

9th April 2009

AWEX Sheep Breed Trial PIGMENTED and MEDULLATED FIBRE STATUS

AWEX is undertaking a project that aims to objectively define the pigmented and medullated fibre status of each sheep breed used in Australia. This information is important from a woolclassing and clip preparation perspective for both pure-breds and crosses.

Within its Woolclasser Code of Practice (COP) and soon to be released Compendium of Sheep Breeds used in Australia, AWEX defines basic wool characteristics, including an estimate of the risk of pigmented (Y) and medullated (K) occurring in the fleece wool of each breed. To address criticism of the 2007-2009 COP, the trial aims to objectively quantify the pigmented and medullated fibre status of each breed based on tests on fleece wool sale lots (or fleece samples) conducted by AWTA Ltd. From this data, broad categories objectively defining the pigmented and medullated fibre content of each breed will be established.

The trial design takes into account that some breeds are not shorn or are rare, so fleece (mid-side) samples are acceptable. Core samples may be measured either Pre- or Post-Sale Testing. Individual woolgrowers will not be identified in any publication; however, each grower will receive a copy of their own results.

In conducting this trial, AWEX is aware of the sensitivities surrounding this issue. Breeds have many different uses with the fleece characteristics of varying importance. However, to maintain the integrity of the Australian sheep and wool industry, it is important that every effort is made to correctly quantify the characteristics of each breed. This will minimise confusion and assist many sectors of the industry to make informed decisions.

All known Australian Sheep Breed Associations have been contacted to nominate sale lots or provide fleece samples for this project. Some believe the trial does not go far enough saying "the risk of cross-contamination from shedding breeds in a variety of situations as well as management strategies to minimise any risk requires examination". Unfortunately, AWEX cannot afford to conduct such an enormous trial, with other wool industry organisations in the same position.

The most important source of samples for this trial will be the Sheep Breeds Societies. It is hoped that they will support this work so that AWEX can characterise all breeds and provide woolclassers and woolgrowers with information of assistance in wool classing or breeding.

AWEX Members can assist this project by ensuring that the Test Request form (see attached) is completed and signed by growers who have had a Pre-or Post Sale test approved by AWEX. If Members have further queries or know of producers who may be able to contribute samples to the trial, please contact Kerry Hansford (details below).

For more information:

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Australian Wool Exchange Limited

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Australian Wool Exchange Sheep Breeds Project

REQUEST FOR DARK/MEDULLATED FIBRE TEST

1. GROWER or BROKER to complete ONE of the following Test Requests after written approval (fax or email) has been received from AWEX.
2. OWNER of the wool must sign authority allowing AWEX to access data.
3. Fax to AWTA Ltd on a regional Fax Numbers (listed below).

PRE-SALE TESTING

Requesting Agent AWTA Client Code:.....
Brand: Description:.....
Client Reference:..... No of Bales:.....
(Weight Note or Folio Number)

POST-SALE TESTING

AWTA Ltd Certificate No:
(Yield & Micron)
Grower Name:..... Date:...../...../.....
(Print Name)

FLEECE SAMPLE - include this Test Request form with sample and post to:

Attn: Angus Ireland, AWTA Ltd, PO Box 190, Guildford, NSW 2161 (ph. 02 9681 1200)

Grower Name: Date:/...../.....
(Print Name)

Postal Address:.....

Phone No:..... Fax No:.....

As Owner/Manager of the wool sample, I hereby give my authority for the Test Results to be supplied to and used by AWEX, as per the arrangements detailed in the Sheep Breeds Project Description.

Name:..... Signature:.....

Melbourne Laboratory	Sydney Laboratory	Fremantle Laboratory
Fax: 03 9371 2190	Fax: 02 9681 4035	Fax: 08 9418 7838

AWTA Use Only.

LABORATORY NUMBER:

CLIENT CODE:

05.8888

SEND INVOICE and RESULTS (Include Y&M, L&S Results with DMF) to:

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