



AUSTRALIAN SUPERFINE WOOL GROWERS' ASSOCIATION INC

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ASWGA Hamilton Region Report

March 2008

We are currently in the midst of what appears to be one of the best wool growing seasons for our region in the past 5 years. With a very wet November and a number of decent rainfalls since we have seen a green pick in most pastures right up until the end of February which should see an even wool growth up to this stage and hopefully result in a higher strength wool clip for 2008.

Whilst the 2007 wool clip contained abnormal levels of dust (65-70% for fleece wool in the Western District) due to the long dry period of summer and autumn, the growing 2008 clip currently on the sheep's back is cleaner and well grown due to the good spring, which kept green December.

January was quite hot, with a couple of rain events, which is quite normal in recent times. February was a cool month with much autumn type weather, but we are presently experiencing a hot period with temperatures 30 deg .or above for almost every day this March thus far.

The sheep have done well to date, but now need supplementary feeding to maintain nutritional levels to keep them in good order, especially autumn lambing ewes. Young sheep and wethers are doing very well.

The high operating costs are putting a big strain on profit margins due to high fuel and farm fertiliser costs which are at levels never seen before. The high capital and maintenance costs of farm equipment add to these cost pressures. Unfortunately the prices we receive for our wool are not increasing at the rapid levels of the costs of our production.

Stud sheep breeders are having a small increase in demand of rams this season, after a number of very lean years. The clearance rates and averages at on property auctions have generally been above the previous years. Hopefully this will continue into the foreseeable future.

Wool growers need to be encouraged and urged to attend their wool sales and prior clip inspections to keep monitoring the quality of their clip and the standard of preparation of classing to enable them to avoid the discounts that apply when their product is not suitable for the top end users.

The increase in wool prices is welcomed to help pay the high operating costs that we face. We hope to see this trend continue to enable us all to remain viable.