



AUSTRALIAN SUPERFINE WOOL GROWERS' ASSOCIATION INC

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ASWGA Ararat-Barunah Region Report

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The old saying 'green grass grows wool' certainly has come to fruition this season. If you were to ask any livestock producer in this part of the country which months were most influential in determining the future prospects for the proceeding year, the answer would undoubtedly be September through to November. With an abundant supply of pasture & cereal hay available combined with an anticipated strong grain harvest, it is certainly a buyers' market. Many would agree when I say that it is about time.

Sheep prices are extremely high at present simply because demand is outstripping supply. This will hopefully encourage an increase in breeding numbers; however I do not expect an immediate turnaround. Producers will primarily focus on breeding sheep for meat production with any thought of harvesting a fleece of wool a secondary concern. Economics will ultimately determine in which direction things will take.

In general, this past Spring woolclip is an improvement on the previous. Although tensile strength continues to be a problem, the clip is carrying less dust content & perhaps a slight

increase in individual fleece weights. The availability of suitably trained shed staff with a thorough understanding toward premium wool preparation still remains a major issue.

With the conclusion of Wool poll resulting in the continuation of the 2% levy, AWI has secured funding for future projects. Although being hesitant to criticize, the participation rate amongst growers was disappointing. For just over half of available votes to be cast shows a severe lack of interest & foresight. Regardless of what one may believe, whether it is positive or negative, it is imperative that the majority of opinions be represented for maximum effectiveness.

The question now is how effectively the marketing division of AWI can utilise the budget allocated. It is hoped that through 'result driven marketing' every dollar can be used to target those markets showing the highest potential, thus returning the greatest value for money. In simple terms, the reputation of wool must be reinstated to that of being the desirable premium product that it was once seen as.