

2018 BREECH FLYSTRIKE RD&E TECHNICAL UPDATE

Survey of Husbandry Practices

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Outline

1. Methodology and Sampling
2. Shearing
3. Crutching
4. Joining
5. Mulesing
6. Tail Docking and Castration
7. Sheep Sales
8. Communication

This survey has produced a large amount of data.

The results presented at the R&D Update are limited to issues raised in the Case Study of 40 Woolgrowers who have moved to A Non Mules Woolgrowing Enterprise (Agenda Item 14) and the National Wool Declaration (Agenda Item 3).

Why conduct this research?



Segmentation

Earlier surveys did not separate merino and prime lamb practices and Mules and Non Mules practices



New Products

New pain relief products on the market so needed a baseline of product adoption



Full range of practices

Monitor whole range of “Merino” on-farm practices over time



Quantify Non Mules Exploratory Findings

Highlight the key practices often mentioned in the interviews of 40 Non Mules businesses



Validation

Validation of anecdotal information, eg use of rings on tail when mulesing



Better Reconciliation

Better reconcile practices, ie % rams bred on farm v rams purchased

1. Methodology and Sampling



Methodology: CATI surveys



Duration: 25 minute non-incentivised interviews
Some questions were removed after the pilot phase due to questionnaire length



Sample : 1,200 merino producers

- 6 States
- 26 Regions
- 4 Flock size categories



FARM's Rural Database of Sheep producers



Fieldwork was conducted in February to April 2018

Questionnaire



- The questionnaire consisted of 73 questions (excluding screening questions). Most questions were closed however there were a number of open ended questions and “Other (Specify)” options where relevant
- Demographic information was also collected to assist in analysis and interpretation of the results. Variables included:
 - State
 - MLA Region (as used for the AWI MLA Wool and Sheepmeat Survey)
 - Flock Size
 - Micron
 - Body wrinkle
 - Respondent age
 - Gender
- Data points on the charts that are statistically significantly higher or lower than the national result at a 95% confidence level are shown with an up (↑) or down (↓) symbol

Interviewing



- 1,200 producers interviewed by telephone
- Respondents had to be the primary decision maker regarding their 2017 sheep husbandry practices, have a sheep flock of either Merino Poll, Merino Horn or Merino Dohne
- Fieldwork was conducted in February to April 2018
- Predominantly evening interviewing but daytime shifts were run for call backs
- Field work was conducted by FARM (Fairfax Agricultural Research and Marketing) using their database of over 100,000 rural producers

Interview Length

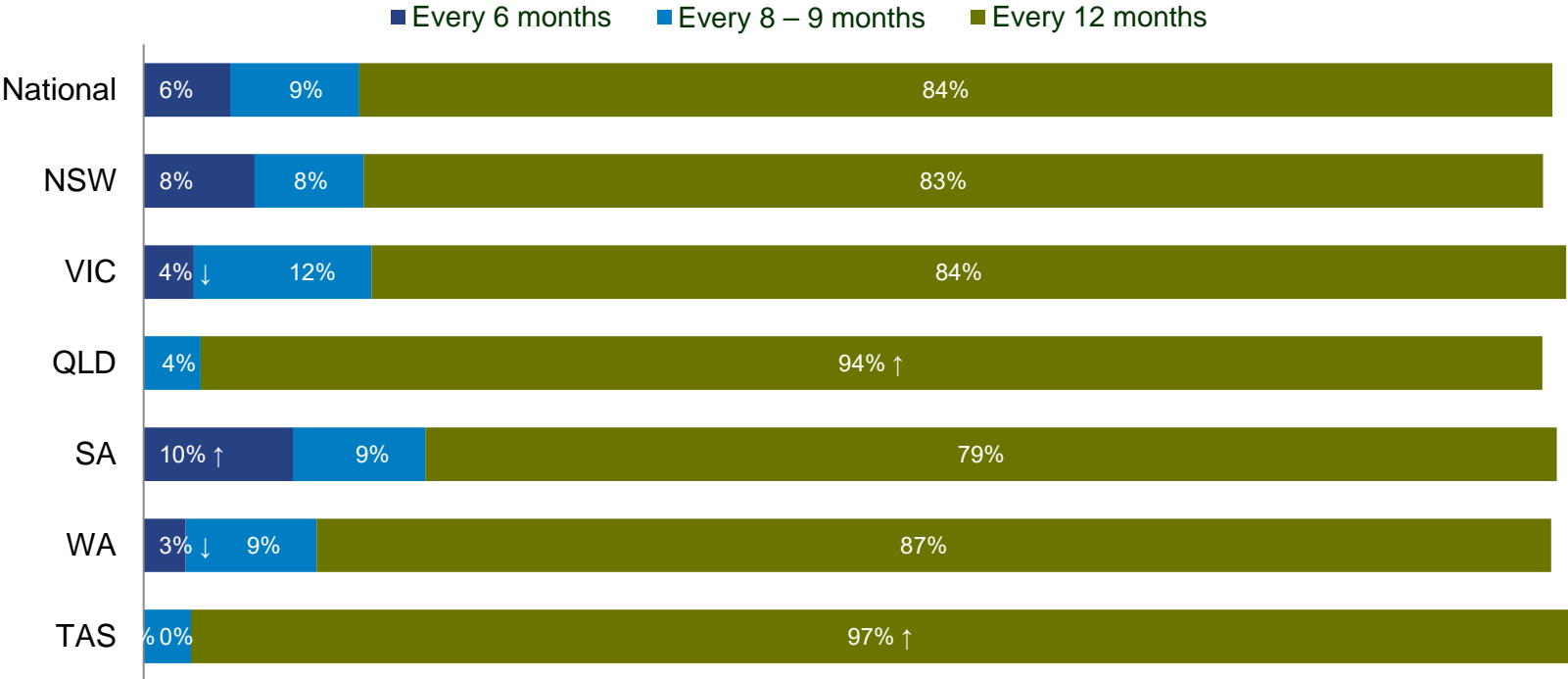
The questionnaire took 25 minutes to administer

2. Shearing

The vast majority of producers were shearing once a year however, SA had a greater occurrence of shearing twice a year



Breeding Ewes Shearing Frequency



Q6: How often do you shear your merino breeding ewes?

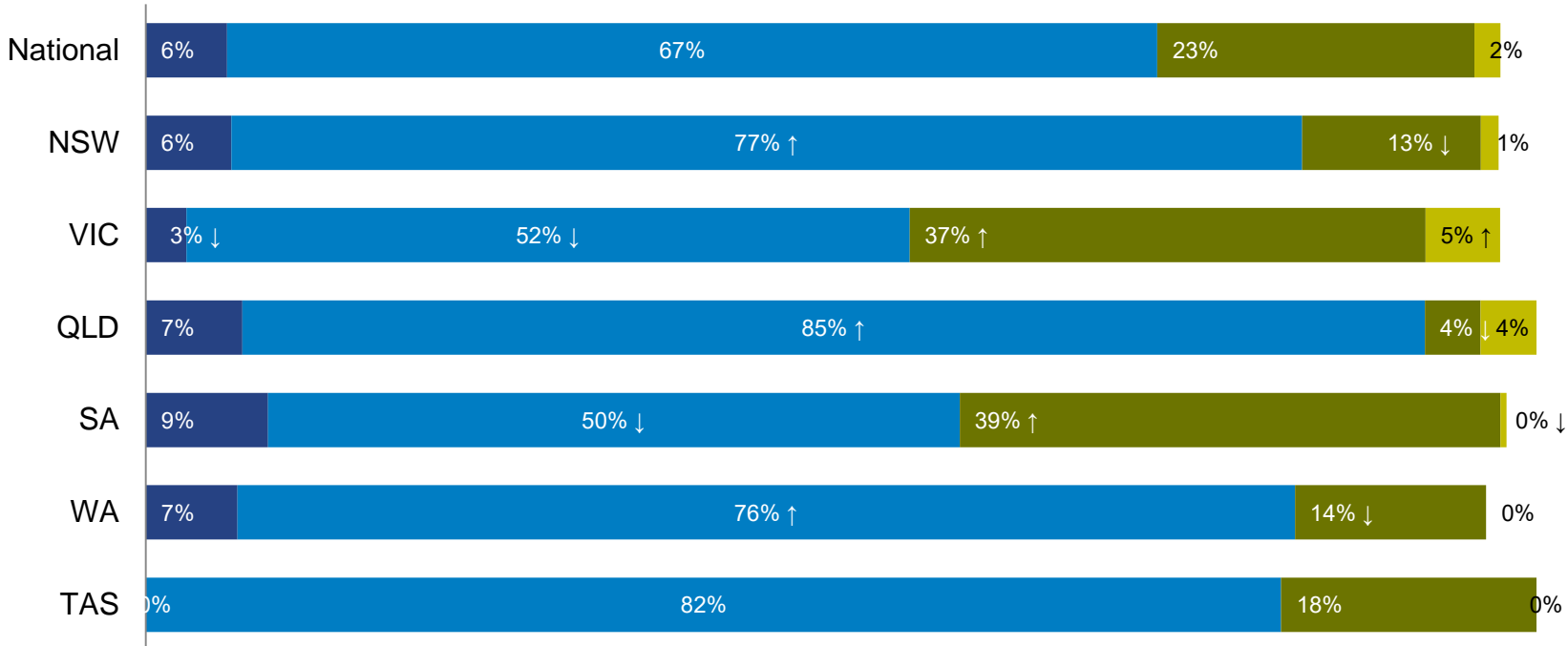
*Graph excludes other and don't know results

3. Crutching

Crutching once per year remains the standard. However, VIC and SA are more likely to double crutch

Crutching frequency

■ Not at all ■ Once per year ■ Twice per year ■ Three or more times a year

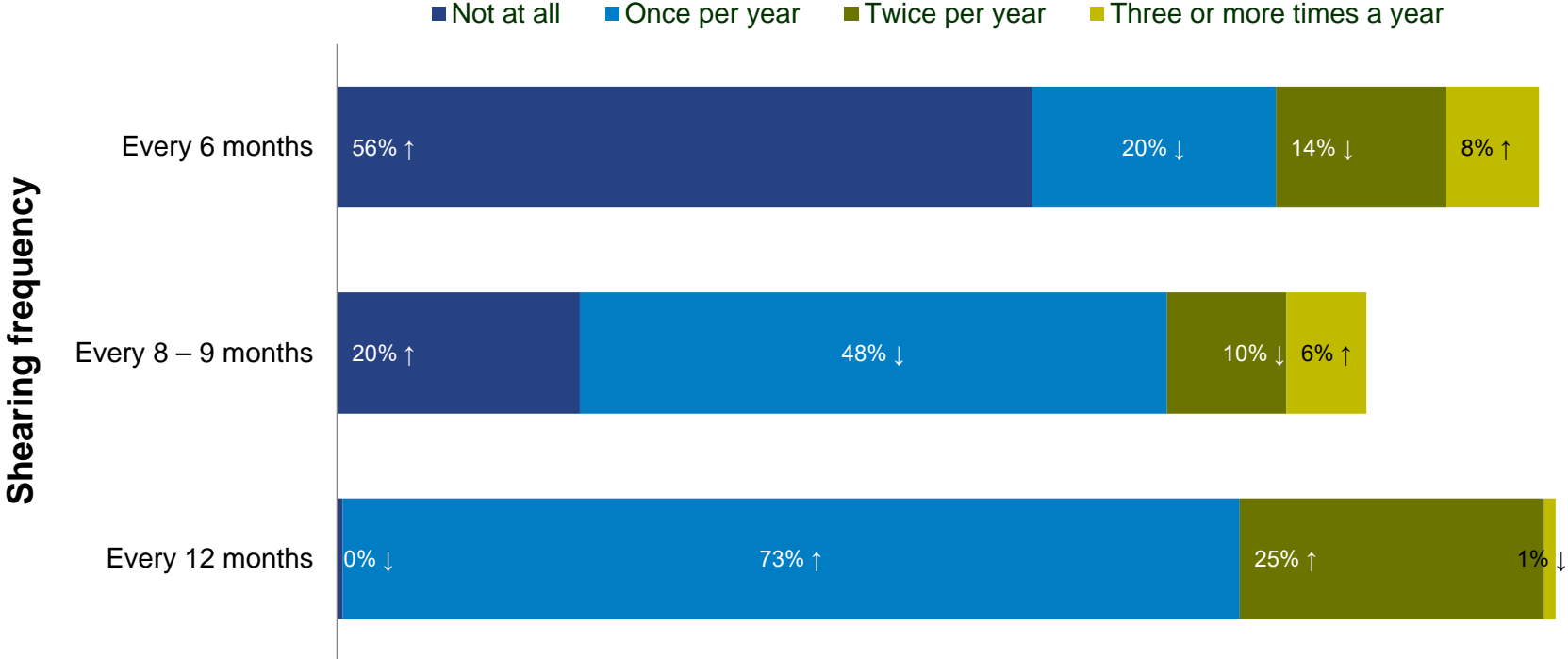


Q9: How often do you crutch your mixed aged ewes?

