

29 July 2014

AWEX Wool Pack Changes Approved

AWEX has been advised by the Department of Agriculture that the changes to the AWEX wool pack standard have been approved and has come into effect as at 24th July 2014.

AWEX commenced an extensive review of the wool pack in 2011 to address safety concerns raised by the NSW Government and RMS (formerly NSW RTA). Safety concerns were related to overwidth transport loads of wool bales on NSW roads.

As a result of the approval, any wool packs manufactured under the old standard and imported into Australia from today will require special approval by the Minister.

In addition the final date for importation of wool packs under the old standard is 31st October 2014.

After this date **ONLY** wool packs meeting the new wool pack standard will be able to be imported.

It is important to note that all wool packs currently in Australia or imported on or before the 31st October 2014 cut off, are still able to be used and sold in Australia. There are limited stocks of wool packs in Australia and wool growers and merchandise outlets will not be disadvantaged by this change.

The Australian wool industry is eagerly awaiting the 'new' standard wool packs to improve the safety performance of wool transports in complying with each states road regulations. It is expected that we will start to see the new wool packs in Australia towards the end of 2014.

Wool Pack Changes

Changes in the new wool pack standard are minimal but will provide maximum impact i.e. to reduce the length of a wool bale to 1.25m or less.

The changes include:

1. A four seamed base; to give greater structural integrity to the bale and reduce the 'bulge' of the base, and
2. The introduction of the 'Bale Fastening Guide' (BFG) on each flap of the wool pack to assist wool presser's by indicating best practice placement for bale fasteners.

The BFG is a stitched line on each flap of the wool pack which, when used, will enable a wool bale to achieve a length of 1.25m or less.

All other wool pack dimensions and specifications are unchanged. The capacity of the wool pack remains unchanged.

AWEX is mindful of the level of investment the industry has in equipment to handle the current wool bale. Importantly, the intention is to reduce the length of the wool bale to 1.25m or less.

members' update

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Background

As part of the review AWEX conducted extensive trials to identify the key issues which would enable wool bales to achieve a length of 1.25m or less. The factors which caused over length bales had a direct impact on the width of loads of wool bales and importantly the review assessed what constructive changes could be made to improve this issue.

The AWEX trials covered a cross section of wool types, breed types, wool press brands and farming zones, including pastoral and intensive farming, to arrive at a pragmatic solution.

The wool pack review was an excellent example of the industry's ability to work with Government and road regulatory bodies to achieve an outcome in resolving a safety issue. The new wool packs represent a positive step for the industry.

All manufacturers and importers have been notified of this change. All manufacturers have been kept up to date on the progress of the trials and the changes to be implemented.

The final date for importing the 'old' wool pack is 31st October 2014.

After that date all wool packs must meet the new standard.

For further information, contact:

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