

# boardtalk

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1st January 2016

## Minimum Bale Weight to 120 kilograms

The minimum bale weight (for non-specialty wool) will increase from 110 kg to 120 kg from 1st January 2016.

The Bale Weight standard in detail:

- **The minimum bale weight (for non specialty wool) to be increased to 120 kg,**
- **The increase is to be effective from 1st January 2016,**
- **There will be no change to the maximum bale weight (it remains at 204 kg), and**
- **Single bale lines of specialty superfine fleece wool (Australian Superfine [ASF4] or better) 18.5 micron and finer may have a minimum gross weight of 90kg. This is unchanged.**

Industry analysis, conducted by the Australian Council of Wool Exporters and Processors and Private Treaty Wool Merchants of Australia, showed that 1.9% of all bales weigh between 110 - 119 kg and that these bales impact on 9.1% of all lots. This is significant, particularly from a buyer and grower perspective, as each bale can incur costs on a per bale basis. It is in everyone's interests to optimise each bale rather than press low weight bales.

Mark Grave, AWEX CEO said "We understand that no-one sets out to press low weight bales, everyone would want more wool, not less; but it's the unintended consequences of low weight bales that are of concern here, such as increased costs per kilogram and potentially less stable wool bales."

"There is general agreement that the industry can improve the standard of wool pressing and that an industry based education and awareness campaign is paramount to achieving the best result.

Woolgrowers, woolclassers and classing houses should start preparing for the implementation as it coincides with the release of the 2016 - 18 Woolclasser Code of Practice.

### For further information contact:

Mark Grave, tel: 02 9428 6100  
email: [mgrave@awex.com.au](mailto:mgrave@awex.com.au)

## From the Australian Wool Exporters

The Australian Council of Wool Exporters and Processors (ACWEP) is totally supportive of changes to the AWEX Code of Practice to increase the minimum bale weight for non-specialty type wools from January 2016. Wool Exporters prefer to buy heavier weight bales.

ACWEP, together with the Private Treaty Wool Merchants of Australia (PTWMA), conducted analyses of AWTA test data that led to the initial proposals to increase the minimum bale weight.

The reasons for making these proposals related to reducing work safety and health issues, handling difficulties in the warehouse and in transport; and difficulties incurred on the sampling line that are associated with lighter weight bales. These issues are important in containing costs incurred by wool growers and others involved in the wool industry pipeline between the farm and the wool scour.

ACWEP advocates that all bales are pressed to the heaviest possible weights because of the cost advantage achieved when per bale charges are converted to a per kilo basis. The heavier the bale, the smaller the cost per kilo. Charges incurred from the shearing shed to dockside can add to over \$100 per bale. The following table covers per bale charges of \$90 to a per kilo basis.

Charge per Bale = \$90	
Average Bale Weight	Cost /kg (greasy)
190 kg	47¢
180 kg	50¢
150 kg	60¢
130 kg	69¢
110 kg	82¢

The charges for some of the services (see table) are transparent to the grower. But, others are not, as they are incurred by the buyer in the buying and exporting processes.

ACWEP is aware that most growers expect their bales to be pressed to heavy weights and no-one sets out to press a minimum weight bale. The average weight of bales tested by AWTA in 2013/14 was 176 kg. But, the number of lighter weight bales is significant. For example, 8.2% of bales were less than 140 kg.

Wool classers have a key role to play in achieving these goals and reducing wool growers' direct and indirect costs.

ACWEP is not aware of all the reasons for the presence of lighter weight bales. But it does know from the analyses conducted with PTWMA that it is often just one bale in a lot and that it is often the last bale.

Ensuring that all non-specialty bales are pressed to the new minimum of 120 kg; and preferably to the heaviest possible weights (but still within the maximum of 204 kg), will assist in safety and handling; will reduce per kg costs and improve returns through the wool supply chain.



**Chris Kelly**  
President,  
Australian Council  
of Wool Exporters  
and Processors

## Bale Weight Stickers

AWEX is also releasing a new set of 3 bale weight stickers. The stickers can be applied to wool presses so that everyone in the shed is aware of the Australian standard for wool bales.

The stickers will be available from AWEX via Boardtalk and Woolclasser registration commencing on 1st October, direct from AWEX, as well as through brokers and private treaty merchants.



# AWEX Bale Weight Calculator App

**AWEX is pleased to announce the release of a Bale Weight Calculator App (BWC).**

The BWC is a decision-support tool that lets the user model different line pressing outcomes based on the forecast or actual wool output. AWEX CEO Mark Grave: "The BWC was developed in response to industry concerns regarding the consequences of low weight bales through the pipeline. We understand that no-one sets out to press low weight bales, everyone wants more wool, not less; but it's the unintended consequences of low weight bales that are of concern, such as high costs on a per kilogram basis and potentially less stable wool bales."