Farmers not crutching their sheep are increasingly likely to have moved to shear twice per year



Crutching frequency



Q9: How often do you crutch your mixed aged ewes?
 Q6: How often do you shear your merino breeding ewes?

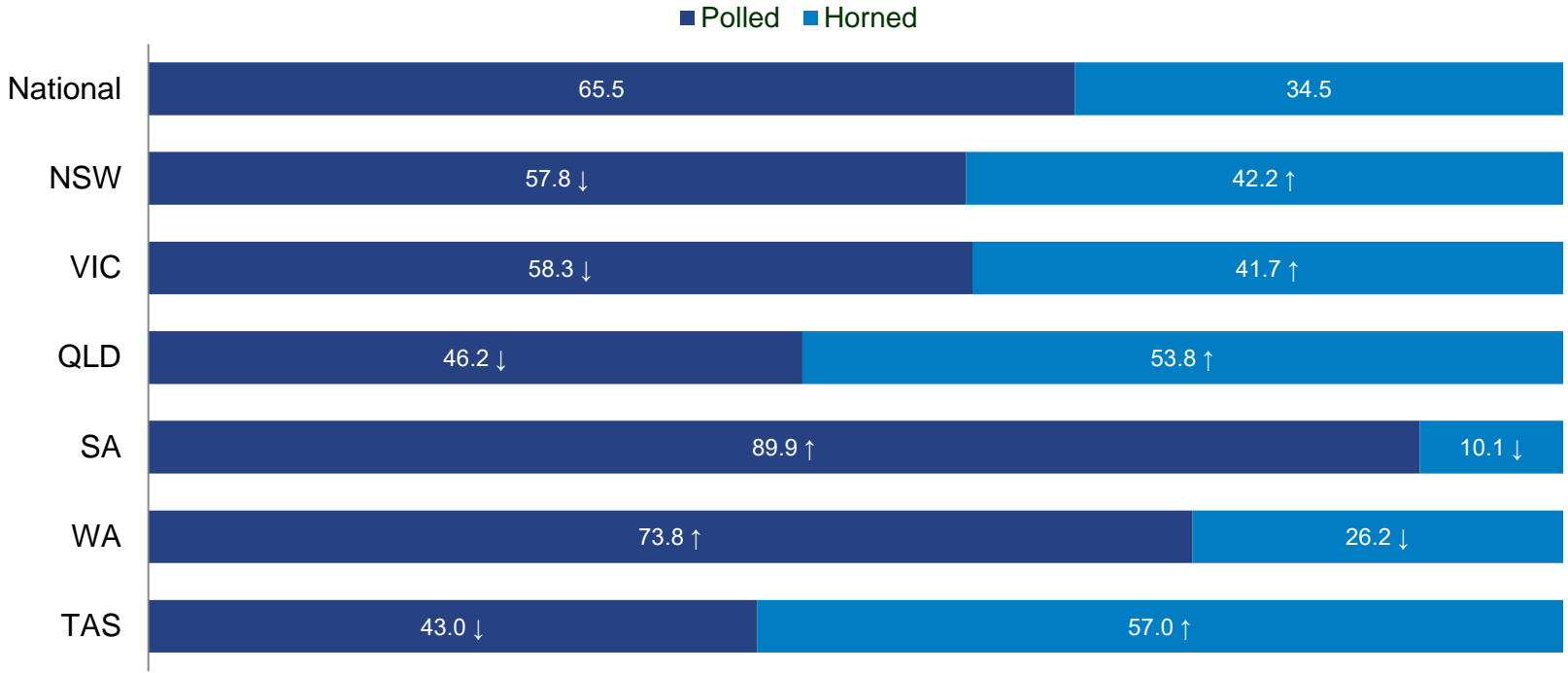
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4. Joining

Polled versus Horned Merinos

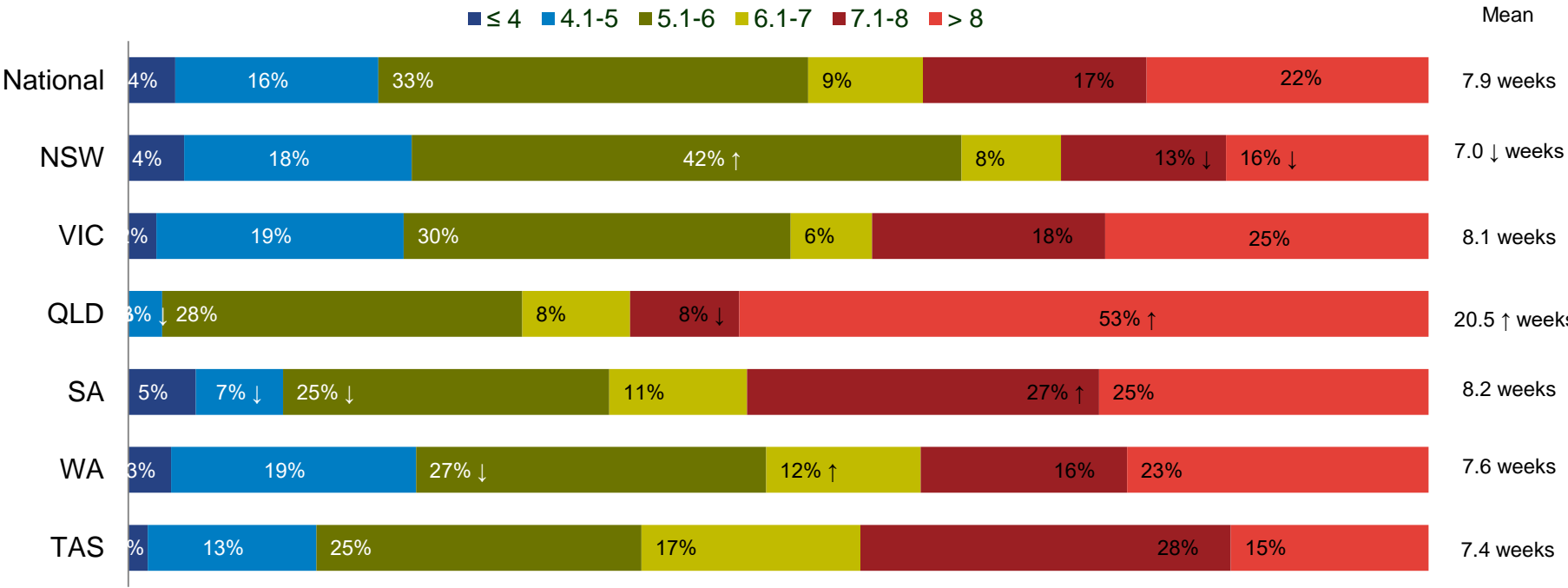


% Horned or Polled



The number of weeks ewes are joining fell predominately in the 5.1 to 8 weeks plus range with QLD producers more likely to join for significantly longer periods compared to other states

weeks ewes joined to rams

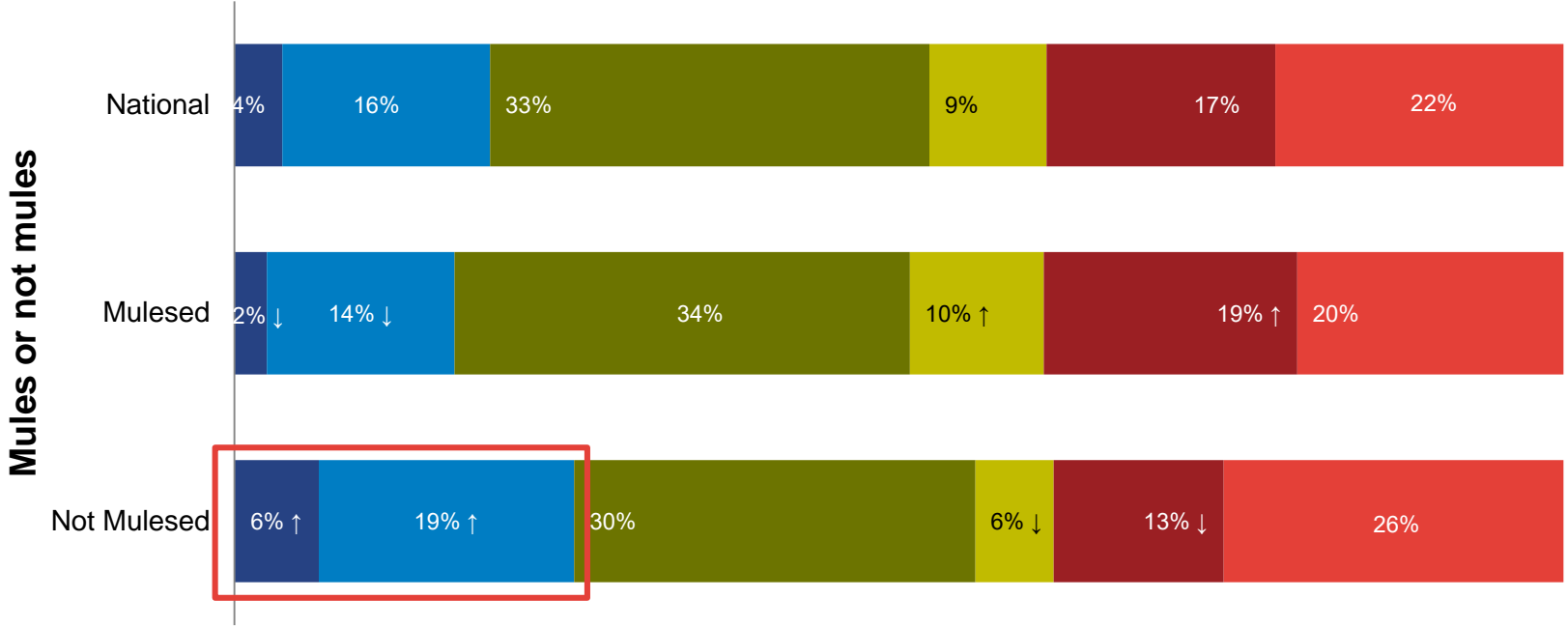


Q10: How many weeks do you join your merino ewes to your merino rams?

Producers not mulesing their ewes were more likely to join for shorter periods

weeks ewes joined to rams

■ ≤ 4
 ■ 4.1-5
 ■ 5.1-6
 ■ 6.1-7
 ■ 7.1-8
 ■ > 8



Q10: How many weeks do you join your merino ewes to your merino rams?

The large majority of rams were bought in rather than being bred

% rams bought and bred



Validation: 2014 CRC report found **66%** of wool producers buy rams and **34%** breed their own

Q13: What proportion of your merino rams do you buy in / breed yourself?

The preference for buying or breeding rams tended to be more equally shared in the larger producer category, particularly the 2,000 head flock size



% rams bought and bred

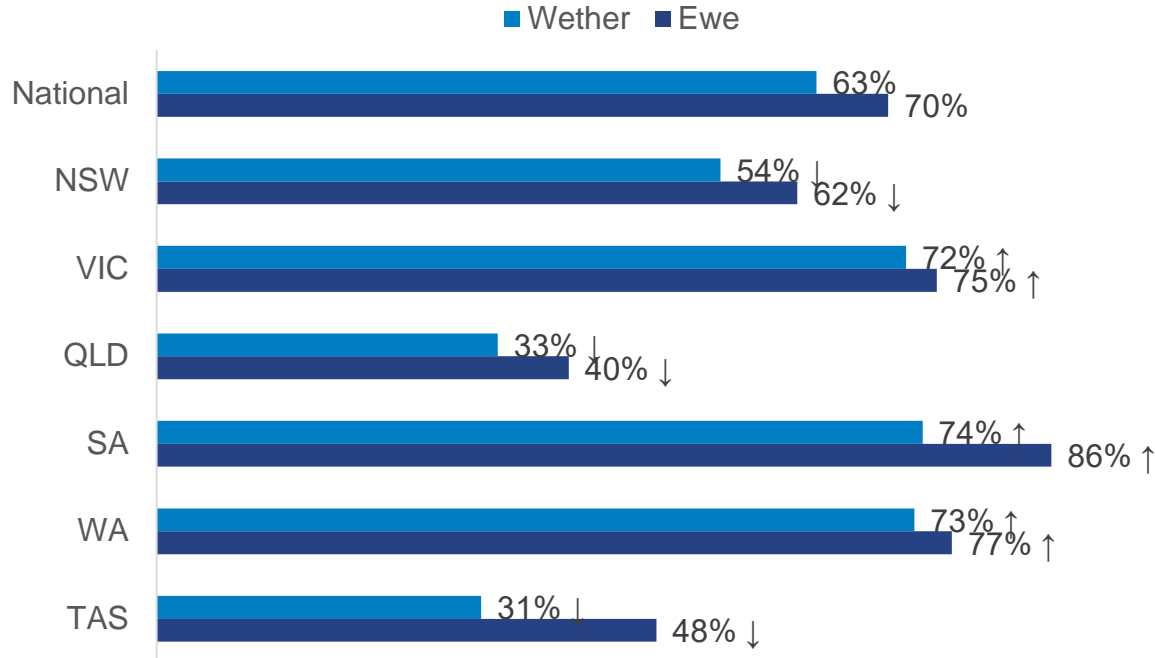


Q13: What proportion of your merino rams do you buy in / breed yourself?

