



Newsletter

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Federation of Wool Merchants

New Zealand Wool
Classers Association

Newsletter
August 2012

Please note that articles and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the New Zealand Wool Classers Association, but those of the author or outside contributors.

New NZWCA Chairman's thoughts

Having taken over the role of Chairman from Martin Patterson following his retirement at the AGM I hope I have not "dropped the ball" by being a bit inactive, but shifting house has rather taken over my life for the last few weeks.

As we enter the busy season for classing, it is always a guess where the market will be, despite what we are often told it is always a mystery until the fall of the hammer and timing can be crucial. I had one clip last year where the grower didn't get organised with Merino Co to sell the clip and it cost several dollars per Kg, which is a lot of cash on 120 bales of very nice merino.

There are some who are disappointed with the way the Shear NZ program has not pushed the classers roll. Dave and I met with Barry Pullin, Peter Taylor and Peter Lyon to discuss this and I fully support their approach, as the aim is to lift the bottom end of the National clip. As classers it would be good to help them in their aim, by improving the less well prepared clips as well as continuing to present the existing well prepared clips to a high standard we may be able to help the industry along. The Shear NZ program is a "Living Document" (to use the modern lingo) and future developments are sure to see the classer roll recognised to a greater degree. We must remember that only a small percentage of the National clip is actually prepared with a classer being involved. With more and more contracts involving relationships from the farm to the retailer more clips are likely to be requiring either a registered classer or Q stencil there should be more need for qualifications above the basic 4 levels of wool handler. Long term, good preparation and prices to reflect the effort put in should benefit us all.

This year the clip will no doubt have some variety, some areas have had a lot of rain so we hope the clips have not got too much colour, some may have been affected by snow but we all hope for some good clean wool without tender or heavy VM. I wish everyone a safe and stress free season.

Bill Dowle

My Trip to Argentina by Rose Barnett (NZWCA Board Member)

I felt incredibly lucky when my good friend, mentor and work colleague Collie Wally (Colin Wallace-Wool Classer) asked me if I'd like to go to Argentina as his Assistant Wool Classer for 2 weeks before Christmas 2011. And take over as Wool Classer 2012.

It was a very long trip as our final destination was near the bottom of Argentina. However, the scenery was breath taking as we passed over the Andes Mountains and glaciers.

When we reached the first Ranch Santa Ana, the first thing I noticed was the drop in temperature compared to a very hot Buenos Aires. The days were nice even though it was cold and windy. So I was pleased that we had comfortable and warm accommodation and I'd packed my merino thermals and windbreaker. In fact the hospitality was absolutely fantastic. The language barrier wasn't too big a deal as there were a few people who spoke English to do any necessary translating. And along with a few sign languages, it wasn't too difficult to communicate.

The sheep are Merinos with New Zealand and Australian genetics and the Wool Classing preparation is similar to home. I was very impressed with the 10 stand shearing shed which was pretty flash compared to our standards in New Zealand. A conveyor belt carried fleeces to the Classers wool room. And a rather awkward looking press that pressed 250kg bales certainly did the job.

We had 9 shearers, 8 woolhandlers and 2 pressers, all male and either Argentinian or Chilean. The shearers have adapted our style of shearing thanks to New Zealand Shearing Instructors. They shored between 1000 and 1100 per day. Our woolhandlers turned out to be a good bunch of boys. Collie had pre-warned me that they do one job and don't help each other, so we took turns in working with them. And it didn't take long for them to work together and to sort the wool how we wanted. Apparently they were intimidated by the girl woolhandling. The shearers were giving the boys a hard time, saying that this girl is better than them, so the competition was on. Especially when I introduced them to our long handled brooms. When they first saw them, they said "We have our own brooms", two short handled plastic leaf rakes! They were soon placed permanently back in their big yellow bus.

Over all I had a great time working in this beautiful country and look forward to learning Spanish and more about their culture and history.

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Newsflash:

Strong Wool

Refresher Day

Napier—11th September

Start : 9.30 am to approx. 3.30pm

Where:

PGG Wrightson Store,
Pandora Rd, Ahuriri, Napier

Agenda: Still being worked on, but will be topical and run in-conjunction with Wool Testing Authority Napier.

ALL stencil holders and leading shed hands welcome – make sure the boss lets you have the day off because part of holding a current stencil is to attend a Refresher Course once every 3 years.

New NZWCA Board Member

BRUCE ABBOTT **A1457**

As I have been just elected to the Directorship of the New Zealand wool-classing association I have been asked to give a short profile of my working career and my thoughts on the future of our industry.

I began my career in the wool industry working for National Mortgage in Dunedin in 1963. I completed the Massey University Wool and Wool-classing Diploma in 1966. I then entered the wool scouring industry for the next 13 years, progressing to be works Manager of Seaview Wools Petone. Progressed into wool-testing for the next 8 years and managed the Dunedin branch for NZWTA. Moved out of the wool industry and managed student accommodation with my wife Pat for the next 11 years. During this time I started up a classing run in 1990 which has grown to classing 13

sheds with approximately 80,000 sheep. Over the years I have been awarded the Half-bred and Merino Merit awards and a number of commendations.

