

## NZ WOOL CLASSERS ASSOCIATION

### JUNE 2021 NEWSLETTER



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#### From The Chair

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Well as I put this to paper the drought has broken. A state of emergency has been declared in Ashburton and I suspect a few other spots will follow. I have measured 18% of my average rainfall for 24 hours. That's the problem with asking for rain too often, it all comes at once.

In your association there have been some changes that you will likely be aware of. More about these changes will be elsewhere in the newsletter but I must pay tribute to the efforts Bruce Abbot put in way above expectation during his 6 years in the position. Marg is getting her head around the job as Registrar so the new era begins; well it began at the very successful Industry Day/AGM in Ashburton.

Bruce will still be involved and will lead the education side of our activities with Marg taking over the Registrar activities.

So most things will probably be the same anyway but we will no doubt have a different emphasis in some areas but promoting and monitoring good standards, promoting education are the key to what we are about. A slight change in emphasis is not a problem as it helps us evolve as any organisation must do to survive.

Most of the items I could comment on have a more detailed item in this newsletter so I will leave space for these and with the now likelihood of getting some spring growth, hopefully the winter isn't too hard as with possibly lower feed stores a hard winter could result in poorer spring/pre-lamb clips, which as good classers you will still present in top condition.

When you do get into these clips remember the messages from the brokers and merchants, keep the standards high and keep the contamination out. We have to maintain standards as our mission statement says we are here to promote good preparation and presentation of wool clips for sale.

Cheers and keep warm and dry

**Bill Dowle**  
**D1076**  
**Chairman**

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## *From NZWCA Registrar*

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**Kia ora koutou** and thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, my first since taking on the role of Registrar in March.

Registrar is not a role I had ever aspired to, however I have always felt strongly about the importance of maintaining a New Zealand classer registration system that is robust and respected, so it is an honour to find myself here. Thanks to the work of others and those who have gone before me (more on that soon) I believe NZWCA has a positive profile in the industry. What we do, what we stand for, our part in the quality wool chain, is on the radar in a world where wool's place in a global groundswell of demand for sustainable products is increasingly evident.

There is a demonstrable awareness of and interest in NZWCA; we all play a role in ensuring our association is widely known and positively viewed. Stats tell us a post and photos on the NZWCA Facebook page the day after our recent Ashburton event had, at time of writing, reached 46,244 people and had 2,424 engagements. An NZWCA Facebook post at the end of April, sharing an email warning from PGG Wrightson about not using Econopak wool packs has had, at time of writing, reached 20,499 people and 3654 engagements.

Multiple times in the past few months, on a variety of platforms, I have heard public acknowledgement of the value in and necessity of quality in wool preparation and classing. As an example, Andy Caughey, CEO of the Strong Wool Action Group, began his talk to our Industry Professional Development Day in Ashburton in May by acknowledging that quality wool preparation and classing was "fundamentally important" to ensure the brands choosing wool had exactly what they needed to make their products. Never doubt that our passion, professionalism and everything we do in the wool industry counts.

I've had a few big firsts recently, (mostly associated with becoming your NZWCA Registrar) like pulling together the recent Industry Professional Development Day/AGM event. This, like pretty much everything else I've done since beginning in the job, wouldn't have been possible without the groundwork laid down and then support from Bruce Abbott. Bruce's passion for wool and tireless advocacy for NZWCA is something we should all be extremely grateful for. I know I am. I look forward to continuing to work alongside Bruce for NZWCA; Bruce has chosen to concentrate on the training/education aspect.

Bruce has left large shoes to fill, please bear with me! In addition to Bruce, I have relied on our indispensable secretary Annette Gamble and Chairman Bill Dowle since beginning in the role. I very much appreciate their patience and help and also need to record my thanks to our Board members for trusting me to be Registrar, and for their solid support.

I welcome your feedback or engagement. My email is [reg@woolclassers.org.nz](mailto:reg@woolclassers.org.nz) and my phone is 027 474 3104, though please be aware especially in the springtime I may not be able to answer calls during the day as I could be busy classing.

I wish you all a quality wool harvesting season for 2021. **Noho ora mai.**

**Marg Forde**  
**A1260**  
**Registrar**

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*At the NZWCA AGM in Ashburton on May 13<sup>th</sup>, Allan Frazer agreed to become our Patron. We are extremely honoured Allan has agreed to take on the role.*

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Allan has been a board member of NZWCA since its formation in 2006 and is its longest serving member.

His employer until early 2010 was Meat & Wool New Zealand and its predecessor organisations where he worked for some 50 years. It was toward the end of this period when he had responsibility for overseeing a range of wool industry good programmes. This included grants to industry good organisations in the wool sector, managing meat and wool levy support of ITO training and managing scholarships for undergraduate and post graduate wool scholars. During this time, he was assigned to work with wool industry interests to undertake the formation of NZWCA and in this role he was invited by the industry to continue his involvement by becoming a board member.

Allan grew up on a Canterbury sheep and beef farm and for many years was a partner in a livestock farming operation in North Canterbury. He graduated from Lincoln University in the days when an introduction to wool classing training was a component of every agricultural degree and diploma qualification on offer.

During his career he held a range of senior roles including two periods as European Director of the Meat Producers Board and a 12-month period as Acting CEO for the global organisation. His experience covered roles in research and development, marketing, leadership and human capability development as well as serving as a director of a number of industry organisations.

He is currently a business advisor to a number of organisations including being the business manager for the Poplar and Willow Research Trust and Facilitator of the Wool Industry Education Trust. He, and his wife Heather, own and manage a small olive grove North of Wellington.

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*At our 2021 AGM in Ashburton on May 13 the Association gained a new Board member, Karen Wilkins-Duff (A871). Welcome and thank you Karen.*

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Karen's career in the wool industry started in her teen years as a shed hand on the family farm. It was becoming obvious that with a natural ability, an eye for detail and love for wool and shed work, that Karen would eventually begin studies in the industry.

The Wool course at Lincoln College (as it was known as then) was pursued in 1982 which started off Karen's Classing career in earnest that same year. Sheds around Marlborough, both on the home farm, and the neighbours, and anyone who would give her a shed were all helping towards her classing stencil. The call of University beckoned again however, with a short stint attempting BCOM Fmgmt, and finally the Diploma in Wool technology in 1986.

A move to Central Otago in 1987 to work for Peter Lyon was the next opportunity, in the hope that many sheds would pass her way and allow Karen to complete her A stencil. Thanks to Peter putting his trust in my abilities, this quickly came to fruition.



Further opportunities arose later in 1987 when Karen was approached by the Wool Board in Wellington to join them as a Sales Analyst. A role she found interesting, which also took her to Christchurch and Dunedin valuing on the wool floor before auction. It took less than a year however to realise that she was not ready for the corporate world in Wellington, so after a few phone calls to relevant industry people, she left on the next boat back to Marlborough to pursue full time classing. This led to nearly 20 years as a full-time classer. Off seasons were spent in the horticultural industry eventually as a quality inspector for Enza/Agriquality – now Asurequality Ltd and a 3-month sheep classing scholarship spent in NSW and South Australia for good measure, courtesy of the Marlborough Merino society and then prominent and legendary sheep classer Gordon McMaster.

A career change in 2006 led to Karen back to Lincoln University to complete her BCOM, with a double major in International Business and Marketing. All the while keeping one shed up her sleeve as study pocket money.

The last 10 years has seen Karen, now based in Christchurch, continue with part time classing, as well as full time General Manager/Director for her family business Durolla Products NZ Ltd, a manufacturing company. This involves marketing and selling injection molded paper and soap dispensers to the hygiene, cleaning and paper industries.

With a very challenging and varied working career, who knows what the future will bring. One thing for certain is that some involvement in the wool industry will always be welcome says Karen.



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*Pam Liverton, registration/stencil number A246, retired from her pioneering wool classing career 12 years ago but such is her passion for the craft and life of classing that she can't quite bring herself to stop paying her membership when the invoice arrives each year from the NZ Wool Classers Association*

*by Marg Forde, Registrar*

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"I'm so proud of my stencil, I always have been, always will be," says Pam, whose number makes her the longest-standing woman "A" stencil holder according to NZWCA records. There are only five current NZWCA members with registration numbers lower than Pams, and they're all men. "When I started classing there was no stencil, then not long after they bought in the numbers," she says.



The North Island daughter of a long-established Romney farming family at Tiraumea still vividly remembers her introduction to merino wool in the early 1970s, when she ventured to Central Otago to woolhandle for Murray McSkimming and Vic Harrex. She'd spent the previous five years travelling and working; Australia, the UK, Spain, and places between. However, as soon as she worked with the Central Otago merino wool "everything changed". "I fell in love with merino, I remember just thinking, this is it!" says Pam.

But becoming a wool classer was no smooth path. She recalls 1975, early days of her Diploma in Wool Technology study at Massey University. Her intake had seven "girls", more than traditional ex-Bradford (England centre of wool trade) lecturer and Head of Wool Lex Meek had ever seen "or obviously wanted to see". "He looked over his glasses down at us and said 'you know there is no place in the wool industry for women'. I thought differently and went on to prove him wrong."

Pam (73) lives in Masterton these days but at her busiest in the 1980s and early 90s she classed mainly around Central Otago working solidly from mid-June through until the end of October with both machine and blade gangs. Many of

the properties now have, she notes, "grapevines in place of sheep". In the off-season she would head to the Gisborne and Taupō areas "where they were still classing crossbred hogget's".

Pam was taught the basics of wool preparation growing up on her family property 'Pakowai Farm'; her brother Robert is fourth generation on the place now. "When I was a child I always found myself pulled to the woolshed at shearing time. The wool classer taught me how to woolhandle." As school leaving loomed it was, she says, the days when farming succession was a male domain, "but there was no way I was going to work in an office". She wool handled for a Coromandel contractor to make enough to get her to Australia, her first step in travelling the world for the next five years.

The Massey Diploma in Wool Technology which Pam undertook in 1975 and 1976 had academic and practical components. Lectures and course work was done in blocks on campus and practical experience completed working in the industry. "My friend Barb and I ended up doing our practical in Dunedin at the Wrightson NMA wool store." The wool store floor was a truly male-dominated place at the time, and quite the experience she says. Barb rebelled against the prevailing male attitudes, and the boss who liked a drink at work; she spoke out and got the sack, says Pam. On the plus side, there were all breeds of wool coming through the store, so Pam was able to put her head down and "learnt a lot". "Actually, it was a hilarious time looking back, I loved it."

The previously mentioned Massey lecturer Lex' thoughts on women in the wool industry aside, Pam says she is forever grateful for what she learnt from him and other lecturers as she worked her way to being awarded her Diploma in 1977. "Education at Massey was brilliant, really solid," says Pam, "I found through all the rest of my classing, whatever fads or new things came along, as long as I stuck to those strong basics from Massey everything would be ok. The first Saxon merino clip I ever classed was somewhere near Alexandra. It was shorn by an Australian contractor who had brought a gang over and they shored with narrow gear. I was, as was pretty normal back then, the only woman in the shed. But that wasn't something I thought about, I just loved that chance to class that Saxon wool."

