

2nd October 2018

AWEX Code of Practice Review

Major Outcomes

The AWEX Board has approved the recommendations made by the Industry Services Advisory Committee (ISAC) with respect to the triennial review of the Code of Practice (*Preparation of Australian Wool Clips: The Wool Classer*). The review of the Code of Practice (COP) was comprehensive and involved the consideration of submissions from wool classers, wool growers, selling agents, exporters and other stakeholders, with additional input from international customers of Australian wool.

Wool Classer Re-Registration for the triennium 2019-2021 will commence in October 2018.

The major outcomes from the review are described below.

1. Wool Classer Presence in the Shearing Shed at all Times

Misuse of a Wool Classer's stencil can negatively impact the reputation of the Australian wool industry. To support the integrity of Australian wool, the Rules of Registration for Wool Classers have been strengthened; that is, the Wool Classer must be present in the shed, in which they class, at all times during the shearing, thereby authorising their stencil/stamp to be put on every bale prepared by them.

In addition, AWEX is:

1. Re-introducing Wool Classer Stamps/Stencils with a visible expiry date, and
2. All AW/MC Wool Classers will be issued with an Identification Card. The ID Card will also hold the expiry date which will enable growers to be confident that the classer employed is a registered and qualified classer.

2. Wool Classer Reputation Management

The revised Rules of Registration and COP emphasise the role of the Wool Classer, not only as being responsible for the preparation of the wool and management of the wool handling team, but also their obligation to uphold the integrity of Wool Classing and the Wool Classer registration scheme.

The Wool Classer must refrain from acting in a way as to bring the role of the Wool Classer, the Registration Scheme and AWEX into disrepute.

3. Drugs and Alcohol Policy

References in the COP to Work Health & Safety policies and procedures now includes the adherence to the 2017 Drugs and Alcohol in the Shearing Industry policy.

4. Electronic Classer's Specifications

Electronic Classer's Specifications (as well as electronic bale identification) offer improved accuracy as well as increased efficiencies to the wool industry. Their use by Wool Classers and wool growers/managers is strongly encouraged, with the COP reflecting this view.

5. Clip Preparation – Skirting vs. Non Skirting

A major consideration of the COP review was the matter of Skirting vs. Non-Skirting as it relates to Clip Preparation, Certification and the reputation of the Australian wool clip.

AWEX sought input on this issue from international customers of Australian wool.

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There was overwhelming support for there to be no change to the COP as it relates to skirting and the clip preparation of Australian wool. Skirting will remain a key component of defining whether wool has been classed and is compliant with the Wool Classer COP.

A “non-skirted” suffix for bale descriptions will not be added to the COP.

This determination was supported by feedback from the customers of Australian wool, the exporters and processors, who felt that the standard and reputation of Australian wool preparation needed to be maintained to remain competitive in a global market place; and, that preparation to this Code meets their very diverse needs. Exporters and processors want to see a Classer in the shed as it demonstrates a chain of responsibility that they have confidence in, and every effort should be made to promote the COP standard as our customers view it as extremely important.

Unskirted wool and wool not prepared to the COP is still able to be offered for sale with a D Certificate (Wool Preparation Category).

6. Update to Breed Codes

Breed Codes can assist wool growers in selling their product and buyers in sourcing it. Polwarth wool can now be described using the Breed Code PW (e.g. AAA PW, PW PCS), see the Classing Crossbred section.

7. Description of Downs Cross Composites

Many different breeds are used to produce a Composite Breed, with Downs crosses becoming more common. A Crossbred description for such wool is not always appropriate as the wool displays Downs characteristics. To assist the Wool Classer to correctly describe wool from Downs composites, a Downs Cross (DX) description has been added to the COP, see the Classing Downs Wool section.

8. Classing Crossbred Wool

The alignment of MFD categories and counts was reviewed with the following changes made:

Crossbred Sub-Group	MFD Range (µm)	Quality Counts
Comeback	26 µm and finer	64s, 60s, 58s
FX	27 – 29 µm	56s
MX	30 – 33 µm	50s, 46s
CX	≥34 µm	44s, 40s, 36s

9. Prematurely Shorn Wool

Growers are more commonly changing the frequency of shearing, usually moving to shorter shearing intervals. This topic has been expanded and is covered in the Merino and Crossbred Classing sections.

10. Weaners Description

The removal of the description (WNS) for Weaner wool was not supported. There are technical reasons for using a Weaner description; that is, (a) research has shown higher levels of dark and medullated fibre (DMF) in wool from young sheep at their 1st shearing, and (b) wool from a 1st shearing is excluded from the Merino DMFR Scheme, and it does not receive a Risk Rating. A Weaner description is an indicator of potential DMF risk.

11. Shanks

Due to their high medullated fibre content, the importance of keeping Shanks separate from all other wool types is emphasised in the COP.

12. Stain

All references to Stain now specifically refer to Urine Stain. Other references to stain; for example, Water, Pen and Canary, are now referred to as either 'Colour' or 'Affected'. The COP will provide greater clarity for describing of lines containing Urine Stain wool, which should help address issues of non-conforming lines of mixed length and/or wool category.

13. Goats

The reference to Goats has been removed from all entries related to "Run with", and instead are referred to as visible dark and medullated fibre contamination by Other Animals.

The "Run with" reference was removed due to the different herding behavior of goats and their lower level of seasonal shedding when compared with Shedding Breed sheep. Any visible dark or medullated goat fibre in wool must have a Y or K suffix appended to the bale description.

AWEX would like to thank all contributors for their input and submissions to the Review of the 2019-21 Code of Practice: Preparation of Australian Wool Clips.

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