With over 65% of Australian wool exported to China, it is important that the end users have a basic understanding of Australian wool clip preparation and the standards prescribed in the Woolclassers Code of Practice.

Woolclassers may recall two open letters written to the Australian Wool Industry by the Chinese Wool Textile Organisation expressing concern over the quality of Australian wool.

To address some of these concerns the Australian Wool Exchange was involved in a two day industry training event in Zhangjiagang, China. Australian Wool Innovation and the Australian Wool Testing Authority were co-presenters. The objective of the training event was to:

• improve Chinese knowledge of Australian Wool Quality systems, and
• improve communication between Australian Wool Industry bodies and Chinese wool processors.

Over 200 participants attended representing 58 companies. Participants had the opportunity to review 107 representative grab samples from Australian sale lots. These samples included typical examples of fine, medium and broad wool clips. Also displayed were lots that were identified as failing wool clip preparation standards as described in the Australian Woolclassers Code of Practice. In addition to the samples, AWEX demonstrated the principles of fleece skirting, this provided attendees with a hands-on opportunity to give some understanding of the work which is undertaken by woolhandlers and woolclassers.

Topics presented included:
• an Introduction to Australian Wool,
• the Woolgrower’s and Woolclasser’s Role,
• the Woolclassers Code of Practice,
• the Role of the Wool Broker,
• the Role of AWEX, AWEX-ID and Clip Inspections/Classing Standards,
• Dark and Medullated Fibre Risk,
• AWTA Objective Measurement and Certification,
• Pre-sale Information,
• the Sale Catalogue,
• the Role of the Wool Buyer.

The training session emphasised (and in turn confirmed) the importance of the three basic principles underpinning the Australian Woolclassers Code of Practice (COP):

• To accurately document and describe each bale.
• To present a product correctly packaged and free of contamination, and
• To prepare uniform, predictable, low risk lines of wool (that meet the needs of wool processors and therefore attract maximum competition at sale time),
• To be aware of the role of the Woolclasser and the different aspects of wool that a Woolclassers’ must be aware of.

Attendees received a copy of the Chinese version of the AWEX Woolclassers’ Code of Practice. The COP is recognised as the Australian standard for wool preparation.

Many questions were asked by those in attendance about the different qualities of wool, how wool is prepared and the training required to be a Woolclasser. The samples provided a range of types, different coloured dusts, lengths and micron to display the diversity of wool grown in Australia.

Everybody recognised the Woolclasser’s stencil and now they understand how this relates to the standard of preparation.

For more information contact:

David Williams, Victorian Wool Centre, Brooklyn, ph. 03 9318 0277.
AWEX Clip Inspection – How Does It Work?

The Australian Wool Exchange undertakes the important function of clip preparation inspection and auditing. This function, conducted by fully-trained, experienced auditors in all selling centres, identifies sale lots classified by a registered woolclasser that do not conform to the Code of Practice (CoP), The Preparation of Australian Wool Clips.

Neither the Woolclasser Registrar nor the auditors see a Woolclasser’s specification prior to auditing or the lot being sold. The selling agent (or wool broker) uses the Classer’s Specification to list the clip for sale and then transmits its catalogue as data to AWEX – this includes the standard wool descriptions. The inspector, the lot, up to 24 hours prior to it being sold, AWEX advises the selling agent of any clip preparation issues. Clip preparation issues identified by AWEX are categorised into classes of quality (one minor and two major detrimental feedback issues) to 3 (major non-conforming lot).

The broker will then inspect the lot and liaise with AWEX auditors on the nature of the clip preparation issue. The broker may appeal the issue.

Approximately one hour prior to sale AWEX will issue a daily report.

Clip Inspection Audits for 2006/07

Nationally, the ten top clip inspection audits for the 2006/07 season were (total lots):

1. Fleece/Sweat Evident (UT) 3,468
2. Heavy Stain not in Description 2,114
3. Odd Grade/Badly Ripped (HR) 2,073
4. Declared: Not prepared to COP 1,487
5. Over or Underweight Bale(s) 942
6. Unclean Bale Description 740
7. Declared: Unskirted Fleece 652
8. Black Fibre XLS (not Declared) 545
9. Mixed Breeds 484
10. Mixed Coloured 482

Total lots with Clip Preparation inspection code of 10.490 or 3.44% of total auction offerings.

What is Organic Farming?

‘Organic agriculture’ is defined worldwide as ‘farming without the addition of artificial chemicals’. An artificial chemical is a substance that has been manufactured or processed chemically and is not a guarantee of the fibre’s characteristics.

From a practical point of view, for the maintenance of organic certification some of the requirements could include things such as sheep are fed organic grain if required; old dip sites be quarantined to manage the potential chemical residue risk; and fences must be good enough to keep neighbours’ stock out. There are a number of allowable inputs for the control of internal and external parasites in sheep that are approved for use in a certified organic livestock enterprise. In terms of fertiliser: green manure crops, compost and rock phosphate are all acceptable but superphosphate is not; because superphosphate is rock phosphate with a manufactured chemical, sulphuric acid added.

Like any other enterprise choice, there is a need for wool producers to consider the pros and cons before making a decision. RPRDC has recently released a comprehensive guide called “Going Organic: Organic Livestock Production – a conversion package for organic livestock production in the rangelands of Western New South Wales”, Copies are available at http://www.indt.gov.au

New Style Appointment

Dr Kerryn Hansford
Quality & Training Program Manager

AWEX is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Kerryn Hansford to the new position of Quality & Training Program Manager. Kerryn is well known to many in the wool industry both locally and internationally. She has a strong wool science background having formerly worked as Project Leader – Raw Wool Metabolism and Early Stage Processing for the CSRIO at Ryde and Geelong; as well as at the International Wool Secretariat in Ryde and London.

More recently Kerryn has been consulting to Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) and Federation of Australian Wool Organisations (FAWO), where in conjunction with the Industry-based Dark and Medullated Fibre Risk Working Group, she has been instrumental in the development and progress of work in this project.

Kerryn’s strong technical background will be an asset to AWEX and will enhance the depth of knowledge in a number of key technical areas.

Included in her responsibilities will be Secretariat to and management of projects emanating from ISAC (Industry Services Advisory Committee), AWEX representation on Industry technical committees, further industry trialling of E-Bale to the delivery of the AWI OFFM-QA project.

Kerry will also manage the review and development of the new training resources for woolclassers incorporating the 2007–09 Code of Practice.

Kerry is based at the AWEX Melbourne office. Contact details for Kerry are:

AWEX
691 Gladstone Rd
BROOKLYN VIC 3025
p. 03 9181 5277
e. khansford@awex.com.au

Woolclasser Activity Report

Season 2006 – 07

The Woolclasser Activity Report provides a list of all wool that has been offered under your Steward Number in the auction system between 1st July 2006 and 30th June 2007. The information presented in this report has been transmitted to AWEX by the selling agents.

The main components of the Woolclasser Activity Report are:

Your Details

The personal information for each registered Woolclasser currently held by AWEX. If details are missing or incorrect, please contact AWEX as soon as possible on 02 9428 6140.

A list of Registered Farm Brands will be printed on reports for Overseas Classers.

Your Auction Activity Details

A complete list of clipped lots offered through auction summarises the wool categories into: Fleece, Pieces, Bales, Weaners, Lambs, Crutching, Locks, Stains and Other. In this section, the Average Bale Weight for each brand is presented as a horizontal bar chart.

Your Clip Inspection Records

A list of preparation issues raised during the period. Records are listed in the order of Inspection Date, Sale Number, Brand, Description, Lot Number, Broker Code and Inspection Result. If any of your clip inspections have an Open status, it indicates AWEX has not received your response. Please follow this up with AWEX as a matter of priority.

This report provides useful, informative feedback for Woolclassers in relation to their performance. Please email woolclassers@awex.com.au or call Wool Services on (02) 9428 6140 if any information on the report appears to be incorrect or if you wish to discuss any issues regarding your Woolclasser Activity Report.

Registration Review Committee

The Registration Review Committee (RRC) reviews the performance of Woolclassers that (repeatedly) breach the Code of Practice or the Woolclasser Rules of Registration. At its meeting on the 20th August 2007 the RRC considered the performance of 11 Woolclassers in addition to the currently 15 under Corrective Action requirements.

NEW! Test Certification to Reflect Clip Preparation standard

We wish to alert woolclassers to a series of changes to the test certification that have been approved by the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO). In general terms, from January 1, 2008 the test certificate type will reflect whether the line of wool meets the industry agreed clip preparation standards. Where a line of wool does not meet the minimum standards (AWEX Scale 3) it shall be assigned to a different certificate type.

This is a significant issue for woolclassers as the preparation status of the wool will now follow documentation through the pipeline to the end user. These changes will apply to woolclassing standards on-farm and in Classing Houses.

Full details will be circulated in the next edition of BOARDtalk. For more details please contact David Cotter 02 9428 6100.

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Just a Remind...
The development of the 2007-2009 Woolclassing Code of Practice (COP) provided the industry with an opportunity to overhaul many areas that were affecting Woolclassers in the workplace. After significant consultation, the industry decided that the previous bale description system was past its use by date. With this significant change to the COP, Woolclassers have been seeking answers to a number of frequently asked questions.

These frequently asked questions are shown below:

Q. I am worried about describing my lines as AAAM. How can I manage this in the shed?

A. Woolclassers can now focus on providing objective measurement of key bale description characteristics. This extra character can be written in the wool book and placed “discreetly” on the bale for in-shed management only.

Q. Why are you asking for Tender, Short and Broad Merino lines now to be called AAAM?

A. These characteristics are now measured objectively as staple length, staple strength and staple micron respectively and are not required in the Bale Description.

Q. If I make a broad line in the shed (previously BBB), what is that line now called?

A. If the wool is broader than the main line it is called AAAM. The Wool Specification must advise that this is a broad line and is not to be omitted with your other fleece lines.

Q. I make a shorter line in the shed (previously AAM) what is that line now called?

A. The wool length is less than the main line and provided the line is going to be tested for staple length describe it as AAAM. The wool specification must also clearly advise that this is a shorter line that the main line.

Q. Does AAA need to be used on NON fleece wool?

A. No. AAA and AA are required on most fleece lines (Adult, Weaner and Lambs) and are optional on non fleece lines. Classers may find them useful on non fleece lines (e.g. Pieces, Bellies etc) where they have made multiple lines and want to identify them separately.

It is important to remember the following:

“Using the new bale description system relies on good in-shed management and strong communication between the Woolclasser and the Presser. Bins must be identified clearly. The new bale description system does not change the principles of classing. The Woolclasser still needs to make sure the main fleece fits the subsequent lines according to this standard woolclassing principles (see Section 5).” Pg 65 of the 2007-2009 Code of Practice for Woolclassing.

New Graduates’ Woolclassing Competition

Contestants were required to class three different wool types being Crossbred, Medium/Strong Merino and Fine/Superfine Merino wool. They were also required to use their skills to apply AWEX-ID, estimate prices on prepared wool lots and for each classing exercise write up a classifier’s specification report.

“The woolclassers were able to put what they had learned on display and in a pressured environment. Each contestant displayed an incredible amount of concentration and focus to their skills to themselves but also to the TAFE training colleges. The results were quite outstanding,” said Mark Grave, AWEX CEO. The winner of the 2007 VICTAS Graduate Woolclasser of the Year Competition was Meg Chandler, Hamilton, trained at South West TAFE, second place to John Leach, Rheola (BRIT) and third place went to Ethan Merton, McLeod (NMIT).

The winner of the Sydney Rural Easter Show competition was Florence Klingner, Forbes (Western Institute of TAFE), second place to Simon Tatters, NMIT (Western Institute of TAFE), third place to Andrew J Warthington, Caringbah (Hunter Institute of TAFE).

M Grave said, “An important element of the competition was for the students to have experienced judges that could provide beneficial and constructive feedback to each contestant. My congratulations go to each contestant for being part of an important competition for the wool industry and the spirit in which they participated.”
From the Registrar

Greg Sawyer
Phone: 02 9428 6144
Email: greg_sawyer@awex.com.au

AWEX Clip Inspection Review

AWEX recently convened a workshop with nominated Woolclasser and Broker representatives to review clip inspection reporting practices. This workshop has allowed these representatives to have input and contribute to the process procedures used by AWEX in conducting and communicating clip inspections. This review was conducted in the context that the AWEX clip inspection is a function supporting the objectives and policies defined in the Woolclassers’ Code of Practice, namely:

- To prepare uniform, predictable, low risk lines of wool;
- To present a product correctly packaged and free of contamination; and, to
- Accurately document and describe each bale of wool.

The Code of Practice is non-sectorial and is written for the benefit of the pipeline and to enhance the Australian wool clip in a global environment. If the Woolclasser believes at the time of preparation that the wool preparation does not comply with the standards described in the Code of Practice, then the Woolclasser is invited to contact the Registrar.

Wool Bale Description Chart

All Woolclassers are advised that AWEX has available the large bale description charts for the shearing shed. This chart is part of a series of posters currently being developed.

Single Sourced Wool

In the course of a show floor clip preparation audit, AWEX and Buyers query some lots for potentially multiple source wool. These lots typically display mixed characteristics not seen in a Mob as defined in the AWEX Woolclassers’ Code of Practice. Where a query had been raised as to the origin of the wool on the show floor, AWEX will be seeking documents from the selling agent that clearly allows trace back to the single farm source. Where the origin of the wool is demonstrated to come from a single farm source, AWEX is then able to assess the lot from a Woolclasser clip preparation perspective; namely, whether the Woolclasser has exceeded the Mob concept or Lotting across Mobs as documented in the Woolclassers’ Code of Practice.

Woolsearch

Readers are advised that the Woolsearch website for Woolclassers, Shearers and Wool Handlers has been migrated into the corporate AWEX website (www.awex.com.au). The two sites have been merged to offer a single point of reference for the Woolclasser community. Woolsearch provides an opportunity for all Woolclassers, Shearers and Wool Handlers to be placed on an internet employment database.

Woolclasser Code of Practice – Downloads

The AWEX website now includes the following Code of Practice downloads:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ),
- Pre-sale Preparation checklist,
- Change Log,
- Woolclasser’s specification sheet (generic),
- Bulk class tear off tags.

These downloads can be found in the Woolclasser section under Code of Practice.

Final Word...

AWEX is a small team of professional and experienced wool people who work with the overall wool industry to further enhance and develop industry standards. If you have any questions or queries on wool industry standards or compliance, please phone 02 9428 6140, email: greg_sawyer@awex.com.au or fax: 02 9420 9633 and our staff will be able to assist you further in working with the world’s best woolclip.

Change of Details

If you have changed your details, please fax (02) 9420 9633 or email woolclasser@awex.com.au with your postcode number and address details.

Change of address details –

Please fill in details below and post or fax this coupon to AWEX Head Office or email us

For Owner Classers

Registered Bale Brands

1. 

PO Box 823

Lane Cove NSW 1595

Telephone: (02) 9428 6140

Facsimile: (02) 9420 9633

woolclasser@awex.com.au

Northern Region

PO BOX 195

Guildford NSW 2161

Phone: (02) 9632 6166

Southern Region

691 Geelong Road

Brockleyn VIC 3025

Phone: (03) 9318 0277

Western Region

PO BOX 1280

Fremantle WA 6160

Phone: (08) 9454 6999

North AWEX

South AWEX

West AWEX

East AWEX

www.woolcheque.com.au

www.awex.com.au

JUST A REMINDER...

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To find qualified Woolclassers, Shearers and Shed Hands.

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- Hundreds of listings
- Easiest to use. Search by postcode or town

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- Work wanted section
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Phone: (03) 9318 0277

Western Region

PO BOX 1280

Fremantle WA 6160

Phone: (08) 9454 6999

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