I have been married to Pat for over 40 years; have two children Pauline and Gregory & 5 grand children.

Outside interests include; Chairman of the Millers Flat Water Company which supplies potable water to the town, committee member of the Millers Flat Baths, Life member Upper Hutt Hockey Club, very keen outdoor bowler and interested in most sports.

The future of our industry is in the hands of our farmers who have been very loyal in retaining fine wool sheep. Most of, if not all of the country's merino clips is classed but over the years there has been a reduction in the classing half bred wools.

This is the area that is so important to the up and coming classers to get hands on experience. and the industry should be encouraging the farmers of half bred sheep to have classers prepare their clip.

Putting our classing registration number in the catalogue on clips you have classed is an area that should be pursued by this association and wool brokers. My biggest concern is the ageing work force of present?

We appear to have a number of people enter into this industry but after a couple of years they disappear. We have to find a way of retaining these people so they will be able to take over from the older generation. Lastly to all up and coming classers, our job is not only to class wool but to communicate with farmer, broker, contractor and shearing staff, this is an area I see many of you fail in and once you get this right you will start to become a classer in demand.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

Bill Dowle
Chairman

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Classers, Contractors and Crews by Dave Carr (NZWCA Registrar)

Many thanks to Barry Pullin & Peter Lyons (Shearing Contractors Association)

Shearing is an ultimate team game. It involves farmers/managers and their staff, classers, contractors, shearers, wool handlers, pressers and wool brokers and agents. That is easily said. But we must always have in our minds that we are all in this together. The better the relationships are, the better the job and the more rewarding it is.

If everybody makes an effort - life is easier.

This group of people is not simple to manage and work with. It is complex and it is based on individual viewpoints all the way through. Firstly to accomplish a common goal there has to be respect for everybody and the chance for people to perform. Preconceived ideas need to be led by example and at times forgotten by the individual if there is a better team way of doing things.

Lets look at this team effort. High performance teams have

- Common purpose and goal
- Intention (planned or structured)
- Clear roles
- Communication process (communicate regularly with each other)
- Accepting and supportive leadership
- Small size (teams are big enough to get the job done but small enough to reach a consensus on issues)
- High levels of technical and interpersonal skills
- Open relationships and trust
- Accountability (team members know what they and others are held accountable for)

Rewards structure

Does this sound like a shed that you want to work in?

As a classer you are the farmer's representative. Your role is to class wool to his requirements to the best of your ability. The relationship with the contractor has to have flexibility to meet variances of weather and wet sheep let alone staff availability and logistic restraints. It is best to communicate frequently, make early calls with regard to half days and start times and sometimes forgoing a half day for the sake of a better team set up to start the shed the following morning.

Classers need to be competent enough to make the call on the classing of the wool at all times. You do a great job where your focus is on that individual fleece in front of you and the characteristics of the clip as it passes across your table. Your skills are recognised and valued by everybody in the wool harvesting process.

Shearing crews are tightly organised and focused units. A good contractor will have hierarchy through gangers and leading wool handlers. If these structures are there, utilise them in the first instance. Encouragement and coaching are the truest form of a good leader. Not that hard, direct – you must do this and that. That is not a leader, that's a manager. Wool sheds are challenging, complex working environments. They are also incredibly rewarding and empowering. A good crew working together gives a total team concept. Open communication at all times will enable you to make the best out of crews that you work with. You definitely don't need to be everybody's mate but it is not about being a p**** to get the job done.



Communicate
& get it right!

Pre-Shearing Plan & Clip Report



	Name	Phone	Date
Farmer			
Shearing Business			
Wool Agent			
Partner Wool Q.A. programme:			

Pre-Shearing Plan – Farmer to complete (✓) Before Shearing (shaded area)

C H E C K	First Aid Kit			Tidy Woolshed		Sheep dagged	
	Emergency plan			Good lighting		Sheep drafted	
	Clean toilet			Rubbish bins		Sheep emptied	
	Clean washing facilities			Bale book		Tally book	
	Current Woolshed WOF			Last years test results		Specification Sheets	
	Last dipping and fly treatment	Name of Product			Date	/ /	
		Name of Product			Date	/ /	
		Name of Product			Date	/ /	

W o o l P r e p P l a n	Faults to be removed	Contamination	⊙	Dags	⊙
		Wet wool	⊙	Urine stain	⊙
		Black wool	⊙		
	Remove to Improve = ⊙	Bellies	•	Pen Stain	•
		Frib	•	Cotty wool	•
		Eye Clips	•	Tender wool	•
		Colour (Yellow)	•	Vegetable matter (VM)	•
		Raddle	•		
	Stipulate lines and brand required				

Changes to Plan/Issues

Team Leader to complete after Shearing

Reports		Team Leader Comments
Injury or near-miss		
New hazards found		
Animal welfare issue		
Pre shearing checks done		

Name:	Signature:	Date:
Team Leader	Signature:	Date: