



## New England Region Report July 2011

### A POSITIVE OUTLOOK EMBRACES NEW ENGLAND SUPERFINE GROWERS

The past twelve months have been greeted with a healthy change in seasons with much needed drought breaking rains. The growers have experienced a very wet October-November 2010, having to cope with bogged machinery and trees large and small falling over in the paddocks. Such a season as this was hard to remember after all the years of poor rainfall. We are going into a much improved winter with plenty of water but will have to supplement feed ewes prior to lambing to help the ewes rear a good lamb.

The merino ewe has become a valuable commodity for the wool industry as well as the meat industry. Currently meat buyers are approaching wool growers for any surplus sheep that they might have for the meat market. It appears that growers are not being too tempted to sell as the sheep are close to full wool and shearing dates fast approaching.

**Woolclip Outlook:** The superfine woolclip from the New England is expected to show a bit more vegetable matter this season, due to the flush of summer feed. Hopefully the wet summer rains will not have too much effect on the wool quality. Microns test results would expect to be marginally broader with improved wool cut per head.

**Market Situation:** The rise in the superfine wool market late last year was received with much excitement from the growers who have kept up their numbers of their merino flock. Unfortunately there is still a shortage of sheep in Australia, especially Merino ewes as the growers have moved away from the depressed wool markets in recent years. The recovery in sheep numbers will take a few years to build with a short supply of well grown superfine wools in the auction rooms. Wool growers have also welcomed the significant rise in the value of their sheep with recent on property sheep sales.

The ewes have been purchased by growers wanting to breed more merino sheep once again. Ram Sales have been met with encouraging demand and renewed confidence in the industry.

**Wool Delegation visits** During the year the New England Region had a visit from the Schneider Group along with representatives from the Mazotto Company. Gaining a good appreciation for the local sheep industry members were able to speak with the mill members at Darryl and Robyn Carter's "Whyworry Winery". Members always enjoy the numerous meetings and dinners at their property.

In April we had a visit from Chinese textile representatives organised by Stephen Feighan from AWI. with companies such as ADD and Textile University (Donghaa University) being amongst the group. These visitors were keen to see where the Italian processors sourced their wools.





In July last year we had the annual visit from our Federal President, Mrs. Helen Cathles coinciding with the regions Annual General Meeting. Mrs Cathles outlined her forthcoming programme for the next twelve months and thoughts on how we could further promote our product.. The meeting was well attended at the local Aero Club with an evening meal and open fire.

**Membership:** All regions are experiencing a decline in membership of the association but it is hoped that with an improved and sustainable wool market this may influence woolgrowers to join once again. The association requires a field officer working in the membership area, as regional office bearers have limited time resources away from their wool growing pursuits.

**Wool Competitions:** The Zegna Fleece Competition was once again well supported and we are awaiting the anticipated announcement of grower's results for the 2011 competition. The New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition awards have again seen a few of our local members feature in the top placings. Congratulations to Paul and Sally Pittman and family on gaining second place, and the Wood family equal fourth.



Sally & Paul Pittman – second placing in the New England Ultimate Clip Competition.

**Newcastle Selling Roster:** The Newcastle Wool Selling Centre is still a subject of much concern with a reduction of wool sales for the 2011/2012 season. The NASC committee have only rostered four sales with the August sale being cancelled. Tony Gall along with Helen Cathles were invited to address the committee meeting in Sydney in May to outline the growers concerns.

The New England regions Annual Meeting was held in early June, and once again our Federal President, Helen Cathles gave an update on various activities of the Association.

An address from Mr Les Targ, National Auction Selling Committee chairman, explained the position of his committee in reducing the number of sales in Newcastle for the 2011/2012 roster.

**Life Membership** Following the meeting, former Federal President of the Association, Tony Gall was awarded Life Membership of the ASWGA. A Gala Dinner was held at the Costwolds Restaurant in Armidale which was well attended by the local growers. Tony gave an interesting speech about his twenty eight years of involvement in the superfine wool industry and thanked the association for the very prestigious award bestowed to him from the Association.

Thanks to all the office bearers who give up their valuable time and expertise to support the superfine wool growing industry. We would also encourage members to keep coming to meetings and support their industry, and remain informed of current promotional issues aimed at improving market share for their fibre.



A presentation of the Zegna centenary book to John Williams (ASWGA President from 1983-1986) on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration