

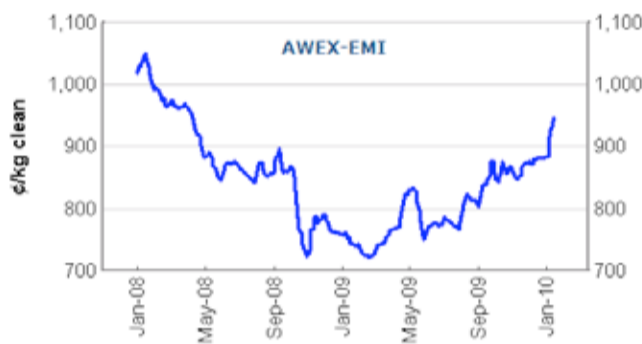


## AUCTION ACTION

The past six months has seen a strong wool market with the currency seeming to have less of an influence. Despite a rising Australian dollar, prices have climbed steadily since August as available quantities have pressured buyers into competing strongly on suitable wool. The AWEX EMI has ventured into the \$9 bracket for the first time since late April 2008 with all microns attracting interest.

Buyers appear to be more anxious to secure quantity since the resumption of sales after the Christmas recess, with the tempo lifting another notch. A 7% rise in the AWEX-EMI in the first few weeks of January and auction clearance rates running at very high percentages (around 98% Australia-wide) have both contributed to a positive mood around the wool-trade at the moment. Forecast auction quantities are also having an impact, with numbers expected to decrease for the remainder of the 09/10 season, particularly in newly shorn Merino fleece wool.

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With regard to the offering, there appears to be a significant quantity of poorer style wool coming from south western New South Wales and South Australia substantially due to the drought conditions. However, this is contrasted with a generally good to best style offering from the western districts and northern country. Microns are slightly broader in these areas and yields over 70% (Schlumberger Dry) are common. Staple strength has improved, although there remain a large number of clips measuring less than 28 Nkt. South Australian clips continue to show the effects of the dry weather; an offering that is consistently showing fleece wool of hungry-fine micron and yields less than 45% (Schlumberger Dry). Many clips have now sold and the expected quantities out of South Australia and far western Victoria have declined.

Tasmanian clips improved over the past few years with the better growing conditions showing in the wool at auction. The majority of clips seen so far this year have been of a good to best topmaking standard with the occasional spinner's style. The strength and yields have increased as well; however, it has been noticed that many traditional Merino growers have adopted non-Merino breeds during the drought, at least for a portion of their flock.

New South Wales continues to feel the effects of drought and now floods in some large, traditional wool growing areas. The quantities seen at auction continue to fall, with cropping now a major income source for many farmers. Crossbred sheep are now experiencing a growth in numbers as growers look to their meat sheep to provide an income.

In Queensland sheep numbers are now estimated to be less than 4 million, almost 80% below their peak in 1991/92.

Western Australia has provided many challenges to the Woolclasser with a large number of new breeds now occupying the land previously run with Merino sheep. Many of these are shedding breeds, which places more emphasis upon the Classifier to avoid contamination.

Contamination has again been recognized as a major issue within the industry as the increasing numbers of shedding breeds make themselves evident across many clips. Classers must be aware of keeping the wool from these sheep separate from the pure Merinos and other white wool sheep. Also note; it is mandatory to allocate the appropriate contamination suffixes. These suffixes are R for clips that have been run with shedding breeds, and if visible, Y (pigmented fibre) and/or K (medullated fibre).



Mulesing Status of Bales declared using the NWD

## AWEX Publications for Sale



1. 2010 - 2012 Code of Practice: Preparation of Australian Wool Clips - The Woolclasser

2. AWEX Sheep Breed Compendium



3. Bale Description Poster



4. Bale Preparation Poster

All of these publications form part of the Woolclasser Registration pack. To purchase any additional copies, either single or multiple, please contact AWEX Head Office in Sydney on (02) 9428 6100 or awex@awex.com.au or any AWEX regional office.

The prices including GST (not including postage) are listed below:

Item	Prices Plus Postage	
	Members	Non Members
1. COP	\$9.90	\$12.10
2. Sheep Breed Compendium	\$4.95	\$6.05
3. Bale Description Poster	\$0.55	\$0.66
4. Bale Preparation Poster	\$0.55	\$0.66
<b>All Four Items</b>	<b>\$15.95</b>	<b>\$19.47</b>

## 2010 BOARDTALK TO THE BUSH SEMINARS

AWEX wishes to advise that the 2010 series of the BOARDtalk to the Bush seminars for Woolclassers, wool growers, selling agents, contractors and shed staff are to be held between February and August 2010.

A key focus of this series of BOARDtalk to the Bush will be the recently released 2010 - 2012 Woolclassing Code of Practice. Other topics will include:

- National Wool Declaration (including Mulesing Status)
- AWEX Sheep Breed Compendium (breeds in Australia)
- Occupational Health and Safety in the Shearing Shed
- AWEX Services available to Woolclassers

### The Seminar locations comprise:

**NSW:** Cooma, Yass, Hay, Deniliquin, Wagga, Temora, Cowra, Forbes, Parkes, Dubbo

**VIC:** Ballarat, Horsham, Melbourne, Ararat, Hamilton

**SA:** Naracoorte, Adelaide, Tintinara, Burra

**WA:** Wagin, Moora, Williams, Northam, Tambellup, Mt Barker

**TAS:** Launceston

**QLD:** Brisbane, Longreach, Tambo, Charleville

Invitations to attend the seminars will be sent to Woolclassers in each region closer to the date. Please check the AWEX website [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au) for the specific date, time and venue for each location or call AWEX Woolclassing on 02 9428 6144.

BOARDtalk to the Bush seminars are Free with each Seminar lasting approximately 3 hours, including ample opportunity

for discussion with both AWEX staff and external presenters. Tea and coffee will be provided.

All industry personnel are urged to attend a Seminar to gain an up-to-date and practical insight into the preparation of Australia wool clips as well as a variety of associated issues.

When you decide which Seminar you would like to attend, please contact AWEX on 02 9428 6144 to let us know (this will be a great help for planning).

## Change of Details

If you have changed any of your details, please post or fax (02) 9420 9633 this coupon to Head Office, or email [woolclasser@awex.com.au](mailto:woolclasser@awex.com.au) with the changes. You must include your stencil number.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Woolclasser ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_



**HEAD OFFICE**  
PO Box 649  
Lane Cove NSW 1595  
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[woolclasser@awex.com.au](mailto:woolclasser@awex.com.au)

### For Owner Classers

Registered Bale Brands

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT'S NEW IN THE 2010 – 2012 CODE OF PRACTICE?

For the past 12 months, AWEX's Industry Services Advisory Committee (ISAC) has been undertaking its triennial review of the Woolclasser's Code of Practice (COP). The review commenced with a Woolclasser survey with over 1000 submissions received from around Australia. Input was also received from the National Woolclasser Consultative Group, attendees of Masterclasser courses, Registered Training Officers, Woolclassers in direct contact with AWEX staff (e.g. at industry events) as well as other industry groups. In fact, this review is considered one of the most consultative to date. Some changes to the COP are summarised below:

### Bin Code for Differentiation of Multiple Lines

Woolclassers have commented that the Bale Descriptions advocated in the 2007 – 2009 COP made it difficult to differentiate between multiple lines of wool (e.g. AAAM) when classing large clips. This comment was supported by wool brokers and handlers, who often find it hard to identify and match comparable lines of wool in the lotting process.

To address this shortcoming, it is recommended that Woolclassers use a single character (called a Bin Code) on wool bins to distinguish between multiple lines. A single number rather than a letter is preferred as it is less likely to be confused with the bale description. This Bin Code is then carried through to the Classer's Specification, the Wool Book and bale labels. The new landscape labels have a Bin Code in a circle at the end of the Bale Description row.

*Note:* The Bin Code is only for use by Woolclassers, pressers, wool brokers and handlers to aid the identification of lines and the lotting of wool. It will not be published in the Sale Catalogue or on the Test Certificate. Classer's are strongly encouraged

to utilise the Bin Code when classing large clips; however, it is not necessary to use it for smaller clips where there are only single lines.

### The Woolclasser and the Wool Harvesting Team

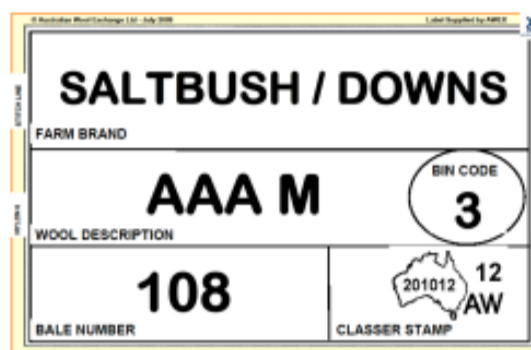
Untrained or inexperienced staff in shearing sheds is more common than ever before. To assist the Woolclasser in managing this situation, Section 5 on the Wool Harvesting Team now includes a separate list of duties and responsibilities for the contractor, wool handler, presser and shearer. These sub-sections are not intended to replace appropriate in-shed training or course work. More so, they are designed to summarise activities that each member of the wool harvesting team might be expected to do.

Each sub-section can be photocopied and handed out as a set of basic instructions and/or as a reminder to staff. Duties that are not required in a particular shed can be crossed out.

### Application of the Woolclasser's Stencil/Stamp to Bulk Class Bales

Classing Houses wish to differentiate between Bulk Class (BC) bales that have been classed and prepared according to the Woolclasser's COP and those that contain wool literally thrown into a pack. To give Classing Houses better control of their standards, Registered Woolclassers are required to apply his or her stamp/stencil to all the BC bales that they have prepared to the Code.

If a Bulk Class bale has been put together by another person (e.g. the wool grower), the current Woolclasser should not apply their stamp/stencil but should add the bale to a separate Classer's Specification and clearly identify that they did not prepare this bale.



Landscape Bale Label

### Recognition of Masterclasser

Since 2008, AWEX has been conducting Masterclasser courses to provide a professional development opportunity for Australian Woolclassers (AW). Six courses have been conducted across the regions, with selection based on invitation by industry or AWEX nomination, with volume classed and performance taken into consideration.

In the 2010 – 2012 Rules for Woolclasser Registration and the Woolclasser's Code of Practice, Masterclasser (MC) is recognised via registration and stencil status. The Masterclasser program in its very short time has become well recognised around Australia and also overseas with many enquiries being received for extra information. See Page 3 for information on eligibility criteria and up-coming Masterclasser courses.

#### For further information:

Mark Grave, ph. 02 9428 6100 or mgrave@awex.com.au

David Cother, ph. 02 9428 6100 or dcother@awex.com.au

Kerry Hansford, ph. 03 9318 0277 or khansford@awex.com.au

## AWEX SHEEP BREED COMPENDIUM

### Update of Content

Woolclassers who renew their registration for 2010-2012 receive the new AWEX Sheep Breed Compendium along with their COP. The aim of this document is to provide Woolclassers and other wool industry personnel with a ready reference for the sheep breeds found in Australia. It provides a photo of each breed along with a summary of their appearance, primary use(s) and average or range in wool characteristics.

Since the Sheep Breed Compendium's publication a few errors/corrections have been identified. In addition, the Meat Merino Breed Associations were contacted to review the dual-purpose emphasis (Meat : Wool ratio) of their breed. In providing these revised ratios, it is important to remember that they are a guide only and can vary according to management and environmental conditions as well as the current economic climate. Please make sure you update your Compendium with the following:

Breed	Page	
Afrino	15	Ratio: 75 : 25
Dohne	16	Ratio: 60 : 40
SAMM	17	Ratio: 80 : 20
Texel	28	Pig: Medium Med: High
Lincoln	32	Pig: Low Med: High
Romney	33	Fle Wt: 3.5 – 5.5
Poll Dorset	39	Diameter: 27 – 33 (same as the Dorset Horn)
Tukidale	49	Pig: Medium Med: High

Note: for Pigmentation and Medullation, these categories are now confirmed by testing.

### Interpretation of Pigmented and Medullated Fibre Categories

Separate Pigmented and Medullated Fibre Categories established for each breed were generated on the basis of Pigmented and Medullated fibre (pmf) tests conducted by AWTA Ltd on fleece wool#, with the content for each breed classified into one of four (4) categories.

- For Australian Merinos where the number of individual tests is greater than 10,000:
  - Very Low: less than 5 pmf/10 g
- For breeds where the number of individual tests is less than 200 (and/or the tested values justify the category):
  - Low: less than 10 pmf/10 g
  - Medium: 10 to 20 pmf/10 g
  - High: greater than 20 pmf/10 g

**Note 1:** Pigmented and Medullated fibre contamination is usually only a problem for wool destined for sensitive, generally apparel, end-uses. Wool not destined for sensitive end-uses has no requirement for Very Low or Low levels of Pigmented and/or Medullated fibre.

**Note 2:** The current Dark & Medullated Fibre (DMF) Test<sup>^</sup> was developed to indicate potential risk of DMF contamination in a lot. It is not appropriate to scale-up the contamination levels from raw wool to processed wool or finished garments.

**Note 3:** In general, the coarser the fibre diameter, the higher the medullated fibre content.

# Only fleece wool was tested to minimise the possibility of urine stained fibre in the sample.

<sup>^</sup> The Test uses the CSIRO reference scale of 0 (white) to 8 (black), from pale yellow at 1 to dark brown at 7 (see illustration). Fibres with a reference of 6 and above are considered a contamination fault.



### Additional Information on Pigmentation and Medullation

1. It only takes a few pigmented or medullated fibres or staples over a fleece to cause a problem in a processing consignment. Therefore, if any single sheep has higher levels of pigmentation or medullation, it can cause contamination in a much larger quantity of wool. This applies to any breed of sheep and is the same as the principle behind contamination from urine-stain, where a few staples can contaminate an entire consignment.
2. Not all contamination occurs as "spots" you can see, rather individual fibres not visible to the naked eye may be spread throughout the fleece.
3. For flocks that have been bred as white over many generations, the occasional brown/black spot may still occur. These animals should be culled as lambs so that the flock remains white.
4. For pigmented and/or medullated fibre contamination to occur from transfer of fibres from shedding breeds to white wool sheep there must be physical contact between them. It is important to remember that clumps of shed fibre should be removed from yards, fences and camp sites prior to running white wool sheep through them.

#### For further information:

Kerry Hansford, ph. 03 9318 0277 or khansford@awex.com.au



#### AWEX WOOL SERVICES

Ground Floor,  
318 Burns Bay Road  
Lane Cove NSW 2066  
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woolclasser@awex.com.au

AWEX is a national organisation of brokers, growers, exporters, processors and private treaty merchants which, in the best interests of the wool industry, provides: Industry standards (wool packs, wool preparation), Clip inspection services, Woolclasser registration, Independent market reports, Wool description and appraisal, Wool sale rostering and Wool administration.



## NOTES FROM THE AWEX AUDITORS

### Woolclassing Advice in the Shed

The AWEX Regional Offices receive numerous phone calls throughout the year from Woolclassers anxious about some of the advice they receive in the shearing shed. This advice, from various members of the wool industry including growers, brokers, contractors and other shearing personnel, often relates to which lines the Classer should or should not make or other methods they should use to prepare the clip.

At times some of this well intended advice can be outside the obligations of the Woolclasser who must abide by the Code of Practice (COP) for the Preparation of the Australian Wool Clips. The Classer must evaluate the advice and determine that at least the minimum standards are being observed and hence the lines conform to the COP. Ultimately, by applying their stamp/stencil the Woolclasser is advising that the wool will meet the diverse requirements of processors and maximise competition at sale.

If lines of wool within a clip do not meet the COP, the owner/manager should be advised that a Woolclasser's stamp/stencil cannot be applied. If a Classer is "forced" to apply their stencil, he/she should contact AWEX at the completion of shearing to report this. Note: in circumstances where alternative classing (see COP, Section 17) is advocated, for example, the wool is being privately sold to a processor, it may not be necessary to class to the COP and a stencil may not be required.

Woolclassers should be prepared to listen and discuss various classing options; however, if in doubt remind the provider of the advice of your obligations as a Registered Woolclasser, and do not hesitate to contact AWEX if further clarification is required.

### Completing the Woolclasser's Specification

The Woolclasser's Specification is the key document used by the Classer to formally record the clip preparation outcomes made when classing a clip, while the handling agent uses it to assist them in making lotting decisions and analysing the clip.

Note: When inspecting samples on the show floor, the AWEX auditors and the wool buyers do not have access to the Woolclasser's comments, so make sure the wool in the boxes illustrate why you have made the various lines.

Some of the key points to consider when completing a Classer's Specification are:

- The Woolclasser's Specification must be legible (they are often faxed making them even more difficult to read), accurate and complete. Make sure that the information matches the physical bales and the Wool Book.
- **It is very important that the mob and bale details on the Classer's Specification also mirror those that are written on the National Wool Declaration (NWD).**
- Some rehandle departments do not have access to the Woolclasser's Specification when handling Bulk Class. Therefore, Woolclassers are asked to include the contents in/on the Bulk Class bale (see COP, Section 19) as well as on the Speci.
- Bales that are not prepared by the Woolclasser or do not meet the COP should be recorded on a separate Specification (without the Classer's details). If possible, write down the reason for not including the Woolclasser's ID (stamp/stencil) on the bales.
- The Woolclasser should ensure the grower is aware of the sections they are required to complete on the Speci (i.e. trading name, payment details, etc.). Encourage, and if required, assist the grower to complete the NWD before the start of shearing to help keep mobs of different mulesing status separate.
- After providing a copy of the Classer's Speci to the grower and the broker, try to keep a copy for your own records. A standard Classer's Specification and the NWD can be downloaded from the AWEX website [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au).

### The Contamination Screening Process

AWEX auditors, as part of their role, receive samples from AWTA Ltd that may contain an in-bale contaminant. The samples are taken as part of routine core sampling with possible contaminants identified during laboratory testing.

AWEX inspects the samples and decides what action to take based on the type of contaminant found in the sample. If the sample contains; for example, woven material, metal or plastic, AWEX requests that the broker inspect the bales to remove the contaminant. The inspection involves stripping the bales down and going through every bale in that sale lot. This is very time-consuming and costly, with the lot withdrawn from sale until it is inspected.

Since 1998, 20% of all lots reported by AWTA Ltd have returned a positive result; that is, the contaminant has been found in the bale. The most common contaminants are woven material (19%) - usually a shirt or cloth, followed by plastic (16%) as well as lamb batts, lunch room rubbish, emery paper, metal, wood, wire, plastic etc.

The number of lots reported to AWEX has remained steady and indicates that Woolclassers, wool growers and shed staff all need to be vigilant to eliminate this preventable form of contamination.

#### For further information:

Greg Sawyer, Yennora NSW, ph. 02 9632 6166, [gsawyer@awex.com.au](mailto:gsawyer@awex.com.au)

David Williams, Brooklyn VIC, ph. 03 9318 0277, [dwilliams@awex.com.au](mailto:dwilliams@awex.com.au)

David Aslett, Fremantle WA, ph. 08 9434 6999, [daslett@awex.com.au](mailto:daslett@awex.com.au)

## ADVANCE NOTICE: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Woolclassers please mark in your diaries that on Wednesday 16th June 2010 (evening), the 20th Annual Woolclasser's Forum will be held in Bendigo, Victoria. In recognition of the 20th Anniversary of this important wool industry event, the Key Note Speaker will be well known industry personality Charlie Massy, author of The Australian Merino.

The Bendigo Woolclasser's Forum has gained a reputation as the one of the most informative events about wool and the wool industry. We expect that this year's event, being the 20th Anniversary, will be no exception.

#### For further information:

Athol Frederick,  
p. (03) 5448-3881 m. 0428 510 518 or  
e. [athol.frederick@landmark.com.au](mailto:athol.frederick@landmark.com.au)

## PRINCE CHARLES TO PUSH AUSSIE WOOL

Prince Charles has leapt to the aid of Australian, New Zealand and British wool producers, launching a project to increase demand for fleece. Concerned about the low prices farmers have been receiving for wool, The Prince has teamed up with growers from the three nations and UK retail giant Marks and Spencer to make wool fashionable again.

A consumer campaign starting in autumn and a special wool week to take place in September will tell the public about the advantages of the use of sustainable, natural wool fibre in the fashion, carpet and insulation industries.

For further details go to: [www.princeofwales.gov.uk](http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk) and in the search box type "The Wool Project"

## 2010 - 2012 CLASSER REGISTRATION

Woolclasser registration for the 2010-2012 period is currently open. As at 31st January 2010, the following Woolclasser registrations had been received by AWEX:

Australian Woolclasser:	8,564
Owner Classer:	8,038
Classer Associate:	1,005
Masterclasser:	114
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>17,721</b>

Registration forms were sent to Woolclassers in October with follow up reminders in December and January. To date re-registration is running at approximately 78%. It is important that the industry has enough qualified and Registered Woolclassers to class the Australian clip and ensure that farm brands are eligible to receive a 'P' certificate. AWEX is already seeing that there are large discounts for wool not classed by a Registered Classer and wool not prepared according to the Code of Practice.

<b>ACT</b>	74.5%
<b>NSW</b>	78.5%
<b>QLD</b>	73.0%
<b>SA</b>	81.5%
<b>TAS</b>	78.0%
<b>VIC</b>	79.5%
<b>WA</b>	74.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78.5%</b>

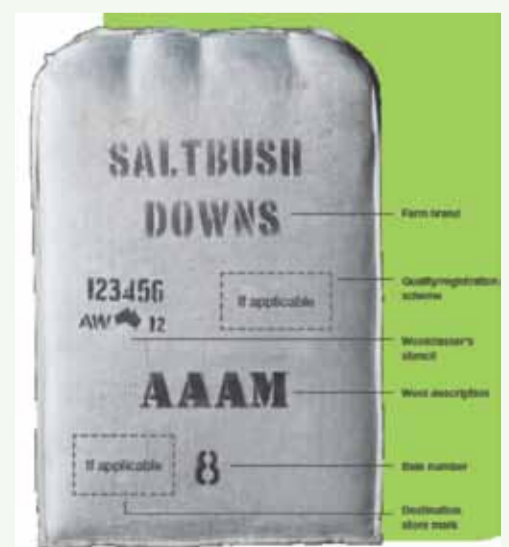
If you are aware of any Woolclassers who have not yet registered for 2010 - 2012, ask them to contact their local AWEX office or AWEX Head Office on: 02 9428 6100

This year AWEX introduced online registration and in its first year of operation, 22.5% of Woolclassers registered using the new AWEX on-line facility. This is an excellent result as the registration is immediate and ensures that stencils and the Code of Practice are delivered in the quickest possible time. The successful use of the online facility will open up new opportunities for Woolclassers in the future.

## REMINDER: The Bale Face MUST be Branded

The face of the bale MUST be branded with the Farm Brand, Wool Description, Bale Number and the Woolclasser's Stencil (see diagram). Do not apply a Bin Code to the face of a bale.

Where required, Quality/Membership Scheme Brands or Rail (destination) Stencils may also be applied. The information branded on the bale face must not conflict with that written on the bale label or marked on the bale head.



## MASTERCLASSER MATTERS

Over the past two years AWEX has invested some of its training resources towards developing the expertise and profile of AW stencil holders through its Masterclasser Program. Professional Woolclassers are identified for their skill and influence on the Australian wool clip, as well as the quantity of wool they class and their character. By providing support to this group of key influential people, they in turn have shown their commitment to the Australian wool industry.

The program involves invited participants attending an intensive four day workshop at a wool selling centre. Masterclasser attendees receive training on topics including, but not limited to, AWEX-ID and its application, managing the workforce, current buying trends, Occupational Health and Safety and the Code of Practice. There are now over 110 registered Masterclassers Australia-wide.

**The next Masterclasser Courses are scheduled to be held in May (Melbourne and Sydney) and June (Fremantle). AW stencil holders who wish to nominate are asked to check the AWEX website [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au) for updates or contact Greg Sawyer on 0414 314 703.**

**To retain Masterclasser status for the next registration period, the MC must:**

- Class a (minimum) average of 4 clips and 250 bales per annum per registration period,
- Record no more than 1.5% of lots with a Scale 3 Clip Inspection issue in a 3 year period, and
- Aggregate a minimum of 10 training credits per registration period.

**Training Credits Schedule:**

- Attendance at a BOARDtalk regional seminar:  
10 credit points
- Attendance at a Masterclasser update course:  
10 credit points
- Attendance at a wool sale:  
4 credit points
- Completion of recognised relevant TAFE or CAE subjects:
  - Computer Skills: 4 credit points
  - Business Studies: 5 credit points
  - First Aid Update: 5 credit points
  - AWI Shearer/Shedhand Training: 5 credit points
- Completion of a relevant certificate, diploma or degree\*  
7 credit points
- Wool Industry related training\*: On application  
\*subject to application, relevancy and approval. Points awarded on relevancy.

Successful completion of the Masterclasser course in a registration period is recognised as 10 credit points.

Where a Masterclasser does not complete the requirements, the registration shall default back to the Woolclasser's original registration category at the following registration period. Woolclassers who wish to be re-instated as a Masterclasser category must demonstrate a record that meets the retention criteria.



Masterclasser students at the Newcastle Course discussing traditional Superfine wools with Peter Meakes, Australian Wool Network.

## NATIONAL WOOL DECLARATION (NWD) – MULESING

### Annual Review of the NWD

In September 2009, after calling for submissions to the annual review of the NWD, AWEX received substantial feedback from a cross-section of International and Australian wool organisations. Given the intense interest in this topic, AWEX's Industry Services Advisory Committee (with its membership extended to provide wide industry representation) has met numerous times to ensure a considered review. At the time of printing, no recommendations have been made to the AWEX Board; however, it is anticipated that the next meetings scheduled for February and March 2010 will allow its finalisation.

The formal release of the revised NWD (Version 3.0) to wool information systems is July 2010. However, every effort is being made to provide sellers with the revised form as soon possible so they can organise the next print run of their shearing stationery.

### Correct Completion of the NWD

Desktop audits of the NWD compare the information provided in the Classer's Specification, the NWD and the data entered by the broker. Anomalies that may result in an incorrect Mulesing Status can be detected prior to sale, with a correction then made to the Sale Catalogue and Test Certificate. If an anomaly is found, the Auditor contacts the broker involved who, if necessary, contacts the grower to double check the details.

The number of successful NWD audits has increased since the implementation of the Desktop Audit, as it has helped inform growers and brokers on correct completion and data entry. Currently, the most common errors made relate to:

- Declaring Pain Relief (PR) on mobs of sheep that are too old\* to have been mulesed with PR. This often occurs with mixed age mobs. Older sheep should be classed out prior to shearing to allow the wool from the younger sheep to have PR status.  
\*PR was commercially released at the end of 2005, which at this time makes 4 year old sheep the oldest age group that can claim PR status.
- Wool (e.g. oddments) from mobs of mixed Mulesing Status is not allocated the "lowest common denominator", viz:
  - Non-Mulesed sheep and Mulesed sheep should be allocated Mulesed status.
  - Sheep Mulesed with PR and Mulesed sheep should be allocated Mulesed status.
  - Non-Mulesed sheep and sheep Mulesed with PR should be allocated Mulesed with PR status.

### On Farm Mulesing Audit

AWEX, with funding from Australian Wool Innovation, established a Working Group comprising veterinarians, woolgrowers, state department/primary industry representatives, AWI and AWEX staff to develop the protocols and technical requirements for an Australia-wide On Farm Mulesing Audit (OFMA). In combination with the Desktop Mulesing audit, an OFMA is considered essential to the ongoing reputation of and support for the NWD, both locally and internationally.

A prototype framework was trialled in September 2009 in NSW commencing in Dubbo and travelling through Gilgandra, Nyngan, Parkes, Forbes, Grenfell, Orange, Boorowa, Yass and Cooma. A number of important outcomes/recommendations resulted from this trial:

- The following options: non-mulesed, mulesed, tail stripped and clips can be identified through physical inspection of the sheep and thus can be audited on farm. The differentiation of Intradermals (Skin-Traction) awaits confirmation of the application pattern; however, a Desktop Audit will be available. Note: The use of Pain Relief can also be audited by a paper trail.
- The OFMA protocols can be applied across all environments; noting that different approaches are required when auditing pastoral properties compared to those in sheep/cropping regions or the tablelands. It is envisaged that the Auditor will communicate with the grower/manager a few weeks prior to the audit to facilitate a time that, within reason, best suits both parties.
- The OFMA visits are very powerful training opportunities; therefore, it is important to appoint an independent Auditor who can discuss all aspects of mulesing.
- The statistical basis for the OFMA audit has been confirmed. The audits are designed to identify an estimated 2% False Declarations within the dataset of Non-Mulesed declarations at 99% Level of Confidence. Similarly, it aims to identify 2% Mulesed sheep in a Non-Mulesed mob (at 99% Confidence).
- It is anticipated that completion of an OFMA would result in the grower/manager receiving a status report that indicates the level of conformance to the OFMA criteria.

In the case of non-conformance (e.g. a deliberate false declaration, greater than 1% mulesed sheep in a mob without an explanation, or refusal to undergo an audit), the buyer will be advised that the lot(s) they purchased were not the Mulesing Status appearing in the Sale Catalogue and Test Certificate. The correct status and the circumstances involved would be advised.

While some of the finer details of an OFMA program including how it would be funded are yet to be finalised, it is anticipated that the program will commence in 2010.

### Non-Merino Sheep/Crosses and the NWD

While the Dark and Medullated Fibre Risk Scheme is only applicable to Merinos, a declaration of Mulesing Status can be made for any breed of sheep. Regardless of the end use of the wool (e.g. apparel or interior textiles), buyers and processors want to know whether the sheep producing the wool were mulesed or not. So use the NWD to promote the animal welfare practices of your enterprise.

Make sure your broker provides you with a NWD or go to the AWEX website to download a copy. On the NWD, complete all the property information and then answer whether you have ceased mulesing or not. For some Non-Merino breeds/crosses the answer is Yes, because they have never been mulesed!

Then to complete a valid declaration, fill out the details for each mob, viz. Mob No., Mob Breaks, Age Code, Breed Code, Sex Code, Mob Mulesed and Pain Relief Use and then date and sign the NWD.

For Merinos, also answer the questions on Contact with Shedding Breeds and Crutching History.

**Note:** A month by month graph of the bales of wool of different Mulesing Status sold at auction is shown on Page 4.

### For further information contact:

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