"Many of the costs that are incurred by growers and buyers are based on a per bale charge, not per kilogram." said Mark Grave "Costs such as transport, warehousing and even testing fees are charged on the number of bales and not kilograms so it makes perfect sense to optimize these services and press heavier wool bales."

**The BWC is a single screen with 3 expandable sections:**

1. Input forecast data of the line (Green section)
2. Input actual data (during shearing) (Orange section)
3. Results of 5 possible pressing strategy outcomes (Grey section)

The input of actual data in the orange section as the wool is being shorn allows the user to adjust their pressing strategies as the line develops.

The new BWC App offers five different strategies to consider from: pressing the heaviest bales first, managing the end of a line over one or two bales, to averaging the weight of each bale across a line of wool. "The BWC App allows the user to set their own maximum and minimum weights, provided that they are within the 120kg – 204kg range. This means that the woolclasser, wool presser and grower are in control and can optimize the wool leaving the shed."

The AWEX BWC can be downloaded and used for free via smart phones running Android or iOS from the respective Google and Apple App Stores.

**For more information contact:**

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## Congratulations

to all of our 50 Year Woolclassers for your continued commitment and valued contribution to the Australian wool industry.

### WOOLCLASSER 50 YEAR HONOUR ROLL Registered 1965

AW	<b>Garry Anderson</b>	WYANGALA	NSW	AW	<b>Bruce McGregor</b>	MALDON	VIC
AW	<b>Gerry Balding</b>	COLEBROOK	TAS	AW	<b>Milton Mincherton</b>	NOLBA	WA
AW	<b>Graham Barwick</b>	MOREE CREEK	NSW	AW	<b>Phillip Noonan</b>	MERBIEN	VIC
AW	<b>Max Bright</b>	ROMA	QLD	AW	<b>Noel Oliver</b>	TREVALLYN	TAS
AW	<b>David Burger</b>	PORT PIRIE	SA	AW	<b>Barry Pitt</b>	COONAWARRA	SA
AW	<b>Kenneth Champion</b>	ORFORD	TAS	AW	<b>Tony Price</b>	PYRAMUL	NSW
AW	<b>Anthony Cole</b>	DERNANCOURT	SA	AW	<b>Christopher Rathjen</b>	BIRDWOOD	SA
AW	<b>Michael Colvin</b>	GRENVILLE	VIC	AW	<b>Noel Rendell</b>	HEXHAM	VIC
AW	<b>Adrian Cooke</b>	YASS	NSW	AW	<b>David Rothery</b>	MOLONG	NSW
AW	<b>William Coutts</b>	CRESWICK	VIC	AW	<b>Terrence Rubie</b>	CHINCHILLA	QLD
AW	<b>Raymond Galley</b>	DUBBO	NSW	AW	<b>Maurie Sharkey</b>	GOORNONG	VIC
AW	<b>D Gay</b>	FROGMORE	NSW	AW	<b>Neil Smith</b>	MAITLAND	SA
AW	<b>Lloyd Green</b>	PARKES	NSW	AW	<b>William Thompson</b>	TOOBORAC	VIC
AW	<b>Gilbert Haines</b>	MELROSE	SA	AW	<b>Michael Turton</b>	YORK	WA
AW	<b>Clyde Hammond</b>	SHEPPARTON	VIC	AW	<b>Peter Watts</b>	YEUNGROON	VIC
AW	<b>Anthony Hart</b>	WEST WYALONG	NSW	AW	<b>Maxwell Webb</b>	WALLA WALLA	NSW
AW	<b>Bert Haynes</b>	HOLBROOK	NSW	AW	<b>Douglas Worland</b>	LAKE CARGELLIGO	NSW
AW	<b>Peter Heriot</b>	CULCAIRN	NSW				
AW	<b>Gerard Houweling</b>	MUNDAGERY	NSW	CA	<b>Anstey Giles</b>	NORTHGATE	SA
AW	<b>James Jenkinson</b>	GLENTHOMPSON	VIC	CA	<b>John New</b>	GLOUCESTER	NSW

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# Review of the Woolclassing Code of Practice

As part of the triennial review and preparation for the 2016-18 Woolclassing Code of Practice, AWEX issued a survey to woolclassers and other industry sectors in late 2014. Over 900 responses were received to the online survey. In addition to the survey, several submissions were received from industry.

The Review of the Code of Practice was categorised into the following:

- Classing policies
- Description policies
- Packaging policies (including bale weights)

- Documentation policies (including Declarations)

Overall, there was a high degree of satisfaction with the 2013-15 Code of Practice.

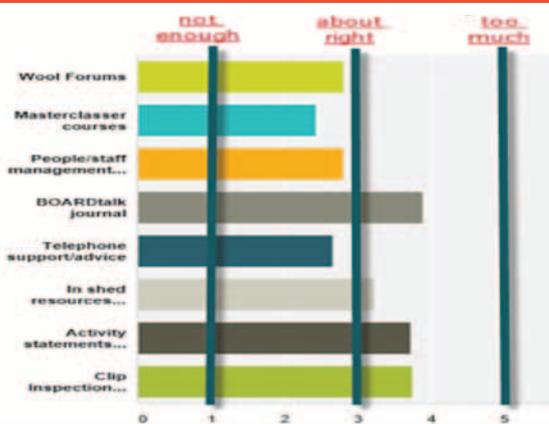
Some of the items identified in the survey or raised in the submissions include:

- Request for recognition of unskirted wool as classed
- Greater detail on how wool from "composites" should be classed and described
- More detail of how Shedding Breeds should be classed
- Use of AAAM as a descriptor
- The number of bale descriptors in the supply chain
- Conflict between marketing advice versus technical advice
- Issues associated with raising the minimum bale weight
- More clarity regarding some Oddment preparation standards

## Online Survey

The following summary of the online survey results is expressed as the "Weighted Average Response", calculated on a scale of 1 to 5.

### Classers rating of the Services provided to Woolclassers by AWEX



### Classers rating of AWEX Initiatives introduced in recent years

SCALE: 1 = POOR TO 5 = EXCELLENT	
Landscape Bale Label	4.2
5 Bale Fasteners in Top Flap	4.3
Bale Pressing Posters/Labels	4.1
Sheep Breed Compendium	4.3
AWEX Facebook Site*	2.4
Bale Label Marking Pen	4.4
Woolclasser Stamp	4.7
WoolClip*	3.3

### Classers rating of their Work Environment compared to 3 yrs ago

SCALE: 1 = MUCH WORSE TO 5 = MUCH IMPROVED	
Shed Conditions	3.2
Quality/Expertise of Wool Handling Staff	3.0
Alcohol/Drugs in the Workplace	2.9
Woolgrower awareness of Wool Quality Requirements	3.3
Adequate Shed Staff	2.9
Quality/Expertise of Wool Pressers	3.0

\* Results influenced by Classer indicating "Have not used".

## Other survey results

- There was strong support (83%) that no content should be removed from the COP.
- Regarding COP policies/rules, 65% supported no change. Unskirted Crossbred fleece wool and Merino Bin Codes were identified for consideration.
- In general, the current Woolclasser training/extension services provided by AWEX was assessed as meeting Woolclassers' needs.
- A mandatory 2-day training program was

conducted for all Woolclassers in 2001. For the responses received, 62% supported the concept of a similar training program for 2019-2021.

- The survey identified that a high proportion of Woolclassers (over 80%) use Computer, Internet, E-mail and/or Mobile Phone services on a daily/weekly basis.
- In relation to the National Wool Declaration, around 80% filled out the Mob Details and Dark and Medullated Fire Risk sections, while only 60-70% completed the Mulesing Status section.

All survey results and submissions were considered by AWEX's Industry Services Advisory Committee at its meeting in January 2015.

### For further information contact:

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Wool for future generations

# woolsearch

Find qualified Woolclassers, Shearers and Shed Hands

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- Download Wool Preparation Standards



1. Examples of different RFID tag types tested to determine the "best performing".

2. Loaded truck passing Antennas.

3. Reading bales on a truck with Hand-held.

## AWEX Project: e-Bale

### Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) of Wool Bales

Wool industry participants, including AWEX, have previously investigated the electronic identification of wool bales during the 1980s, 90s and 2000s. Numerous RFID tags were examined for their suitability with a cost/benefit analysis (CBA) undertaken in 2006. This work revealed that e-Bale potentially offers significant benefits to the industry. In 2013/14, AWEX commissioned a review of RFID Technology and an updated CBA of e-Bale. The review indicated that RFID tags that may survive the wool bale life-cycle could be sourced at a price point of less than \$0.60. The outcomes from the CBA were positive and together with renewed interest from industry, the e-Bale research recommenced.

#### What is e-Bale?

The identification of wool bales via RFID technology. The intention is that the RFID tag can be read at any stage through the wool supply chain, from farm to broker to processor, and accurately identify each bale using a unique RFID number.

#### How do you use e-Bale?

On its own the RFID number is just a number, but combined with other information such as the wool specification or dumping and shipping information, it can create enormous efficiencies in wool handling and data input with a high degree of accuracy. No mistakes!

#### What are the potential benefits of e-Bale to industry?

The benefits that might be achieved through the wool pipeline using e-Bale include:

- (a) Improved bale traceability and quality control allowing; for example, traceback.
- (b) Improved information flow from farm to processor, including the accurate identification and streamlining of delivery of bales from farm to mill.
- (c) Enhanced performance of electronic Woolclasser's Specifications (e.g. WoolClip) by providing details of the clip/bales prior to their arrival at the wool store.
- (d) Rapid identification of wool bales in the event of an Exotic Animal Disease outbreak, with this information extremely valuable when preparing for and/or responding to such a situation.

- (e) Improved downstream (processing mill) efficiency and quality management to maintain the price and position of wool in a competitive textile market.
- (f) Enhanced reputation of the Australian wool industry for quality and innovation.

#### e-Bale: the Woolgrower

The benefits to the grower will most likely be achieved through a linkage between electronic Classer's Specifications and RFID tagged bales, ensuring that all bales are identified and described correctly. WoolClip provides analytical capabilities and being able to transmit the data direct to the wool broker could open up all sorts of possibilities.

#### e-Bale: Industry Working Together

Through this project AWEX has been working closely with AWH Pty Ltd (Australia's largest provider of wool logistics including transport, storage, handling, dumping and shipping) and with well-known wool exporters New England Wool Pty Ltd and Modiano Australia Pty Ltd.

It is critical to have commercial support for the project from wool industry participants.



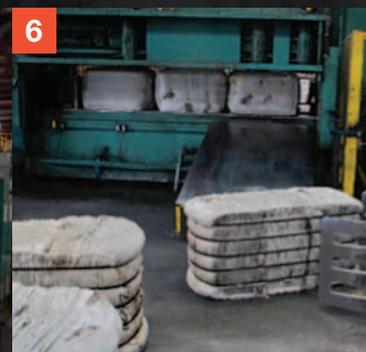
## Sydney Royal Easter Show Wool Sale – S40/14

In April this year, the Northern Region wool auction was held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show for the first time. This inaugural event brought all sides of the wool industry together under one roof. Within the sheep pavilion you could see world class stud sheep, some of the best fleeces from NSW, the national graduate woolclassing competition, junior judging, training and education stands plus retail outlets. The concept was the first of its type and proved to be a great success. The fully commercial wool sale was held over 2 days with 14,085 bales offered, generating over \$17.5 million in sales.

Both the buyers and brokers were enthusiastic, and together they demonstrated how the industry works best. They showed their flexibility and preparedness to work effectively in unfamiliar surroundings yet still maintain a commercial focus. Technical support for the sale including sale result entry, display screens and buyer IT needs were run through a robust business grade Wi-Fi provided by the Royal Agricultural Show of NSW. Nearly all buyers had laptops, with the sale room becoming their 'defacto' office.

The aim of holding the wool auction at the Sydney Royal Easter Show was to demonstrate and educate people on the level of professionalism in the wool industry, highlighting that wool remains a significant financial contributor to the Australian economy.

A new display screen presented live updates on critical information including sale turn over, which kept attendees engaged in the sale. Feedback from everyone involved in the sale was extremely positive.



4. An example of a Hand-Held reader.

5. Bale passing under antenna before dump.

6. Three bales pressed into a tri-pak.

### Trials to identify suitable RFIDTags

In 2014, AWEX began its research to identify appropriate RFID technologies (tags and associated equipment) that had the potential to survive the wool pipeline, viz. pack manufacture, shearing shed, transport, wool store, dumping, shipping and the mill (See photo 1).

The dumping process, where three bales are compressed to the size of one bale and encased in 5 steel bands (to form a tri-pak), is the most challenging in terms of reading RFID tags. This environment, comprising metal, moisture, grease and wool can affect whether a bale reads or not.

The “best performing” tags are now being subjected to whole of wool pipeline trials, described in Parts A and B below.

#### Part A: Dump to Mill Trials

The Part A trials involves the following stages: wool storage and handling, dumping, shipping and arrival/storage at the mill. An antenna (scanner) connected to a reader and computer was installed above the conveyor to the dump (See photo 5 and 6).

Merino and Crossbred consignments were purchased by New England Wool and Modiano Australia for their mills in Biella, Italy and Nejdek, Czech Republic, respectively. The bales in these consignments had RFIDs inserted under the pack labels of each bale.

The RFID tags were read prior to 3 bales being dumped into a tri-pak, with the 3 bales within a tri-pak linked. This linkage is to evaluate the concept that if one bale in a tri-pak can be read, then the other two bales are known by association. Both the tri-paks and the individual bales will be read again on arrival at the mills to determine the tag survival rate. Different hand-held readers will also be tested to ascertain any variance in their performance.

#### Part B: Farm to Store Trials

Part B involves the following stages: pack manufacture, shearing shed (pressing), transport, storage and handling and core/grab sampling. RFID tags were adhered to the back of wool pack labels, with these applied to wool packs by a pack manufacturer and returned to Australia for use in the trials. Over the next few months, the packs are being distributed to wool growers within Victoria, with the all bales being delivered to the Brooklyn wool store where the

RFID equipment is located.

To measure their performance, the tags will be read when the bales arrive at the store as well as post-sampling. Future trials will see AWEX investigate the use of WoolClip (electronic Classer’s Specification and Wool Book) to facilitate a link from the shearing shed to the wool store (See photo 4).

Part B has also included setting up a portal to read bales as they enter a wool store on a truck. Trials conducted to date have resulted in the truck portal reading 99 to 100% of bales on a truck as they are driven past the antennas at a speed of 5 to 10 km/hour (See photo 2 and 3).

#### Timeframe

The results of the RFID trials conducted to date have been very encouraging. It is anticipated that the evaluation of the tags will take another 4 to 6 months to complete.

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## AWEX Wool Forums

AWEX will again be conducting a series of Wool Forums during 2015 at major regional centres throughout Australia. These Forums were strongly supported during 2014 with an average of 80 attendees enjoying informative and interactive presentations. This year the Forums will again feature a Keynote Speaker, a Wool Buyers Panel and the latest industry updates including the review of the Code of Practice.

An open invitation is extended to all woolclassers, wool growers, wool brokers, shearing contractors and wool industry personnel to attend these Forums. The Forums are free and will be conducted on Saturday mornings from 9.00am to 12.00 noon, with morning tea supplied.

The Forums will be advertised locally and invitations will be sent out to all woolclassers in these regions prior to the event. Attendees are required to register for catering purposes and classers are urged to invite interested wool growers or industry members to these Forums.

#### For further information contact:

Peter Sudholz, tel: 02 9428 6144  
email: [psudholz@awex.com.au](mailto:psudholz@awex.com.au)

Date	Location	Venue
Saturday 1st Aug. 2015 9.00am - noon	DUBBO NSW	Dubbo Rural Skills & Environment Centre, Western Institute of TAFE, Narromine Rd, Dubbo, NSW 2830
Saturday 15th Aug. 2015 9.00am - noon	HAMILTON VIC	Hamilton Golf Club, 170 Rippon Rd, Hamilton, VIC 3300
Saturday 29th Aug. 2015 9.00am - noon	OATLANDS TAS	Oatlands Ex-Servicemen’s & Women’s Club, 1 Albert St, Oatlands, TAS 7120
Saturday 24th Oct. 2015 9.00am - noon	CLARE SA	Clare Country Club, White Hut Rd, Clare, SA 5453
Saturday 7th Nov. 2015 9.00am - noon	WAGGA WAGGA NSW	The Commercial Club, 77 Gurwood St, Wagga Wagga, NSW 2650

# News Flash

## 2016 - 2018 Woolclasser Registration

The 2016-2018 Woolclasser registration will begin on the 1st October 2015. Invitations will be sent out on the 1st October to all currently registered Woolclassers and Classer Associates inviting them to re-register for the 2016-18 triennium. Please ensure your mailing address is up to date.

## New Woolclasser Training Organisations

Two new Registered Training Organisations (RTO) have commenced delivery of Woolclasser training in Victoria. They are SCAA Shearer Woolhandler Training Inc, Hamilton and 4 Up Skilling Pty Ltd, Euroa. Details of all RTOs are listed on the AWEX website under Education.

## National Wool Trainers Workshop 2015

The annual national RTO workshop for Woolclasser trainers will be held in Sydney on the 15th and 16th October 2015. Topics covered during this workshop include national assessment standardisation, wool technical updates and updates on 2016 Code of Practice.

## Wool Pack Manufacturer Inspections

AWEX conducted the first half of its annual inspections of wool pack manufacturers in China during May. Along with the inspection of facilities, the key issues discussed were the various complaints AWEX has received from growers, Woolclassers, brokers and importers about wool pack quality.

After 6 months of the new wool pack Standard, all manufacturers have completed in-house training to ensure that early issues are now being resolved quickly and satisfactorily.

## NWD - Integrity Program

AWEX On-Farm Inspectors have completed 225 on-farm audits this season to verify declarations for Non Mulesed (NM) and Ceased Mulesing (CM) status. Properties are randomly selected from wool offered for sale. Inspections were conducted in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria and Western Australia



Competition winners: L-R Grace Delahunty (2nd), Gabrielle Saliba (1st.), Candida Johnson and Lucy Pigram (equal 3rd.)



Teasdale Trophy: L-R Mark Grave and Frank Roberts

# National Graduate Woolclasser Competition

The 2015 Sydney Royal Easter Show was again the host venue for the AWEX/TAFE National Graduate Woolclasser Competition. This is the fourth year the competition has been run, bringing together the best 2014 graduate Woolclassers from across Australia to compete for the "Golden Stencil". The event first began as state competitions in 2007, and based on their success, became a national competition in 2012. The AWEX/TAFE competition is a showcase for woolclassing and the wool industry, and has proven to be a popular event on the Show programme.

Competitors travelled from New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria to vie for the coveted "Golden Stencil". This year's winner of the competition and "Golden Stencil" is Gabrielle Saliba from Gulgong NSW. Gabrielle completed the tasks of classing "simulated" fine Merino, medium Merino and Crossbred wool clips as well as AWEX-ID and wool valuation, culminating in an oral presentation to the judges. Gabrielle demonstrated an ability to class wool of all types under the pressure of the competition and she spoke confidently about her classing strategies.

Gabrielle graduated from Western Institute of TAFE, Dubbo Campus and was trained by Frank Roberts. She was also the winner of the DAS Campbell prize for the top NSW graduate. This is the 42nd year of the DAS Campbell award.

2nd place and "Silver Stencil" was awarded to Grace Delahunty, Invermay VIC. Grace completed her training at Hunter TAFE, NSW.

This year there was tie for 3rd place and the "Bronze Stencil". It was awarded to both Candida Johnson, Minhamite VIC, who trained at RIST, Hamilton VIC and Lucy Pigram, Cootamundra NSW, who trained at Riverina TAFE NSW.

The Dennis Teasdale Perpetual Trophy, awarded to the training organisation and trainer of the competition winner, was presented to Western Institute of TAFE and trainer Frank Roberts. The Dennis Teasdale Trophy recognises the valuable contribution that education plays in the wool industry, and in particular, that made by trainers and TAFE.

This year's competition judges were: Mr Rowan Woods, Jemalong Wool, Mr John Mills, NSW TAFE and Mr Peter Sudholz,

AWEX. Judges commented on classing skills of the competitors and the evenness of the competition, saying that all graduates had strengths that will hold them in good stead for their future in the wool industry.

The RAS Easter Show continues to be a world class, iconic event in Australian agriculture. The sustained pressure of the Graduate Woolclasser Competition held over 6 hours is what sets it apart from anything else on the industry calendar. The aim of the event is to recognise excellence in woolclassing and education and to lift woolclassing's profile as a profession and career opportunity.

Each year, TAFE Organisations delivering woolclasser training are asked to nominate their best graduate from the previous year. To be nominated is an honor, and we congratulate all of the competitors who took part in the competition. Each competitor gains valuable experience along with feedback on how to improve their skills.

Competitors	Address
Kylie Mckinnell	Evandale - TAS
Kirsty Bone	Nhill - VIC
Candida Johnson	Minhamite - VIC
Lucy Pigram	Cootamundra - NSW
Brad O'leary	Elong Elong - NSW
Grace Delahunty	Invermay - VIC
Gabrielle Saliba	Gulgong - NSW

The competition would not be possible without the support and encouragement of AWEX, NSW TAFE and the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. NSW TAFE, in conjunction with AWEX, was integral in expanding the competition from State-based to the National-level. AWEX has proudly sponsored this event since it began in 2007.

### For more information on the National Graduate Woolclassing Competition please contact:

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email: [mgrave@awex.com.au](mailto:mgrave@awex.com.au)

## “Board” Wool Preparation - Getting it Right

Over the past two seasons AWEX appraisers have noticed an increased incidence of unprepared or poorly prepared wool from the shearing board described as M STN. It is being offered for sale with the Classer's Stencil applied.

In some cases, there have been up to 10 bales of wool in these sale lots! It appears that wool from the board; that is, Locks, Pieces, Crutch wool, Dags, Stain is not being prepared to the Code of Practice (COP).

In the worst cases, all the board wool is merely being swept up, pressed into one line and branded M STN. As well, different wool categories, e.g. stained Pieces and stained Locks, are also being mixed together in the shearing shed and offered for sale as M STN. In both these instances, the wool has not been prepared to the COP standards.

### What happens at sale?

Prior to sale, the AWEX-ID is allocated to each sale lot by the broker, which is validated by AWEX auditors. If these lines of board wool contain mixed wools (e.g. different wool categories, faults, lengths, shanks, stain, etc.), the sale lot is deemed to be a Non-Conforming Lot (NCL). As a result, the correct AWEX-ID is applied to the sale lot, e.g. MNC5E.S1, and the “P” certification is removed and replaced with a “D” certification. This certificate change tells the buying trade that the sale lot(s) do not meet the COP.

### What issues are presented to the buyer/processor?

Combing wools (e.g. long fleece, pieces, bellies) and carding wools (short crutch wool, second cuts, locks) go through different processing systems; and therefore, they must be kept separate. In addition, individual wool categories have different processing characteristics, while urine stain can potentially cause dark fibre contamination in white wool.

Therefore, wool buyers do not want sale lots with mixed wool categories or faults as this

does not give them flexibility when putting together processing consignments.

### How does this affect price?

Currently, the market demand for oddment wools is very strong and can be up to around 70 to 80% of fleece wool value, depending on type. If mixed wool categories (e.g. pieces, locks, crutchings) or mixed length (e.g. combing and carding lengths) are evident, price discounts of around 25% are possible. If urine stain (dark fibre) is present, the price discount can increase significantly to 30% or more, depending on the amount of stain.

### Example:

The photo shows the grab sample of a thirteen bale line of wool branded M STN, which was recently sold through the Western Wool Selling Centre. This lot was appraised by AWEX auditors as a Non-Conforming Lot (MNP7S.70S3), it contained approximately one third carding stain and locks (4 bales) and two thirds combing stain (9 bales). These two distinctly different wool types have been separated in the sample box.

In this instance, it is evident that all the board sweepings, Locks, Crutch wool and Stain were mixed with combing length Stain to form a “dump” line. Discounts applied to this lot will have resulted in a significant loss to the wool grower.

### What are classers telling AWEX?

When Woolclassers receive a Clip Inspection Report for unprepared board wool, some of the reasons offered are:

- They are simply trying to make a line out of these (at times) small amounts of different wool types.
- There are not enough shed staff to keep up with shearers, so the board wool is just swept into one line.
- Shed staff are either untrained, inexperienced or do not have the skills to prepare wool off the board.

### What are a Woolclasser's options?

Regardless of the circumstances, it is role of the Woolclasser to prepare the wool to provide the maximum return to the grower. Therefore, Classers must apply one of the following options to board/oddment type wools:

- Ensure lines are prepared to the COP guidelines and apply the Classer's stencil to the bales.
- Do not mix different types of wool to try to make a bale or sale lot. Explain to the wool grower why the different types of wool cannot be mixed. Generally, in most sheds either single bale lines or small amounts of Bulk Class will occur. Growers may opt to sell this wool through their broker with the wool clip, sell it privately, or hold this wool over to the following year to potentially match it with next year's shearing.
- If wool is not prepared to meet the COP standard, do not put your stencil on the bales. List these bales on a separate Classer's specification and do not put your Classer details on it. Clearly indicate the wool is unclassified and does not have a Classer's stencil applied - this will inform the grower and the broker that the line does not meet the preparation standards of the COP.

### For further information contact:

Contact your regional representative (see bottom of page 2)



Sample of a thirteen bale line of wool branded M STN.

## Live Sale info on AWEX home page

AWEX provides a range of market reporting services to industry. In addition to these, AWEX has recently updated its Home Page to display progressive sale results, for each sale, every sale day.

Woolclassers, growers and industry personnel can view this information on the AWEX website [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au) on sale days. The table below is an example the live information provided.

### Today's Progressive Sale Results

Sale Centre	Bales Remaining	Bales Sold	\$ Total
Fremantle	1,834	2,802	\$3,571,121
Melbourne	358	7,914	\$10,434,416
Sydney	0	7,217	\$10,135,371
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>17,933</b>	<b>\$24,140,908</b>

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# Auction Action

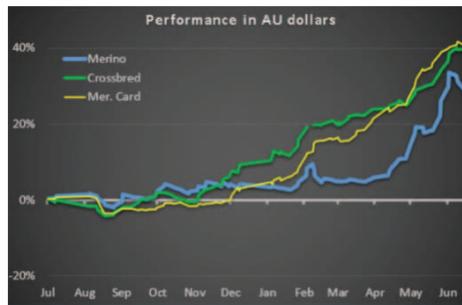
CHART 1



*At the time of writing the market was off its peak, but the EMI was still up around 30% for the season, the sixth best result in 35 years of the combined AWEX/Aust. Wool Corp series.*

There has been some strong price action in the wool market since the last Boardtalk was published in November. At that time the AWEX-EMI was in a period of consolidation and had tracked sideways for a good six months. However from that point there was a gradual improvement in fortunes, initially led by the Crossbred and Merino Carding portions

CHART 2

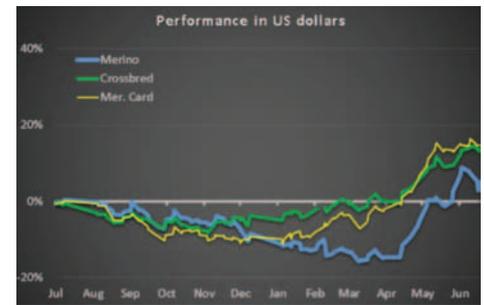


of the catalogue which have made consistent gains. Rises for this season (since July) are currently around 40% for these types with most of the gains attributed to a post-Christmas rally (see chart 1).

Merino Fleece types followed the other sectors high later in the season, with a series of sharp jumps commencing in April. Contributing to the price rises were concerns of a wool shortage leading into the last few months of the season which were heightened by a low pass-in rate (which affects the amount of wool being reoffered in subsequent weeks). Whilst the pass-in rate for the 2015/16 season is set to be the lowest on record at 8%, it had little affect on overall volumes which will be around 7% higher than the previous season.

At the time of writing the market was off its peak, but the EMI was still up around 30% for the season, the sixth best result in 35 years of the combined AWEX/Aust. Wool Corp series. The best result was made four years ago when

CHART 3



there was a 56% rise in the EMI. During that rally the AWEX-EMI peaked at 1425 and was driven higher by the fine wool sector. The 17 Micron Price Guide (MPG) at one point was trading at a 1200 cent premium over the 21 MPG. Compare that to the current premium which is 180 cents.

As with any strong improvement, market chatter has focused on the sustainability of this rally, however a different picture emerges when converting prices into end-user currencies. The Australian dollar has continued to weaken (see chart 2) and is well below parity with the greenback. The US dollar remains the choice currency for traders, and prices in US dollars for the Merino MPG's look set to close the season on an unchanged basis.

## For more information contact:

Lionel Plunkett, tel: 02 9428 6136  
email: [lplunkett@awex.com.au](mailto:lplunkett@awex.com.au)

## 50 Year Woolclassers

### Doug and Bill Worland, Lake Cargelligo/Tullibigeal NSW

This year Doug reached the 50 year milestone as a Registered Woolclasser. Doug grew up on the family farm "Bingarra" at Tullibigeal with his older brother Bill. He completed his schooling at Yanco Agricultural College in 1956 and returned to the family farm where he started doing the woolclassing course at the Tullibigeal Community Hall in 1957. The course was one day a week for three years and was conducted by instructor Peter Baker from the West Wyalong Technical College. Following the course, Doug classed in shearing sheds having to submit three wool clips, two Merino and one crossbred for inspection by wool brokers. After gaining three brokers' references supporting his classing expertise, he then obtained his Woolclassing Certificate.

Doug worked locally classing about five or six sheds per year; and more recently, his classing has principally been associated with the family farm operations. In his early days, he clearly remembers a tough time at one shed where, with two shearers doing in excess of two hundred sheep per day, he ran the entire shed picking up, skirting and rolling, classing,

pressing and penning up. Doug now runs a farming operation "Warrigal Park" with his sons at Burgooney and operates in a family partnership with his older brother Bill.

Bill achieved the 50 year registered Woolclasser milestone in 2014. After attending Yanko Agricultural College from 1948-1950 he returned to the family farm "Bingarra" at Tullibigeal. Bill began his woolclassing course at the Tullibigeal Community Hall in 1956 and, after gaining his Woolclassing Certificate, he worked for shearing contractor Fred Dunn from Lake Cargelligo. In those early years, after sowing the crop at home, he would go off woolclassing in the Cobar, Hay, Booligal and Hillston regions before returning home for fallowing and harvesting. In later years he continued to class locally.

Bill is passionate about Merino sheep breeding and in 1996 was pro-active in setting up the continuously running Lake Cargelligo Show Society Maiden Ewe Competition. In 2001 he was awarded the Centenary Medal for his contribution to the wool industry. Bill still operates in the family partnership with Doug and said he has made a lot of friends in the wool industry and thoroughly enjoys the experience.

