

Wool classer receives merit award

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Wool has always been part of Anne-Marie Parcell's life.

"I love it and not a day goes by when I am not staring at sheep or touching wool. If I am not spinning it, I am shearing or crutching or drafting. I never wear polar fleece," the Bannockburn wool classer said.

And neither did the two lambs that turned up last week wearing wool jackets.

Ms Parcell was delighted when she was given a merino merit award from the New Zealand Wool Classers Association recently, for the clip she classed at Northburn Station, near Cromwell.

When not classing for about four months a year, she works as a shepherd, and on orchards and vineyards, and does general farm work, including fencing.

"One of the shearers calls me Anne-Marie Merino."

She leases 31ha near Bannockburn, which she called Parcell Station, and runs about 120 merino, Polwarth and quarterbred black and coloured sheep.

She also has a Gotland ram and five pure bred Gotland ewes. The ram is crossed over merinos, producing a fleece with characteristics that she really likes, especially for spinning, and is keen to develop further.

The first shear off some of the Gotland offspring can have an horizontal stripe in the middle of the staple.

"It doesn't happen very often and the next year they will probably be grey all through."

Her flock produces 15 to 16 microns up to 24 to 26 microns. She sends fleeces to Tally Ho



Top of her class . . . Wool classer Anne-Marie Parcell, of Bannockburn, has received a merino merit award for the clip she classed at Northburn Station, near Cromwell.

PHOTO: YVONNE O'HARA

in Roxburgh to be carded and then she spins it.

Ms Parcell spent six years in the police and also attended Lincoln University in 1989-90, completing a diploma in farm management. She stayed for an additional three months to gain her wool classer's certificate.

She also classed for five seasons in the United States, in the northwestern states.

"They were not as fussy as New Zealand there, but it was awesome. We worked out of a semi-trailer that unfolded into a 10-stand woolshed and they would bring the sheep to us."

Her partner Tony Holder

managed Northburn Station for six years and she was allowed to cull to improve the wool quality.

Each line of merino has specific qualities in length, style, strength and colour and she can class up to 1200 fleeces a day.

"You need to keep the lines

exactly right, even when the mob changes."

NZWCA's Bruce Abbott said usually broker/merchant wool representatives recommended a classer for a merit award.

Then a panel from NZWCA looked at the results of the clips and gave merit and commendation awards.