



**NZ WOOL
CLASSER
ASSOCIATION**

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4

MAY 2008

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY:

- **Organizational Structure**
- **Promotion & Development**
- **Recognition**
- **Skills**
- **Quality**
- **Education**
- **Standards**
- **Liaison**
- **Activities**
- **Strategies**
- **Focus**

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Health and Safety in the Wool Industry Workplace

The recent release of a document compiled by the industry outlines the rights, responsibilities of everyone and wool industry specific health and safety issues. At the NZWCA AGM Peter Lyon, shearing contractor, spoke on the importance of the Best Practice Guidelines for the wool harvesting industry.

Under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992, your employer has legal responsibilities to you as an employee. You also have a responsibility to look after yourself and ensure that what you do does not affect anyone else's safety or well-being.

The most common health and safety hazards identified in the wool shed that can affect you are: sprains and strains, wrist and back problems, cuts and bruising, fatigue and dehydration. Some more serious health hazards are: wool based infections, giardia, leptospirosis, hepatitis, tetanus, dermatitis and noise. Stress also cannot be underestimated.

Employee rights:

- *To have a safe working environment where the employer makes sure that you are not exposed to significant hazards.
- *To be made aware of the procedures in place to deal with emergencies, such as accidents, earthquakes, fire etc.
- *To be made aware of the health and safety policy and process, the hazards you are exposed to, and how to minimize hazards.
- *Training & supervision for learners.
- *Availability of Health & Safety training.

Employee responsibilities:

- *Follow instructions at all times
- *Ensure and protect the safety of yourself and others (this includes never working while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs).
- *Know where safety equipment is.
- *Take all possible steps to keep your workplace safe. Identify, eliminate, isolate or minimize possible hazards. Ensure that your actions do not put anyone at risk.
- *Report accidents to your employer.



A presentation was made to Peter McCusker (PGGW), (pictured left) for the seven year contribution he has made to the wool classing fraternity on his retirement from the Board. In addition he was given an Honorary Wool Classing registration, A2102.

Peter began as the Brokers' representative on CRAIG from 2001-2004, continued when it became WQAG, and for the past two years served as an inaugural board member on the NZWCA.

From the Chairman's 2nd Annual Report

I would like to acknowledge my board for their participation and contribution towards the success of the last 12 months and I would like to thank retiring members Brian Jephson and Peter McCusker for their hands on role and being prepared to make themselves available for sub committee work, Professional Development, on which they were members.

The Classers Association is playing an important role in working alongside others in industry to improve Health and Safety in the woolshed through representation on the H&S Committee and contributing to the design of posters which will shortly be printed and distributed to farmers and growers. The three posters include one promoting Best Practice Guidelines for clip preparation.

The Board has also been working alongside Tectra and Tafe, the Australian equivalent, in discussing the opportunity to align qualifications and review joint training opportunities. I was privileged to host Mark Graves, CEO AWEX, who attended the classer refresher day in Queenstown last year. The purpose of the visit was to see the programme first hand and to have discussion on access for NZ classers into Australia and vice versa. The outcome was the establishment of a relationship between NZWCA and AWEX that is focussing on an approach to deliver quick access by NZ classers to Australian accreditation through agreed undertaking of competence assessment.

The Board in July 2007 invited Mike Jones, CEO of Wool Industry Network to a meeting. Mike advised the Board that WIN will be undertaking a review of industry quality systems and would seek the Board's view. Dave Carr and Mike Gourdie have had an ongoing discussion with WIN regarding our Industry. WIN has also been entertaining an idea from Board member Martin Paterson regarding cost benefit analysis on the financial implications of preparation v non preparation of crossbred wools.

The result of this proposed project was to seek long term benefits for our Q stencil holders and profits for the crossbred grower. I would like to thank Dave Carr as our Board member on the Wool Industry Group for his efforts in promoting our industry good towards the project.

Early January Mike Gourdie, Dave Carr and I met to prepare the Budget for 2008 and are very conscious of our Income v Expenditure. The association had a budget deficit in 2007 due to our last financial year being 18 months to bring us into line with the calendar year for our 2008 financial year. I would like to acknowledge that the association is discussing with Meat & Wool NZ for extra financial support to carry out wool industry good. Without that support and life line we would not be able to operate with the membership size and contribution.

At the end of January Mike, Dave and I hosted a Wool Industry meeting in Christchurch along with other industry leaders. It was very successful in setting out the requirements and standards for classer refresher days covering all breed groups. At this meeting Dave Carr informed the industry that a current review is being undertaken by NZWCA and Tectra regarding the Wool classing Technology Course run by Tectra.

A general review of the course is timely and a consultation process with Brokers, Grower organisations, wider industry along with Tafe and AWEX from Australia is underway. This will help NZWCA's strong desire for our member classer skills to be identified and be acknowledged on both sides of the Tasman.