6. Mulesing

The majority of producers were still choosing to mules their lambs, however the incidence in QLD and TAS is much lower

% of producers choosing to mules their lambs in 2017



Note;
There are a large number of woolgrowers who are not mulesing who do not declare their NM status on the NWD

Validation:

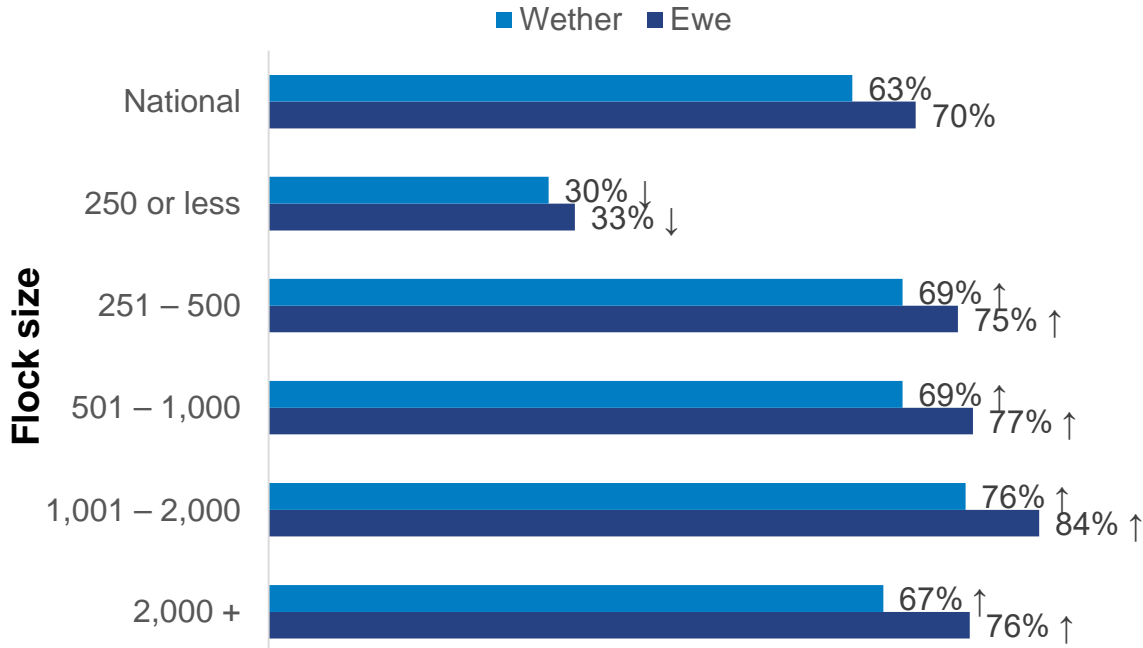
2014 CRC report found **83%** of merino lambs were mulesed
 2013/14 AWI MLA Wool and Lamb Forecasting Survey found **73%** of merino lambs were mulesed
 Estimates from the current study were that **77%** of merino ewe lambs and **66%** of merino wether lambs were mulesed

Q28: Did you mules your merino **ewe** lambs in 2017?
 Q32: Did you mules your merino **wether** lambs in 2017?

The smaller producers tended not to mules their lambs



% of producers choosing to mules their lambs in 2017

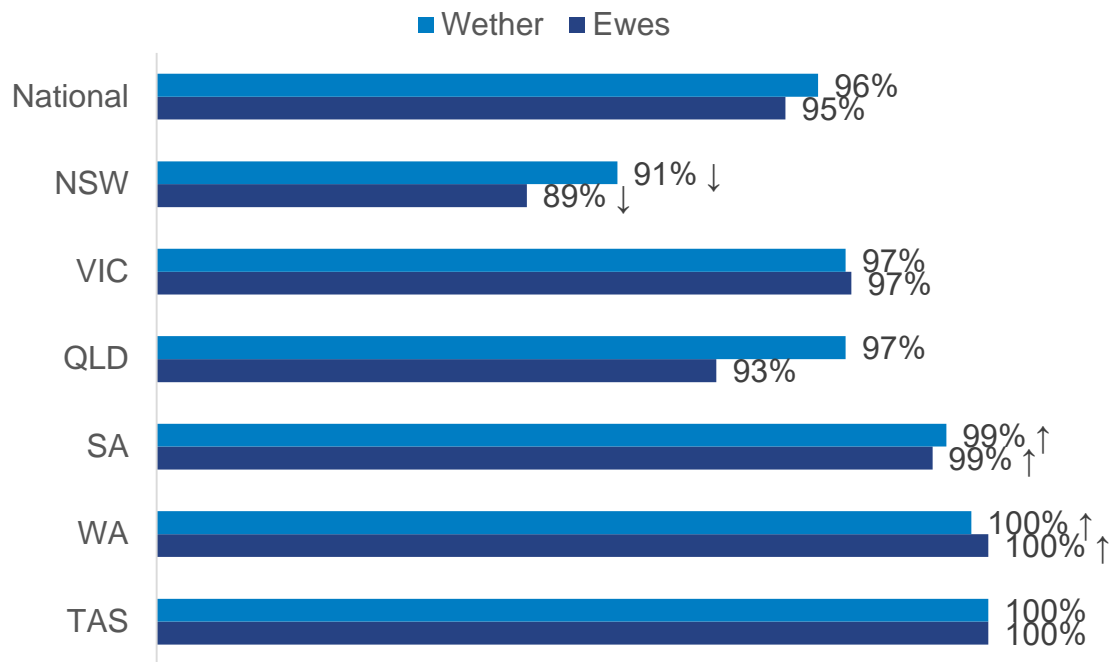


Validation:
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 Estimates from the current study were that **77%** of merino ewe lambs and **66%** of merino wether lambs were mulesed

Q28: Did you mules your merino **ewe** lambs in 2017?
 Q32: Did you mules your merino **wether** lambs in 2017?

The majority of producers were choosing to mules their lambs at marking

% of producers choosing to mules their lambs at marking



Q29: Did you mule your **ewes** at marking or post weaning?
Q33: Did you mule your **wethers** at marking or post weaning?

Base: Those respondents who mules ewes: n = 894
Base: Those respondents who mules wethers: n = 796

The vast majority of producers who mules were using pain relief for mulesing



% of producers choosing to mules with pain relief



Note;
There are a large number of woolgrowers who are using Pain Relief and not declaring this status on the NWD

Validation:
 2014 CRC report found **61%** of mulesed lambs were treated with pain relief
 2013/14 AWI MLA Wool and Lamb Forecasting Survey found **77%** of merino lambs mulesed received pain relief
 Estimates from the current study were that **85%** of mulesed lambs were treated with pain relief

Q30: Did you use pain relief on your **ewe** lambs for mulesing in 2017?

Q34: Did you use pain relief on your **wether** lambs for mulesing in 2017?

Smaller producers were less likely to use pain relief for mulesing than larger producers



% of producers choosing to mules with pain relief



Validation:
 2014 CRC report found **61%** of mulesed lambs were treated with pain relief
 2013/14 AWI MLA Wool and Lamb Forecasting Survey found **77%** of merino lambs mulesed received pain relief
 Estimates from the current study were that **85%** of mulesed lambs were treated with pain relief

Q30: Did you use pain relief on your **ewe** lambs for mulesing in 2017?

Q34: Did you use pain relief on your **wether** lambs for mulesing in 2017?

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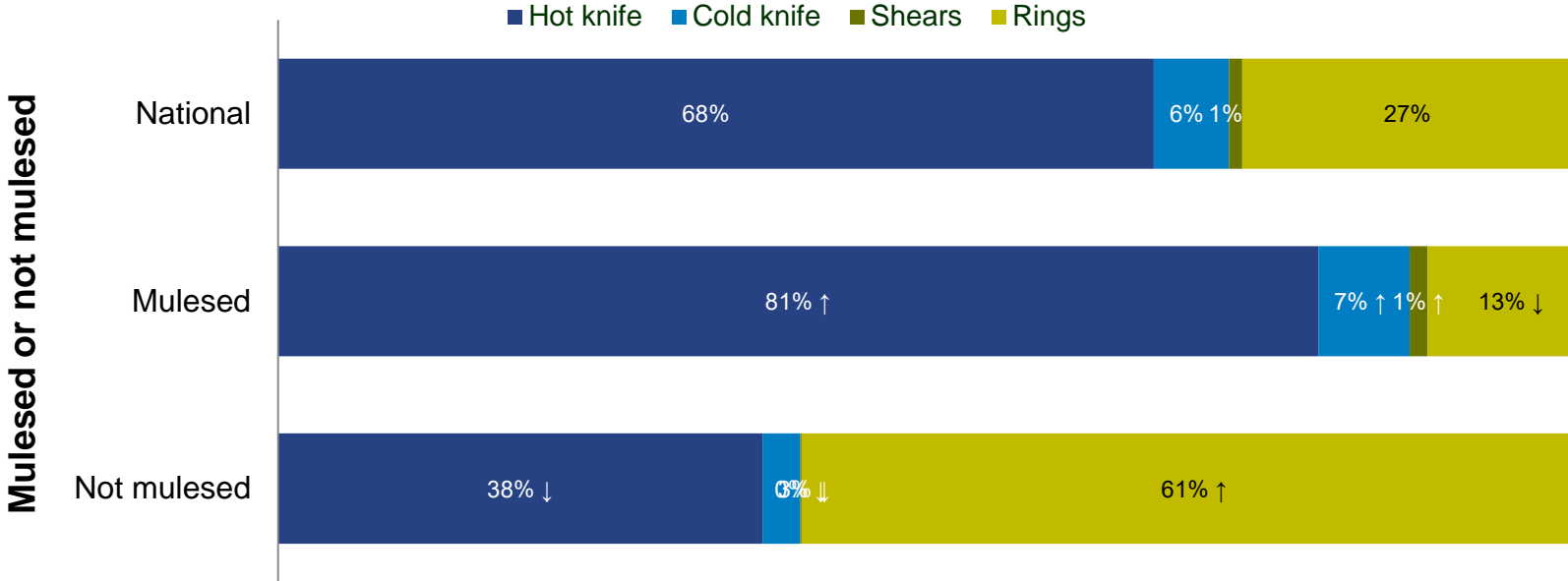
Base: All respondents mulesing ewes: n = 894

Base: All respondents mulesing wethers: n = 796

7. Tail Docking and Castration

The Hot knife method was the main choice for producers mulesing their lambs where non-mulesed lambs had a higher use of rings

Tail docking method ewes



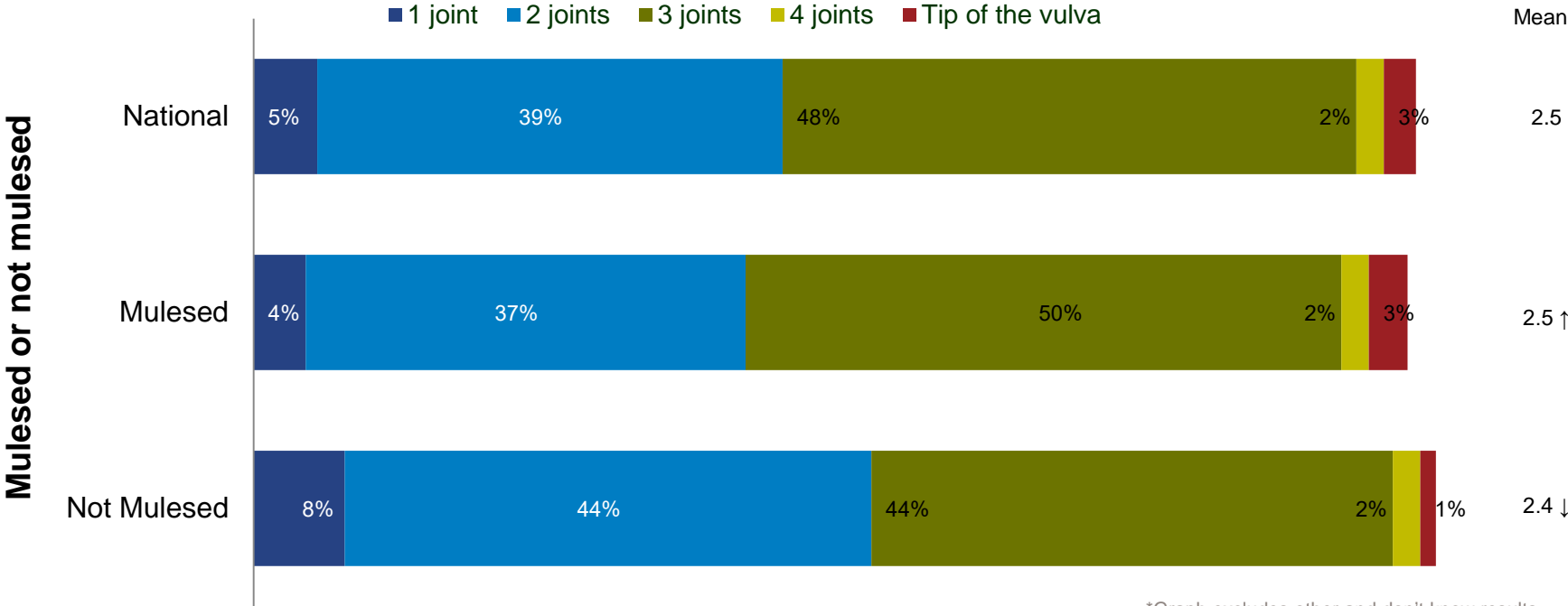
Q45: What method do you use to tail dock merino ewes?

