

## *A lifetime of distinguished service to the Wool Industry*

Jim Konishi



*Former ASWGA President Kevin Dunn with Jim Konishi and Margaret Dunn 2009*

Jim Konishi was elected as an Honorary Life Member of ASWGA in March 2009 in recognition of a lifetime of distinguished service to the Wool Industry and in particular to ASWGA during his time with the Itochu Corporation and with The Woolmark Company.

Jim Konishi was born in Japan in 1941 and completed his formal education, graduating from Kobe City University of Foreign Studies with a BA in English.

After graduation he joined the Wool Department of C Itoh & Co. Ltd. in Osaka learning the business of wool trading and delivery and beginning his contact with the Australian wool industry.

In 1970 he moved to the Combing Wool Section of the Wool Department at a time of rapid expansion in the wool business of C Itoh. During this period he came into close contact with Australian Wool Buyers and the operations of the Australian auction selling system.

In April 1972 he moved to Argentina as a Director of C Itoh & Cia. (Argentina) based in Buenos Aires, becoming the Vice President of the Argentinean operation in 1979.

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Returning to Japan in 1980 as Deputy Manager, Combing Wool Section C Itoh & Co. in Osaka. During this period he gained an extensive knowledge of the global trade in wool and in particular in early stage processing and trading operations.

In April 1984 he moved to Australia as Senior Manager of the Wool Division of C Itoh & Co (Australia) based in Melbourne. It was during this period that he made many friends among the Wool Brokers, Exporters and wool growers attending Auction Sales.

In July 1987 he moved to Sydney as Senior Manager of the Wool Division of ITOCHU Australia Ltd. and began a close relationship with ASWGA through the Membership of ITOCHU. He was a great supporter and friend to ASWGA during the period of the Reserve Price Scheme providing advice to the Presidents and Council and making friends among the superfine growers, becoming familiar with many of the well known superfine brands.

Promoted to Deputy General Manager in April 1990 he had the difficult task of coping with the increasing stockpile and subsequent demise of the RPS with the resultant consequences. His calm good sense through the crisis was appreciated by all who were involved.

In February 1992 he returned briefly to Osaka before coming back to Australia in April 1992 as Director and General Manager, Wool Division ITOCHU Australia Ltd. It was during this period from 1992 through to 1995 that his leadership, expertise and sound judgement was appreciated.

In particular the advice that he provided to ASWGA through the difficulties of the Stockpile Reduction schemes, initially the Vines review, followed by the controversial Garnaut Review and the difficulties that were created through the Fixed Release Schedule.

In July 1995 he returned to Osaka to become General Manager, Wool Department ITOCHU Corporation. He was a great help to visiting Presidents arranging meetings and through his membership of JEFA provided valuable advice on the markets and trends.

Retiring from ITOCHU in August 1997 having served with distinction for 33 years he joined The Woolmark Company as the Regional Director for the Asia Pacific Region.

It was during this period that he played a pivotal role in the implementation of the Australian Extrafine Merino Pilot Marketing Scheme and also providing considerable resources and

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advice in the research into the possibility of ASWGA through its commercial operating arm AEM setting up a Supply Chain marketing initiative.

His enthusiasm for these projects has been appreciated by all the ASWGA Presidents, and Executive members who were involved with Woolmark in the project. In particular his work with David Conners and Dr. Ian Hilton in supporting the proposals was most valuable. That the projects could not be sustained by the growers must have been a considerable disappointment to him.

Finally retiring from The Woolmark Company after 10 years in December 2007 following the restructure resulting from the McLachlan review.

With his continued loyalty and support to ASWGA and our growers who hold him in the highest esteem it is most appropriate that his service is recognised by the awarding of Honorary Life Membership.

July 2009

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