

# boardtalk

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we know wool AWEX

## AWEX appoints new Wool Classer Registrar

AWEX is pleased to announce the appointment of Fiona Raleigh as AWEX Wool Classer Registrar. Fiona is from Cootamundra, NSW and has had an extensive practical background as a Wool Classer, as well as 22 years as a Wool Classer trainer with TAFE NSW. Fiona's background includes agriculture and education qualifications and an involvement with her family's sheep enterprise.

Fiona's interest and commitment to the wool industry has been demonstrated in her willingness to be involved in all aspects of training and promotion. From working at shearing schools to support young people develop wool skills, as a wool handler trainer through the promotion of education and wool careers to school students and at sheep industry events. Fiona will be working closely with Registered Training Organisations nationally, to develop training resources current to industry and supporting continued improvement of wool classer training.

The appointment will be a highly visible one with Fiona's role having a strong emphasis on being a point of contact for the wool classer, with a focus on providing practical and technical advice and support and assistance. AWEX believes that it is important that the Wool Classer Registrar is involved in improving communication between the classer and the supply chain and Fiona is committed to providing this service.

### Fiona can be contacted on

ph. 0403 396 842 e. [fraleigh@awex.com.au](mailto:fraleigh@awex.com.au)  
87 Cooper Street, Cootamundra NSW 2590

## AWEX Wool Forums 2016

AWEX will again be conducting a series of Wool Forums during 2016 at major regional centres throughout Australia. These Forums were strongly supported during 2015 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.

An open invitation is extended to all Wool Classers, 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 Wool Classers 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. Please feel free to register interest in attending at any time.

### Master Classer course

Master Classer Courses are a professional development opportunity for Australian Wool Classers. Applicants must be nominated by an industry body who believes the classer would benefit from attending this program. Nominations may be made by; for example, by a Selling Agent, Auction or Private Buyer, Wool Producer, Shearing Contractor or Training Organisation.

Wool Classers nominated by industry should have the following attributes:

- Must have been actively wool classing for the last three years, (and intend to continue),
- Must class a minimum of 7 clips or 400 bales per annum,

- Must have ability and desire to further their wool knowledge, and
- Must demonstrate good character, judgment and capacity for leadership.

The Master Classer course will be held in Melbourne only and is of 4 days duration focussing on:

- Staff management/supervision skills, strategic thinking and communication techniques,
- Customer requirements (producer, warehouse, broker, buyer, and processor),
- Quality assurance and wool preparation with show floor lots, and
- Building deeper levels of understanding behind the Wool Classer's Code of Practice.

Nomination Forms available from the website [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au) or contact the Wool Classer Registrar directly for more information and nominations.

### Pipeline tour

For the first time AWEX are offering a professional development opportunity to registered Wool Classers.

This one day tour will give Wool Classers a 'beyond the farm gate' look at the wool industry and will incorporate a tour of the

- Melbourne wool selling centre,
- Show floor and sampling,
- AWTA wool testing facility,
- Victoria Wool Processors – carbonising and wool scouring.

The tour will be free to registered Wool Classers and facilitated by AWEX staff. Expressions of interest are invited as group participant numbers will be limited.

**For more information** Fiona Raleigh, ph. 0403 396 842 e. [fraleigh@awex.com.au](mailto:fraleigh@awex.com.au).

MAY

21

AWEX Wool Forum  
Katanning  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
Saturday  
9am – 12noon

30-  
2 JUNE

Master Classer  
Melbourne  
VICTORIA  
Starts Monday

JULY

9

AWEX Wool Forum  
Cooma  
NEW SOUTH WALES  
Saturday  
9am – 12noon

30

AWEX Wool Forum  
Armidale  
NEW SOUTH WALES  
Saturday  
9am – 12noon

AUGUST

6

AWEX Wool Forum  
Naracoorte SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
Saturday  
9am – 12noon

OCTOBER

6

Pipeline Tour  
Melbourne  
VICTORIA  
Thursday  
9am – 12noon

# 85th IWTO Congress – Young Professional

The International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) held its 85th congress in Sydney from April 4-6th 2016. The IWTO is an international organization whose members are national committees from countries from around the world that consist of stakeholders from the wool industry. The IWTO has its head office in Brussels, Belgium. However, via a number of constituents from member countries, the IWTO has a very real presence at policy level in all member countries.

The IWTO's vision is for "a sustainable, profitable, international wool industry, working together for the future of our fibre". The IWTO congress attracts woolgrowers, brokers, buyers, wool processors, retailers, academics of wool metrology and marketing and many other key members of the wool supply chain.

My name is Alex Willson, I am a woolgrower from Crookwell in NSW, where my wife and I run merino and crossbred sheep. We are both from farming families and we have continued on in that vein, however our enterprises are run entirely on leased country. I am also a part-time Wool Classing teacher with TAFE NSW – Illawarra Campus and have been teaching in Goulburn and Yass for 4 years. This job is great because it has given me the opportunity to meet many people from the industry and allows me the chance to develop networks in different parts of the chain.

I was fortunate to be invited to attend the congress as a 'young professional' by AWEX. I thank AWEX for sponsoring me to attend the congress, as a grower and teacher the congress has helped me understand the wool chain from the different stakeholder's positions.

The IWTO congress included some 30 speakers from member countries; presentations were given from people in all parts of the chain. I thought there was a great feeling at the congress and all delegates in attendance seemed to be in good spirits.



Fiona Raleigh AWEX with Alex Willson  
TAFE Illawarra, TAFE NSW

## Some points of interest:

- A re-occurring theme from the congress was to outline the great story wool has to offer; wool's sustainability is paramount going forward and provides great value to woollen products at the retail end.
- Animal welfare continues to be at the tip of everyone's tongue, consumers of our product are becoming more discerning and request a product that is ethical and developed by best practice.
- Clip preparation should be continued at a high standard; classers and growers alike need to be aware of the importance of quality assurance procedures during the wool growing and harvesting process. It is of high importance that the national wool declaration is filled out thoroughly when completing the wool classer specification.

Jeremy Wear, Manager of SGS stated that, "uniformity and processing efficiency are vital for low margin environments", and of course uniformity increases processor confidence and thus likelihood of better prices at the farm gate.

- There is a huge investment occurring in the wool industry worldwide. In Australia alone Deakin University, CSIRO and VCAMM in conjunction with state and federal governments have invested

\$103 million in the Australian Futures Fibers Research and Innovation Centre.

- Changing demographics of world age and population bode well for wool consumption. Dr Clint Laurent, Global Demographics Ltd identified the target markets for premium fibres. In China alone these customers will increase by nearly 100 million people by 2025.
- Dr Paul Swann spoke about the positives that have come from the sheep industry in recent times. "Sheep meat and wool have increased in value by 50% since 1992." "Gross production per head has increased, in 1991 it was \$21-22/head in 2015 it was \$70/head". "The industry has increased in value by approx. \$1.5 Billion with half the sheep since 1992".
- Dr Kerry Hansford spoke about the developments AWEX has made with electronic tracking for individual wool bales and the potential benefits of being able to pin point bales in processing and handling. With increased traceability the likelihood for efficient tracking from farm to processor will lead to cost savings.

The theme for the congress was "Wool for future generations"; as such the organizing committee placed considerable emphasis on the 'young professional' contingent. The 21 young professionals consisted of growers, brokers, buyers, processors and other professionals from Australia and overseas. Throughout the congress we were afforded the opportunity to meet and speak with many people in the industry. I commend the organizers of the congress, The Federation of Australian Wool Organizations. The goal of increasing youth involvement in the congress was certainly achieved.

The opinion I have left the IWTO congress with is that there is a lot of great things happening in the wool industry at the moment. Our fibre has many strengths. It is sustainable and renewable, authentic and natural. Changing demographic trends for fibre demand and wealth distribution will lead to the potential for wool to have a greater market share in fibre purchases. It seems that consumers are starting to get past pre conceived ideas about wool and move towards the new education of wool's superior attributes. Finally in Australia we have a great amount of dedication to the sheep industry and its continued success.

## contact



**Wool Classer Registrar**  
Fiona Raleigh  
02 9428 6144  
woolclasser@awex.com.au



**Northern Region**  
Robert McKeown  
02 9632 6166  
northernregion@awex.com.au



**Southern Region**  
David Williams  
03 9318 0277  
southernregion@awex.com.au



**Western Region**  
David Aslett  
08 9434 6999  
westernregion@awex.com.au



# 2016 “Golden Stencil” National Graduate Wool Classer Competition

The 2016 AWEX/TAFE National Graduate Wool Classer Competition was once again held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. This is the fifth year the national competition has been run, bringing together the best 2015 graduate Wool Classers 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 wool classing and the wool industry, and has proven to be a popular event on the Show programme.

Training organisations nominate their top students. This year ten Competitors from NSW, VIC and SA were challenged to a series of tasks that reflect industry skills and demonstrate their training.

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.

Three simulated classing exercises of Crossbred, Medium Merino and Fine Merino are completed along with AWEX ID and wool valuing. An oral presentation is given to the judges by each graduate, on the Fine merino classing exercise. This gives the graduates the opportunity to present their knowledge of the influences on the classing decisions made. These strategies could include mob size, Code of Practice requirement and marketing, all with the aim of maximizing returns to the grower and preparing uniform lines for the processor.

The successful graduate was Audra Field from Mudgee NSW, who was able to impress the judges to be awarded the golden stencil.

Audra was trained by Frank Roberts from Western institute of TAFE, Dubbo, NSW .

Second place and the silver stencil was awarded to Ayla Young from Leeton NSW who was trained at the Riverina Institute

of TAFE and third, and the bronze stencil went to Chris Hvass of Rylstone, NSW, who graduated from Hunter Institute of TAFE NSW.

Audra Field was also the winner of the DAS Campbell prize for the top NSW graduate. This is the 43rd year of the DAS Campbell award.

The Dennis Teasdale Perpetual Trophy, awarded to the training organization and trainer of the competition winner, was presented to 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.

The judges for the competition represent their respective areas of the wool industry to give a balanced evaluation of the competitors.

Mr. David Cother, Wool Services Manager, AWEX. Mr. Brett Cooper of Australian Wool Network and Mr. John Mills, TAFE NSW. The judges commented on the value of the competition as an opportunity for the top students to show case their talents. Mr. Brett Cooper added that Audra presented herself and the wool well and it was evident that she had a very sound understanding of wool classing and this was a reflection of her commitment to her training. It was noted that all graduates had skills that would hold them in good stead for a future in the wool industry.

The Sydney Royal Easter show is the ideal event to show case the contribution training has to this important area of Australian agriculture. The aim of the event is to recognise excellence in wool classing and education and to lift wool classing’s profile as a profession and career opportunity

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

Clockwise from top left: 3rd Chris Hvass, 1st Audra Field, 2nd Ayla Young; Trainer of the year Frank Roberts, Dubbo, with AWEX CEO Mark Grave; Winner of golden Stencil Audra Field, Mudgee.

Competitors for 2016		
Jonathon Craig	Windellama	NSW
Alixandra McCall	Yarram	VIC
Tess Riley	Kangaroo Island	SA
Ayla Young	Leeton	NSW
Audra Field	Mudgee	NSW
Suzie Carlon	Lyndhurst	NSW
Renee Kenworthy	Temora	NSW
Megan Ihle	Kars Springs	NSW
Chris Hvass	Rylstone	NSW
Tania Jones	Melbourne	VIC

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 Wool Classing Competition please contact:**

Fiona Raleigh, Wool Classer Registrar  
ph. 0403 396 842 e. [fraleigh@awex.com.au](mailto:fraleigh@awex.com.au)

Mark Grave, CEO  
ph. 02 9428 6100 e. [mgrave@awex.com.au](mailto:mgrave@awex.com.au)

# Technology and the Wool Classer



New tools and technology to assist the wool classer and give access to information, anywhere, anytime is available in several formats. A recent survey indicated that over 80% of wool classer repondees use computer, internet, and mobile phone services on a daily/weekly basis. As part of ongoing initiatives provided to classers, AWEX continues to develop tools using current technology and information sharing services. Strategically AWEX will continue to invest in technology tools for wool classers as:

- We believe that the documentation functions of the wool classer will increasingly be provided using software services,
- The use of technology is readily accepted and expected by potential and new graduates,
- This represents a professional and personal development opportunity for wool classers.

**AWEX website.** [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au) Wool classers can log-in to view their own classing details, using their Username and Password supplied by AWEX. The site provides details of clips classed, Clip Inspection Reports and response forms and a link to contact the Registrar. Also found on this site, under the Wool classer Tab are useful downloads; including, blank Specifications, pre-shearing checklist, bale description charts, chemical log, NWD and Bulk Class tear off sheets. Other information includes news, competition and training information, past BOARDtalks and publications for sale and much more.

**WoolCheque.** An online tool that can quickly price your wool against current market values as well as view similar lots sold at auction to verify price estimates. You can look at historical price trends and get useful tips. You can find Woolcheque at [www.woolcheque.com.au](http://www.woolcheque.com.au) and click on 'price your wool'.

**WoolSearch.** A free online search tool where wool classer contact details can be listed for access by potential employers. Update your details with AWEX if you would like to be included. Found on the AWEX home page. Features include:

- Thousands of listings.
- Work wanted section.
- Local or interstate.
- Search by postcode or town.

**AWEX online.** A premium product delivering real-time market access and standard reports. Availability is by subscription. Alternatively, live sale summary information can be found at the [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au) home page.

**Facebook.** Follow posts, news and views of what's happening in the industry. Share your industry story with [#weknowwool](https://www.facebook.com/woolexchange). To view go to [www.facebook.com/woolexchange](http://www.facebook.com/woolexchange)



**WoolClip.** Software developed by AWEX for use on Windows PC's and laptops that allows users to record in-shed activity and create Wool Classer Specification sheet(s), National Wool Declaration and numerous other reports. Contact AWEX to receive a subscription to this service.

The many benefits of WoolClip include:

- The production of a legible, printed Wool Classer specification sheet.
- An option to have the software build the specification sheet automatically.
- No more crossing out.
- Detailed reports.
- Elimination of duplicate bale numbers.
- No more missing bales.



**Bale Weight Calculator.** 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 Wool Classer, Wool Presser and Grower are in control and can optimize the wool leaving the shed. The AWEX BWC app can be downloaded and used for free via smart phones running Android or iOS from the respective Google and Apple App Stores.

**SMS.** From time to time AWEX may contact wool classers via SMS. A quick way to get the message out when land mail access is limited.

**Mobile / Smart phone.** Wool classers may consider using their phones to record aspects of their classing for future reference, or to record a copy of the Wool Classer Specification when a triplicate is not available. Also useful when reporting images of faulty wool packs and batch numbers to AWEX.

**wool cheque**

Independently Assess your Wool Price

[woolcheque.com.au](http://woolcheque.com.au)

- FREE Online pricing tool
- Independently assess prices and trends
- Relevant, up-to-date wool market information
- Simple charts and graphs
- Quick and easy



Follow industry updates on Facebook [www.facebook.com/woolexchange](http://www.facebook.com/woolexchange)

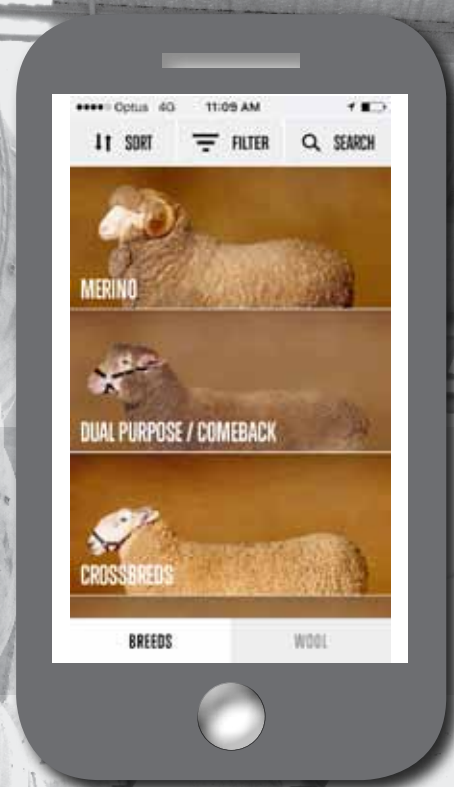


**Auditor photo records.** AWEX auditors are trialling the use of photos to record and report clip inspection issues.

**e-Bale.** The e-bale project being conducted by AWEX is 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.

The benefits that might be achieved through the wool pipeline using e-Bale include: Improved bale traceability and quality control allowing; for example, traceback, improved information flow from farm to processor, including the accurate identification and streamlining of delivery of bales from farm to mill.

**Sheep Breed Compendium.** The AWEX sheep breed compendium is now available for iPhone. Download from app store.



# Sheep Breed Compendium App

As part of the Australian Wool Exchange's commitment to the Australian wool industry, AWEX have developed the AWEX Sheep Breed Compendium as a free App. This will replace the current hard copy version. This Compendium will be a key reference for all personnel working in the Australian sheep industry.

The principle aims of this Compendium are to provide:

- 1) Sheep producers with information that may be useful when making strategic management decisions, selecting a sheep breed for their enterprise and/or when choosing sires for crossbreeding.
- 2) Wool Classers with knowledge to help them class clips for all breeds and cross breeds.
- 3) A description and photo of each breed allowing easy recognition, along with their commercial purpose and objective data to quantify the wool characteristics.
- 4) Contact details for sheep breed societies in Australia.

The information presented in the AWEX Sheep Breed Compendium is based on published material (e.g. books, journals and websites), information provided by sheep breed societies/associations and other industry organisations as well as the results of objective wool testing.

Every attempt has been made to list the breeds currently in use; however, new introductions may have been missed, while some breeds may have disappeared or are extremely rare. As well, published material for some breeds is very limited.

In compiling this Compendium, the aim is to provide objective information that defines each breed of sheep, particularly in terms of their wool characteristics.

The apps function is to enable users to be able to easily browse for different sheep breeds and obtain a summary and photo for each breed. The app will include sort, filter and search functions as well being able to browse through all of the available sheep breeds by category. The app will be available in iOS and Android.

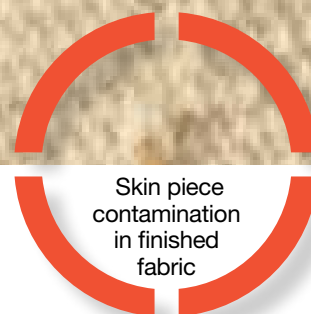


# woolsearch

Find qualified Wool Classers, Shearers and Shed Hands

[woolsearch.com.au](http://woolsearch.com.au)

- FREE Online search tool
- Thousands of listings
- Work wanted section
- Local or interstate
- Search by postcode or town
- Download Wool Preparation Standards



# Dealing with unskirted fleeces

*The Wool Classing Code of Practice (COP) has been reviewed and the 2016-18 version has been released to all new and re-registering Wool Classers and the industry.*

The Code of Practice is the standard for clip preparation. Prior to publishing the COP was open for review. Submissions were received for items that the industry felt were of concern.

Some of these issues included:

- Dealing with unskirted fleeces
- Conflict between marketing/preparation advice versus technical standards.

The Code of Practice remained unchanged in these areas. However it has become apparent that Classers need clarity and support in these areas.

Clip inspection reports that come from the show floor by AWEX auditors are necessary for AWEX to maintain the standard of the Australian wool clip by identifying issues that

impact on the competition and reputation of Australian wool or cause problems for our customers. Wool Classers, as part of their requirements for registration, must ensure that wool classed on farm meets the standard of the Code of Practice. (Rules for Wool Classer Registration, 2016-18, sec 3.4.3.)

It is a common issue that Wool Classers may be asked by growers or selling agents to class wool outside the Code of practice. (Wool Classer COP 2016-18, Classing Other, page83).

## Preparing unskirted fleece lines

If the Classer has been ask to prepare unskirted fleece lines, the Code of Practice states that the Wool Classer's stencil **MUST NOT BE APPLIED**. The Code of Practice requires all fleece wool to be skirted correctly. The only exceptions to this skirting requirement is black, medium/hard cotts or medium/hard dermatitis fleeces, provided these lines are described with the respective cast line description e.g.COT M. (Wool Classer COP, 2016-18, Principles 8.4, page 30).

The request to not skirt fleece wool may be a cause of problems or conflict in the shed. This is an issue that AWEX is aware of and

as such has developed clear guidelines for the Wool Classer to follow. The Wool Classer should explain that part of the requirement of registration is that the wool classer stencil is applied only to lines that meet the Code of Practice. (Wool Classer COP, 2016-18 page 3). Remember the classer is a valued member of the team and plays an integral part in shed supervision. All wool will have an end user where some level of preparation is required e.g. stain and brands removed etc.

Bales where the Classer's stencil has been withheld should not be included on the specification which has the Classer's name and details on it. Put these lines on a separate specification. These lines will then be identified as classed on farm and not meeting the Code of Practice and assigned a D certificate. (Wool Classer COP 2016-18, Sec 2.3, 2.4, 2.5). The oddment lines from these clips will often meet preparation standards and as such may have the classer stencil applied and listed on the standard specification.

Classers should contact AWEX if they apply their stencil to bales not meeting the COP due to being under duress e.g. it is a situation that is getting out of hand.(Wool Classer COP 2016-18, Key Point, Page 4; Rules for Wool Classer Registration, sec 3.4.4).

# Skin pieces *cost* Mills money

*Processors of Australian wool have raised their concern about contamination from skin pieces and the costs that they incur to the mills.*

Processors employ labour to inspect and sort lots prior to processing, with high levels of skin pieces identified by these staff.

The issue of skin pieces is most evident in carbonised types, where faults are not easily recognised after carbonising until spinning and fabric construction. Skin pieces create flecking in the dyed fabric; and as a result, removal and mending of affected product is necessary and is costly to the mills. AWEX has been asked by the processors of Australian wool to (a) remind Wool Classers of the importance of removing skin pieces and (b) to advise of them strategies to use in the shearing shed to help facilitate its removal.

## Dealing with skin pieces in the shed

The Wool Classer should communicate to the wool grower and shearing team about the importance of skin piece removal. Skin pieces of any size (large or small) are NOT acceptable and all lines of wool should have skin pieces removed, including non-fleece lines and lambs.

The amount of skin pieces present will vary for different classes of sheep and between sheds. A high incidence of skin pieces, say in Merino Lambs, is not a reason to ignore them. And it is not acceptable to tolerate the odd few skin pieces.

Lower lines, due to their different processing requirements, may be more sensitive to skin pieces than combing fleece lines and this is an even greater reason to prepare them correctly. **Do not place skin pieces in a Pieces (Skirting) line or a Stain line.**

## On the board

- Instruct shed staff that the best time to remove skin pieces is during the shearing operation or immediately before picking up the fleece, as the shorn side of the fleece is exposed and skin pieces are most visible.
- Allow shed staff time to carry out this task by assigning more staff to picking up the fleece, or combining skin piece removal with other tasks such as sweeping.

- Make sure all staff understand that the objective is a skin piece free clip. Emphasise the importance of skin pieces as a serious fault and give it equal priority to stain removal.
- To assist with the removal of skin pieces, have extra labelled bins located on the board. **Skin pieces must not be placed in a Stain line.**

## At the wool table

- Careful rolling of the fleece to expose the shorn side will allow skin pieces to be identified.
- When working on the table, wool handlers on each side should develop a routine for rolling the fleece. Routines are important as each staff member will have predictable and repeated actions with each fleece, and this will improve work flow and pace.
- Train staff to work to a routine. Allocate more staff to wool rolling duties, remembering efficient and effective skirting and wool rolling has a large impact on the quality of clip preparation and should receive priority.
- Place bins on both sides of the wool table for skin pieces.

## At the press

The wool presser is the last person to physically inspect all wool before pressing, and he/she should also be instructed on the importance of the removal of skin pieces. A bin should be placed near the press for skin pieces.

## Description and branding

The bale description for skin pieces is, for example, SKN (breed group) PCS e.g. SKN M PCS.

***If there is not enough skin pieces to make a line they should be allocated to a Bulk Class bale, separated from other segments and clearly identified.***

## In the shed

- Do not apply the Classer's stencil to bales classed outside the Code of Practice.
- Do not include these lines on the Classer's Specification that has the Classer's name on it.
- If things get out of hand, class as directed and contact AWEX
- Lambs and weaner wool requires skirting.
- Correctly describe the bale contents.
- Feel free to contact the Registrar for advice and support.
- Maintain your position as supervisor of staff and quality management.
- Keep up the good work. Wool Classers are the trained professional in the shed.

Fleece lines of lambs wool will also require skirting preparation. If the lambs wool is described as a fleece line e.g. AAA M LMS then there is no tolerance for skirtings to be evident. By calling a line AAAM LMS or AA M LMS it is indicating to buyers that it is a fleece line.

MLPCS is the description for, in this case, a merino lambs pieces (skirtings) line. (Wool Classer COP, page 69).

**For more information contact:**  
Fiona Raleigh, ph. 0403 396 842  
e. [fraleigh@awex.com.au](mailto:fraleigh@awex.com.au).



Left: Lynne Patmore, 'Cooyong'; Frank Grace; Fred Patmore, 'Mount Erin' Yass.

Below: Jessica White, ('09) Yass; Frank Grace, Woolhandler; Irene Holloway ('91), Wee Jasper; Fiona Raleigh, AWEX Wool Classer Registrar.

## Frank Grace 60 year achievement

AWEX recognise and value the commitment of the Wool Classer to the Australian wool industry.

This year Wool Classer Frank Grace achieved a significant milestone as a registered Wool Classer. Frank has been employed for sixty consecutive years and by three generations of the Patmore family to oversee and class their wool clip.

"I have been classing at the 'Mount Erin' shed for sixty years. I was the first to class in the shed when it was built in 1956 and I have come back every year since," Frank said. "I had to delay National Service for six months so I could do the classing here".

The 'Mount Erin' shed is owned by Fred and Jeanette Patmore and it was Fred's father Noel Patmore that Frank began classing for. This year he is responsible for the preparation of Fred's son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Lynne Patmore's clip. Chris and Lynne own the joining property

'Cooyong' and run 2100, 18um, merino ewes and use the 'Mount Erin' shed for their shearing. Mount Erin is located in the Good Hope area near Yass, NSW. Frank enjoys classing at the 'Mount Erin' shed as the sheep are well presented and there is always well trained and adequate staff. Frank also has an extra interest in the Patmore's sheep as Frank assists in the ram selection and sheep classing.

Frank studied two years of wool classing whilst at school and when he left in 1950 he completed his next two years of study at Yass and graduated after completing the wool classing exam in Goulburn in 1953. Frank and his wife Kath raised 5 children on the family property at Bowning, where Frank was the principal of their Poll Dorset stud. Frank and Kath now reside in Yass where Frank is actively involved with the show society. Frank recently celebrated his 81st birthday.



## Auction Action

*The wool market closed the first quarter of the 2016 calendar year on a weak note with the benchmark AWEX-Eastern Market Indicator easing 26 cents over the January to March period.*

Over the long term the wool market is more inclined to start the calendar year on a positive footing; only 13 first-quarters out of the past 37 years have finished lower. Analysis of the last 10 years paints a different picture however, with an even split between higher and lower finishes.

Looking further back, over the course of this season (since July) the EMI, at the time of writing, has averaged 1248 cents. That figure is fairly indicative for most of the season given it has traded in a reasonably narrow range. There were with brief periods above 1300 or below 1200, but 80% of the time the EMI has been between 1220 and 1285 cents.

In local terms the market has recently battled against a surging Australian dollar which appears to be a significant factor affecting pricing levels. Making a six-year low in mid January at 68.3 US cents, the currency rallied and hit 77 US cents at the end of the quarter, a 12 percent rise, mainly on the back of stronger iron ore prices and US monetary policy settings.

The rise in the exchange rate over that period has corresponded with a steady fall in the wool market. When converted to US dollars, the most popular currency for processors, the EMI has remained fairly static, hovering around 900 US cents. A late surge prior to Easter saw it push towards near season highs in USD terms.

At the individual sector level, the medium to broader microns have been the best performers for this season, generally rising 1% to 2%. The superfine Micron Price Guides are currently behind for the season, but have shown promise recently with good support for the better types. Crossbreds, on the other hand, are more than 100 cents lower. Their dip in prices comes on the back of a strong rise in prices during the previous season. Merino Cardings also rallied strong during 2014/15 but are unchanged for the current season.

**For more information contact:**

Lionel Plunkett, ph. 02 9428 6136

e. [lplunkett@awex.com.au](mailto:lplunkett@awex.com.au)