She enjoyed the timing of her busiest classing years which she explains coincided with multiple technology changes and merino wool becoming really valued. "I think I just struck it right, I classed for farmers who were leading the way testing and finding markets in Europe, things like that."

Aside from the wool, Pam says the characters in the shearing sheds are what kept her there and made for "very special times". She points out the value placed on a person's ability to work hard in a team being placed so highly "regardless of who they are and how they live" as a great strength of the industry.

Pam has contributed back to the industry by judging in competitions. "I was the first woman to judge wool handling at the Golden Shears. There was no badge then as I recall, I was asked to judge in my capacity as a South Island wool classer." And Pam continues to contribute by faithfully paying her NZWCA membership fee each year, supporting our industry and keeping her cherished 'A246' current.

Thanks Pam!



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## *Congratulations to all the 2020 Certificate of Wool Technology graduates from the Southern Institute of Technology (SIT).*

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We look forward to seeing you out there in our industry – in the wool sheds/stores/scours/factories/auction rooms/brokers – putting into practice all you have learned, contributing to ensuring the highest possible quality standards for NZ wool.

2020 graduate award winners were: Top Overall Student, Ingrid Neera (trophy donated by NZWCA); Highest Practical Marks, Toby Single (trophy donated by NZ Wool Scours); Highest Theory Marks, Abby Kell (trophy donated by NZ Wool Scours).

There has been strong interest for 2021 in the Certificate of Wool Technology and Wool classing course through SIT in Invercargill. 38 students began the course in February and there are enough students for another intake in July.



*Trophies for top 2020 Certificate in Wool Technology students Ingrid Neera, Toby Single and Abbey Kell*

*A happy group after the 2020 SIT graduation, from left Claire Mulholland, Ingrid Neera, Bruce Abbott (NZWCA), Cassie Johnston, Mecaela Lynch, Christie Burn and Te Kau Ma Tahī Natilie Moore*





# YOUR CAREER IN WOOL STARTS HERE

**Join us in 2021 - Semester 2 for:**

**New Zealand Certificate in Wool  
Technology and Classing (Level 4)**

📅 05 July to 29 October

🕒 This Blended Delivery course is delivered  
online with 5 day block courses available  
in both the North and South Island.

**Telford is calling for expressions  
of interest for:**

**Wool Clip Grading Training Scheme  
(Level 4)**

For more information email [telford@sit.ac.nz](mailto:telford@sit.ac.nz)



Take advantage of the Targeted Training and  
Apprenticeship Fund that will allow you to study  
select sub-degree courses at no cost.



**For more information  
call 0800 835 367 or visit [www.sit.ac.nz/Telford](http://www.sit.ac.nz/Telford)**



**Telford**  
Te Whare Wānanga o Tairāroa  
A College of Southern Cross University



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*The NZWCA annual merit and commendation awards for excellence in wool classing were announced and presented at our AGM in Ashburton on May 13.*

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Of note were the high number of clip nominations put forward by brokers and wool merchants, indicating an appreciation for the overall standard of classing and associated wool preparation through the 2020 season, said NZWCA Chairman Bill Dowle and EO Bruce Abbott.

Bill said: “These awards prove that the hard work undertaken in the shed by classers is noticed and the clips are looked at closely by the brokers and merchants as the nominations for the awards are sent in by these people, so keep up the good work.”

In addition to congratulating all award winners Bill and Bruce, on behalf of NZWCA, thank the sponsors of each category and the brokers and wool merchants for their input.



MERINO MERIT AWARDS proudly sponsored by;

#### WINNER A2129 Tina Elers for Te Oma

Merino Merit award winner Tina Elers had planned to attend to receive her top honour but unexpected family circumstances prevented this. Instead her acceptance message was read out to the meeting and printed here:

*“It’s such an honour to receive this Merit Award acknowledging my worth as a wool classer. This could not have been achieved without Donald Young (farmer) his knowledge, experience and passion to produce superfine Merino wool and also believing in me in the beginnings of my career, along with great management from Brendon and Shelley Cornish and a good in-shed team behind me of consistent everyday shearers and wool handlers whose preparation of Te Oma wool clip for 2020 was on point (lol in more ways than one they will know what I mean) and of course the presser for packaging the final product. I acknowledge you all I accepting this award. Thank you also for those involved in making this award possible for Woolclassers.” – Tina Elers*

#### COMMENDATIONS

M2077 Katrina Marsh for Simons Pass



A2140 Cedric Aramoana for Huxley Gorge and Glentanner



A783 Dave Carr for Glenaan and Muzzle



D1473 Terrance Mulcahy for Awakino and Bog Roy



## MERINO COMMENDATIONS CONTD....

- A723 Barbara Newton for Stonehenge, Te Aka and Hartfield
- A2120 Christina Pagan Karauria for Merino Ridges and Lochaburn
- A2073 Shirley Munro for Craiglea (ewes)
- A1716 Robyne Murray for Craiglea (Hogget's)
- A1465 Anne Marie Parcell for Northburn
- A1565 Rose Barnett for Moutere, Buscot, Otematata and Quailburn Downs
- A2142 Kristal Wilson for Galloway Station
- A644 Jackie Donald for Grantleigh farm
- M1563 Sharon Lawton for West Edge

CROSSBRED MERIT AWARDS proudly sponsored by;

WINNER FC1871 Annabel Tripp for Snowdon



## COMMENDATION

X2133 Vivienne Lewis for Ngamatea Station

NORTH ISLAND MERIT AWARD proudly sponsored by; BJ Mahony Shearing

WINNER A1099

Sonya Johansen for Timahanga



*Presented by Roger Fuller (CP Wool) on behalf of BJ Mahony Shearing*

PROVISIONAL CLASSER MERIT AWARDS proudly sponsored by;



WINNER P2136 Sarah Higgins for The Throne

#### COMMENDATIONS

P2176 Sarah Lewis for Queenstown Hill



P2182 Cassie Johnston for Tokastone



MID MICRON MERIT AWARDS proudly sponsored by;



WINNER A2014

Sharlene Adamson

for The Forks and Lake McKay



*Presented by Roger Fuller CP Wool*

#### COMMENDATIONS

D2105 Kelly Paku-Taylor for The Acheron and Hidden Hills

A1132 Patrick Shelford for Tiroiti and Kyeburn

D1445 Richard Moriarty for Marble Point and Barcaldine

A1899 Sandra Harnett for Mt Possession



## MID MICRON COMMENDATIONS CONTD....

A2086 Ian Kofoed  
for Hazeldean



A825 Janet Hacksaw for Spec



A1285 Nigel Cossar for Waimihi



*Presented by Roger Fuller CP Wool*

OWNER CLASSER MERIT AWARDS proudly sponsored by;



WINNER FM2138

Sally Smith for Awapiri



## COMMENDATIONS

FD620 Eric Laurenson for Burnbae



FA887 Juliet Jones for Matarae



M1577 John Sanders for  
Matangi Station

FM1690 Andrew Sutherland  
for Benmore

M2150 Mary Satterthwaite  
for Muller

FM2201 Simon Fowler for  
The Bounds Station

*As at previous similar events, Bruce Abbott's wool exercises at the NZWCA Industry Professional Development Day and AGM in Ashburton in May provoked much thought and some discussion and debate.*



Participation was, as always, optional, and handing your completed entry in for marking was also optional, but there was a lot of interest in doing so. Bruce marked and returned all forms submitted, and then identified each wool sample. So, regardless if participants had their forms marked or not, it was a learning experience all the way. Thanks Bruce!

Graeme Goodger (A1883) had a successful outing, winning the Breeds section and the combined best score for Micron and Yield sections. Interestingly, in two sections there were dead heats in top scores. In both cases the equal winners were wool classers/farmers with many years' experience and classers with less runs on the board, and by agreement the younger classers went home with the trophies. Nice gesture Allan Paterson and Dave Carr.

Results: *The Wool Exercise trophies were donated by NZ Wool Testing Authority*



**NZWTA**

**Oddment identification** (only wool handlers and students eligible for trophy):



Brooke Patterson (SIT Certificate in Wool Technology student)

**Yield:** Sally Smith (FM2138)



and Dave Carr (D783)

**Micron:** Cassie Johnston (P2182) and Allan Paterson (FD713)



**Breed identification:** Graeme Goodger (A1883)

And the  
**Combined Micron and Yield:**  
Graeme Goodger (A1883)





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*Our 2021 Industry Professional Development Day and AGM was in Ashburton on May 13. It was well attended by woollies from throughout the South Island, and a handful from the North Island.*

*By Marg Forde, NZWCA Registrar*

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NZWCA chairman Bill Dowle opened the AGM with a period of silence to honour those who had passed on in the previous year. Allan Frazer was appointed NZWCA patron, a position which had been vacant since the tragic death in a farm accident of David Daunton in January. Karen Wilkins-Duff (A871) became a new member of the NZWCA Board. (Profiles on Allan and Karen elsewhere in this newsletter)

Thank you to everyone who supported the day. We had a very full programme which began with Bruce Abbott's famous wool exercises at 8am on a frosty morning; speakers; a tour of the [The New Zealand Sock Company](#) factory after lunch and ended with our AGM and 2020 season Merit and Commendation Award presentations (see photos and story elsewhere in this newsletter). We finished around 5pm.

We had nearly 90 people from throughout the wool industry attend, including about 20 Southern Institute of Technology Certificate in Wool Technology students who impressed with their questions to experienced attendees and our speakers.

Special thank you to our stellar speakers, Ben Askew and Kylie Finn from the Christchurch wool store, Blair Davies from [New Zealand Merino Company](#), Euan and Paul Sparrow from [The New Zealand Sock Company](#), Roger Fuller from [CP Wool](#), Doug McKay from [PGG Wrightson Wool](#), Tom O'Sullivan from [Campaign for Wool - New Zealand](#), and Andy Caughey from SWAG (Strong Wool Action Group).

Summaries of the wool store, NZ Merino Company, CP Wool, PGG Wrightson, NZ Sock Company presentations are laid out elsewhere in this newsletter.

We were fortunate to have two busy wool industry advocates, Tom O'Sullivan and Andy Caughey, attend and speak. Special thanks to Bruce Abbott for organising them.

**Campaign for Wool NZ:** Tom, a third-generation sheep farmer from Mid-Canterbury and Hawkes Bay, gave us a positive insight into the work of Campaign for Wool, an international organisation which he fronts in NZ. Tom pointed out Campaign for Wool NZ was "not political or commercial and 100 % transparent".

He told us the North Island and South Island "Wool in Schools" containers set up for educating school students about the value of wool were booked up for the year. The containers had always been well supported by rural schools but recently there had been a big uptake in interest for Wool in Schools from urban schools he said.

A "Wool in Architecture" webinar hosted by Campaign for Wool NZ had been so successful the concept, aimed at getting architects and designers to specify the use of wool, was going to be rolled out globally by the organisation. Wool met performance demands but importantly it also fit "the green agenda", Tom said. "Wool needs to harness the groundswell of consumers looking for natural products and moving rapidly away from plastics."

Tom explained he joined the organisation because he wanted to act not complain, and he urged wool industry members present to join Campaign for Wool NZ by signing up online <https://nzwool.co.nz/sign-up-to-show-your-support/> He stressed the value of unity: "We are far more powerful if we are working together."





**Strong Wool Action Group:** CEO Andy Caughey gave an update on the work and role of SWAG. A former international marketing manager for the New Zealand Merino company, Andy has been involved in the wool sector in NZ and internationally since 1988 and in 2011 he founded Armadillo Merino.

Andy explained SWAG was a short-term organisation with a \$3.5million budget “here to facilitate discussion and change”. It was a collaboration of primary sector groups and funded by the industry and the Government via the Ministry of Primary Industries.

They had three defined areas of attention.

1. Understanding the key drivers around strong wool use, as Andy put it “building bridges between a fabulous fibre and consumers wanting a sustainable product”. IDEO, a global design and innovation company that looked at “big picture problems” had been commissioned to report on this. One of the key areas to begin with, according to the IDEO work, was tapping into the US carpet market. Around 50% of the world’s carpet was laid in the United States. Americans were becoming more aware of the effect on waterways and food supply as a result of toxic substances, for example, old synthetic carpets were a growing problem, dumped and leaching into waterways. “We want to tap into that stream, but these are projects that will take time to come to fruition,” said Andy.
2. Making our fibre fit for the market and addressing supply, educating: These were key in working closely with farmers, NZFAP, the NZ Farm Assurance Programme, and a collective effort from the industry to build the reputation of strong wool back up.
3. An enduring industry structure. “There is no single entity that represents our industry,” said Andy.

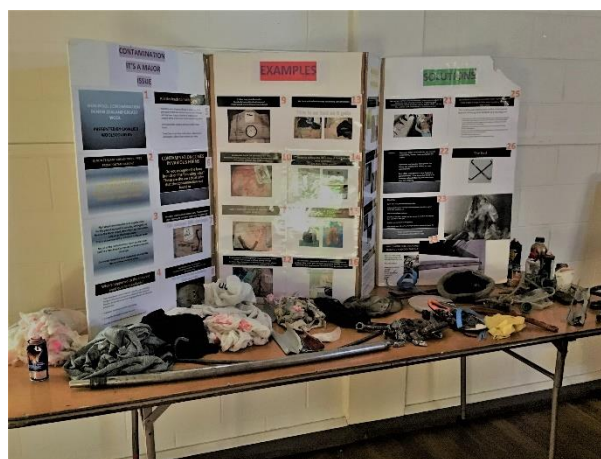
Bruce Abbott Executive Officer NZ Wool Classing Association commented;

At NZ Wool Classers Association Industry day held recently in Ashburton, it is very encouraging to hear the intelligent and informative questions put to SWAG CEO Andy Caughey by the students that are sitting the Certificate in Wool Technology and Wool Classing. With young people like this entering our industry it will be in safe hands for the future.



***Classers Guy Palmer A1678 and Ian Koefed A2086 at the Professional Development Day in Ashburton***

***Contamination Display***



**Article in the Ashburton Courier about our Professional Development day on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May**

**Link below go to page 17**

[https://www.ashburtoncourier.co.nz/digital-edition?edition=ASH\\_2021\\_05\\_27](https://www.ashburtoncourier.co.nz/digital-edition?edition=ASH_2021_05_27)

Confirmed wool appreciators, NZ Sock Company CEO Euan Sparrow and his son Paul (operations manager) gave an entertaining and informative presentation to NZWCA Industry Professional Development Day attendees in the hall venue at Ashburton in May, prior to the visit to the company's factory just along the road.



*NZ Sock Factory NZWCA tour from left Bill Dowle (NZWCA chairman), Euan Sparrow, Gabrielle Sparrow and Paul Sparrow*

The company began as Phaups Hosiery in 1901. In 1980 Euan and his father Kip purchased it and began the process of turning it into "NZ Sock Company – Engineers of the sock since 1901". Subsequently the third generation of Sparrows, Paul and his sister Gabrielle (international sales manager) have joined the company. Euan, Paul and Gabrielle all took the time to show our groups around their factory. Thank you Sparrows!

NZ Sock Co only uses NZ sourced wool for socks all made with specialist performance yarns. One of these yarns "NuYarn" Euan described as "merino on steroids"; it was experiencing "huge growth on the international market". Another example of new sock

technology which Euan gave, which particularly interested the wool professionals and strong wool

growers in the hall, was being made using merino but with 36-38 micron wool instead of the usual nylon mix in the heel and toe. This sock, being made for giant outdoor wear company KUIU had been getting rave reviews from hard core North American adventurers for warmth and minimal movement inside the boot Euan said. Attendees who discovered these merino/strong wool mix socks in the factory shop after the factory tour are giving them a workout currently!

NZ Sock Company produces socks for clients from throughout NZ and the world. Their Ashburton plant is working 24 hours a day for five to six days a week. Prior to the Covid19 pandemic Euan explained they had begun the process of bringing all their



*NZ Sock 36-38 micron heels and toes, rest merino, no nylon*



Chinese knitting back to NZ, a decision they are pleased to have made and stuck to.

They have since committed to spending in excess of \$1million a year on new plant for the next three years. R&D work is ongoing. Also prior to Covid they had begun making a merino wool face mask which is impregnated with a solution which is 99.9% effective against virus. "When Covid hit, I thought we could be doomed, but those face masks got us out of jail, we sold 44,000 of them, demand was huge," said Euan.







*NZ Sock factory NZWCA tour May 2021  
Euan Sparrow and Cert Wool Tech student  
Lacey Roussel*



Check out the website

<https://www.nzsock.co.nz/>

**NZsock<sup>co</sup>**

A year on, he said their business was growing despite the pandemic. Shipping space was the problem, not markets for their socks. For one shipment they were sharing the cost of air freight with the client to ensure consumer demand could be met. Euan explained that conducting business with clients via Zoom calls from home during lockdowns here and overseas had resulted in the Sparrows getting to know whole families. This had brought them closer and underlined the family business values they shared with clients. As stated on the NZ Sock Company website: "We've been making socks for generations. We believe in quality, value and listening to our customers".



*NZ Sock factory NZWCA tour May 2021  
view from inside the R&D room*





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## NZM Key Classing Messages 2021/2022 Season

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### Do your homework



- ❖ Meet the owner and contractor prior to the start of shearing.
- ❖ Check previous test results.
- ❖ What contracts are in place, different contracts ~~are~~ different prep.
- ❖ Are there any climatic or genetic changes that will affect the clip profile?
- ❖ Check shed, is it clean, number of bins, skt/classing tables are they fit for purpose.

### Professional

A classer is a professional in their field. The classer's handling of staff should always be professional. An important part of our ZQ Ethical Wool Brand is social responsibility, part of that is treating everybody the same, fairly and show respect. We expect all classers to do the same.

### Wool Harvesting Supply Chain

- ❖ This is the start of value add for grower by meeting contract spec and gaining whatever auction premiums the commodity mkt is paying for good prep and good classing etc.
- ❖ The classer plays a very important link in the supply chain by monitoring the preparation and ensuring an excellent classing standard.
- ❖ A key ingredient in good classing is to class what is in front of you, **Like Wools with Like Wools.**

**Don't get too hung up with classing the volumes required to meet the contracts, the key is adhering to the preparation required and the classing will look after itself. It becomes too confusing if a classer tries to class out 6 bales to fit a particular contract, class like wools with like wools.**

### Reda contracts

- ❖ Some growers may have Reda contracts.
- ❖ A full skirt is required, flanks, full back and necks must be removed along with any shorter wool. Classing must be specific for this contract, microns must be even and be of traditional crimp, keep bold crimp wools separate. Lines must be 95mm absolute max, keep longer wool separate.
- ❖ Absolutely no tender wool or degrees of tenderness will be accepted.

### Auction prep and classing

If you are classing a shed where the wool is going to auction, do the best prep and classing. This will allow for any premiums and discounts that may be available at that time.

### VM

- ❖ Grass in particular (Barley Grass) lies parallel to the fibre and during the manufacturing process it is very difficult to remove. If there is any doubt this contamination must be removed. Watch for Hore Hound, it has been quite prevalent the last couple of years, remove as required.

## Docs

**Tally book** - A classer's good repour with the presser helps to eliminate mistakes.

**Species** - If the classer is responsible for the species use the NZM electronic species, this prevents double up of bales numbers etc. and allows traceability within NZM'S ZQ brand. It is a requirement of ZQ that the speci is completed correctly and is accurate.

## 21/22 micron Merino types

Polwarth or ¼ bred clips, please make sure the Merino type wools are classed out separately to any of the half bred type wools. In the traditional Polwarth ¼ clips most will look like Merinos so only take out those fleeces that look more like a half bred. This also applies to any half bred clips that may have a Merino genetic influence or are transitioning finer. In those clips class out any fleeces that have a visual Merino appearance.

Do not push these lines if in doubt don't put them in.



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## GRADING CROSSBREDS

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**ROGER FULLER**

**CP WOOL**

**Wool Brokers Representative**

I believe first and foremost it is important to know if the farmer is involved in contracts with his wool, and yes there are crossbred contracts as well as Merino contracts out there. This will determine the amount of labour required in the shed and the standard of preparation that is required.

If contracts are not applicable this is when we can take our eye off the ball. Unfortunately farmers will be looking at costs to harvest their wool, and the woolshed takes the first hit.

You as graders /Classers should not lower your standards, therefore continue to prepare the wool to your best ability although in some cases this may prove difficult when you may not have the staff numbers.

The day will come when a premium will be paid for preparation, and you as Graders/Classers will be judged on the work done in the shed.

Currently it is very difficult to argue how many are required in the shed to prepare the clip when prices are where they are, but diplomatically you can talk with the farmer and say one day it will be to your benefit that the preparation will pay off!!

### CURRENT SEASON

We are noticing some lowering of standards throughout this season's wool clip preparation. This is no fault of you preparing the wool, it just goes back to what I said previously

COSTS V PRICE of which will hopefully be sorted by certain groups set up to address these issues going forward.

Can I commend you all on a major issue we had this season re BRANDS appearing in the wool. After much publicity, this issue was a major talking point in wool preparation and the cost it was having on Exporters especially certain colours not scouring out. As we are all aware BRANDS are a fault and are to be removed, but I believe through less labour in the sheds in the current environment this is what can happen. Fortunately this issue has somewhat quieted down and you as graders can pat yourselves on the back on addressing this issue.

### GENERAL PREPARATION

**Vegetable Matter** is a major problem in crossbred wool. This can be a seasonal issue, but Thistles especially are the worst. With the current dry situation through the South Island we are going to see more lines of wool with this fault coming through. In crossbred wool processing this fault can be extremely damaging. So please be vigilant with this issue.



## BELLIES/PIECES

Generally can be put together. Ensuring bellies are fribbed. We are currently seeing no significant price difference between the 2 especially in the 2/s types and in full length types. This can also be a saving to the grower having one line only and also avoid the cost of lines being interlotted.

## COTTS

We have seen this year Cots not being separated from the free wool. Cots and Coty flanks need to be separated regardless of colour of the free wool .If Cottts are left in the price will be discounted accordingly. I recently saw a 52 bale line that was all in and sure enough the price was a COT price.

