, Rodd & Gunn’s eyes are now on the North American market through more than 200 independent retailers. Leading department store Nordstrom has welcomed the label into a handful of its Canadian stores and Nordstrom.com, and the label will soon open in its USA stores.

The entrance into the North American market means that Australian wool is not only a focus for Rodd & Gunn during the southern hemisphere’s winter months, but according to Mr Prikryl is now, more than ever, a year-round obsession. The lifestyle lived by North Americans is similar to that of Australians and reflects the design philosophy of the brand to create masculine, practical clothes to suit the modern, outdoor lifestyle – and wool’s natural properties fit the bill.

“Much like the food industry, consumers should have a thorough understanding of what they are buying so they can make informed decisions. I believe that as a consumer you are better off buying a quality garment made from the best raw materials that will last you longer, rather than buying another throwaway fashion item that lasts only a few months. We’re conscious of making our product fresh and stylish, but the first consideration is quality.”

A subsidiary of AWI, The Woolmark Company owns the iconic Woolmark logo and positions Australian wool as the premier ingredient in luxury apparel. Its licensing program allows licensees to use the Woolmark, Woolmark Blend, or Wool Blend logo, depending on the fibre content of their wool products, providing a unique, global fibre quality assurance scheme for manufacturers and consumers alike. With plans to rollout Woolmark swing tickets by spring, Mr Prikryl says he is looking forward to communicating the Woolmark message to Rodd & Gunn’s loyal customers.

“I’m exceptionally excited to have become a Woolmark licensee and can’t wait to get the message out to more people. The driving factor to become Woolmark accredited was to promote the benefits of wool and educate our customers that wool is one of nature’s greatest fibres and we’re proud of it.”

MORE INFORMATION
www.roddandgunn.com
For Georgina Austin, a career in fashion design was not necessarily where she thought she would end up. The mother-of-two has a degree in graphic design, but after working at large fashion brands such as Country Road and Decjuba, today she is the founder and owner of premium knitwear label Cable Melbourne.

“A lot of people told me that I wouldn’t be able to have a brand that just did knitwear,” she said. But after realising there weren’t too many options in Australia specialising in high-end knitwear, Cable Melbourne was born.

“I think we started with about 10 styles, which we sold wholesale. Then we opened a store in Armadale and it just grew from there. It’s been eight years now.”

Georgina’s innate understanding of the unique qualities of Australian wool seems to be part of her DNA: her great-great grandfather was the founder of Thomas S Beaumont & Sons, a leading buyer of Australian superfine Merino wool and the starting point of four generations of wool buyers.

“It’s this deep connection with the Australian wool industry which not only fuels Georgina’s passion to work with Australian Merino wool, but also to promote the fibre by supporting initiatives such as the Campaign for Wool's Wool Week and manufacturing in Australia as much as possible. Sadly, as more factories close, Georgina says it is becoming increasingly hard to remain 100 per cent Australian made.

‘Australian made is always something I have been interested in, although remaining so is becoming more and more difficult. I grew up being surrounded by Australian-made products and the importance of keeping things local. When I first started Cable I couldn’t meet the minimum for overseas orders, but local factories were very supportive of new labels back then. Even now, they’re really keen to help experiment with new ideas. It’s a real collaboration.’

A supporter of the Campaign for Wool, Georgina says every piece in the Cable Melbourne winter range contains Australian Merino wool of 19.5 microns. She says she has tried other yarns, but nothing compares.

“Wool’s really durable; you can do a lot of beautiful things with wool. It wears very well, it’s machine washable, it’s soft, it doesn’t pill. I’ve tried others and we always go back to wool. We promote our products as investment pieces and so we need to have a very good quality yarn to back this up.”

After finding success with the womenswear side of the business, and having two children of her own – three-year-old Harry and Heidi aged 20 months – Georgina started a sub-brand, Cable Baby.

“Cable Baby came about when Harry was in swaddles, it was freezing and I was thinking ‘no one sells pure wool anymore’. Unless your grandmother’s knitting you one you just can’t buy 100 per cent woolen garments for children, so we thought ‘well why don’t we try and do some.’

Surprisingly, it costs the same to make a wool jumper for a baby as it does an adult, which Georgina admits has been a bit of a challenge. Yet, as with all wool apparel, customers see the value in making conscious purchasing decisions and buying items of a high quality.

“We get a lot of people buying presents and also grandparents buying it (Cable Baby); a lot of people see the value in it. If they only have to buy one and then pass it down to their next child they’re happy to do it, but it’s certainly not a disposable purchase. Wool is probably one of the most sustainable fibres out there.

“Our baby basics range is machine washable, so you can put your baby in a pair of wool leggings, a top and then a jumper and you’re all set, without too many layers in winter. Wool is breathable, babies don’t get allergies from it, it’s soft on their skin, it’s easy to look after and it’s warm.”

For more information, visit www.cablemelbourne.com
Life after football doesn’t get much better than the Barry Young story.

While some modern players struggle to find a path beyond the heady days of AFL football, Barry forged his own, sometimes rocky, path well before the boots were hung up. Jaspa Herington is now a rare domestic manufacturing success story, exporting wool products to countries as far flung as Russia, China and Ireland.

The eldest of six children from St Arnaud in central Victoria, Barry credits his strong work ethic to his mother and father who not only worked as a sales people but ran a farm with up to 2000 sheep on the side.

“There are a lot of memories of caring for animals and feeding sheep through drought. It’s a little ironic that I now have a business in the wool industry but it’s a great natural and renewable fibre,” he adds.

Barry began his football career at Richmond in 1988 but really made his name as one of Kevin Sheedy’s tough men through the mid to late 1990s only to miss out being part of the 2000 premiership at the Bombers.

Whilst history will show he was unlucky to have missed both the 1993 and 2000 premierships at Windy Hill, his work ethic and persistence has delivered great success in the business world.

Fresh from school and playing at Richmond in the late 1980s, Barry was working at bedding company Jaspa Herington as a sales representative.

When the company hit difficult financial times in 1991, Barry did what many wouldn’t do; he took a massive risk and bought the company.

Unlike his choice to crash into Tony Lockett, this move has paid off handsomely.

Juggling football and his own company may have contributed to the end of his time at Richmond but it put him under the wing of one of the great thinkers of the game and he and Kevin Sheedy still keep in touch to this day.

“My favourite Kevin story involves the trip I took at the end of 1996 to San Francisco. Flying a day later than the team, I arrived at the airport to see I was sitting next to Sheeds. It made for an interesting flight. We finally got to San Francisco after too much talking and there was a crazed fan at the airport, desperate to get Kevin’s autograph.

“See Barry, I can’t go anywhere in the world without being famous!” Kevin beamed.

“He is the most positive person I know,” Barry laughs.

Working with AWI, Jaspa Herington now sells high quality Australian made quilts and underlays across the world, proving that locally grown and made product can still be successful.

Jaspa products are available from Spotlight and Big W while Herington products are available at David Jones, Harvey Norman and independent outlets.

You will find they are still the only thing soft about footy hard man Barry Young.

MORE INFORMATION
www.jaspa.net.au
While AWI’s Fibre of Football campaign has been dedicated to Australian football and the AFL, supporters in the rival code of rugby league and the NRL also have the chance to snap up some wool supporter gear of their own.

Simple yet stylish, the Supporter Knit by ClubKnit is available for all 16 NRL clubs, as well as the 18 AFL clubs, in men’s and ladies’ styles. Constructed from a Woolmark-certified wool/acrylic blend for warmth, the jumpers feature a traditional v-neckline, ribbed cuffs and an embroidered club logo on the chest.

The jumpers are made from machine washable preshrunk yarn, are anti-pilling, have a fully-fashioned finish on the armholes, and the cuffs and hem are reinforced with knitted in elastic.

With NRL and AFL clubs currently fighting it out for a top eight finish and a place in their Final Series, this jumper is the perfect way to showcase your team pride in the paddock, at home or at the game!

MORE INFORMATION
The NRL official product jumpers are available at selected NRL Club Stores and online at www.NRLshop.com.
The AFL jumpers are available at selected AFL Club Stores and online at www.shop.afl.com.au.

TOM CAT OPENS SHEEPVENTION
Geelong star Tom Hawkins was in Hamilton in August to officially open Sheepvention and be an advocate for AWI’s Fibre of Football campaign. Tom – seen here wearing a Rodd & Gunn wool jumper (see page 22) – is one of a growing list of AFL stars keen to celebrate their country roots and remind people of the importance of woolgrowing to Australia. The AWI campaign continues to grow. It is not only celebrating the rich heritage of the Australian wool industry and Australian Football, it is also placing Merino wool back into football jumpers and supporter gear.

MORE INFORMATION
www.fibreoffootball.com.au
For a man who has literally run to the ends of the earth, finding a new way to challenge himself can be the biggest challenge of all. Yet veteran ultra-marathon runner Pat Farmer succeeded in this task – organising a gruelling marathon (42km) race on the soft sand of Maroubra Beach in Sydney.

“I had been looking for a while to find something that was really challenging but that could be finished in a reasonable time frame,” explains Mr Farmer. “That may sound simple but when you have run across America twice, traversed from the North Pole down through the Americas to the South Pole, when you have run all the way around Australia and across the Middle East, it’s a stretch to come up with something that will challenge other people but not kill them!”

The Quicksand marathon – that included 10 kilometre and half marathon options – was also a fundraiser, with the event raising $15,000 to Fr Chris Riley’s Youth Off The Streets program.

A long-time champion of Merino wool, Mr Farmer knows all too well the power of a performance fibre when competing in difficult conditions. Having worn Australian Merino wool sportswear when he ran across the Simpson Desert and around Australia in every condition imaginable, it’s no wonder that it is his fibre of choice when putting his body on the line.

“I have been racing in superfine Merino wool for the past 17 years and together we make a great team, so if anyone asks me what’s the best material to run in, the answer is naturally wool.”

For Mr Farmer, who, like many other Australians lives in a coastal area, is exposed to the evening coastal winds that can “cut through you like a knife”.

“The big advantage of natural fibres, in particular superfine Merino wool, is that it not only protects you against the cold but it breathes and prevents overheating. This is why it’s the best product for active sportswear.

“When I was looking to promote wool with my homegrown Quicksand run I contacted AWI and they connected me with Australian sports and lifestyle brand Jaggad, who was only too happy to help.”

Working alongside AWI, Jaggad produced an exclusive Quicksand running T-shirt, made from 18.5 micron Australian Merino wool, which was given to every Quicksand contestant.

“All of the 100 runners competing in the event commented on the comfort of the tops. When it comes to performance you can’t beat natural fibres, and it just makes so much sense to combine Mother Nature’s resources with modern knitting techniques and blends.”

Mr Farmer believes there is currently a strong market for high-performance running apparel and Merino wool’s versatility and natural attributes make it a natural fit.

“We’ve seen the cycling apparel market grow, with cyclists prepared to pay a premium for quality apparel. But now I see the market out there for runners, who want a stylish and functional design without having to compromise on performance.

“Merino wool is the perfect choice for athletic gear in all temperatures because it breathes so well and has excellent wicking properties. This meant the athletes on the Quicksand run didn’t get chaffed under the arms or around the nipples as you would with synthetics, and it also helped to regulate the body temperature as the night drew on and the temperature cooled.”

MORE INFORMATION
www.patfarmer.com
www.patfarmersquicksand.com.au
www.jaggad.com
Track and field athlete Jesse Owens broke four world records in one day in 1936 dressed head-to-toe in natural fibres. American Major League baseballing great Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s record of 714 home runs, wearing wool. Polar explorer Ernest Shackleton and his team battled Antarctica during his infamous 1914-17 expedition wearing wool. These are three of the world’s greatest sporting achievements that were referred to by adidas Senior Director Running Apparel and Customization Craig Vanderoef during his presentation at the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) Congress held in China in May, and according to Mr Vanderoef, wool’s history on the sporting and outdoor fields of yesteryear is well-placed to make a return.

“We’ve spent the better part of six decades trying to come up with synthetic materials that would mimic what the body already does,” Mr Vanderoef said. “We’ve spent six decades looking for a fabric that moves moisture well, that didn’t get heavier as you performed, that stretched and moved with the body. We’ve been looking for wool. We have spent 60 years trying to be better than something that already existed.”

So positive was Mr Vanderoef about wool’s rightful place in sports and outdoor apparel that delegates left the conference even more confident about a resurgence of wool.

As one of the world’s leading sports brands, adidas prides itself on technical innovation. In the past 12 months adidas has launched a range of seamless wool-blend T-shirts, such as the Wool Primeknit Tee. While championing wool’s natural benefits, such as moisture management, the garment’s innovative seamless design creates a smooth, slim fit that moves easily on the body. But wool is not just an apparel story. In February, adidas launched the Ultra Boost running shoe, with a fully knit and engineered upper, which adidas said delivered your ‘greatest run ever’ and magazine after magazine agreed. Mr Vanderoef asked rhetorically: How can adidas make the ‘greatest run ever’ better? The answer: By using wool.

“In the Fall of 2015 we will offer the first fully knit wool version of this shoe. It is beautiful. There’s a value to it that everyone sees. But what this shoe does that the synthetic shoe doesn’t is odour control and allows for thermo-regulation. It’s your greatest run ever made better by wool.”

According to Mr Vanderoef, it’s not only wool’s natural properties that make it the ideal fibre for athletes, no matter their level of performance: it’s the fibre’s authenticity, the story of wool and its long-lasting performance.

“Today’s athlete expects more from a product. They don’t expect to wear it just for the 40 minutes to two hours they workout for in a week. They expect to wear it for that time and to create an authenticity of athleticism on the high street.”

adidas sub-brand Mitchell & Ness sells a Hank Aaron Authentic Jersey for US$300. The wool flannel jersey, according to Mr Vanderoef, merits this price because “the value and performance of wool has not changed over time”.

“This jersey is being sold to inner-city kids; it’s not bought by adult fans that sat in the stands in the 1970s. No one buying it even saw Hank Aaron play, but this wool jersey gives the opportunity to understand the athlete both on the field and off. These are being worn by the guy who wants to be authentic, and the fabric he finds authenticity in is wool.”

For adidas, weaving the best product innovations of the past with technical enhancements is all part of the job.

“Wool has been a part of sport performance since we have had sport, and its tradition of performance will continue. We have the ability to change what’s next, and that starts with wool.”

And what would the great Jesse Owens think of wool’s triumphant return to the sports arena?

“Jesse would be amazed, not surprised. Pre-1960, wool was not thought of as a problem; pre-1960 wool is fantastic. It’s what we wear. It’s beautiful Merino.”

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In South East NSW where the Eucalyptus forests on the Great Dividing Range change into vast expanses of treeless plains and countless mountain spring-fed streams form the head waters of the mighty Snowy and Murrumbidgee Rivers you’ll find the Monaro, home to some of the best wool producing Merino sheep in Australia.

Graziers have established flocks of sheep here over generations and continue to ‘battle on’, regardless of hardships within the rural sector. Despite the negativity that sometimes surrounds the agricultural industry, there is a future, and this positive message is very strongly voiced on the Monaro, with one of the leading spokesmen being wool producer Michael Green.

Michael’s ancestor John Green came to Australia in 1818, as many did, courtesy of the British Government for ‘assuming ownership’ of someone else’s sheep. Once his penance was served John Green took up more honourable grazing practises with a licence to depasture livestock at the Kybeyan property ‘Doolondondoo’ in 1834 which is still in the family today. The Greens are a well-liked and respected family on the Monaro and have great connections with the wool industry in both producing wool and shearing.

Michael took the step from commercial breeding to becoming a formal Merino stud in 2007 after realising the increasing need for Merino sheep that could handle high rainfall and still produce quality wool. Through the 100 or so years the Greens have been breeding sheep here on the Monaro, Michael’s ‘Boudjah’ stud now offers sheep averaging around 18 micron which are sold locally and interstate to producers who are seeking wool cutters that can handle similar conditions to that on the Monaro.

Among the many battles farmers face on the land is noxious weeds. “A good year for grass is a good year for weeds,” Michael says. “The Monaro has experienced four consecutive good years with improving commodity prices but continue to be frustrated by the ever increasing expenditure for noxious weed control.”

The changing demographic in the area is an increasing problem with land management practices of absentee landholders a worry for farmers like Michael Green. Being so close to major cities like Canberra and Sydney, and with access to the snow or coast only one hour’s drive away, the Monaro region is proving attractive to people seeking a ‘tree change’ or simply somewhere to get away from the city for the weekend.

“The majority of new landowners are co-operative when it comes to weed control, but a lot lack the basic education of weed identification and control and the impact this has on our industry,” Michael says.

One of the major noxious weed threats to the Monaro is African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*). This highly invasive

BATTLING WEEDS
ON THE MONARO PLAINS

- Weeds can be a major threat to pasture productivity, native vegetation and biodiversity.
- They cost Australian livestock industries $2.1 billion per year in control costs and lost production.
- Woolgrower Michael Green from the Monaro in South East NSW believes battling noxious weeds is a fight worth fighting.

Woolgrower Michael Green on his property ‘Boudjah’ near Cooma on the Monaro Plain with the Three Brothers volcanic peaks in the distance behind him.
weed has devastating consequences when left uncontrolled.

‘I believe the African lovegrass invasion is equal in challenge to the rabbit plagues faced by previous generations, in financial and biodiversity losses,’ Michael says. ‘It has the potential to completely change the Monaro’s unique landscape and unfortunately in some areas it already has. It creates a monoculture and has no nutritional value in winter when you need it most and, to top it off, dense infestations pose a major fire risk.’

The Monaro plains on a winter’s day can seem a cold, desolate and lifeless place, but it not only sustains livestock, it is also home to a variety of native flora and fauna that are found nowhere else in the country, which are at risk of disappearing under the veil of noxious weeds like African lovegrass.

Because of the ‘it’s all too hard’ attitude, Michael believes that there needs to be a change in understanding towards why these widespread weeds need to be controlled. It’s about protecting both agriculture and the environment.

‘The introduction of SEPP 46 and its evolution to the Native Vegetation Act restricted viable farming options of weed control, for the presumed protection of native biodiversity. In reality the opposite has resulted.

‘The recognition of local knowledge by potential lifestyle property owners and those responsible for developing government legislation must become a priority if we are to protect both our industry and the environment on which it depends. Sometimes it does feel like an uphill battle but I still think it’s a battle worth fighting to make sure the next generations can enjoy and profit from everything the Monaro has to offer.”

The Cooma-Monaro Shire is the first to admit they have a major problem with these weeds, but particularly in some areas.

“Widespread weeds such as African lovegrass and Serrated tussock (Nassella trichotoma) are not a lost battle,” the Shire’s Noxious Weeds Manager Brett Jones says.

“We have large parts of our shire that are not yet affected by these weeds, but there is unfortunately a push to take these weeds off the noxious weeds list, which would give local control authorities no power to regulate their control. We must keep the weeds on the noxious weeds list to ensure there is legislation in place to protect these areas.

“The 18th NSW Weeds Conference being held in Cooma this October (see box opposite) gives us the opportunity to highlight not only the problems we face locally with noxious weeds but also the chance to enjoy and profit from everything the environment on which it depends.

The program includes a wide variety of speakers and topics on weeds and their control, new developments and advances in control techniques and changes in policies and legislation.

The keynote speakers include James Litchfield of ‘Hazeldean’. Australian cricket legend Glenn McGrath will be the guest speaker at the official conference dinner on 14 October. Costs to attend apply.

The theme of the conference is ‘Weeds – the future, innovation and adaptation’ which reflects the plans, research and vision for weed management for the years ahead.

Available for each of the following six priority pasture weeds in the livestock industry:

- African lovegrass
- Serrated tussock
- Paterson’s curse
- Silver leaf nightshade
- Onopordum thistles
- Chilean needle grass

The booklets, produced in collaboration with MLA, are available at www.wool.com/weeds

Also, refer to Module 5 (Protect Your Farm’s Natural Assets) in AWI and MLAs Making More From Sheep best practice manual at www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au

The Cooma-Monaro Shire Council Noxious Weeds Services 02 6455 1941
Extinosad® Pour-On is the dead fast, dead easy way to control lice off-shears. Its unique knockdown chemistry makes it ideal for use in rotation programs, while its nil wool withholding period and minimal 21 day ESI1 gives you maximum management flexibility. Combined with its new low volume applicator, new off-shears dose table and new 6 month off-shears guarantee2, Extinosad Pour-On is now dead faster, dead easier.

