



**NZ WOOL  
CLASSERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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# NEWSLETTER

September 2014

## Chairman's Comment

By now the season is well under way, I presume, for all of us. Hopefully the weather is co-operating; it would be great to have a clear run for a change. There is a mix of great things happening in the wool industry at the moment as well as some worrying things. I recently attended a meeting of the Wool Advisory Group on behalf of the Wool Harvesters Group, of which we are part of, some of the research being undertaken for wool is showing great promise for wool's future. We had outlined research into bedding (wool duvets); the heat retention and moisture transport properties of wool are unequalled by synthetics. There is still some way to go with some of the research into insect treatments for wool as well as stain resistance. More is being understood into the makeup of the proteins in wool and the ongoing battle of the effects of light on wool, affected by yellowing, colour fade weakening of the fibre over time and dye fade.

There are some great health benefits of wool, trials being undertaken with wool socks have shown great benefits of wool socks over other fibres as well as the ability of wool to cleanse Formaldehydes from its surrounds.

Of some concern perhaps is the declining use of wool. This is well illustrated by the Soft Floor Covering figures we were presented. In New Zealand in 2006 there was 12 Million m<sup>2</sup> of carpet sold, of which 78% (9.36 Mill m<sup>2</sup>) was wool. Last year there was 11 million m<sup>2</sup> sold. However only 25% (2.75Mill m<sup>2</sup>) was wool.

This could partly be from the lack of promotional spend by the industry. It is a common saying that "You can't sell a secret" – especially since the end of the wool levy the market spend has been reduced and fragmented. This year the wool growers have an opportunity to vote to reintroduce a wool levy. Not only for promotion but other industry good things. The continuation of research to help manufacturers battle the "Dial Up" properties for synthetics but also maybe for some harvesting training. As wool classers it would be good to try to convince the growers that the small levy they would pay would have a good long term payback.

It is disturbing to hear of the campaign by the animal activists group PETA where the very small amount of animal maltreatment in the Australian shearing industry has been blown out of proportion in the USA consumer market. We can say "It's over there and out of our patch. We don't do that. What can I do anyway?" What you can do is ensure that there isn't maltreatment of sheep. If someone is hurting animals it could bite back on us all. The filming was done "under cover". It could happen here. We don't want or need bad publicity.

The market is again looking weak this year. From the numbers supplied by Merino Co the fine edge could have a bad season but the drop in production for the medium end in Australia may help these wools. The best we can do is ensuring our preparation is up to standard and all our wool is well presented be that for

contract or auction. Quality makes a bigger difference in a weak market. Why should a buyer take badly prepared wool when there is well prepared wool available?

Your association has entered the social media era. A Facebook page has been set up by two of the students studying with Tectra, great to see new classers wanting to become involved, it is the members' organisation; there is always room for more to become involved, we are always inviting input. The page is New Zealand Wool Classers Association. It would be great to see this page grow to a useful discussion board; it will only do so by our members using it. Go for it.

**Bill Dowle**

*Chairman NZWCA*

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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.



## Time To Review Our Organisation

– Bill Dowle, Chairman NZWCA.

Some of you may have been aware before you got this newsletter that Dave Carr has resigned from his position as Registrar of NZ Wool Classers Association; this is not because of any disagreement with the board or Association but due to how our contract with Tectra is structured and Dave's involvement with another training organisation.

With this in mind and the fact that the association has been in existence for some 10 years it is timely to have a look at ourselves.

The best start to this is that anyone who is involved in our industry let us know what you think we should be doing as an organisation. This is a message to both members and non-members.

To the members it is a question of what would you like us to be doing to service your needs better, what do you think we should be doing? Carry on as we have been, do more or do less? Should we become more involved with classer training or should we leave it entirely up to the current training organisations and just liaise with them to help keep the content current and relevant and assist with mentoring?

Should we broaden our base and take shed-hands into our organisation? Should we be more involved in their training?

To those in wool classing but not members of our association the question we would like your comment on is; What should we be doing so that you feel we are relevant enough that you would join us and support and help promote and steer the organisation?

If you have a comment make please contact any of the board members and tell them or send it in, just talking about it in the pub or wool bins will do nothing, no-one who can make a difference will hear. This organisation should be for all wool classers, now is the best opportunity you will be offered for some time to have an influence on its future.

If you don't know any board members they're listed below or write to PO Box 7327, Sydenham, Christchurch.

**Bill Dowle**  
*Chairman NZWCA*

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## Where I Want To Be

Hi, my name is Kristal Wilson, a student Wool classer from the Central Otago region.

I would like to write about my experience at the Bruce Woollen Mill as part of the day that was organized for the 2014 Classer Refresher Day and AGM. I thought that the tour of the Milton mill was exciting, a bit intimidating and very much overwhelming. First of all, to be surrounded by people with vast experience in the field I'm studying, to listen to them speak with one another with conviction and passion about wool was totally amazing to me.

I could have almost run home to Google everything they were talking about, just to get amongst it.

Intimidating because the mill was a fully functioning work place. Wow, to have seen the place at full speed must have been something.

Overwhelming because I couldn't have asked anymore questions – someone would have probably strangled me within the hour! I know now, finally, what I want to do and where I want to be, the opportunity to see a fully functioning mill was OUTSTANDING. Reading about it and seeing pictures was not enough.

Now I find myself explaining to trainee woolhandlers the different processes that I had seen that day and why certain faults create problems at the mill. They are now aware of why and what happens. I love the reactions that they give, I know they will use that information to teach others.

So to all the people who organized such an awesome day thank you so much.

**Kristal Wilson**  
*Student Wool Classer*



## Presentation of 2014 Merit Awards:

Presented at the AGM in Milton, 6th May

Awards:

**Merino Category sponsored  
by New Zealand Merino**

Graeme Goodger (P1883)  
Grays Hills

**Mid Micron Category  
sponsored by Elders**

Ian Kofoed (A2086)  
The Hectors

**Cross Bred Category sponsored  
by PGG Wrightsons**

Guy Palmer (A1678)  
Mendip Hills

**Owner Classer Category**

John McKenzie (FH463)  
Mt McKay

Commendations:

**Pip McConway** (A1864)  
Richmond Brook

**Murray McLaughlan** (D1677)  
Mt Nicolas



## Registrars Ramblings

Pre-Lamb 2014 (and Farewell).

Another year goes by – some of you are already well into pre-lamb and the sense of busyness and comradeship that it provides. For others it is just that same-old-same-old grind, one day after the other, in an attempt to earn enough to get you through the off-season.

Prices, especially for the fine/super fine merino, are still abysmal in spite of the industry's best efforts to do something about it. What worries me most of all is that every year there are less and less sheep requiring a wool classer's care. Every day it seems that I hear of someone else going the half-bred or cross-bred way. Costs can only be cut so much and sometimes there must be a carrot at the end – it is just not happening! As I have said many times before we are all in this together; farmers, shepherd, shed staff, contractors, truckies, brokers, and so the list goes on.

Perhaps though, the dairy scene is coming back to earth a bit and with a lift in red meat prices the flow to black and white may be slowing. May be we should all be voting for the Greens after all!

For the past six years I have done my best for the Association as your Registrar – through thick and thin – however the time has now come for me to hang up my hat. By the time that you read this I will no longer be your Registrar; however I wish you all the very best in the future and look back at changes that



have been made and friendships that have been cemented with some sense of pride.

There is still a bloody lot to do out there, however it is someone else's turn now. Not everyone agrees with my approach however I have and always will speak my mind and give my reasons for doing so.

Together we are strong – never forget that – even if it does sound a bit like a trade union call.

**Dave Carr**  
*Registrar NZWCA*



## The Resumé of DG (Don) Urquhart

The new broker rep to your board

Born and raised in the Mid-Canterbury district of Ashburton, spending formative years on a high country station working with merino sheep and wool. Purchased a fine wool property at Omarama which we farmed for 14 years, before moving to Oamaru to work full time with the wool merchant business we started at Kurow.

Completed the Massey wool course extramurally and continued to expand my classing run until our wool business grew to the point that it required my full attention.

I still maintain my Merino classing stencil with pride in a profession I believe is very

important to the wool industry and the New Zealand economy.

The Federation of Wool Merchants appointed me to support Wool Classers and wool preparation as our members feel we can help meet a need in the industry at a practical level. Our members have been supportive of me in my endeavours.

As a Board member I would like to raise the profile of wool classing in general and support classers to the best of my ability. I consider it a privilege to assist in any way possible.