Q28: Did you mulesing your merino ewe lambs in 2017?

*Graph excludes other and don't know results

The majority of producers docked ewes tail at either the second or third joint with slight differences seen in mulesed and non-mulesed lambs

Ewe lambs tail docking length



*Graph excludes other and don't know results

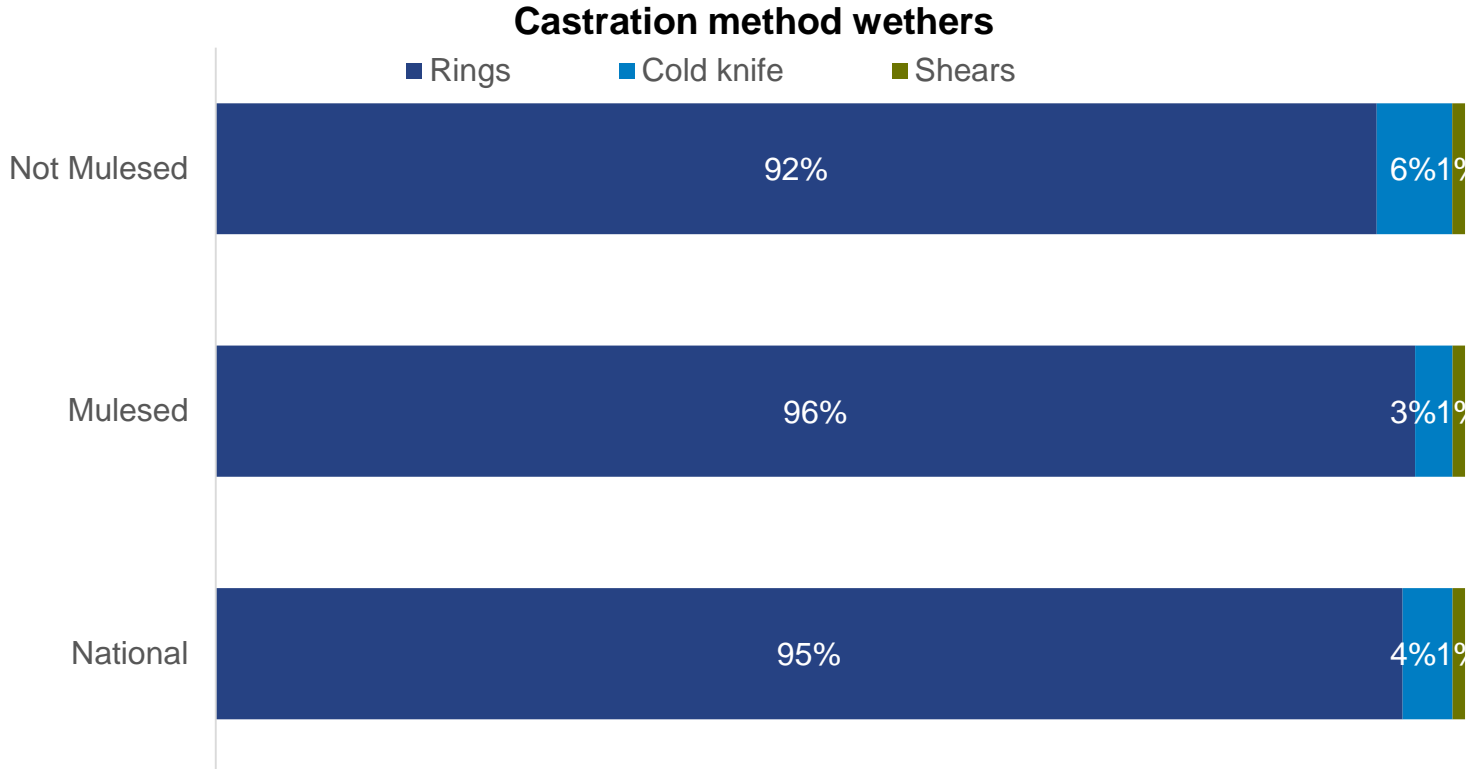
Q47: At what length do you dock ewe lambs' tails?

Q28: Did you mules your merino ewe lambs in 2017?

Base: All respondents: n = 1197

Base: All respondents: n = 1200

For castration, virtually all producers used the rings method on their wethers regardless of mulesing practice



Q53: What method do you use to castrate merino **wethers**?

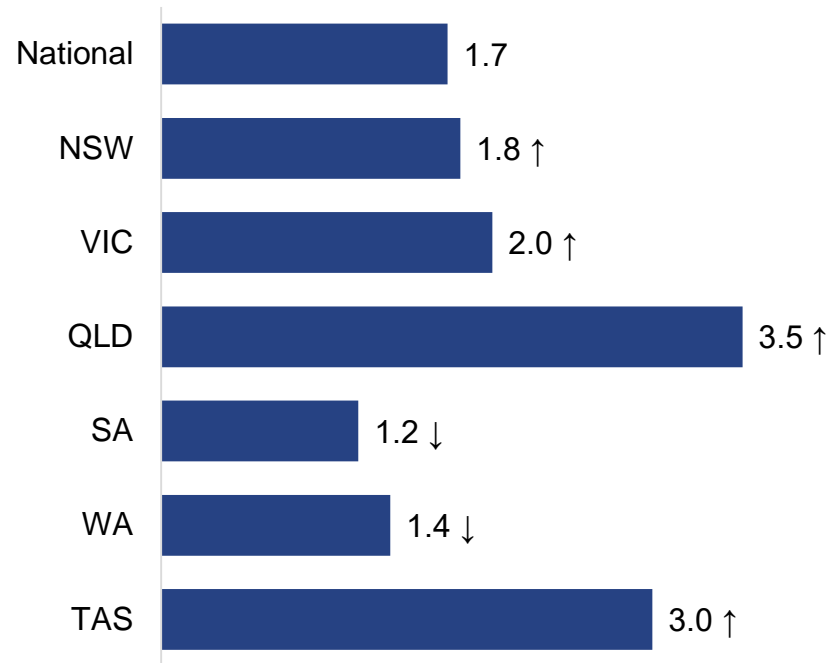
Q32: Did you mules your merino **wether** lambs in 2017?

*Graph excludes other and don't know results

8. Sheep Sales

Wethers were generally sold at 1 year old. However, producers in TAS and QLD tended to hold onto wethers longer

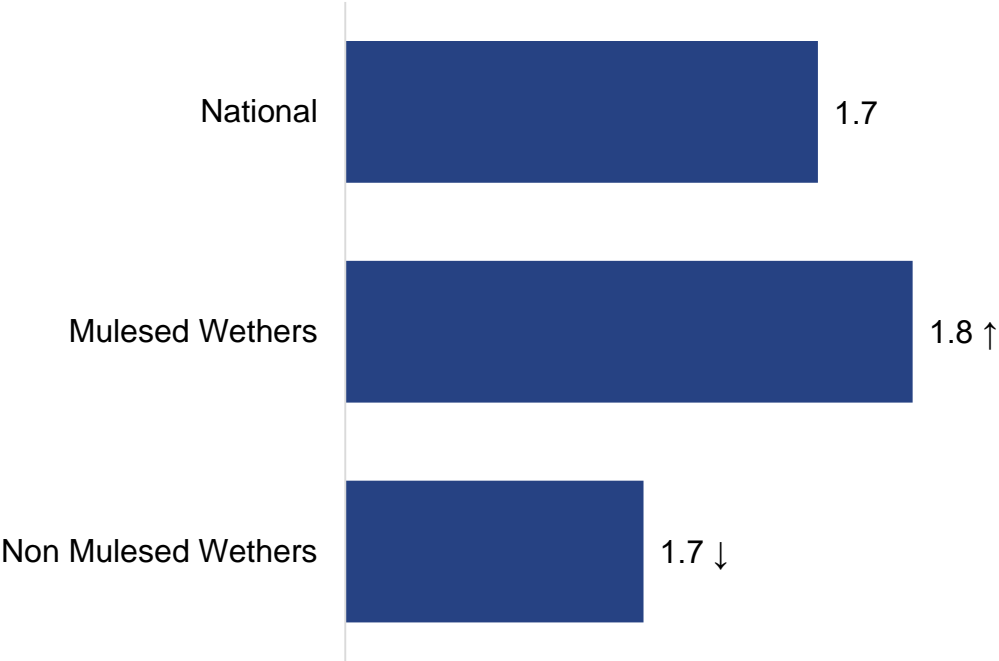
Age wethers sold



Q66: At what age do you typically sell your wethers?

There was very little difference in age of sale between mules and non mulesed wethers

Age wethers sold



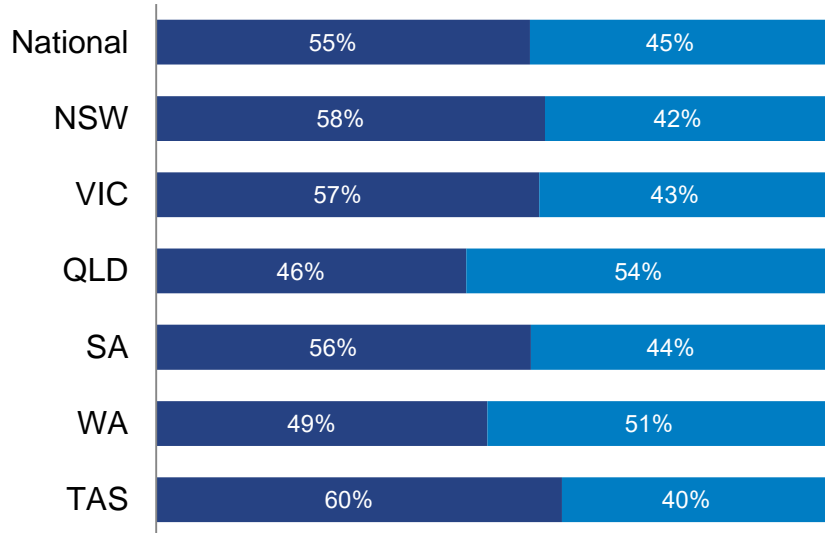
Q66: At what age do you typically sell your wethers?

9. Communication

Approximately half of all producers surveyed were aware of the Flyboss website with half of these visiting the site

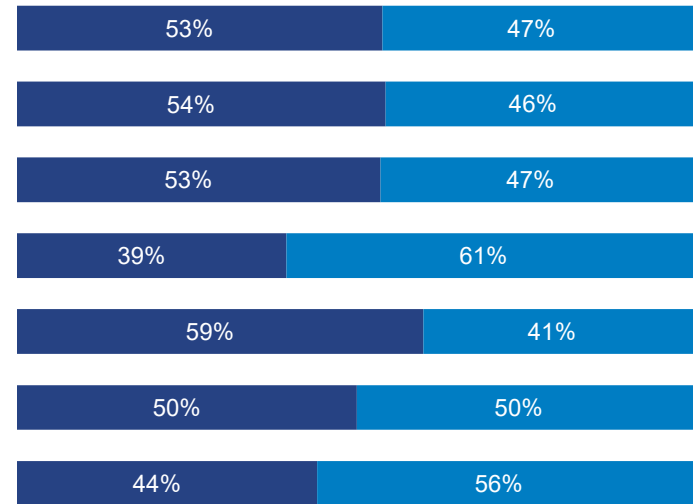
Have you ever heard of Flyboss?

■ Yes ■ No



Have you visited the website?

■ Yes ■ No



Validation: The 2014 IPMS report found **49%** of producers have heard of the Flyboss website, and of those, **28%** have visited the site. In the 2014 CRC report, **34%** of sheep producers were aware of the site

Q68: Have you ever heard of the following websites? Flyboss

Q69: Have you ever visited the Flyboss website?

Base: All respondents: n = 1200
Base: All respondents who have heard of the site: n = 701



This publication is based on information presented at the Australian Wool Innovation Limited (AWI) National Wool Research and Development Technical Update on Breech Flystrike Prevention held on 17th July 2018. Some information in this publication has been contributed by one or more third parties and licenced to AWI, and AWI has not verified whether this information is correct. This publication should only be used as a general aid and is not a substitute for specific advice. Any reliance on the information contained in this publication is done at your own risk and to the extent permitted by law, AWI and any third party contributors exclude all liability for loss or damage arising from the use of the information in this publication. Except to the extent permitted under Copyright Law no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process, electronic or otherwise without the specific written permission of AWI. Neither may information be stored electronically in any form whatsoever without such permission. AWI gratefully acknowledges the funds provided by the Australian government to support research, development and marketing of Australian wool. GD2792