## SUMMARY

I encourage all Graders, Classers and shearing contractors to make themselves available throughout the season to visit the Brokers Stores to view the samples up for sale .This can be very beneficial to you all, seeing the preparation of lines in the sample boxes and also any feedback from Exporters who could be valuing wool for sale at the same time. Cots being left in lines of free wool can see the line discounted up to 40 to 50 cents per kg. Thistles can also have the same sought of discount and in some cases more.

CP Wool in Christchurch have the NZ Yarns factory which Dyes and Spins the wool into Yarn. This is a very unique operation and it can give you an appreciation of the processing of wool and issues that are faced with contamination, but also how well prepared wool can make a difference to the flow through the factory.

Feel free to contact me to arrange a visit at some stage throughout the season

**ROGER FULLER**

**CP WOOL**

**Wool Brokers Representative**

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*Quite remarkably, current global merino wool markets are clearly informing us that there is strong demand for the regal fibre as returns to growers from across the Tasman are favourably returning where they were two seasons ago.*

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Dave BurrIDGE  
South Island Auction Manager  
PGG Wrightson Wool

This is occurring despite all the reports of textile industries barely operating due to pandemic restrictions, especially in the old countries. If we continue to see this trend play out going into the late winter/early spring, growers can be expected to enjoy more acceptable returns than was achieved this year on the open market.

Interestingly, with the more reliable grass growth in most regions in Australia this season, there has been correspondingly on average higher volumes of slightly broader micron wool that has come forward for sale. This has equally left less volumes of sub 18-micron wools for sale and observing price trends, it has been the finer end of the market that has seen higher price percentage lifts than the broader microns.

Whilst it has become very dry in many parts of the South Island in recent times, it is however expected that the overall quality of the NZ fine wool clip will be in quite good order when harvested. What this possibly means for the wool handling and wool classing community, is to no other than stick to the fundamentals of preparation and classing.

Of caution, while we are noticing higher percentage lifts in the finer end of the market, it is my belief that it does not necessarily warrant additional lines based on extra fine microns. Over classing and having an abundance of 1 or even 2 bale lots based purely on micron can tend to be not only counterproductive, but it also adds further test house and selling costs and ultimately only shifts micron averages within the individual wool clip.

One of the major classing focuses remains that tensile staple strength or even the lack of it must continue to be at the forefront when setting up lines in the shed.

#### **Submitting wool specifications online:**

Once you have opened it on our website

<https://www.pggwrightson.co.nz/Services/Wool>

Scroll down and click on Wool Specification Sheet you simply click on any part of it and start typing the info directly in from there.

Once you have completed it you close and save it as a document, if the specie is finished you can email it directly to your wool agent and they will deal with it from there, if you want to add to it the next day simply open it up and continue to add more bales or other relevant information.

**Traditional NZ Descriptive System** - I hope the following helps and provides direction to fine wool classers when presenting merino wool that is destined to be offered and sold via the Christchurch auction room:

The main wool brokers offering fine wool via the Christchurch wool exchange would like to suggest that all merino wool be described by using the NZ based descriptive system that has always been in existence and not the AWEX version, being the Australian descriptive system.

All fine wool buyers purchasing merino wool from the Christchurch selling exchange unanimously support fine wool classers to use the NZ descriptive system. The AWEX version is not well understood to wool exporters in NZ as it does not convey clear messages or add confidence to NZ based buyers to how or why a wool clip has been presented.

The NZ descriptive system provides all the additional information to buyers as to why the different lines were made and conveys not only the different lines based on quality (the use of the number of "A"s at the end of the description) but also the micron distinctions (the use of either "Ultra", "Sup", "Ex F", "F", "M" or "Stg") at the start of the description. The NZ descriptive system also conveys age group messages to buyers by including "Hog" (for woolly hogget's) or "H" (for hogget's shorn as lambs) or "2TH" for two-tooth sheep and even "Wth" for those growers that still retain wether clips.

***Some examples:***

ExF Mer AAAA; F Mer AAAAA; M Mer AAAA; Stg Mer AAAA; Mer AA; M Mer 2TH AAA; Mer Bks AAA; Mer NKS AA; Mer BLS AA; Mer Pcs AAA; Mer Lox A; Mer 2PCS A.

Any questions your wool rep will be able to help.

Expectation would have that the signs for fine wool growers in NZ look promising for the new season and buyers have already engaged in conversations with us as wool brokers expressing their keen interest.

All the best for the new season to what is shaping up to be another dynamic season.

**Dave BurrIDGE**  
**South Island Auction Manager**  
**PGG Wrightson Wool**



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*“From the Wool store Floor” was the theme of the well-received talk given by Christchurch wool store warehouse manager Ben Askew and store classer/core sample machine operator Kylie Finn at the NZWCA Industry Professional Development Day in Ashburton on May 13<sup>th</sup>.*

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Ben is a former aircraft engineer and has worked in supply chain and logistics so understands the absolute value in efficiency. Here are Ben’s main points:

- Helpful things make our life easier and not helpful things cost us time we don’t always have. This also impacts the return the growers get.
- **Spec sheets** can go through many different hands. It is vital they are accurate. When the spec sheet is not legible we have to write one up from what is written on the bale cap – not always easy and creates double handling, again using precious time and potentially costing the grower.
- **Cap information/branding** as with specs, crucial that this is accurate and can be read. Believe it or not we do get bales with no markings at all. Special care needed with branding recycled packs, make sure old information doesn’t get confused with actual branding
- **Bale weights:** Core machines won’t handle the pressure of an overweight bale. If core tubes are damaged time is lost and repair is costly. Underweight bales can’t go through the machine either. Both underweight and overweight bales reduce return to the grower
- **Correct weight bales** are safer and easier to stack, store and transport
- **Contamination** in the bales is a constant issue to watch out for
- **Econopaks** No blue stripe, grey in colour. Not accepted at scours as of 1 July. In the store we have noticed a health and safety risk when handling them. They slide on truck decks, they don’t have the structural integrity and fall off the cat claws regularly in the store which is a stacking risk
- **Wish list** Caps stamped instead of written on, calibrated scales in all sheds, all spec sheets automated and sent before bales are collected

