

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012

## UPDATE - AWEX WOOL PACK TRIALS

Considerable progress has now been made in the conduct of wool packs trials currently being undertaken by AWEX. These trials are part of a review of the wool pack standard, with the primary aim of quantifying the factors contributing to over-length bales and evaluating whether modification(s) to the woolpack can help resolve the problem.

As previously mentioned, the early indications from preliminary trials are that breed (XB vs. Merino) and wool length (M FLC vs. M LMS and MLKS) affect the length of a bale. These and other factors, such as bale weight and the type of wool press, are being considered in the On Farm Trials currently being conducted in NSW and VIC.

### **Current Trials - Evaluation of Newly Designed Wool Packs**

AWEX commissioned the manufacture of three variants to the current standard wool pack that may improve the performance of the packs (in terms of bale length) and thus help reduce the occurrence of over-width loads. One variant has been removed from the trial as early results showed it had little or no impact on improving bale length. The wool packs, which are currently being trialed under normal shearing shed conditions, include:

1. Standard Wool Pack: Standard 3 panel construction.
2. Variant 1: Standard wool pack with 4 sewn seams in the base; a 5 panel construction,
3. Variant 2: Standard wool pack with 4 sewn seams; a 5 panel construction, with reinforced strips weaved into each panel.

Also being evaluated on the packs described above is a Bale Fastening Guide (BFG). The BFG is a line sewn onto each flap of the pack, which will ultimately act as a guide for the correct placing of bale fasteners.

Over the past 4½ months, AWEX staff have travelled to properties and wool stores in NSW and VIC to evaluate the packs under a wide variety of conditions. To date, properties assisting with the pack trials have been located as far afield as Carrathool, Narandera, Tarcutta, Temora, The Rock and Wilcannia, NSW and Beaufort, Byaduk, Moyston, Peshurst, Skipton and Yendon, VIC. Thirteen properties and seven different broking companies have been involved.

Approximately 550 packs have been measured in these locations on wool ranging from superfine to medium Merino through to a variety of Crossbred types. Additionally a variety of wool press "makes" (both corner and side pinning) have been used on the different properties adding another variant to the trial design.

This trial will be finalised over the next 3 weeks, with an additional 200 packs to be allocated to properties around Coolah, Dubbo, Gundagai and Temora, NSW.

Once all the data has been collated and analysed, additional proving trials (see next page) will be undertaken.

Update Reference: 3009 Wool Pack Trial

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## **Proving Trials – Evaluation of Preferred Pack and Bale Fastening Guide**

Given the large number of factors in the pack trials described above, it is necessary to conduct a second set of trials, called Proving Trials, to allow the final determination of any potential changes to the wool pack standard to be made.

In this set of trials, a “preferred pack” to be chosen from the 3 variants will again be compared with the current standard pack. In both cases, the Bale Fastening Guide will be used, with the Proving Trials enabling its correct and final position to be confirmed.

Adding to the complexity of the work, the Proving Trials will also consider the use of a raised floor in the different “makes” of wool press.

It is anticipated that the Proving Trials will run from the beginning of April to the end of June 2012, with the final results and analysis to be known in July 2012. An extension program, which is currently being planned, will follow immediately after the Proving Trials are complete.

Those wishing to be involved in the Proving Trials are welcome to contact AWEX (see contact details below); however, the inclusion of properties may not always be possible, depending on location of the property and the availability of AWEX staff.

## **Acknowledgement of Assistance**

Once again, AWEX extends its gratitude to the wool growers and brokers who have been involved in the pack trials. AWEX staff have greatly appreciated the assistance given by those involved, especially as the trials involve some assistance in moving bales in shearing sheds and wool stores.

### ***For further information contact:***

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