I am pleased to say that the Registrar has not reported any poor standards of classing to the Board, in fact, Mark Graves, CEO of AWEX, complimented the high standard of classing by our stencil members' clips in Melbourne. I would like to remind members of the association that we need your input. Don't be scared to put your hand up, speak up and take part.

As Professional people we have a responsibility to maintain standards as Registered Wool Classers and be proud to put our registration number on our bales. To do this, please ensure you are a current **paid up** member.

I would like to wish the Board and the new Chair the very best for 2008 and good luck for the 2008-2009 classing season.

GRAEME BELL A223
CHAIRMAN NZWCA

Annual General Meeting

Held in Christchurch on Wednesday April 16th in conjunction with the merino and mid-micron classer professional development day with around 35 registered classers and industry personnel in attendance.

Board acknowledgement

In addition to reports from the Chairman and executive Officer, Mike Gourdie, the Chairman acknowledged the role of retiring Board members Brian Jephson and Peter McCusker in the development of the association over the past two years.

Australian Classing Trial

Dave Carr spoke of the delays in moving this plan forward. Information was expected prior to Christmas but only received April 8th which means the trial as previously announced will also be delayed. The costs of being involved in the trial scheme for course and boarding were advised.

(Contact Registrar if you are interested in participating)

Classing Qualification update

The review has restructured the qualification in three stages with stage one completed and stage two is under construction. Dave Carr thanked Tectra for their input into the review and their efforts to date in developing a new program.

New Board Members

It was somewhat disappointing that there were no new nominations for the board vacancies. The Board will look to co-opt members as it sees fit, including that of a broker representative.

H& S cont'd from page 1

Hazard Prevention

The majority of hazards can be prevented by applying simple remedies. Physical hazards can be removed or shifted, or if it's mechanical just turn it off and get it fixed. Most physical injuries can be prevented by using correct and safe practices and techniques.



Good personal hygiene practices will minimize any likelihood of wool based infections; in addition not sharing personal things (such as cigarettes, cups, towels etc) lessens the likelihood of contracting giardia, leptospirosis or hepatitis. Open wounds should be cleaned and covered, and an adult tetanus injection booster every 10 years is a good preventative.

As for continuous noise, inexpensive earplugs will keep noise from shearing machinery and overly loud sound systems to reasonable levels and will contribute to preventing permanent hearing loss.

Stress occurs when someone has difficulty coping with the demands of work or home life and can be caused by a variety of factors; overwork, physically demanding or hazardous work, competitiveness, lack of confidence, problems outside of work, and negative work-place relationships. Some signs of stress include: depression, lack of motivation, difficulty in sleeping, irritability and anxiety at work and health problems.

If you or a work mate is experiencing these problems encourage them to be proactive in dealing with the problem. It can often be alleviated with a simple conversation.

Meat & Wool New Zealand Comment

M&WNZ continues to take a keen interest in the work of the Association and is strongly supportive of the initiatives launched since its formation. The role of classers and wool handlers is critical to the positioning of NZ wool with our global customers. It was particularly pleasing to have been invited to participate in the industry meeting convened by NZWCA in January and to hear of the support for the Association's initiatives from all sectors of the industry. The Merino New Zealand Company's two Fibre Select events this year each with a strong practical content and the introduction of a mentoring scheme for classers is also great news. Likewise the Professional Development Day organised by Tectra and held in Plamerston North for Senior Wool Handlers and Xbd & Q Stencil holders was a great success and no doubt those scheduled for Gore and Timaru at the end of May will be equally successful.

Mid-Micron & Merino Professional Development day in Christchurch

About 60 classers and wool harvesting personnel participated in small groups in a variety of workshops held during the day.

These included: **half-bred** preparation (Peter McCusker), length & strength testing (Blair Davies), contracts and style (Keith Ovens), in shed testing (Jackie Donald), practical classing (Sharyn Miller) and message reinforcing.

The day and format received very favourable comments.

Overheard:

“Every classer in Canterbury should be here”

Photo credits: NZM and Allan Frazer Meat and Wool



It was great to see the NZWCA Life Members in attendance.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

As you will see below NZWCA have assisted in the provision of five Professional Development Days this year and our hope is that a similar number of days will be organised in 2009. By the time you receive this newsletter the first four days will be behind us but there will still be the opportunity to participate in the Fibre Select Day being held in Queenstown on the 20th June. *To register for this event please phone 03 3777 990*

DATE	April 16th	May 1st	May 28th	May 29th	June 20th
VENUE	Christchurch	Palmerston North	Gore	Timaru	Queenstown
CATERING FOR	All leading & senior wool handlers. All mid-micron and merino classers. (further details see page 6)	Senior wool handlers Xbd & Q stencil holders	All Senior wool handlers. Xbd & Q stencil holders.	All Senior wool handlers. Xbd & Q stencil holders.	All leading & senior wool handlers. All mid-micron and merino classers. (further details see page 6)

North Island NZWCA Merit Award Winner- Dan Ramsden (FX 276)

The year 2008 so far has been a momentous one for Dan Ramsden. Not only did he win the NZWCA merit award for the North Island, having attained his registration as an owner classer 30 years ago in 1978, but the family celebrates 100 years of farm ownership at Akitio on the Wairarapa east coast.

Dan's interest in wool began in 1960 when he completed the first stage of the Massey wool diploma. Doing the course has paid for itself over the years because of wools importance on the farm, as well as enjoying the challenge each season brings and working with the raw product. The family run two properties, where 9000 sheep including a Romney stud of 500 ewes are run, and Moanaroa with 1400 Angus cattle which also incorporates a stud. The clip of 200 plus bales is sold at auction and Dan regularly attends a wool sale at the end of November/December.

Dan attended the Classer development day in Palmerston North. He felt the opportunity to find out what's been happening in the season and to get some feedback from the buyers proved very worthwhile with the added bonus of interaction with other classers and the speakers.

Dan's interests lie in farm oriented activities and particularly with selecting and showing fleeces at local shows where he has been successful over the years, although to date the coveted Golden Fleece has eluded him. He feels it is important that someone should be in the shed during the shearing to oversee and class the clip where necessary and consequently fully intends to continue classing the family clips for as long as he is able.



Dan Ramsden was presented with his award by NZWCA Patron D (Bertie) McPherson at the recent classer development day held in Palmerston North.

Photo credit: NZWCA

NZWCA Merit Awards 2007/2008

Merino

Merit	Colin Wallace (A872)	<i>M in Diamond</i>
Highly commended	Graeme Bell (A223)	<i>Mt Campbell</i>
	Barbara Newton (A723)	<i>Te Aka</i>
	Andrew Templeton (D1301)	<i>The Rocks</i>

Mid-micron

Merit	Bruce Abbott (A1457)	<i>Dot over X</i>
Highly commended	Pip McConway (A1864)	<i>Richmond</i>
	Andrew Fox (FH1491)	<i>Foxdown</i>

Crossbred

Merit	Lorraine Graham (A2015)	<i>Rocklands</i>
Merit (North Island)	J Dan Ramsden (FX276)	<i>Ware Ware</i>
		<i>Moanaroa</i>
Highly commended	Tunis Rata (X1383)	<i>Hazeldale</i>



Eyes down and looking at the Massey facility in Palmerston North earlier this month. Classers who attended heard from Malcolm Ching of Wool Services and NZWCA Registrar, Mike Gourdie.

There was also plenty of opportunity to get some “hands on” experience.

Facts

- New Zealand produces 45% of world carpet wool, and 89% of the NZ production is exported.
- A typical living room of carpet contains the wool from six sheep, which first must be spun into 100km of yarn.
- Wool carpets rapidly and irreversibly remove common air contaminants from indoor air. Research estimates that they will continue purifying the air for up to 30 years.
- Wool carpets buffer indoor humidity reducing humidity peaks and inhibiting condensation on cold surfaces that can lead to the growth of mould.
- The top 5 wool export markets in value terms are; China, United Kingdom, Italy, India and Belgium.

Source: Meat & Wool NZ

The Wool Industry Network :

has been established to transform the wool industry. Most of its attention is being focused on changes off-farm - on improving methods of processing wool, on new products and on evidence of wool's naturalness and environmental sustainability. But WIN recognizes that it is not simple for processors to obtain wool that is consistently “fit for purpose”, with properties appropriate for its use. Given that wool is naturally variable and several grower lines with different properties are blended for processing, the place for classers to provide consistency is obvious. There is no machine to replace them.

To read an account of the trip to Melbourne, to view the auction and show floor, which was won by Barbara Newton at last years Fibre Select go to <http://www.merino.co.nz> and look under “all news articles”,

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*“Quality is remembered
long after the price
is forgotten.”*

*“Whatever is worth doing
at all is worth doing well.”*

Fibre Select
Queenstown, Friday June
20th, 2008.

*This could be your big
chance!*

Two classer scholarships
for promising classers
to elevate their career
are to be made,
and a
Trip to Melbourne
to be won.

As the industry looks to move classers up the ladder this is an ideal opportunity for junior classers and leading shed hands to learn from experienced classers and those in the industry.

While the day will be mainly concentrating on merino, mid-micron will be covered in classing and contract workshops.

The feed back from your comments relating to previous days has been addressed with regard to allowing more time for “hands on” practical classing experience prior to the forthcoming season.

The provision of actual in-shed scenarios of clips for you to class in your own time, with assistance if required, and without any outside pressures proved very popular in Christchurch and will be repeated in Queenstown.

For more information on Fibre Select, please contact

**The New Zealand Merino
Company 03 377 7990 or
fibreselect@nzmerino.co.nz**