1. Refer to label directions. 2. Terms and conditions apply. Visit extinosad.com.au or contact your rural store.

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Researchers have decoded the Australian sheep blowfly genome, adding ammunition in the battle to protect the nation’s sheep flock from flystrike.

Around 2000 genes not seen before in any other organism were discovered as part of the research. These genes can now be investigated as potential drug and vaccine targets.

All 14,544 genes of the blowfly were identified by the international research team, led by the University of Melbourne in partnership with the Baylor College of Medicine Human Genome Sequencing Center. The research was co-funded by AWI and the United States National Human Genome Research Institute.

Over the past decade, on a range of three associated projects, AWI has invested up to $4 million around the genetic and genomic opportunities to control the Australian sheep blowfly Lucilia cuprina.

The research, published in the scientific journal Nature Communications, provides insights into the blowfly’s molecular biology, how it interacts with the sheep’s biology and, importantly, shows its potential to develop insecticide resistance.

The Australian sheep blowfly is now responsible for about $173 million in losses to Australia’s sheep industry each year from flystrike.

Lead researcher on the project Dr Clare Anstead of the University of Melbourne’s Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences said the genome map has “limitless potential” for fighting the blowfly at home and abroad.

“This fly is especially good at evolving to resist insecticides. There has been a massive amount of research into prevention and control of flystrike, from developing a vaccine, new insecticides, to targeting weak areas of the fly and even biological control with bacteria and fungi. But none are completely effective.

“It’s exciting that we have now identified more than 2000 genes that have never been seen in any other animal or plant. Some of these ‘orphan’ genes hold the key to the parasitic relationship between the blowfly and the sheep. They could be targeted to develop a completely new method of control.”

University of Melbourne Professor Robin Gasser, who oversaw the research, added: “If you want to develop effective interventions against this fly, you need to know it inside out and understand its biology, starting by identifying all the genes. And, we have done that.”

Insecticides can be effective, however, the blowflies rapidly evolve to develop resistance to these chemicals.

Professor Phil Batterham, at the University of Melbourne’s School of Biosciences, says this work now enables researchers to predict gene mutation in flies that could make them resistant to chemicals, which means we may be able to avoid the type of crisis that the medical community now faces with antibiotic resistance in bacteria.

“The next step is to isolate the parasite’s ‘Achilles’ heel’ – genes that allow the parasitic interaction between the maggots and the sheep,” Prof Batterham said.

“Flies have an extremely sophisticated sense of smell. They can smell the difference between sheep that are resistant to the fly and those that aren’t. We want to produce a fly that cannot smell, so that we can understand how important that sense of smell is in the initiation of flystrike.”

Animal welfare and flystrike prevention is AWI’s number one research priority. Since 2005, considerable progress in the R&D program has been made, with AWI investing $47 million in health and welfare R&D activities, including $28 million specifically in breech flystrike prevention.

AWI remains committed to the fast-tracked research, development and extension program to reduce the reliance on mulesing and improve the lifetime welfare outcome for sheep. AWI’s work in this area is summarised at www.wool.com/flystrike
WHAT IS ‘REFUGIA’?

When sheep are drenched, some of the local worm population can remain unexposed to that drench. Mostly, these are worms in their egg or larval stages on the pasture where drenches cannot affect them, but they can also be immature or adult worms in sheep that haven't received that drench.

‘In refugia’ simply means the worms are ‘in refuge’ or in a safe place away from the drench.

When pastures are green and temperatures are mild, worms within the sheep are a minor proportion of the worm population, and much of that population is in refugia if a drench is given then.

When pastures are dry and temperatures are too hot or too cold to allow development of larvae from worm eggs, the worms within the sheep are a very large proportion of the local worm population (see Figure 1, below). Drenching at this latter time exposes much of the worm population to a drench and is a major contributor to the development of drench resistance.

Worms within a sheep are in refugia if that sheep was not drenched with its flock-mates. Sometimes this is accidental through a missed muster or poor drenching, but can also be used as a deliberate strategy called ‘targeted selective treatment’. This strategy was developed for Australian conditions by the WormBoss project.

WormBoss recommends that not all worms in a population should be exposed to a drench at the same time.

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**Figure 1.** Likely proportion of worms in the sheep versus on pasture in different climatic conditions. Source: Lewis Kahn
The worms in a local population that are not exposed to a drench are described as being ‘in refugia’. If you need to drench into clean paddocks or drench during periods of little or no worm activity, then maintaining worms in refugia provides a powerful and relatively simple way to manage drench resistance.

The worm population in the sheep and on a pasture (where these sheep have grazed for some time) will have about the same proportion of drench-resistant worms – the actual proportion will depend on your farm’s drench history. But after drenching, the sheep will only contain drench-resistant worms. Their eggs will be the only ones contaminating the pasture for three weeks, at least.

If there are worms from the pre-drench population in refugia – in this paddock or another paddock, in some sheep within this mob or another mob – then they can be used to dilute the numbers of drench-resistant worms (and the eggs they produce) that have survived in drenched sheep.

If used effectively, this prevents these small populations of drench-resistant worms from quickly becoming the main population on your farm.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT WHEN USING REFUGIA?

Maintaining worms in refugia to dilute numbers of drench-resistant worms also means more worms to infect sheep after drenching. However, with some understanding of when and how to use refugia, you can achieve both good worm control and slower development of drench resistance.

1. Understand the seasonal environmental pattern that influences worm larval development and survival to know when refugia management is most important in your region.

   • In regions with regular rainfall, short periods of hot and dry or cold, or where perennial pastures persist through hot summer months, there is almost year-round development and survival of larvae on pasture, which will be in refugia. Here, there is less need for deliberate management to maintain worms in refugia.

   • In regions with regular and prolonged periods of dry, or very hot or very cold weather, larvae will not develop or survive during these times. Here, the proportion of worms on pasture in refugia falls to very low levels and strategies to maintain worms in refugia are especially important.

   • The key factors in development of eggs to larvae are temperature and rainfall at the time eggs are deposited on the pasture, as well as some weeks after.

2. Distinguish between the worm species.

   • Refugia strategies are most applicable for scour worms. They need to be applied with more caution where and when barber’s pole worm is a major risk.

3. Apply refugia strategies in sheep best able to tolerate worms.

   • Adult sheep in good body condition are the best class when you are going to leave a proportion undrenched.

   • Do not apply refugia strategies with lambs, weaners and hoggets.

4. Monitor worm egg counts

   • Use a WormTest in flocks when you are using refugia strategies to check that excessive worm burdens don’t develop.

5. Know your recent drench history.

   • Drench resistance is specific to a drench group (or active family) and to a particular worm species. Benefits from worms in refugia rely on them being the same species and susceptible to the same drench that was just used.

To find practical strategies for using refugia to assist you in the management of drench resistance, look in your regional WormBoss Program at www.wormboss.com.au. The WormBoss website also provides a number of other ways to manage drench resistance.

MORE INFORMATION
www.wormboss.com.au
Like ParaBoss on Facebook at www.facebook.com/paraboss.com.au
Lewis Kahn, ParaBoss Executive Officer, 02 6773 2997, lewis@paraboss.com.au
AWI is funding another round of Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) training across Australia.

The LTEM course enables woolgrowers to better understand ewe nutrition and to develop a successful and productive animal production system.

The program is an example of the wool industry supporting better lambing and the better welfare of breeding ewes.

AWI has recently signed a contract with the Victorian based training organisation Rural Industries Skill Training (RIST) to provide funding for another round of Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) training.

The funding will enable another 120 groups of Merino producers to undertake the 12 month training course. Totalling $756,000, the AWI funding covers 60 per cent of the $1200 that the course costs for each of the 600 woolgrowers who are expected to participate. RIST has already identified almost 500 woolgrowers (100 groups), so woolgrowers who want to participate in this training need to contact RIST ASAP.

The LTEM course is aimed at wool and sheep producers who want to improve the management of their breeding ewes to improve ewe and lamb survival, and reproductive performance.

The LTEM course is run in groups of four to six woolgrowers (an average of five per group) who meet six times each year with the facilitation of a trainer. The course is very hands-on, being entirely based in the sheep yards, shearing sheds and paddocks of the participating woolgrowers. Most groups visit the property of each group member for the meeting, so the days are long, full and very satisfying.

The course runs over a complete reproductive cycle for the sheep of the participating woolgrowers. Usually this is around 12 months, but can extend out to 14 months depending on the lambing times of group members and any management changes they make as a result of the course.

Participating woolgrowers will also be introduced to the LTEM App which is a smartphone-based decision support tool which makes handling the "numbers" in the paddock and yards so much easier. This AWI-developed App is free and has been downloaded more than 1000 times since its launch a year ago.

If the achievements of past LTEM course participants are anything to go by, this investment by AWI will produce an extra 200,000 healthy lambs and reduce the mortality of breeding ewes by 25,000 by the end of 2017.

AWI has been the principal funder of LTEM and the Lifetime Wool research project it evolved from, contributing more than $10 million over the past 12 years. The course is delivered through RIST via facilitators across all major sheep producing regions of Australia.

In the 2014/15 financial year, 100 groups (500 producers) completed (or have started with only the final sessions to complete) LTEM training, resulting in:

- 11% increase in the number of lambs weaned
- 36% reduction in ewe mortality
- 23% increase in stocking rate.

**MORE INFORMATION**
Darren Gordon (RIST) 0408 114 656 or dgordon@rist.com.au
Ian Evans (AWI) 0427 773 005 or ian.evans@wool.com
www.wool.com/LTEM

Members of the Lifetime Ewe Management (LTEM) group at Frankland in the Great Southern Region of Western Australia developing their condition scoring skills, with some members using the LTEM smartphone App developed by AWI.

The Frankland LTEM group learning how to use objectively measured Feed On Offer assessments.
LAMB SURVIVAL:
THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF LIFE

• AWI-supported Nuffield scholar and woolgrower Matthew Ipsen from Victoria has presented the results from his research into world’s best practice in lamb survival.

• The key recommendation from his report is to improve ewe nutrition which will increase lamb birth weight (the most important factor contributing to lamb survival when conception rates are high) and give the ewe sufficient body reserves to have a quick delivery and provide satisfactory care to her lamb.

• Other practices considered in the report include genetics and gene technology, physiology and maternal behaviour, and sheep management during pregnancy and birth.

Through an AWI-funded Nuffield scholarship, woolgrower Matthew Ipsen from Wareek in central Victoria has travelled across the globe investigating world’s best practice in lamb survival, particularly in the first three days of life.

As well as being a woolgrower and prime lamb producer, Matthew also operates a business in sheep artificial insemination and ultrasound pregnancy scanning – which is where the idea for his 2013 Nuffield scholarship came from.

“My clients are keen to improve lamb survival and I really wanted to investigate best practice so we can be better at what we do on-farm – really it all relates back to both profits and welfare,” Matthew explained.

“Across the Australian industry, while survival of lambs from birth to marking can vary considerably, rates rarely exceed 90 per cent in single born lambs and 80 per cent in twin born lambs. The majority of lamb loss occurs within the first three days of postnatal life.”

One of the best ways to increase profitability on-farm is by increasing yields, and that generally means more lambs being born and surviving. So Matthew set about investigating how other major sheep producing nations approach lamb survival.

“I travelled to Scotland, France, South Africa, Argentina, Uruguay and New Zealand to investigate what research and management practices are being utilised in those countries. I examined the effects on lamb survival of several factors including nutrition, selection and genetics, and housing of sheep during pregnancy and birth.”

NUTRITION IS VITAL

Overall the key learning for Matthew was about improving nutrition, with the theme being repeated often on his visits.

“We already know the importance of nutrition from the Lifetime Ewe Management program, but it just kept being reinforced everywhere I went – you’ve really got to set that up, as that’s where you’ll get your biggest return on investment,” Matthew said.

“Improving the nutrition of pregnant ewes will increase lamb birth weights, which is the most important factor contributing to lamb survival. It will also ensure the ewe will have sufficient body reserves at birth to facilitate a quick delivery, begin lactation with an adequate amount of colostrum, and provide satisfactory maternal care to her lamb. The lamb will benefit by having a greater amount of body reserves, particularly brown adipose fat to metabolise post birth, will stand and suckle quicker, and lose less heat after birth.

“Nutrition also affects maternal behavior. Ewes that are undernourished will show impairments which can affect the quality of the maternal relationship with their lambs. Undernourished ewes are generally more aggressive, spend less time grooming and more time eating after the lamb’s birth and are more likely to desert their lamb.”

GENETICS AND SELECTION

Matthew said selecting sheep with a genetic propensity for lamb survival is a beneficial and desirable option.

“Despite very low heritability estimates for lamb survival, and some researchers around the world suggesting genetic improvement will be ineffective, modest genetic gains appear to be possible. Failure to include it as a trait in breeding objectives could result in a genetic decline over time.”

Matthew recommends selecting replacement rams on Australian Sheep Breeding Values for total weaning weight, and selecting replacement ewes on maternal rearing ability as he says fertility at an early age is an indicator of rearing ability in later life.

EWE AND LAMB MANAGEMENT

The provision of a suitable lambing environment in the paddock that encourages ewes to choose a sensible birth site and remain there for at least six hours is likely to improve the chance of lambs surviving their first week of life.

Matthew said the method of housing pregnant ewes, as used in many other sheep producing countries, could improve lamb survival rates by approximately nine per cent. This is achieved through better protection from hypothermia and predation, prompt identification of ill health and disease, and reduced lamb abandonment.

“The high cost of infrastructure and labour in Australia will lead many Australian producers to disregard the concept. But in both South Africa and New Zealand it has been shown to be an economically viable option, particularly when targeting specific mobs such as lightweight twin-bearing ewes or triplet-bearing ewes.”

SCOPE FOR INDUSTRY ADOPTION

Matthew added that he hoped his Nuffield research results will not only improve the profitability of his own farm and business clients’ farms, but also the whole industry.

“There is still considerable scope for the industry to adopt practices to further improve lamb survival. Improving the reproductive performance of the Australian Merino is an important pathway to maintaining a sustainable and viable sheep industry that will also result in improvements in profitability for sheep enterprises.”

MORE INFORMATION
Matthew’s Nuffield report and a 17-minute video of him presenting his results are available via www.wool.com/nuffield
A wild dog facilitator has been appointed in the north-east of NSW to assist woolgrowers and other key stakeholders to work together to lessen the impact of livestock predation by wild dogs.

Reduced attacks will improve on-farm productivity, rural community wellbeing and rural biodiversity.

The position is funded by AWI and managed by the Invasive Animals CRC in partnership with AWI, NSW Department of Primary Industries, NSW Farmers, Northern Tablelands Local Land Services and local Landcare.

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

Newly appointed wild dog facilitator for north-east NSW David Worsley with his working dog on his property on the Northern Tablelands.

Wild dog coordinators facilitate collaboration between landholders (in new or existing wild dog management groups) and with other key stakeholders, locally and across shires. They also help coordinate on-ground wild dog control activities.

This is vital, but can be challenging for landholders without the external help provided by an independent coordinator.

The coordinators use a ‘nil-tenure landscape level’ approach with local communities that highlights the benefit of focusing on the ‘common problem’ rather than attributing ownership of the dogs to individual land managers.

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

The new wild dog facilitator for north-east NSW is David Worsley based at Armidale. David has been a farmer in the Northern Tablelands for the past 20 years. He is the owner/manager of a 3000ha grazing enterprise, running at different times up to 9500 sheep, 3500 goats and 400 breeding cows and cropping enterprises. Backed by a degree in Agriculture, this gives him a very sound knowledge of agricultural practices in the region.

David already has extensive knowledge of wild dogs and pest control, and experience in coordination, facilitation and mediation with farmers and stakeholder groups.

He has been president of the Nullamanna Wild Dog Control Group for the past 11 years and has helped facilitate and coordinate aerial and ground baiting for wild dogs, fox baiting programs and helicopter shoots for wild pigs for the past 20 years. He has also dealt with pest issues as Gwymac Landcare chairman and committee member and Northern Tablelands
AWI is providing funding for a wild dog facilitator to help reduce dog predation in the north-east of NSW. The recently appointed facilitator is working with stakeholders to help strengthen the rural communities’ efforts to achieve sustained on-the-ground control of wild dogs. The appointment complements AWI funding for wild dog coordinators currently in western NSW, Victoria and Queensland, and a new position in Western Australia.

Local Land Services Board Member. He has also worked for Ruralbiz Training for the past 15 years as a trainer/facilitator.

David took on the new wild dog facilitator role in May and has quickly started meeting with landholders and stakeholders in the region to help them improve communications and develop collaborative plans.

“I have always had a passion for the land, its people and a very keen interest in wild dogs. My baseline knowledge and prior experience of engaging with land managers has enabled me to hit the ground running,” David said.

“I look forward to helping woolgrowers and other landholders work together to develop the networks and structures to reduce wild dog attacks on their flocks and the associated stresses that this places on woolgrowers and their families.

“Communication and understanding between stakeholders has been lacking in certain areas - it’s important that we bury some of the history and play the dog and not the man. Ultimately I aim to create a strong legacy of collaborative and cooperative wild dog management across all tenures.”

David says a key opportunity to improve wild dog control is to develop management plans which become ingrained as part of routine farm management.

“The idea is to get farmers to see wild dog control as a routine management activity in a similar fashion to for example lice, blowfly and worms. Most farmers will routinely treat for lice at shearing, crutch for fly control and drench for worms, fox bait pre-lambing and possibly control pigs. These activities are seen as routine, done at relevant times of the year as part of normal farm management. The same should apply to dog control, such as taking part in an annual or biannual broad-scale baiting program, complemented by other control methods such as trapping.”

Funding is available under AWI’s ‘Community Wild Dog Control Initiative’ to individual groups to undertake wild dog control activities. Funding can be directed by groups to fill gaps they have identified in their control plans. Mr Worsley can assist groups to formulate plans and apply for these funds.

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

If you need clarification or assistance please contact Ian Evans at AWI on 0427 773 005 or ian.evans@wool.com
Queensland’s twice-yearly regionally coordinated aerial baiting campaigns—along with ground baiting, trapping by professional trappers and landholders, and shooting—continue to cover a considerable area of the state during key periods of wild dog activity.

As in the previous two years, AWI’s Queensland wild dog coordinator Brett Carlsson facilitated the drafting of the baiting calendar for the April-May campaign, and assisted with its implementation by engaging the councils of 15 shires to bait in a coordinated sequence.

When Brett was appointed wild dog coordinator in 2012, one of the primary things he did was to facilitate a workshop with local governments, producers and their wild dog committees to discuss and create a coordinated twice yearly aerial baiting program. While there had been aerial baiting programs prior to then, the significant difference of the new program was that it was a coordinated campaign with agreement from the shires on the sequence that the baiting takes place.

“The situation they were in was that the current booking arrangement for aerial baiting sometimes resulted in large time gaps in baiting programs between neighbouring shires, and this in turn led to dogs moving between unbaited and baited areas very soon after each program,” Mr Carlsson said.

“The programs are now more successful in logistically ensuring that the shire areas are being baited in a coordinated sequence that aligns with neighbouring shires and reduces the time gaps between programs.”

The combination of utilising aerial and ground baiting throughout the campaign time frame enables a considerable area of Queensland to be baited, with the shires involved covering approximately 69.5 million hectares which is about 40 per cent of the entire state of Queensland.

As a result of the improved coordination, many producers have noticed a decrease in the incidence of dogs reinfesting unbaited areas across shire boundaries, which was the previous problem prior to the implementation of the coordinated calendar.

Since 2014, the campaign now utilises three aircraft to carry out the aerial baiting whereas previously there was only the one operator. Brett was instrumental in the engagement of the additional aerial providers ensuring the baiting program was carried out at the most suitable time to increase effectiveness. This has also reduced the time to complete the entire program from approximately three months down to six weeks.

“Despite the effects of the drought, the motivation of producers to proactively control wild dogs is still high,” Mr Carlsson said. “The sharing of knowledge, information and the coordination between groups is very encouraging. The chairs from the committees are now talking together regularly outside of meeting times, and sometimes sharing resources which demonstrates that there is a strong shared interest and motivation to improve the control programs where we can.”

The baiting campaign engaged 15 local governments/wild dog committees Flinders, Richmond, McKinlay, Winton, Barcaldine, Longreach, Blackall/Tambo, Barcoo, Diamantina, Quilpie, Bulloo, Maranoa and Balonne, of which six are outside of the Brett’s project area.

Planning is under way for the October-November 2015 campaign.

Brett also assists in other wild dog control initiatives such as planning and presenting AWI-funded wild dog trapping workshops in partnership with AgForce staff and supported by Biosecurity Queensland, as well as professional trappers.

The presentations include a strong message of coordination at a local and regional level as well as the importance of landholder-led wild dog management groups and the role they play in wild dog control.

MORE INFORMATION

Brett Carlsson, 0428 730 553, carlssonb@agforceprojects.org.au

Coordination and cooperation are crucial to effective wild dog control. Pictured here is the Flinders Shire Wild Dog Management Committee planning and prioritising control efforts at a workshop facilitated by AWI’s Queensland wild dog coordinator Brett Carlsson (second left).
The Australian Government, AWI and other industry bodies have announced funding to develop an early warning ‘Wild Dog Alert’ system that will help livestock producers be proactive at reducing wild dog attacks.

The Wild Dog Alert will use cutting-edge camera technology, including automated image recognition software and real-time messaging, to detect a wild dog as it enters a property, before it attacks livestock. The system will send an alert to the farmer informing them of the location and identity of the dog.

When a producer receives an alert, he can respond immediately by moving stock and targeting the dog with traps, baits or shooting. The location where the dog was captured on camera and an image of the dog could be sent to local wild dog controllers to help them target their control and reduce search times.

Thirdly, the producer can simultaneously contribute the data to their local and regional collaborative wild dog plans.

When wild dogs invade a farm, it is usually several days before livestock attacks start or are noticed by producers. An early warning system enables producers to get on the front foot in their fight against wild dogs. This is in contrast to the present situation in which, often, wild dog control has necessarily been reactive, with landholders and contractors effectively forced to ‘chase’ dogs after livestock have already been maimed and killed, and control is more difficult.

Lead researcher from the University of New England, Dr Greg Falzon, said the Wild Dog Alert has been in development for the past three years and has now achieved a ‘proof of concept’.

“The new funding will enable the Wild Dog Alert to become a reality, although it could take around three more years of research until the product is available and progressively rolled out to farmers,” Dr Falzon said.

“We are very focused on producing a robust system that works at a practical level for farmers – I am confident that it will be an effective tool they can use to complement and assist their current control measures. The availability of the final product at a ‘reasonable cost’ to farmers will also be very front of mind during its development.”

Dr Falzon said the new funding will go towards, firstly, technological matters, such as refining the facial recognition algorithms and increasing its capabilities and, secondly, field work to determine operational issues such as how and where the cameras are best deployed and the different methods of communication to farmers.

“Crucial to the project’s success will be its alert system. In areas where the phone reception is sufficient, it could be as straightforward as a message to a mobile or smartphone. Of course a lot of areas have poor or no reception, so other options that we will investigate include specialised UHF radio networks, pager systems, and even communication via satellite.

“What is suitable for a particular area will depend on several factors such as existing infrastructure in the region, the terrain and the cost. Different options will be made available to suit a range of circumstances and wild dog management plans.

“I can see great potential for the Wild Dog Alert. For example in the hilly terrain around the New England Tableland, a wild dog will often exploit the weakest spots on boundary fences. If one is seen near the fence or gets in, then the Wild Dog Alert will notify the producer with a location and a photo of the dog so he can address the situation and fix the fence before other dogs get in.

“We can also see opportunities to apply the technology in different ways to assist producers in different farming systems ranging from coastal environments through to the rangelands.”

The Wild Dog Alert, which visually monitors for the presence of wild dogs on a property, will complement the ‘Electronic Shepherd’ (see the March 2015 edition of Beyond the Bale) which is also in development and which is designed to audibly detect stock attacks which are either imminent or in progress.

The partners in this new project are AWI, Meat and Livestock Australia, NSW Department of Primary Industries and the University of New England working through the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre.

MORE INFORMATION
www.pestsmart.org.au/wild-dog-alert
EXCLUDING DOGS
ONCE AND FOR ALL

An exclusion fence has been very effective at preventing wild dogs – and kangaroos – entering Tim Williams’ property at Morven in Queensland, resulting in increased lambing rates and the ability to run sheep in all paddocks without worry of wild dog attacks.

Grazier Tim Williams from Morven in Queensland is running more stock than ever on his 8700ha property ‘Banff Downs’ and hasn’t had a problem with wild dogs thanks to a decision to put in exclusion fencing in 2012.

He has even increased the carrying capacity by more than 10 per cent despite a two and half year dry period, and has plans to increase stocking by a further 10 per cent to 16,000 DSE. Most of this increase will be in sheep numbers, which Tim says will be easily achieved now that grazing pressure from kangaroos has been reduced to a manageable level and wild dogs are no longer a major issue.

In 2011 lambing on ‘Banff Downs’ was as low as 40 per cent in some paddocks and wild dogs were slowly encroaching. Tim decided that he had to fence the property or leave the sheep industry for good.

The reduced impact of wild dogs and pigs has resulted in average lambing rates across Banff Downs of up to 96 per cent.

The exclusion fence erected on Tim Williams’ property has provided Tim and his family with peace of mind, knowing with confidence that sheep can graze without wild dog attacks.

PHOTO: Rodney Green, Queensland Country Life

COSTS AND MAINTENANCE

The fence was completed in June 2012 and took around 18 months to install.

The average cost of materials for the fence was $2850/km which took into account contributions from neighbours and the use of some old fence in some sections. Tim estimates that site preparation and construction cost an additional $2000/km. The total cost was approximately $4850/km or $204,000 for the entire 42km fencing project that encloses 8300ha. This translates to an investment of just under $25 per hectare.

Tim initially checked the fence once a month by motor bike, which takes around two hours, but it is now checked routinely every six months. In contrast, before the fence was built he was spending a day a week on wild dog control. He also checks it after a storm.

“More checking was required in the first two months after construction, as there was a lot more pressure from kangaroos at this time,” he said.

I am surprised at how little maintenance the fence needs – there may be more in the future as the fence ages but this shouldn’t become an issue for a few years yet.”

WAS IT GOOD FOR BUSINESS?

Tim started seeing results from the fencing during lambing in 2012. Two paddocks achieved 97 per cent, while a third mob achieved 70 per cent after it was compromised by a dog that entered (via a gate that had been left open). 2013 was the first proper lambing that he achieved, with no dogs present at lambing time.

In 2014, three paddocks averaged 95-100 per cent, while a fourth paddock only achieved 60 per cent due to pig pressures, which had increased in the absence of wild dogs. The pigs were inside the fence before it was closed, and were eradicated with a shooting and baiting program.

Overall, he has increased his lambing rates from 40 per cent or lower to his current average of 87 per cent. Based on an average value of $50 per lamb, he estimates that his income has been boosted by as much as $47,150 through increasing lamb numbers from 684 to 1627.

The total height of the new fence is 150cm, using Fixed Knot™ wire with 14 horizontal running wires and 15cm gaps between the vertical wires. There is one barbed wire at the top of the fence and one plain wire at the bottom to help strengthen the Fixed Knot™ wire. Clipex™ posts were used which made it easy to attach the wires. An old dog netting fence with new wire run next to it was used for a portion of the fence. Gates needed netting to be added on top for extra height. In creek crossings, netting was suspended from a cable secured between two trees.
“More ewes mean I can start classing them harder and cull non-performing animals. I can make management changes to the business that will improve production, rather than just surviving and making decisions dictated by predators’ influence,” he said.

Tim is now in the process of building up his ewe numbers. He will be joining 2300 ewes in 2015, with the intention of joining 3000 in 2016.

**ADDITIONAL BENEFITS**

As well as dog control, a key benefit of the fence is making kangaroo numbers manageable, and thus the ability to spell and improve grazing country with confidence.

“The fence means that there won’t be a big migration of kangaroos onto the place every time there is a storm,” Tim said.

“I am currently stick raking some country to develop and grow some oats to help finish lambs and young cattle. This was previously done on ‘Banff Downs’ but it was stopped when grazing pressure got too much and the crop was eaten by kangaroos as soon as it came up. ’I am also not feeding as much lick to cattle and sheep this year, and I’m not supplementing ewes at joining this year, as I normally would have to do because of the reduced grazing pressure from kangaroos.”

**MORE INFORMATION**


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**TIM’S FENCING TIPS**

- Put the time into fence line preparation.
- If possible put up a new fence with new materials; don’t try and use an old existing fence.
- Spend time talking to neighbours and ask them to contribute something towards the cost or construction as it makes a big difference.
- Do some research into fence types and talk to those that have already constructed them. Go and visit them if possible.
- Remain vigilant for signs of pigs and dogs inside the fence and act on them quickly.

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**PESTSMART CONNECT WEBSITE**

The new PestSmart Connect website provides a toolkit of free materials – including guides, videos, case studies and links to assistance – to support best practice management of pest animals across Australia.

A new website from the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre contains best practice and practical information to help woolgrowers and land managers combat a range of pest animals including wild dogs, foxes, rabbits and feral pigs.

The PestSmart Connect website is split into three main sections to enable users to:

- **Learn** about pest animals, their impacts and management
- **Act** to protect their livestock and pastures from the impact of pest animals
- **Connect** with agencies, associations and community groups in your local area for practical help and advice.

The website also links to the FeralScan website and app which provides people with the capability to map pest animal sightings, damage and control activities and then to use this information to track and control the problem.

Minister for Agriculture, Barnaby Joyce, officially launched the PestSmart Connect website in June and emphasised the resources available to combat wild dogs.

“Combating the scourge of wild dogs is an issue close to my heart, and I have seen first-hand the terrible impact of wild dog attacks,” he said.

“It’s not just about the estimated up to $66 million that wild dog attacks cost Australia’s agricultural sector each year through livestock losses, disease transmission and control costs. It’s also about the emotional impact that wild dog attacks have on the farmers who put their blood, sweat and tears into raising and protecting their livestock.

“PestSmart Connect serves as a one-stop-shop for farmers and the community to easily access all the information they need on best practice management of wild dogs and other pest animals, including a wild dog management glovebox guide, and videos. Farmers can also connect with each other and find assistance in their region to help them tackle wild dogs and other pest animal problems.”

**MORE INFORMATION**

[www.pestsmart.org.au](http://www.pestsmart.org.au)
Moving sheep through yards and the woolshed or onto trucks and trailers can be a time consuming job.

As woolgrowers know, sheep are instinctively reluctant to move in a direction that is confined, noisy or appears to be some sort of ‘trap’, and will not naturally enter an area unless it is occupied by another sheep.

However, there is now on the market a very simple and effective way of enticing sheep to move into a new location – by using a decoy – to make sheep ‘think’ there are already sheep in the location.

Spike and Kirsty Wall, who run 3000 sheep on ‘St Hilary’ near Inverell in northern NSW, have developed and are retailing ‘Livestock Lures’. These are a life sized picture of a sheep, displaying the side profile of the whole animal including the face, printed on 90cm x 60cm weather resistant plastic Corflute.

Spike says when positioned in a desired location (such as a catching pen or the front of a trailer), the sheep look at the decoy, quickly identify it as a sheep, and are lured towards it, naturally enticing the rest of the group to follow.

“I got the idea when I was having difficulty moving our sheep under the wool shed to keep dry.” Spike said. “I remembered how my father had used mirrors as decoys, but they can be expensive and dangerous if they get smashed, so I started using a large picture of a sheep which worked really well in the sheds and yards.”

Livestock Lures lend themselves to a lower stress style of stock handling. They will not eliminate the usefulness of dogs, however they work best when the sheep are allowed time to look at the lure instead of turning the focus of their attention onto a dog.

A single Livestock Lure can be easily moved to be used at different locations, or multiple Livestock Lures strategically placed can be used to further decrease the time taken to herd the sheep.

In the woolshed, sheep are often difficult to force into catching pens because they have to move in the direction of the noise and activity of the board. Livestock Lures give the sheep a feeling of security and encourages their natural herding instinct to move towards what they perceive to be a safe place.

“They can also be used to help move sheep in the yards, onto trailers and multiple decks of trucks or even ships. It can also keep isolated animals calm, for example, when there is only one sheep left in a catching pen after all other sheep have been shorn.”

Spike has provided the Livestock Lure to neighbours to test on their own sheep, yards and sheds. Heath Grills of ‘Glenorchy’ at Inverell said the decoy is a really handy tool that has saved him a lot of time in the yards.

“In our shed they’ve saved our yarding time by half if not more,” he said. “Pretty much the sheep go up to the decoy every single time, and they sniff it for five or ten seconds. It’s changed the way we yard up, especially at shearing time and even more so at crutching time.”

Spike has patented Livestock Lures and is developing the product for all other herding animals.

MORE INFORMATION
The Livestock Lures cost $20 each plus postage. For more information or to order, visit www.livestocklures.com or contact Spike on 0459 255 677 or spike.kp@ipstarmail.com.au
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SHEARING APP
FOR SMARTPHONES

The ‘Shearing App’ – that provides a singular destination to record and display shearing information – is now available in a version for smartphones.

The use of the ‘Shearing App’, initially released for the iPad in November 2014, is becoming even more widely used following the recent release of versions for the iPhone and Android phones – the most common devices used in sheds. A version for Android tablets has also recently been released.

The Shearing App contains a shearing tally and wool book that enables the user to enter, store, automatically calculate and display data associated with sheep shearing. This includes property details, mob details, shearer, wool handler and staff employment details.

The App is the initiative of shearer trainer Ross Paton from Ballarat and champion shearer Dwayne Black from Esperance, who self-funded its development.

Ross says a lot of work has gone into producing this technological innovation, which not only helps improve the record keeping process but is also very simple to use.

“We’re really happy with the result and the feedback we have received has been quite supportive and positive, which is great considering how traditional the industry can be,” he said.

“There seems to be a fairly even spread of people who are using the App – including woolgrowers, shearing contractors, shearers and classers, wool pressers and wool handlers.”

The App is made up of two versions which allows the user to choose between Team and Personal use.

Ross says the Team version is used for the setting up of a shearing team required for a particular property.

“The user can enter as much or as little detail required to record and calculate all relevant shearing operations’ data, on an ongoing daily basis, until the job is complete. The user can also generate a payslip report for each employee, for a specific date range, which includes all gross, tax, super, allowance and deduction information.

“What the Personal version has extra is the ability to generate personal shearing statistics that are updated on a daily basis. This provides the user with up-to-date information on their personal shearing performance, detailing averages, best and worst performances and the day and date these milestones were achieved.”

“People seem to especially like the auto calculation and payslip generating functions as these are often the most time consuming tasks associated with filling out the tally book, and working out pays. A simple summary of the latest Pastoral Award update and personal shearing stats has also been well received.”

MORE INFORMATION

The App can be downloaded from the Apple App and Google Play stores. You can download the App for a month’s worth of tally and wool book use for $3.79 per month. When the month expires, you can renew again for another month at the same price.

Jarryd Lubcke, a young shearer from Winchelsea in Victoria, using the Shearing App on his smartphone.
‘Shearcova’ is a new product on the market that protects shearing machines from damage and reduces the amount of maintenance the machines need.

A newly launched product to protect shearing machines from the likes of dust, insects and condensation can help woolgrowers improve their profitability and make their jobs easier.

The shearing machine covers, made from a strong high density material that is dustproof and waterproof, are now being manufactured and sold – under the name ‘Shearcova’ – by Tina Powis from Balranald in the Riverina district of NSW.

“Covering shearing machines to protect them from the elements is nothing new,” Tina says. “Farmers have been throwing old jeans, jumpers, sheets and wool packs on their machines for years – but they don’t tend to be completely effective.

“Shearing machines are expensive and it’s important for woolgrowers to protect their investment. The covers produced by Shearcova provide complete protection for the motor head and right down the length of the shearing arm.”

Tina says machinery on rural properties and in shearing sheds have traditionally needed a lot of maintenance due to the dusty and dirty nature of the farming environment.

“Since the drought years the sand particles in the air are worse than ever. Woolgrowers know only too well the effect of all that sand and other dirt in the shearing shed and on the shearing machines. These tiny particles just love to plant themselves on all the bearings and intricate parts.

“Plus, a multitude of insects, condensation, cobwebs and much more find shearing machines the perfect haven during the time the machines lie idle.

“By the time shearing comes around, unless protected, the poor motors are practically choking from the huge mixture of everything the atmosphere and environment can throw at it. Getting ready for shearing is a full-on time of the year and having to deal with extra maintenance, or an unworkable and idle machine, is a headache that woolgrowers and shearing contractors can do without.”

Tina said the idea for Shearcova came about in 2012 when a local property owner who had purchased new shearing machines was not able to find a supplier of covers. Tina’s husband, who manages a nearby sheep station, suggested that Tina could make them – which she did.

“It took many trips to the shearing shed, up and down ladders and countless templates and trial runs to get it right. But with this first commission, the idea for an ongoing business had been planted.”

Tina did some further research into what farmers wanted and expected from such a product, and set about the product’s development.

“The first set of covers came off the production line at the end of April this year, and I launched the product at the Hay Sheep Show. There has been a huge interest from property owners keen to look after their huge investment in shearing machinery.”

There are different sized covers to fit a variety of machines. Tina also produces covers for grinders and can custom make covers for other equipment, not limited to the shearing industry.

The price per shearing cover is $66 including GST.

“To produce a top quality product at a reasonable price was the main aim of the business and, by the look of the orders I have received so far, farmers are happy with both.”

MORE INFORMATION
Orders can be made by contacting Tina at tina10@activ8.net.au or by telephone on (03) 5020 6832 or 0487 166070.

The ‘Shearcova’ one-piece cover protects the motor head and the length of the shearing arm. It comes in different sizes to fit a variety of machines. Pictured here at Paraway Pastoral’s ‘Steam Plains’ station near Conargo are covers for the Sunbeam Super Pro machine.
Sixty of Australia’s best trainers, with a total of more than 1200 years of shearing and wool handling experience between them, gathered at AWI’s first national consistency workshop at Dookie, Victoria, in June.

While AWI has held regional consistency workshops for shearing and wool handling trainers before, this was the first national workshop that has been held. The trainers, from across the country and across the industry, came together to share ideas about how to best train those who will be looking after the national clip for decades to come. The focus was on a practical and hands-on approach to training.

The trainers included the best of the best, each with often 20-40 years of working in the industry under their belt. They included inductees in the Australian Shearers’ Hall of Fame, such as Ian Elkins (ACT) and Kevin Gellatly (WA); record holders including Brendon Boyle (WA), Michael James Terry (WA) and Laurie Bateman (Qld); Australian representatives in shearing, such as Justin Dolphin (SA); and Australian representatives in wool handling Mel Morris (Tas) and Sarah Moran (Vic).

Throughout the three-day workshop, there was an emphasis on sharing best practice techniques amongst the trainers, and the best way to deliver the finest techniques to students. There was also strong interaction between the wool handling trainers and the shearing trainers to ensure the whole shed team works efficiently in clip preparation. While consistency training is mainly focused on teaching novices, trainers also shared best practice tips for all skill levels and sheep types.

Of particular note was the learning of a new technique of catch and drag aimed at minimising back injuries. Taught by Pera Davies of Rolleston in New Zealand, the technique — based on principles borrowed from the Japanese martial art of jujitsu — involves placing the sheep in a position so that the shearer can use the sheep’s own weight and balance rather than having to use the shearer’s own force.

Popularly known as ‘shearjitsu’, the shearer hugs the sheep’s back from behind and places its head off-centre which pacifies the sheep. After the sheep has been moved, the sheep’s back legs are dropped so it sits up automatically ready for shearing. In the shed at Dookie, the trainers practiced the new technique of ‘shearjitsu’ and provided very positive feedback. The new technique will be rolled out by the trainers to shearers at their training schools.

Other sessions at the workshop included: setting up shearing stands and gear maintenance; health, fitness, recovery and injury prevention; how to line up training in woolgrowers’ sheds without any negative impact on production; reinforcement of best practice animal welfare practices; and media awareness.

AWI shearing industry development coordinator Jim Murray said there are plenty of young people keen to enter the industry but providing consistency in this type of training across the country is vital to maintain and strengthen its professionalism.

“Each year AWI funds training for hundreds of shearers and wool handlers in all regions across the country (see opposite). As with all education, it is important to ensure that the trainers themselves are teaching and promoting best practice skills in an effective way.

“There are some tremendous trainers, many being the best in their field, and we are lucky they have such a strong commitment to handing on their expertise. Sharing knowledge has always been one of the great aspects of this part of the wool industry.”

