



ASWGA Hamilton Region Report

July 2008

As we enter another wool selling season it is time to look back and reflect on the season just passed. The last wool clip produced by most growers in our region was probably one of the dustiest produced for many years. Coming through a very dry summer and early autumn we experienced many bad windy days, which stirred up more dirt and dust than normal. With a lot more cropping being done in our region this also adds to the dust content of our wool and also the more worrying long term trend out of superfine wool production.

Added to that now is the move into some of our best wool growing country now being sold for blue gum plantations. This is happening in the top part of the Victoria Valley which has long been regarded as one of the premier superfine wool growing areas of Australia.

The wool market continues to remain fairly steady despite a very high Australian dollar. If growers are able to produce wool for the Italian or Asian textile market returns have been reasonable. However increasing high costs of production, especially very high fuel costs and extreme prices for fertiliser make it hard for woolgrowers to cover costs of production. We certainly cannot receive any less for the quality product we produce to be able to continue to grow it. Cropping and prime lamb production has certainly become an attractive proposition for many over the past few years.

One of the highlights of the year for the Hamilton region was the Beveridge family at 'Bowacka' –Andrew, Chris and their son Alistair, being successful in winning the southern region award for the New England 'Ultimate Clip' Competition. It is a great credit to them and their dedication and passion in

preparing their wool to the highest possible standards.

This year our region once again supported the Zegna fleece competition and also was well represented at the dinner in Sydney. Our region also did well in achieving 2nd and 8th in the unprotected section. On property ram sales continue in our region with the Mibus family at 'Glenara' holding there sale in October, and the Crawford family from 'Sierra Park' conducting their sale in February each year. These two families have been selling rams at there on property ram sales for 20 years and continue to be well supported by a loyal following of dedicated superfine woolgrowers, keen to produce the best natural fibre in the world.

An issue that needs to be resolved shortly is the mulesing situation. Whether alternatives will be successful and acceptable remain to be seen. Maybe it may mean some changes in breeding to plainer sheep, different management techniques and possibly more chemical use. If more chemical in our wool is acceptable remains to be seen, also the possibility of more stain being on our sheep and therefore possibly contaminating our wool should be of concern to our processors.

Once again we enjoyed being visited by our Federal President Kevin Dunn and his report to us in regard to what is happening with our overseas mill partners, and also the possibilities for the coming wool season which we look forward to in anticipation for the much needed increase in price to encourage our fellow superfine producers to continue to grow 'superfine wool for the world'.