Kylie is a former shed wool handler. She initially said an emphatic no when approached to speak. However, to her great credit she stepped way outside her comfort zone and was an excellent, empathetic and well-informed follow-on from Ben. There were multiple comments about how effective it was to hear from someone with an obvious knowledge of the challenges of achieving quality in the wool shed. Here are Kylie’s main points:

- **Fill in the traditional description** if you can on the specs. If there is any incorrect labelling this really helps us make sure a mistaken bale goes into the right line
- **Aim for consistency in bale labelling** different crews, different descriptions can lead us to think there are different lines
- **As soon as the bale goes through the core machine** there is a cost to the farmer so we do our best to avoid retests
- **If you think there could be a problem** contact your wool rep or area manager asap, the sooner the information is passed onto us in the store the better for everyone
- **Basics are important** don’t mix lengths, ages, breeds, take out dnx lambs
- **My job** is to complement the work done, to check for any inconsistency or human error, not to criticise or undo work already done
- **Well prepared clips** do not go unnoticed. And it is disheartening when clips are poorly prepared, pride in our job is really important despite the low wool price
- **I understand the challenges** in the shed and know there is a big difference between when there is a beautiful flow and team work and when there is conflict and dysfunction in a team

Thanks Ben and Kylie

# DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know you don't have to be a registered wool classer to be a member of NZ Wool Classers Association?

Associate membership is a category that covers farmers, sponsors, shearing contractors, retired wool classers or anyone who wishes to support NZWCA and our roles and objectives. Associate members pay an annual fee and are entitled to attend all activities and events run by NZWCA and may attend our AGMs or special meetings but may not vote. Associate members receive our newsletters and other communications and as with other members have the choice of opting in or out of being visible as members on our website.

If you are a registered classer or grader we encourage you to have a chat to your farmer clients about joining NZWCA as an associate member. To do so supports the organisation that has undeniably kept classer registration capacity valid and guarded the integrity of your stencil since the Wool Board was disestablished. Here is the link to join:

<https://woolclassers.org.nz/join/>

Marg Forde (Registrar)

# GRATITUDE

The NZ Wool Classers Association is a nimble, independent organisation funded only by membership fees and these generous 2021 sponsors:

Wool Research Organisation of NZ (WRONZ); NZ Shearing Contractors Association; NZ Council of Wool Exporters; Woolworks; Federation of NZ Wool Merchants (Wool First); NZ Merino Company; Peter Lyon Shearing; BJ Mahony Shearing; CP Wool; PGG Wrightson Wool; NZ Wool Testing Authority (NZWTA)

Our operation also relies on countless voluntary hours and resources donated by a great bunch of people who are passionate about wool and the Association's stated purpose: "Fostering and supporting quality education, harvesting and presentation standards in the wool industry. A home for all involved in wool growing, handling, grading and classing."

THANK YOU ALL!

Marg Forde (Registrar)

## SAVE THE DATE

*Friday August 20<sup>th</sup> is the date that has just been set for the NZWCA North Island Industry Professional Development Day.*

*It will be based in the PGG Wrightson Wool store in Napier. More details including a full programme will be advised nearer the time. Thank you to PGG Wrightson for the venue and NZWCA Board Vice Chair Sonya Johansen for facilitating this.*

## Tahi Ngatahi Online Health & Safety Programme



Tahi Ngatahi is an online platform that uses video clips to pass on skills and safety tips to all working in the wool harvesting industry.

This is a joint initiative between the NZ Shearing Contractors Association, Federated Farmers, Work safe and ACC.



### Accessing the course

It is very important that you have some record of doing an H&S programme.

NZWCA have joined the Tahi Ngatahi programme to give our members **FREE** access to this online training programme.

*This course now replaces the previous option*

The programme is a great tool for our members to ensure their workplace is not only safe for them, but also the entire wool harvesting team. Guidance is provided through informative and instructional videos, skills and safety tips to run a safe and productive wool harvesting team, followed by multiple choice questions.

Topics covered include:

- Why H & S is so very important.
- Shearing shed preparation prior to shearing.
- Who is responsible?
- Handling of sheep and equipment.
- Personal health & fitness.

Ensuring you look after yourself and the people who you are working with.

For your **FREE** access you need to go to the NZWCA web site: [woolclassers.org.nz](http://woolclassers.org.nz), click on **Members Area** in the menu, then go to **News**, click on **Health & Safety Programme**- read more, learn more.

To get underway follow the procedure to connect and **SIGN UP**

Then once received and accepted your request, we will reply and let you access the programme





## CALLING FOR LAST ORDERS, 30<sup>th</sup> June

### Metal Stencil and Clothing Orders

Last Orders for the metal stencils and clothing items so get your orders in

**Metal Stencil:** Please transfer \$25 in the

NZWCA account:

02 0828 0036732 00

With your name in the particulars, and registration number in the reference boxes,



**Clothing:** Now includes a crew neck top for \$35.

You will need to go to the website [www.woolclassers.org.nz](http://www.woolclassers.org.nz)

Under Members Area, click on Branded Clothing to check out the range, delivery, payment details and to place an order



## HAVE A GREAT 2021 CLASSING SEASON