The very **best shearing and wool handling trainers** from across the country came together at a national AWI workshop in June to **share best practice techniques** and ensure that a high level of training is carried out at AWI-funded shearing schools.

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**SHEARING AND WOOL HANDLING TRAINERS**

**PROMOTE BEST PRACTICE**

More than 1200 years of shearing and wool handling experience gathered at Dookie in Victoria at the AWI National Consistency Workshop.
AWI funding helps improve the skill levels of shearers and wool handlers and therefore the quality of woolgrowers’ clip. Pictured here is AWI shearer trainer Ian Elkins, who was inducted into the Australian Shearers’ Hall of Fame this year, training young shearers.

**AWI funds training for shearers and wool handlers to attract and retain new entrants into the wool harvesting industry, build the capacity and longevity of existing staff, and increase returns to woolgrowers through improved clip preparation practices.**

**SHEARER AND WOOL HANDLER TRAINING**

**Adequate numbers of highly skilled professional staff to harvest and handle a high quality Australian wool clip in a timely manner are key to the profitability of the Australian wool industry.**

AWI therefore funds hands-on practical training for shearers and wool handlers in the shed, aimed particularly at increasing their skill development. The training for harvesting staff covers a wide range of experience, from learner to professional shearers and novice to professional wool handlers.

The training is provided by registered training organisations and also through AWI’s Independent Coaching Program that contains trainers of the calibre of Ian Elkins from the ACT and Kevin Gellatly from WA who were both recently inducted into the Australian Shearers’ Hall of Fame. The Independent Coaching Program, which was introduced two years ago, provides AWI with the direct contracting of trainers and is a cost effective way of the providing training. This program is proving very popular with all stakeholders.

AWI investment in the promotion and recruitment of shearers and wool handlers has resulted in significant numbers trained at all levels. In 2014/15, 2490 shearers and 1127 wool handlers were trained directly through AWI-funded programs across Australia.

An additional 350 participants in 2014/15 were trained in crutching and other shearing and woolhandling workshops. These workshops serve an important role in providing a range of training services to the wool industry – from an introduction to wool harvesting and basic skills for new shearers and wool handlers, through improver to advanced and professional workshops for continued development of wool harvesting professionals.

In 2014/15, high school students in WA in the Agricultural school system were also provided with training in the wool harvesting industry by AWI-funded coaches through in-shed or at school demonstrations of shearing and woolhandling.

AWI also makes available training resources that are in constant demand, such as shearing and wool handling videos. The videos, which are available on USB from the AWI Helpline on 1800 070 099, are a complete reference guide for shearers, wool handlers, woolgrowers, instructors and students working in various areas of wool harvesting. Packed with tips, hints and practical advice, the videos include advice from experienced shearers, wool handlers and wool classifiers such as Shannon Warnest, Dwayne Black and Rachel Hutchinson.

**MORE INFORMATION**

www.wool.com/shearertraining

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**2014/15 IN-SHED SHEARER AND WOOL HANDLER TRAINING**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Number trained</td>
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<td>312</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number coached/trained</td>
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BIG TURNOUT FOR SHEEP HANDLING FIELD DAY

More than 300 producers turned out to a recent sheep handling equipment field day at Campbell Town in Tasmania to hear from expert speakers on low-stress livestock handling, yard design, cost-benefit analysis of equipment, labour efficiency, impacts of stock handling on meat quality, and producer case studies.

The field day, run by AWI’s Sheep Connect Tasmania network in collaboration with the AWI/MLA Making More From Sheep program and MLA More Beef from Pastures program, also included demonstrations of sheep handlers, auto-drafters, jetting equipment and v-machines.

HIGH RELEVANCE

For Sheep Connect Tasmania Producer Advisory Panel (PAP) Chairman, Julian von Bibra, a highlight of the event was seeing how the right livestock handling approach combined with handling technology can improve not only enterprise efficiencies and gross margins, but also working conditions.

“There was a lot on offer throughout the day and the emphasis was on how we now have access to technology that enables some of the physical jobs, which most farmers and their staff labour through, to be much more efficient – and much safer.

“More importantly we can involve less skilled or experienced labour. A task such as drenching is a lot easier to master if you don’t have to wrestle with the animal in the race. Competent stock handlers take those sorts of skills for granted, and we don’t appreciate our ability until we get a newcomer on board.

“With some of this new technology, a new operator can master a technique quickly.”

MORE WOMEN

The additional benefit according to Julian is the opportunity to encourage more women into the industry.

“More and more we are seeing females working on farm and often they don’t have the sheer physical strength to match the men, but when you combine their expertise with some of these devices you can achieve a big leap in terms of roles they can take on with relative ease.”

One of those women is Josie Archer, who has recently returned to the family farm ‘Quamby Plains’, west of Launceston, that runs 3500 Corriedales and a Poll Hereford stud. For Josie the day held multiple benefits. Like Julian, Josie is keen to ensure on-farm practices are safe, efficient and lead to an end product that is of optimal quality.

“The day was really well structured,” Josie said. “The presentations were engaging and relevant to our business and the ability to spend the morning listening to speakers, followed by the afternoon looking at handling equipment was a great format.

“We are about to host a low-stress livestock handling course at home, so it was fantastic to hear from Graham Rees firstly about the principles of low-stress handling, about how they are working in practice and then spend the afternoon looking at the equipment that can support the whole production process.”

ONE STOP SHOP

With more than a dozen manufacturers bringing their wares to the field day, producers looking for equipment that matched the needs of their operation were spoilt for choice.

There was a broad range of equipment that gave the prospective buyer an opportunity to compare products in the one venue – not just looking in a catalogue.

Most of the handling devices were demonstrated and producers could ask questions and seek feedback not only from the manufacturers, but other producers who might already have used particular tools.

“The informal afternoon session, where we could compare and swap notes about the range of available equipment with our peers was really useful,” Josie said.

Another benefit for producers was the collaborative approach taken by AWI and MLA through Sheep Connect Tasmania, Making More From Sheep and More Beef from Pastures.

“Tasmanian farming operations are typically diversified businesses, which was reflected in the program through offerings that were relevant across wool and red meat enterprises.

“The collaborative approach was great to see,” Julian stressed. “As a wool, sheepmeat and cattle producer, it was an efficient use of our levies bringing a host of relevant information together at the one field day.”

MORE INFORMATION

www.sheepconnecttas.com.au
Seven young people have been given the opportunity to learn the practical agricultural skills needed to help them get jobs on rural properties, thanks to the new hands-on educational course being run in the western Riverina district of NSW with support from AWI.

Established last year, Hay Incorporated launched the Hay Rural Education Program in response to concerns about the decline in the traditional jackaroo system and the associated lack of stock and other essential rural skills being handed down to the younger generation.

Hay Incorporated Chairman Chris Bowman said the program is providing young people in the region with the skills that will make them more employable.

“The falling number of jackaroos in recent times when a lot of properties were sold, in conjunction with the increased use of contract labour, resulted in a lack of young people with the proper training to get a job,” Mr Bowman said.

“The new program, with the help of properties around Hay, aims to help reverse this trend. We have had wonderful support from farmers and volunteers in the district offering practical and in-kind support like yards, stock and quarters; plus generous financial contributions from several individuals and organisations including AWI and Tocal College.”

The program focuses on wool and livestock production (both sheep and cattle) with the key aspects of production delivered in a practical setting in partnership with woolgrowers throughout the Hay district. It is delivered by trainers who have many years of experience on extensive rural properties.

The inaugural year's program was a three-week course, in three blocks of five days' training spread over a nine month period, covering a range of topics based around the production calendar for sheep, wool production and cattle.

The first week of training was in November last year and included work health and safety, first aid, sheep handling at Michael Field's 'Wyvern' property at Carrathool, pregnancy scanning, and working dog training at Shear Outback with Ed McFarland.

In March, training included small engine and motor bike maintenance with Les Lewis of Les' Mobile Repairs, a Level 2 chemical application course, on-farm stock water repairs and maintenance by Roly Desailly and Noel Corliss at Hazeldean's 'Rosevale' property. The final three days were spent learning wool harvesting and wool shed management at Paraway Pastoral's 'Steam Plains' station.

In June, training included fence construction and maintenance with Sandy Symons at 'Rosevale', sheep (and lamb) handling and lamb marking at Ben and Cate Barlow's 'Ulonga' station, Merino assessment and classing with Chris Bowman at the Bell family's 'Mulberrygong', and prime lamb assessment and nutrition at Rowan Houston's 'Benduck' property. The final week of training concluded at the Hay Sheep Show on 13 June where trainees learnt about sheep judging and then competed in the Junior Judging Competition. AWI's Stuart Hodgson also assisted at several of the training days.

The seven participants, all from the local region, completed the course and were presented with their graduation certificates at the Hay Sheep Show in June by AWI CEO Stuart McCullough.

“Our funding in programs like this aims to 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,” Mr McCullough said.

“We are committed to supporting training programs for young people, and we will be providing funding to enable this particular program to continue next year.”

MORE INFORMATION

• People interested in applying to join the program should contact the program coordinator Sandra Ireson: 0439 938 119, hayincorporated@gmail.com
• ABC Landline’s 5 July program – view it at www.abc.net.au/landline
BREEDING LEADERS

FAST FACTS

• Applications are now open to young woolgrowers from across the country to join AWI’s Breeding Leadership professional development course in Clare, South Australia.

• The five-day course being held in February next year is aimed at helping foster the next generation of leaders within the wool industry.

• At the course, participants will explore marketing, leading and managing people, corporate governance, succession planning, time management and strategic planning.

Participants at the 2014 Breeding Leadership course at Clare in South Australia.

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✓ Stimulates appetite – encourages suckling
✓ Easy to administer - convenient paste formulation

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✓ Reduces nutritional scours & weight differences at weaning
✓ Easy mixing milk formula

STEP 3. RESTORE ENERGY AND FLUID LOSS WITH:

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When it comes to sustainable parasite control, faecal worm egg count reduction is a key test to determining drench efficacy. The combination of three broad-spectrum actives in TRIGUARD delivers effective worm control for sheep, with an average efficacy of 99.7% across properties tested.1

Breeding Leadership was established in 2002 by the South Australian Stud Merino Breeders Association and became a national program through the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders in 2004. Since 2012 AWI has funded the course.

Participants are required to pay a course fee of $330 (GST inclusive) which contributes to the cost of the program.

Applications close on Monday 2 November 2015.

MORE INFORMATION
The application form is available at www.wool.com/breedingleadership
AVERAGE MONTHLY EMI COMPARISON
THE EMI HAS BEEN PERFORMED VERY WELL, ESPECIALLY ABOVE 19 MICRON

The chart opposite provides a snapshot of how well the AWEX monthly Eastern Market Indicator (EMI) and a range of micron and 18 micron averaged at $10.80, operating at the 100th percentile over the past five years, it is higher than at any time during the first decade of this century.

The broader microns and Merino Cardings (MC) have been performing particularly well recently. For the past two months (June-July 2015) Merino Cardings averaged at $10.80, operating at the 100th percentile for both the past five years and first decade of the century.

For the same period, 18 micron averaged at a monthly value of $14.88 (61st percentile and 99th percentile respectively), 21 micron averaged at $13.73 (93rd percentile and 100th percentile), and 28 micron averaged at $9.27 (100th percentile for both periods).

AWI'S BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE
AWI provides weekly market reports and monthly electronic newsletters, which can be subscribed to at www.wool.com/subscribe or by direct download from the AWI website at www.wool.com/marketintelligence

These reports provide weekly commentary on the wool auction market from AWI trade specialists and monthly insights into economic, finance and trade issues affecting global demand for wool, and what this means for the Australian wool industry.
The amount of wool exported from Australia last year increased by 10.1% to more than 344 million kg – see Table 1. Notably, the value of wool exports last year increased to more than $2.7 billion, up by 12.8% – a percentage increase that is larger than the increase in weight.

China continues to be the dominant export destination for Australian wool, importing 76.9% by weight and 73.5% by value, an increase of 13.1% and 15.9% respectively from last year. India, Italy, the Czech Republic and Korea once again round out the other top five export destinations.

While there were 32 countries listed as export destinations for Australian wool in 2014/15, less than a total of 1% of exports went to the bottom 20 countries.

The wool exported from Australia comprised 93.4% greasy wool, 3.5% scoured wool and 3.1% carbonised wool in terms of weight and 91.1% greasy, 4.7% scoured and 4.2% carbonised in terms of value. 99% of the Australian wool exported to China is greasy wool. Malaysia and Korea are the main destinations for scoured wool and carbonised wool respectively.

Just over half of all wool exported from Australia last year was ≤19.0 micron, about a third was 20.0-23.0 micron, with the remainder being ≤ 24.0 micron – see Table 2. Given China’s dominance in the market, it’s unsurprising that the micron of wool it purchased from Australia matched relatively closely the micron exported as a whole from Australia. However China did tend to purchase microns more at the extreme ends, buying 81.7% of all Australian wool of ≤19.0 micron and 88.7% of ≥28.0 micron.

As expected, Australian wool exports to Italy were dominated by the finer microns, with more than 90% of its purchases being ≤19.0 micron – comprising 6.9% of total exports of Australian wool of that micron. On the other hand, India concentrated on the mid-microns, with more than two thirds of its purchases being 20.0-23.0 micron – comprising 13.2% of total exports of Australian wool of that micron.

The amount of wool exported by Australia increased by 10.1% last year in terms of weight and even more so (12.8%) in terms of value. China continued to be the dominant export destination for Australian wool.


<table>
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<tr>
<th>DESTINATION COUNTRY</th>
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<th>EXPORTS OF AUSTRALIAN WOOL IN $'000</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014/15 (kg)</td>
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<td>5,927,229</td>
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<td>Others</td>
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Source: Australian Wool Industries Secretariat from data supplied by Australian Bureau of Statistics.


<table>
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<th>DESTINATION COUNTRY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF EACH COUNTRY’S EXPORT WEIGHT SPLIT BY MICRON DIAMETER RANGE</th>
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Source: Australian Wool Industries Secretariat from data supplied by Australian Bureau of Statistics.
KEY MARKETS
RETURNING TO WOOL

In the third of a regular feature article written by AWI’s Global Strategic Advisor Peter Ackroyd, we provide an insight into a resurgence of demand for wool in the USA and also women’s wear that will benefit Australian woolgrowers. Mr Ackroyd is President of the International Wool Textile Organisation and Chief Operating Officer of the Campaign for Wool.

UPTURN IN THE USA

It was not too long ago that trade promotion bodies in UK, Italy and Turkey (and quite probably Australia) were urging business to prioritise the newly emerging economies known as the BRICs. This neat acronym for the populous markets of Brazil, Russia, India and China seemed to offer hope of at least limited salvation for the men’s and women’s brands of Europe as the mature markets in the EU and North America saw a sudden and significant decline in sales of consumer goods, particularly middle market fashion, following the Lehman Brothers collapse in September 2008.

Whilst most of Australia remained somewhat immune from the near meltdown in parts of the Northern Hemisphere, woolgrowers will recall vividly the unprecedented gloom that pervaded the wool processing pipeline in 2011. The mood at the IWTO Congress in Hangzhou, China, in May of that year was so palpably pessimistic several were predicting the collapse of the trade as we know it. Some four years on at the Congress in Zhangjiagang, the Chinese port city that primary processes much of Australia’s clip, the mood at IWTO could not have been more positive as wool prices soared to almost record levels.

At a time when even the most resilient upper middle and luxury brands are currently reviewing their China strategy, many more are seeking to grow business in the expanding USA market. And it was in New York where all the world’s woollen and worsted weavers congregated in mid-July to show fall fabric collections as US retail begins sampling for fall/winter 2016, a clear 12 months before the goods hit the stores.

“The US is now the most dynamic market for European fabrics, with sales increasing by +10% in the 12 months from April 2015,” said Silvio Albini, President of Milano Unica, Italy’s seasonal fabric fair with more than 400 European exhibitors showing collections each February and September, around 100 of which were in America for the first edition of Milan Unica New York. Sampling of fabrics was said to be “brisk and encouraging and at levels not seen for several years for both men’s and women’s wear”, according to a group of Italian weavers attending the International Woolmark Prize regional event in New York on 21 July.

WOOL RETURNS TO WOMEN’S WEAR, SLOWLY BUT SURELY

Looking at the newly dressed windows at Saks on 5th Avenue in late July as New York temperatures soared to 42ºC, it seemed a little strange to see all the premium brands showcasing winter in the height of summer. Americans have traditionally shopped the season early and a considerable volume of goods in both men’s and women’s wear is shifted by mid-September when stocks are replenished in time for late autumn and the arrival of Thanksgiving at the end of November and the build up to Christmas.

The store windows this year are featuring some very interesting developments in wool in women’s wear following last season’s almost exclusively woollen (aka Crossbred) looks in ‘layering’ using coats, scarves, stoles, capes, hats and caps. Worsted Merino cloths are now featuring in a newly emerging women’s tailored look that has been absent for more seasons most could care to remember. Many however will vividly recall how the flight to cheap polyester/viscose in women’s wear the 1980s and 1990s cost Australia at least 400 million kilos per year in lost Merino production and saw the closure of numerous worsted mills in the Northern Hemisphere.

According to Roger McArdle, Sales Director of Woolmark licensee Alfred Brown, a worsted weaver near Leeds in West Yorkshire that has recently celebrated its centenary, the trend towards quality tailored apparel in the ladies trade is encouraging: “We saw sampling of our standard qualities by a good few leading women’s houses in London last year in preparation for this winter season and I’m looking forward to seeing the finished product in the stores”.

British Vogue August edition is featuring the women’s suit in its Vogue Trends catwalk supplement that previews what’s in the stores for fall this month (August). The feature ‘Suit...Reboot’ continues to extol a trend that sees the suit ‘exit the office and relax into downtime dressing’. All the glossies in this part of the world are celebrating Giorgio Armani’s New Normal look, which couldn’t be more tailored and more wool. Paul Smith, Burberry, Vuitton, Prada, Fendi and more are on similar trend. If the fashion world remains true to its tradition of emulating its masters and mentors (aka copying) the windows in the high street stores of middle and upper middle market Europe will certainly be ones to watch closely next year.
Have you got any interesting photos that you’d like to share with other readers of Beyond the Bale?

We are always keen to see and hear what people working with Australian wool are up to. If you want to share any photos with us, please email the image and a brief description to the editor of Beyond the Bale Richard Smith at richard.smith@wool.com. The photos could portray any feature, be it humorous or poignant, informative or provoking, gritty or beautiful.

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

**FEEDING THE SHEEP**

Marcus Gellert of Glenthompson in the Western District of Victoria sent in this photo from earlier this year when he was out feeding hay to the sheep. He said he spent many hours feeding sheep over the summer and autumn.

**GIRL POWER**

Wool classer, shearing contractor and photographer Simone Chalker from Cowra in NSW sent in this photo of an all-female five member team learning to shear: Simone Chalker, Sammy Wilson, Rhianna MacTaggart, Mikhala Mitchell, Samii DeMooy. www.facebook.com/ChalkzPhotography

**BALED UP**

Tarlee Atkinson from Harrogate in the Adelaide Hills sent in this photo from last year’s shearing with her two-year-old daughter Alexis and her two working dogs sitting on some of their bales.

**SUNSET AT PEKINA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Dianne Duffy from near Pekina, near Orroroo in South Australia’s Mid North, sent in this beautiful photo of sheep grazing at dusk on the family property.

If you submit a photo that gets published in Reader’s Photos, you’ll receive a copy of Tracey Kruger’s ‘Shearing in Victoria’s Western District’ book.

ABOVE The front cover of Tracey Kruger’s 224-page ‘Shearing in Victoria’s Western District’. The book is also available to purchase for $60 (postage included) from Tracey’s website: www.shearinginvictoriaswesterndistrict.com or by phone on 0427 735 208.
2015 is the Year of the Sheep and to celebrate we’re giving you the chance to win one of three Isuzu D-Max Utes, worth $45,000. With a variety of products to keep your sheep in the best health, there’s now even more reasons to purchase from the Bayer sheep range. Buy any eligible product during Sheeptember (1-30 September) and you’ll receive double entries in the draw to win this award-winning vehicle, with 3.5 tonne towing capacity, 5 year warranty and road side assist. All entries are valid for the full length of the promotion so with one winner drawn every quarter, there are even more chances to get lucky.

FIND OUT MORE AND ENTER AT WWW.YEAROFTHESHEEP.COM.AU

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DOUBLE ENTRIES FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PURCHASES FROM THE BAYER SHEEP RANGE DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER.