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New England Region Report

November 2011

The New England is a sea of green, experiencing one of its best springs ever. This follows a damp & mild winter. Many paddocks now look completely white due to the phenomenal growth of white clover. Consequently sheep are in very good condition and were so at shearing.

The reports from shearing this year are very positive. Increased wool cuts because of extra length, exceptional tensile strengths and surprisingly low levels of vegetable fault (even though we had lots of grass during Summer and Autumn). These gave growers a big lift in confidence given the height of the wool market. Sadly we were to be disappointed by the weakening of wool prices as the selling season continued. As a result some growers have elected to sell more wethers, taking advantage of strong mutton prices. They have opted for joining meat rams as they see it has higher profits. Again the superfine industry is facing a potential reduction in supply.

Lambing is all but finished. Higher lambing percentages are expected despite regular rain events throughout. Those that survive will no doubt be well grown.

One positive for next year is the move back to five wool sales in Newcastle. This can be maintained depending on volume of wool sold. The situation of only four sales in 2011/12 has caused some cataloguing difficulties. The five sales will give growers some optimism. When added to the exceptional start to the wool growing season there may be some real positives ahead.