



# **New Zealand Wool Classers Association**

## **June 2022 Newsletter**



*Loch Linnhe Polwarths photo by Sophie Scott (Associate Member)*

### **RESPECT YOUR STENCIL!**

**Keeping your NZWCA membership current is considered a professional obligation  
for NZ classers and graders**

The letter prefix and number which together make the one-off combination that is a registered "Kiwi stencil" is unique and may be used only by the person it was issued to. Using your stencil on bales and in wool specifications if it is not valid reflects poorly on you, the wool clip and our industry.

Invoices for the 2022/23 year were sent out in February. Thank you to the majority who have paid promptly. If you haven't received an invoice and want to use your stencil honestly this season whilst also contributing to the integrity of the NZ wool industry's only classer registration system please email [secretary@woolclassers.org.nz](mailto:secretary@woolclassers.org.nz) message us via our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NZWCA> or webpage <https://woolclassers.org.nz/contact/>

If you have your stencil, and you are wondering why you should keep your membership current, have a read of this (first published in the NZWCA Dec 2021 newsletter):  
<https://woolclassers.org.nz/.../11/November-Newsletter.pdf>

- A time limit is now in place on Provisional prefix on stencils, see Pg 5
- Reminder on process for gaining a stencil prefix upgrade, see Pg 18



*Chairman Bill Dowle  
D1076 shows Rosstan  
Mazey around the wool  
exercise boxes*

## **NZWCA CHAIRMANS ANNUAL REPORT FOR AGM IN MAY**

As another year for the association rolls over we reach the anniversary of the tenure of Marg Forde as Registrar. Marg was a bit reticent about taking the position on and didn't have as much faith in her ability as myself and the rest of the appointed subcommittee.

She has done a marvellous job in what can only be described at times as trying with the movement restrictions of Covid coinciding with the fine wool main shear last spring so protocols and other things like essential worker travel documentation had to be developed, quickly.

Covid has affected other parts of our operations as well with the North Island Professional Development Day being organised, postponed, twice and now still on hold. We will get there.

There have been developments in the wider wool industry with the release of the SAWG report and that now moving on to what is now referred to as Wool Impact. We all hope it has the Impact that is proposed so that the strong wool industry can revive and perhaps even boom.

It was a privilege to be invited to the WRONZ release of the developments that they have funded which hopefully with time will contribute strongly to more demand for the fibre. It is strong demand that will drive prices up and improve the chances of a sustainable industry so that the wool harvesting industry can survive and thrive, and the workers be paid for the hard work they put in.

We have recently become brand partners of Campaign For wool. We had Tom O'Sullivan Chairman for Campaign for Wool (NZ) speak to us last year in Ashburton at the AGM and our relationship has strengthened.

Our relationship with National Council of New Zealand Wool Interests has also strengthened, we are members, and the newly appointed Chairman (Rosstan Mazey) is supportive of our work in trying to get stronger recognition of the stencil and perhaps more teeth in the problem of non-Financial member classers putting a classer number on lines of wool. It is a condition of use of the registration number that you are a financial member to use it. Unfortunately, we see non-paying member piggy backing on the hard work put in by those that do pay. It is possible that with the inclusion of Wool in FAP (Farm Assurance Program) that was set up to cover meat that they include a registration number which will mean that it must be checked and that the number is being used by a **financial member** of the Association. Having Rosstan speak at the AGM is a privilege as this body represents the whole wool industry from growers, harvesters, processors, brokers, merchants, traders, and exporters. To be include with such a body is an honor.

To me the main function of NZWCA is the preparation standards quality control, to get this recognised is great. The training we are involved with is to ensure the standards are followed and kept up to date with any changes the wider industry wants.

Marg and I spent a day late in January visiting various industry organisations as has been the practice for some years, although it has grown from being just the brokers to include others in the wool industry. Karen accompanied us in the afternoon. These visits are good in several ways. Sitting down around the table chatting with people who have so much passion for wool that their life is dedicated to getting as much for the product as possible and helping develop new uses for the fibre is interesting and encouraging.

Marg has lifted our social media profile somewhat as well which has been great.

Trying to keep the formal Wool Certificate course going has been successful with good numbers doing the course, and we are grateful to WRONZ for their scholarships that help 5 students every year with the expenses involved with doing the course.

The Wool Grading course has been an issue, but we have been assured it will happen, we await the action. I hope SIT are true to their word. There is a great need for this course and the wider industry wants it as it gives assurance of preparation standards, which is the guts of what the association is about.

I would like to conclude by thanking Marg for her huge dedication to Wool and the Association. Annette for her administrative oversight and the rest of the board. Particularly Sonya as Vice Chair, who is ready to pick up if I fade due to health treatment I am under and Allan who as Patron is a very wise advisor as well as board member. The rest of the board have continued to do what is asked of them, so we manage to function as a serious body in the wool industry.

**Bill Dowle D1075 - Chairman NZWCA**



## Registrar's report for NZ Wool Classers Association

### AGM 05/05/22 for year ending December 2021



I began in the role of Registrar in late February 2021, taking it on when Bruce Abbott stepped down. Bruce initially stayed on as Executive Officer and I am indebted to him for his knowledge passed on and time freely given, which allowed a functional transition.

**Heartfelt thanks for all the support I have received from NZWCA Board members** in this, my first year. Special mention to Chairman Bill Dowle and Secretary Annette Gamble for their wisdom and commitment, at times daily. It is a pleasure to work with you all on our shared purpose of ensuring there is a solid platform to enable achieving highest quality standards of wool preparation and presentation.

**Appreciation is also due to our Classers, Graders and Associate Members, and our Sponsors**, for recognising the value of a wool classer registration system and putting their money where their mouth is to do so. Administering the NZ Wool Classers Registration system and our advocacy for quality in wool preparation/presentation and wool education simply would not be possible without this support.

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 I believe NZWCA has a positive profile in the industry. This has been forefront in my mind with all I have done as Registrar this past year and maintaining this will continue to drive me.** 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.

Multiple times since I have become Registrar, I have heard across a wide variety of platforms **acknowledgement of the value in and necessity of quality in wool preparation and classing.**

One example sums this up neatly: At the NZ Shearing Contractors Assn annual conference in New Plymouth in May 2021, Bruce Abbott gave a presentation for NZWCA. The NZ Merino Co speaker who followed began by endorsing what Bruce spoke of and said: "It can't be overstated how important wool preparation is, our contracts depend on it".

Formal quality assurance and traceability programmes are now firmly part of the NZ wool pathway landscape. Wool was last September added into the NZ Farm Assurance Programme (which had previously been just for red meat) and the NZ Merino Company's ZQ system is long established and widely respected. Ensuring that wool that passes through and qualifies for ZQ and NZFAP endorsement can be traced to a qualified, registered classer or grader is surely a given. And yet, we are aware there is a complacency amongst some. **This goes to the heart of the value of classers and graders keeping their NZWCA membership current, and the NZ wool sector placing value on having engaged and informed wool classers and graders overseeing wool preparation and presentation. A proportion of my time since becoming Registrar has been getting an awareness on this raised.** Members, you can help. If you know a classer or grader is using a stencil with a registration number that is not valid, or worse, not theirs, speak up. To the person or anonymously to NZWCA. Protecting the integrity of our stencils and registration is a collective commitment.

**Another area upon which I have spent a lot of time and focus in 2021 has been supporting and endorsing wool education and training.** There is a shortage of funding and a historic lack of recognition from some sectors of the importance of this. Gone are the days when farmer Wool Board levies funded shearer and wool handling training and Massey and Lincoln Universities had wool chairs. Today, the framework that the NZWCA registration system rests upon are two qualifications; Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing, a two-year distance learning course, and the Grading course, developed by Bruce Abbott, distance learning backed by a three day block practical unit. These are delivered via Southern Institute of Technology and our association wholeheartedly endorses the wool tutors, Laurie (the legend) Boniface and Richard Gavigan. At times wool education like this sits uneasily within the current tertiary education framework and funding channels. In November I met with SIT management for the first time. I was able to ensure they understood how much our registration system depended upon quality delivery of the two qualifications and made the point that if NZWCA (and so the wider wool industry) didn't support what was being delivered by SIT the viability and credibility of the courses could be at risk. The dialogue continues and with the new Wool Impact body being created, opportunity may be there to stake out some ground for stability in and support for more wool harvesting training.

**Classer and Grader registration upgrade** Before Bruce Abbott resigned altogether from his NZWCA roles last year, he and I worked together to formalise and refresh the process for the upgrading of classer and grader registration. This was a complex job and we ended up with a system we were both happy with. The rewritten processes are now on our website and a summary was published in the August edition of the Shearing magazine. I flagged the changes when I emailed all this information to NZWCA members as well as wool brokers, merchants, shearing contractors and other relevant wool industry people. We have had a few classers submit for shed management/classing or grading reports so far under this new system and it is working well.

**Our AGM/Industry Professional Development Day in May 2021 in Ashburton was successful and well attended.** Bruce had laid the framework down for this and I picked it up and continued when I became Registrar. I was grateful to Bruce for creating the wool exercises for the day. We had a range of speakers and a visit to the NZ Sock Factory and the day was attracted positive feedback.

**Staging a North Island Industry Day in 2021 was not so successful.** Set for August 20 in Napier it had to be hastily postponed due to the whole country being put into Covid Alert Level 4 a couple of days prior. This was a big disappointment for Sonya Johansen and I, and I place on record my great gratitude to Sonya for her help in all aspects of putting the day together. It was the first time we had organised an Industry Day between us, and it was the first North Island one since 2019. We had over 40 people registered to attend (excluding speakers) and we were particularly pleased at the range of people. They included a contractor bringing a van load from Gisborne and a group of Smedley Station trainees and their tutors. Initially we postponed the day to October 6, however that had to be passed over as it was not possible to use the woolstore as our base while still in Alert Level 2. We had another go in March, but Covid alert level restrictions at the wool store got in the way again. We will get there in 2022!

**Essential worker travel documentation for Classers in Covid Level 3 and 4** Given the August/September timing of the most recent Alert Level 4 and 3, smack bang in the busy pre-lamb shearing season time, it was obvious a strong 2021 version of a Classers essential worker pass was going to be needed and well used. I used the Shearing Contractors and Beef and Lamb farm workers versions as a starting point then added in relevant wording specific to Classers. It included a section pointing to our website as a way to verify that the classer using it was a registered member going about essential work. Chairman Bill gave it the go ahead, once I had made sure it ticked the boxes with MPI and MBIE. The availability of the travel document was advertised via email to members and on our website and Facebook. Then I tested it out myself by driving in Level 4 all the way from home in the Waikato to my annual classing work in Central Otago.

**NZWCA are now live as a Brand Partner with Campaign for Wool NZ.**

See here: <https://www.nzwool.co.nz/partners/> Much respect for the work being done for wool by chairman Tom O'Sullivan and his small team.

**NZWCA newsletters and email communications with members** These have also exercised my time.

The June and December newsletters and August mini-newsletter last year appeared to be widely read, a lot of good feedback was received. I have shared selected content from the newsletters via Facebook and email. Content has also been reprinted in Shearing magazine, thanks to Des Williams (Shearing mag editor and publisher) for the ongoing collaboration.

**Social media** the ability to spread awareness of what we are about via this channel is remarkable, given that it costs us nothing except a little bit of time. The association's online profile continues to grow positively, I am posting relevant information regularly. Stats tell us a post and photos on the NZWCA Facebook page summarising our Industry PD Day/AGM and thanking people the day after the 2021 Ashburton event had, at time of writing, reached 46,854 people and had 2,429 engagements. An NZWCA Facebook post at the end of April 2021, sharing an email warning from PGG Wrightson about not using Econopak wool packs has, at time of writing, reached 23,094 people and had 3963 engagements. In March 2021 I saw an Instagram post put up by Icebreaker noting Peter Burling's Icebreaker jocks waistband as he hoisted the America's Cup trophy high. I screenshot the Icebreaker post and used it in a post on NZWCA Facebook where I made the point that the Italians might have had the Woolmark on their sail but we had Pete Burling's wool undies. That post was shared multiple times and Facebook stats tell me it reached 7,843 people. Our Facebook page, at time of writing, now has 1016 likers and 1077 followers.

In closing I would like to reiterate what I wrote in my first report to the NZWCA Board, back in May 2021. **I see a juggle between doing the role of Registrar justice, whilst being mindful of what can be realistically achieved with the resources NZWCA has.**

I need to place on record that I am consciously attempting to stick to what I see as core business, to ensure the role of Registrar that I ultimately will pass on to someone else (always the goal) will be one that does not rely on goodwill and voluntary hours to function. Passion for wool is a driver, the struggle is real!

Ngā mihi, nā,

**Marg Forde**

**A126 - NZWCA Registrar**

## TIME LIMIT PLACED ON PROVISIONAL STENCILS

The word "provisional" is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as: "subject to later alteration; temporary or conditional"

A motion passed at the NZWCA Board meeting on May 4 and AGM the following day in Mosgiel addresses concern about long-term use of the Provisional "P" prefix on classer registrations.

With the motion passed (*full motion wording at end of this article*) classers and graders with "P" in their registration prefix are being actively encouraged to go through the process of upgrading within a three -year time period. Similarly, this motion highlights the issue to farmers and the wool trade.

Provisional "P" wool classing registration is issued to those who apply after achieving the NZ classing academic pre-requisite of Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing. The next step to becoming a fully qualified and recognised classer is to pass the prescribed practical assessments of shed management and wool clip inspections. Full explanation here:

<https://woolclassers.org.nz/members-area/membership-information/>

The original intention, when the "P" prefix was introduced, cannot have been that P classers would not progress, otherwise the word "provisional" would not have been chosen. It is not expected that classers or graders want to be viewed as only provisionally qualified indefinitely. For most who have been sitting on a "P" prefix for a long time, their work is beyond any definition of "provisional" and is therefore worthy of a higher prefix. If that's you, you're short-changing yourself if you don't do the necessary practical and paperwork to get off your P!

Provisional Classers and Graders are urged to contact your Registrar Marg Forde [reg@woolclassers.org.nz](mailto:reg@woolclassers.org.nz)

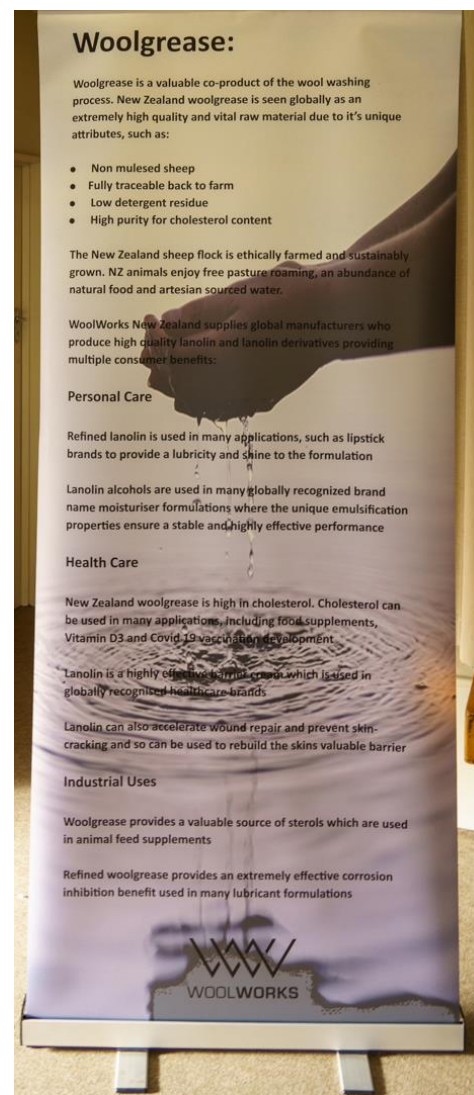
or a member of your NZWCA Board <https://woolclassers.org.nz/board-members/> to talk about how we can work with you to get you beyond provisional status as soon as possible, whilst also ensuring the intent and integrity of the NZ classer registration system is upheld.

Here is the passed motion in full:

*It is recognised that the "P" wool classing stencil is a provisional short-term starting step, pending full classer registration, therefore:*

- From Jan 1st, 2025, all **new** "P" stencil holders will have to submit their required clips within 3 years of their stencil registration number being granted. Failure to complete these requirements, may result in a suspension of their classer stencil at the discretion of the NZWCA Registrar.
- All **existing** "P" stencil registrations granted prior to Jan 1st, 2025, will have three years from this date to submit their required clips. The time frame for completion will be by December 31st, 2027. Failure to complete these requirements, may result in a suspension of their classer stencil at the discretion of the NZWCA Registrar.

By Marg Forde  
NZWCA Registrar



**NZWCA Patron and longest standing Board member Allan Frazer (left) and new life member Bruce Abbott**





## NZWCA Life Membership awarded to Bruce Abbott



**NZWCA citation at the AGM presentation read:** “In appreciation of the exemplary service that you have provided to the Association and to the wider wool industry over many decades.

“In appreciation of the exemplary service that you have provided to the Association and to the wider wool industry over many decades.

“In particular we wish to record your contribution through 4 years as a member of the NZWCA board and 6 years as Registrar and Executive Officer. In this latter position you have lifted the status of the Association enormously especially in relation to your many initiatives and in undertaking this role we have greatly appreciated the significant support from your wife, Pat.

“These have included pursuing industry recognition of member classer stencil numbers; strongly supporting education and training both through achieving on-going delivery of the Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing and introducing the Wool Grader qualification; managing comprehensive Professional Development Days; supporting career promotion; increasing Full Membership numbers and introducing the Associate Member category and in achieving a significant lift in sponsor funding.

“The board looks forward to continuing a close association with you in the future.”



*Bruce thanked his family and his lovely wife Pat.  
Without their support he could not have done any of this.  
(Son Gregory & wife Pat in attendance pictured above)*



### Bruce Abbott's dedication and passion recognized

*Republished with permission from NZ  
Farmers Weekly May 16 edition*

<https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/in-a-class-of-his-own/>

**Bruce Abbott has had an extensive and wide-ranging career in the wool industry, culminating in recently being made a life member of the New Zealand Wool Classers Association. Farmers Weekly writer Neal Wallace discovers his passion for wool burns as bright as ever.**

Advice given to Bruce Abbott when he returned to work from a Massey University wool classing course in the mid-1960s, resonated throughout his career.

A senior staff member at the National Mortgage wool department in Dunedin reminded him that the most important aspect of wool preparation was colour which he would be learn while on the job.

Abbott's 55-plus year career has taken him from wool sheds to wool scours including more than 30 years classing fine wool on Otago and Southland farms.

He has seen the highs and lows of wool farming: the micron madness of the 1990s when farmers were racing to produce ever-finer Merino fleece, to the virtual collapse of the crossbred wool industry as consumers forgot the fibre's merits. Despite that, Abbott who is semi-retired and living in Mosgiel, remains confident and upbeat about the industry and is still actively doing his bit to spark a recovery.

He effectively stumbled into the industry when he left Otago Boys High School in 1964. His brother-in-law was a private buyer in Waimate and Abbott had enjoyed travelling to farms and working with wool.

It seemed an interesting career and he secured a role in the Dunedin wool department of the National Mortgage stock firm. Part of his training involved studying for a Diploma in Wool and Wool Classing at Massey from 1965-66.

After five years at National Mortgage, he was offered a wool sorters role at the Water Taylors scour at Timaru which began more than a decade working and later managing scours.

He estimates there were 35 scours, albeit small, dotted around the country in those days but notes there were also about 70 million sheep. There are now three. There were also eight wool brokers operating in Dunedin alone.

An opportunity to work for the NZ Wool Testing Authority (NZWTA) eventuated, and together with wife Patricia they moved to Wellington, but it was only to be for a year before they decided to return south.

They were enroute without a job when the NZWTA offered him a regional manager's role based in Dunedin which he accepted.

For the next seven years he managed the collection, sampling, and despatching of wool results.

During that time the two largest Dunedin wool brokers, Wrightson and Dalgety, decided they would micron test all wool, a significant move which spread nationally and required an expansion of testing services.

An impromptu meeting in the street resulted in a complete career change. Bruce and Pat were offered the role of managing the YMCA's Dunedin accommodation facility which they did for seven years.

A year after making that change, Abbott was invited to class the Nokomai Station half bred and Merino clips, which he did while they still managed the accommodation business. Eventually Abbott worked with Alexandra shearing contract Peter Lyon which grew his classing run to eight sheds mostly in Otago.

For about 100 days from late July to early December he classed up to 100,000 fleeces, his A1457 stencil appeared on clips from Walter Peak, Cecil Peak, Halfway Bay, Motatapu, Wainui, Horseshoe, Auripo and the Selbie farm. He has cut back to three sheds now, but classing reinvigorated his passion for wool.

"It's not a skill you learn from textbooks, it's about the feel and the colour. When I class I am always looking at the colour."

His skill and judgement determines a farmer's income. A highlight was helping the Selbie family one year receive \$265/kg at auction for a bale of 13 micron Merino wool. Such is the fickle nature of the industry, the next year the equivalent bale sold for \$20/kg.

Abbott says the most important person in the shed is the presser, the goffer between shearers, shed hands and the farmer who is responsible for penning up, tidiness and branding and tracking each bale.

"If you have a good presser, everything flows."

As he stepped back from classing Abbott became involved in the NZ Wool Classers Association, acting as its executive officer for seven years during which he improved communication, introduced field days, linked the association to other wool groups and grew membership by introducing an associate role.

Another passion is education, and he has helped introduce wool training courses through the Southern Institute of Technology which has grown from less than five people per course to 58 this year.

Abbott sees horticulture providing solution to wool's ills. Avocado and kiwifruit sectors were in dire situations he says until the respective industries started working together. Abbott says that is what wool has to do.

"We're not a big industry and we have previously not worked together."

But with consumers moving away from synthetic materials, Abbott says wool's time has come provided the industry works together to promote quality fibre. Farmers have a role ensuring quality is high and there is not a repeat of the recent situation where UK farmers received more for their wool than NZ.

"Crossbred wool preparation has gone out the door and we have got to get it back and we can only achieve that with properly trained people in the shed."



## PRE LAMB-PREPARATION 2022

With pre lamb shearing around the corner it is important the basic principles are applied as in previous seasons.

Check with the farmer before shearing to get a guide on the season they have had. This will give you a good idea of the quality of the clip coming forward and will assist you with your classing/grading.

### SKIRTING

This should be applied where necessary. Remove sweaty points and shorter types across all breeds.

### VEGETABLE MATTER

Very important to remove from Crossbred clips. With the mild Autumn in many areas' thistles will be apparent as many other faults.

Leaving them in through the fleece can cause major issues in the processing.

Be vigilant and remove where applicable.

*Richie Hurring of Wools of NZ speaking at our South Island Classer Professional day in Mosgiel*



**Mid Micron** and **Merino** types allow up to 1% maximum through the lines, but it is still important to remove the Birds nest and seedy backs.

Watch for Tender and shorter staple fleeces. These should be classed into your 'B' line.

### COLOUR

Do not get confused with condition and colour caused by the weather conditions. Most pre lamb clips show condition which is scourable. If in doubt wash some wool under a tap and condition wool will wash white. Heavy colour will not wash out.

Good luck for the season ahead and **remember regardless of where wool prices are, you are still dealing with the farmers income so be careful not to take any shortcuts.**

Also filling out the **specification** sheet, it is important the correct descriptions and bale numbers are recorded. If this is incorrect the impact in the woolstores can cause major issues, and cause delays with wool getting tested and weights to the farmer.

[spec-sheet-editable-1.pdf \(woolnz.com\)](https://woolnz.com/spec-sheet-editable-1.pdf)

## Pre-season message from PGG Wrightson

### Wool Specification Forms

**A constant issue for wool brokers is the inaccuracy of wool specifications arriving at the wool store causing disruption to the otherwise streamlined through-store bale handling systems.**

Whilst most wool handlers and wool classers pride themselves on doing a good job in the wool shed, if the source document for the bale handling and warehousing functions is not accurate, time delays and additional costs associated with correcting the mistakes become major issues for wool store staff and management.

Too often brokers find an extra bale, or more than one bale with the same number, within a consignment. Often the description written on the bale label does not match the description written on the wool specification. Several lines in the same consignment and on the same specification are often given identical descriptions despite intention for the lines to be kept separate. These are all things which create confusion for wool store staff, delays receiving bale weights and test data information for growers, and additional handling costs for brokers.

The wool specification **MUST** be accurate, every bale **MUST** have a separate number, the total number of bales recorded on the specification **MUST** match the total number of bales transported, each line **MUST** be described correctly and differently from other lines, there **MUST** be a clear instruction that the specification accompanying each load is either complete to handle or to be held for further bales to follow later to complete individual lines, every load **MUST** be accompanied by a specification showing the grower's NZFAP ID number if they have one.

**PLEASE BE ACCURATE WHEN FILLING OUT WOOL SPECIFICATIONS. THERE CAN NEVER BE TOO MUCH INFORMATION RECORDED**

[Wool Specification Sheet 2022.pdf \(pggwrightson.co.nz\)](https://pggwrightson.co.nz/Wool Specification Sheet 2022.pdf)





# NZM Key Classing Message 2022/2023 Season

## Bin Bales

The cost of processing and transporting bin bales is making this part of our industry extremely expensive and inefficient.

We are asking for your help and we want to work with you to make a significant contribution to the reduction in the number of bin bales from every property for the coming season.

Owners, contractors, classers, leading wool handlers, and pressers can all play a role in this. We will all need to work together on this issue

To clarify so there is no confusion we are talking about **partitioned bales** that go to binning and contain many different wool types, not single bales of the same type.

We ask you as the classer to take ownership and most importantly **have a plan**. This **plan** is not going to work if you say I will look at it on the last day of shearing, that is too late.

You need to start thinking about this before the first day of shearing.

**I can't emphasise enough the importance of having a plan to make this work**

A good starting point is to check how many bin bales there were last year, and what was in those bin bales. **You will need to check last years tally book.**

Be aware of how many sheep are being shorn?

Starting on the first day, be aware of part bales that are being accumulated. By pressing out bales in main lines slightly lighter (110kgs) or slightly heavier (195kgs) you will be able to eliminate some bin bales, but this will take planning.

**There should be no main line types in bin bales, i.e. no fleece, necks, backs, PCS, Bellies or 2<sup>nd</sup> Pcs and or Lox. Configure your bale weights so this does not happen.**

Its ok to combine certain types e.g. Hogget Necks and Backs and Hogget Bellies and Pcs. Many of you are already doing this.

**The key is to start your planning on the first day.**

**We want to reduce the number of bin bales, we won't be able to eliminate them.**

## Spinners Contracts

**Some growers may have Reda and or Lora Piana contracts.**

*A full skirt is required. flanks, full back and necks must be removed along with any shorter wool.*

*Classing must be specific for these contracts.*

*Micron must be even and be of traditional crimp, keep bold crimp wools separate. Lines must be 95mm absolute max, keep longer and shorter wool separate.*

**Absolutely no tender wool or degrees of tenderness will be accepted.**

**Watch VM, you may need to skirt deeper/heavier to remove Hore Hound as an example.**

**VM max is 1.5%.**

**Do not push the boundaries.**



2022 AGM Classer Day Mosgiel  
Blair Davies of NZ Merino Company

## **Pre-Shearing Homework**

**The key is communication before and during shearing.**

Meet the owner and contractor prior to the start of shearing. This is very important if you haven't classed at that property before.

Check previous test results but use this as a guide only.

Are there any climatic or genetic changes that will affect the makeup of that clip?

What contracts are in place, different contracts require a different prep/skirting level.

**Before you start check the shed, is it clean, number of bins, skirting/classing tables are they fit for purpose.**

Organise and name your bins to suit you as the classer.

Always do a demo skirt before the first run starts. This makes sure the leading wool handler has everybody on the same wavelength and is very important when you are using two skirting tables.

Shearing is the start of value add for the grower. By meeting the contract spec and/or gaining auction premiums that the commodity mkt is paying for good prep and good classing etc, **you the classer and your team in the shed are adding value.**

The classer plays a very important role 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 worry if you are not hitting the contracted volumes, we will sort that out internally. We would rather have a shortfall for the contracted volume than have a whole line rejected because it doesn't meet the specs.**

## **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 that are available at that time. You are not classing to the current market but classing to what is in front of you.

**Once again Like Wools with Like Wools**

## **VM**

Most contracts have a VM max of 1.5%.

As stated earlier we know Hore Hound will be an issue in some areas this coming season. You may have to skirt heavier to remove as much as possible.

Grass e.g. **Barley Grass** lies parallel to the fibre and during the manufacturing process it is very difficult to remove. If there is any doubt this VM contamination must be removed.

## **Other Contamination**

**Every year we see contamination from items that end up in wool bales, e.g. singlets, towels and more recently masks. A towel or something similar can ruin a whole contract for the buyer.**

**Be aware this is happening and put steps/checks in place to prevent it.**

## **Docs**

### **Tally book/Species**

A classer's good repour with the presser helps to eliminate mistakes.

The classer should always check the tally book. If there are no mistakes in the Tally Book, then there should be no mistakes in the Species.

If you as the classer are 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.

## **Professional**

You as a classer are a professional in your field. Your handling of your staff should always be professional. An important part of our ZQ Ethical Wool Brand is social responsibility, within that platform everybody should be treated the same, fairly and shown respect, along with helping others.

You will get a much better buy in from others if you look after them, help them and be kind.

Be proud of what you are contributing to this industry and the important role you are playing.

If you need help please put your hand up.

We are here to help you and we want to help you.

**Good luck for the coming season from Blair Davies of NZ Merino Company**

## Invitation to all Registered Wool Classers

### ***Martin Paterson (pictured) spoke at the NZWCA Day in May***

*about a prize for wool classers at the Wanaka Show (details below). Martin also highlighted the need for younger show fleece wool judges to become engaged and learn from experienced judges. He proposed a training session for those interested and asked for names. He was thrilled to go home with contact details from 11 classers.*



#### **National Fine Wool Supreme Fleece Competition Wanaka Show Grounds - 10 & 11 March 2023**

Wanaka A & P Show is to hold annually "The National Fine Wool Supreme Fleece Competition" in conjunction with the Show. The Competition to be run by the Wanaka Show Wool Committee under the Wanaka Shows Rules and Regulations, as per its Schedule.

Web site [Wanaka A&P Show \(wanakashow.co.nz\)](http://wanakashow.co.nz)

**Classers Award - \$150 Cash for a Registered Classer exhibiting highest scoring Flock Fleece classes only - Merino, Polwarth, Quarterbred, Halfbred, or Corriedale fleece, under Owners entry, Classers**

**Name, Reg No, and email address to be on Entry Form: [entries@wanakashow.co.nz](mailto:entries@wanakashow.co.nz)**

*Past winners: 2020 Bob Todhunter (FD1845); 2021 Pru Heaney (P2158)*

*Also to be won - Champion Stud \$500. Champion Flock \$500. Supreme Fleece \$500.*

*Trophies, Cups, Ribbons, Rosettes, Special Prizes, Cash prizes to \$6,000.*

**Stud Classes:** Merino - Ram, Ewe, Woolly Hogget

Polwarth - Ram, Ewe, Woolly Hogget

Corriedale - Ram, Ewe, Shorn Ram & Ewe Hogget

Halfbred - Ram, Ewe, Shorn Ram & Ewe Hogget

**Flock Classes:** Merino - Ram, Ewe or Wether, Woolly Hogget

Polwarth or Quarterbred - Ram, Ewe or Wether, Woolly Hogget

Corriedale or Halfbred - Ram, Ewe or Wether, Woolly Hogget

Stud and Flock fleeces to be judged under separate/different clean fleece weight criteria.

All Fleeces are Micron tested and weighed to their respective classes before judging.

This is NOT the RAS Golden Fleece Competition.

Convenor, Martin Paterson ph. 021 224 7511 email: [matakanui@xtra.co.nz](mailto:matakanui@xtra.co.nz)

**Entries close March 7 - Fleeces in by 7 March or delivered before 8 March - Judging 9 March.**

Entry form link: <https://www.wanakashow.co.nz/assets/competitors/forms/2023/fleece.pdf>

## Wayne Bremner – A170

It was with sadness we noted the death of Wayne Bremner A170 on 16.12.2021 in Dunedin, aged 73. Wayne had fought a long battle with Parkinsons Disease. He was a long-time member of NZWCA and a highly respected wool classer. His obituary notice fittingly read: "Former wool classer and wool buyer and friend to many." Our association extended our condolences to Wayne's family at the time of his passing.

**A request for any photos of Wayne at work wool classing** has been made by Carla Tucker, who has fond memories of working as a wool handler when Wayne was classing some 30 years ago. By chance she met Wayne's wife Jan in hospital and subsequently Carla wrote the NZWCA seeking Wayne photos for Wayne's family. If you can help please contact Carla on [greenerandkeener@gmail.com](mailto:greenerandkeener@gmail.com)



*Wool classer's view from behind the wool bins.  
Presser Andy helping out throwing fleeces, Canterbury NZ*



## At the coalface – the dilemma of securing clips to class

### *Making use of the “available for work” tab on our website*

How does a classer find work? It's an ongoing and often pondered issue for classers, especially those at the beginning of their career. This problem was raised again by an attendee to the NZWCA Classer Professional Development Day, in their feedback form for the day.

This is what the Anonymous person wrote: “I think the association should help a bit more with helping classers find work. Unless you know a lot of farmers or you're in the clicky industry circles you don't stand much of a chance..... It's not what you know but who you know.”

Thank you to Anonymous for your comments, and all credit to you for getting yourself to the Classer PD Day. I sincerely hope you came away from it knowing more “who” people in the industry. Attending such events increases your own knowledge, but it also signals to others, including all those “who” people that you are committed to being informed and engaged.

Did you know there is an option on the NZWCA website for registered classers and graders to list themselves as available for work? In the member tab all classers and graders names and each person's stencil number and phone number are displayed. However, each classer or grader can edit their listing, adding a photo and something about themselves, and tick the box which shows as “available for work” on their listing PLUS this triggers them to show up if someone was to click the “Find available Classers and Graders” button on the homepage of <https://woolclassers.org.nz/>

NZWCA urges both classers/graders and those seeking classers/graders to make use of this facility on our website.

If anyone has a suggestion as to how your association could, as Anonymous wrote, “help a bit more with helping classers find work” we are listening.

By Marg Forde NZWCA Registrar

## NZWCA in the news

Links to articles published covering the 2022  
NZWCA AGM/Classer Professional Development Day in Mosgiel in May

<https://www.pggwrightson.co.nz/news/new-zealand-wool-classers-association-agm>  
<https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/in-a-class-of-his-own/>  
<https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/conscious-consumers-could-reignite-wool-preference/>

## TIME FOR WOOL CLASSERS TO THINK ABOUT THEIR CHARGES?

It has been suggested by several experienced classers that an article in Farmers Weekly <https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/pay-boost-for-shearers/> could serve as a prompt for all classers to consider their charges.

The article begins “The New Zealand Shearing Contractors' Association (NZSCA) has announced that pay rates for key roles in the shearing industry will rise between 7% to 23% as the industry moves to retain its workers.”

While there is no price guidance in existence for classers, one long-time classer says he believes the lift in pay for shearers, wool handlers and pressers is a timely reminder for classers to look carefully at their rates, and in particular what costs they incur in ensuring they are available for work when shearing at their client's property begins.

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## Conscious consumers could boost wool demand

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Republished with permission from NZ Farmers Weekly May 16 edition  
<https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/conscious-consumers-could-reignite-wool-preference/>

The planets may finally be realigning for wool as the world starts questioning the impact of synthetic fabrics, wool classers were told last week.

Several industry representatives who spoke at the NZ Wool Classers Association annual meeting and professional development day in Mosgiel, were upbeat about the fortunes of strong wool, but their optimism didn't appear to be coming from a position of self-interest.

The 50 or so classers were told the industry is united and given examples of green shoots of opportunity by marketers and retailers.

Despite that, no one was left in any doubt of the scale of challenge ahead.

Strong Wool Action Group (SWAG) chief executive Andy Caughey has lived in Europe for many years and recalls in 2019 UK sheep farmers celebrating they were receiving more for their wool than NZ farmers.

He is optimistic about the future of strong wool, given changes to consumer buying patterns especially among young people, and growing awareness about the environmental impact of synthetic products.

"The youth in Europe and the US are building the world for their future and are actively looking for products that have a low environmental impact and are sustainable."

Each year in NZ, 150,000 tonnes of synthetic carpet is dumped in landfills which have to be sealed to avoid the toxins in the products leaching into water ways.

"These special pits are tombs of toxicity," says Caughey.

Ironically a potential market for wool could be synthetic carpet manufacturers looking for more natural products.

Caughey says the lifestyles and choices being made younger generations differ from their parents.

In the US many are abandoning inner-city apartment living for houses in the suburbs to engage with nature, and spend time outdoors, creating an opportunity for wool blankets.

Caughey says SWAG will transition to Wool Impact on July 1 under a soon to be announced board which will not be made up of industry representatives.

Its chairperson will be chosen for their breadth of international experience, not necessarily in agribusiness, and the board will have people with experience in marketing, managing change, finance and NZ agribusiness.

Wool Impact will have an annual budget of \$3.8m and employ a small executive.

Caughey says Wool Impact will work with industry to develop markets, brands and products and he sees opportunities for acoustic panels, insulation, floor coverings, furniture, bedding, sanitary products, bandages and new products using deconstructed powders.

Wools of NZ Chief Executive John McWhirter estimates that of NZ's 750,000 annual strong wool clip, new uses or markets have to be found for 45,000 to 50,000 bales to start driving prices back up again.

McWhirter says 25 years ago wool accounted for 90% of sales of NZ floor coverings. Today it is 14%.

"Plastic has beaten wool and we've let it happen. We have to take it back."

McWhirter says new initiatives and commitments to use wool announced recently will absorb 2000 bales.

Wools of NZ is aiming to capture 50% of polypropylene's current NZ carpet market share which will consume 55,000 bales.

Rosstan Mazey, the chairman of the National Council of Wool Interests says the key to turning around the fortunes of wool was the quality of the fibre.

"For strong wool, it has never been in a more challenging space, but also it has never had a greater opportunity, evident with companies like Bremworth committing to only sell wool carpets."

Mazey also spoke on the launch of the NZ Farm Assurance Plan (NZFAP), which provides assurances about the production integrity of agricultural products.

He was asked what role, if any, wool prepared by certified classers or graders would have in meeting the criteria of the NZFAP.

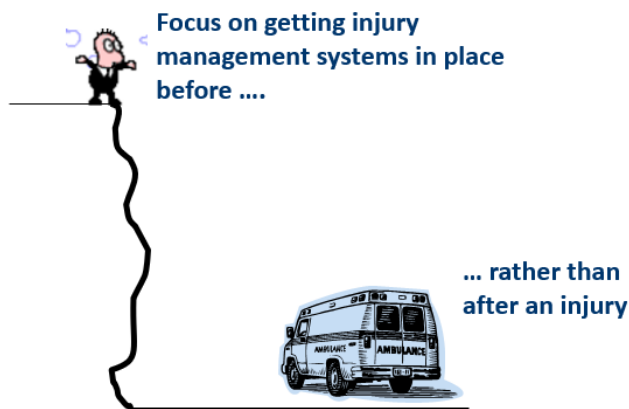
Mazey says the scheme was in its early stages and has been focused on meat, but he was keen for it to be expanded to include wool.

**By Neal Wallace**



*On 05.05.2022 Richard Poff and Grant Campbell presented a discussion on Risk Management at the NZWCA meeting day in Mosgiel. Bronwyn Campbell would normally have spoken on this topic on behalf of Tahi Ngatahi but she was unavailable on the day. We can all be contacted either via the Tahi Ngatahi website [www.tahingatahi.co.nz](http://www.tahingatahi.co.nz) or Bronwyn's business that's called Adaptive Health and Safety Ltd at [www.adaptivehs.nz](http://www.adaptivehs.nz). If you are not sure how to manage the risks of your work then get in touch.*

*This is just a brief outline of that discussion focusing on key aspects from that presentation.*



The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 was legislated because of very poor outcomes in terms of injuries particularly within New Zealand's primary sector. Poor safety management means poor outcomes across all aspects of your business operation. It can be frustrating being distracted by an injury or damaged equipment, to say nothing of the time and financial resources involved. In a worse- case scenario this poor management means loss of life or serious injury. Other less publicized but also severe consequences following an incident are loss of business reputation and/or court time including lawyers' fees and potentially fines from which the financial impact can be crippling. Key Notes from court fines imposed was the fact that training was unrecorded

and not all workers were inducted onto the worksite. Worker training and induction can be addressed by using Tahi Ngatahi program ([www.tahingatahi.co.nz](http://www.tahingatahi.co.nz)) so that everyone knows the risks both for themselves and other workers in the woolshed. Also, the certificate is proof that that worker knows that information.

Understanding your roles and responsibilities as a PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking), is key to ensure you manage the risks within your day to business operations.

As a PCBU you have a Duty of Care to the health and safety of those in your workplace, ensuring that the levels of risk within and around your operations are reduced through elimination or minimization using controls to bring the risk to an acceptable level as far as reasonably practical.

Overlapping duties means just that. Where there are two or more businesses working together e.g. a farm owners, wool classers (depending on contracting arrangement) and shearers working together in and around the wool shed they need to be clear about who is going to manage each risk e.g. if there is a broken gate who will fix it? It also means reviewing controls to check effectiveness and looking at opportunities to improve in terms of policy and procedures currently in place. The Woolshed Warrant of Fitness also on the Tahi Ngatahi program can be used as evidence that the conversation has taken place for those physical risks and what is being done about each.

The self-employed must look after both their own and other workers health and safety while working. This can be as simple as recording meetings with farmers in a diary and noting the risk management that was discussed. Recording any injuries in the diary too and what is being done to prevent a repeat. Prestart meetings can also be recorded in a diary and include who was present and what risks were discussed/ what to watch-out for before shearing begins e.g. what is different about this woolshed compared to others.

What is important is that your business can continue uninterrupted by injury to yourself or others. A small investment in prevention can pay dividends compared to the cost of the clean-up after an injury.



## TIME TO MINIMISE VM – AND HOREHOUND



*Reprinted with permission from PGG Wrightson "Wool Street Journal"*

As we progress towards pre-lamb shearing in the coming months, growers need to prepare to minimise VM in the wool they are set to consign.

There are two different classes of VM contaminant: moit, the likes of hay, manuka leaf, and grass seed, which is relatively easy to remove, washing out of the wool early in the scouring process; and clinging seed heads, which hook onto the fibre as a method of seed dispersal, making removal more difficult.

Due to the wet spring and early summer in many districts, both categories of VM in pre-lambing wool will likely to be worse than usual this season. Central Otago, South Canterbury and McKenzie experienced abundant rain during in December, January, and February, ahead of a much drier March, April and May. That left plenty of surplus vegetation on many paddocks, subsequently picked up by grazing ewes, which have gained excellent condition on ample pasture, with the higher-than-average VM levels a downside to that.

In addition, the prevalence of horehound has been growing in many districts over the past few years, risking a serious detrimental effect on wool quality for those growers who are not diligent in the shed. Horehound falls into the second category of VM, with a hooked seed head that adheres to wool, particularly to bellies, necks and flanks. Recently in the shed of one of our clients the bellies of the ewes were so matted and contaminated with horehound that fleeces were like frisbees: from the heads down, on the shoulders, running up the briskets and under the chins.

Horehound is difficult to shift, and after being introduced to New Zealand in the late nineteenth century, has become widespread throughout the South Island in recent years, from the south, reaching up through Canterbury and Marlborough. Spraying is too expensive to justify, and while some biological controls are being trialled, they will likely take several years to prove.

When it reaches the scour, wool infested with horehound must go through a carbonising process, essentially an acid bath to dislodge the seed head hooks from the fibre.

What does that do to the value of your wool when it reaches the auction room? For a clip from Tarras offered in mid-May, taken off a mob of cull merino ewes the previous month, the difference between high VM wool and low VM was stark: the mainline wool assessed at 0.4 per cent VM sold for \$30 per kilogram clean, or \$21.50 per kilogram greasy, then when the oddments from the same flock were offered, with a 5.2 per cent VM ranking, the price was \$13.70 per kilogram greasy, a price reduction of 37 per cent. Wool with unacceptable VM will sell, though only at a heavy discount.

Clearly nobody wants to see 12 months of effort undermined by lack of due care in the woolshed.

Although inattention in the shed wastes money, putting it right takes minimal effort. Ultimately the responsibility for minimising VM and optimising value sits with the grower, who needs to work closely with the shearing contractor, leading shed hand, and wool classer.

A practical approach will ensure like for like wool is consigned together. If the mainline fleece can be separated from the more highly contaminated wool, particularly when the VM is horehound, that makes dealing with it at the scour easier. Make sure the contaminated parts of the fleece are stripped out and consigned in a separate bale. If that leaves more of the fleece outside the mainline bales, so be it: by making further stage processing more efficient, you are improving the overall value of your clip.

Communication within the shed is key: make sure all parties know what you need, why, and how they can work together to best deliver that outcome.

*From PGGW's June 2022 "Wool Street Journal"*

<https://www.pggwrightson.co.nz/news/time-minimise-vegetable-matter-and-horehound>

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## *Barbara Newton retires and reflects*

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**“CLASSING IS NOT ROCKET SCIENCE BUT REMEMBER THAT ATTAINING A PIECE OF PAPER/QUALIFICATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF YOUR EXPERIENCE. IT IS UP TO YOU TO SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES, YOU HAVE TO EARN THE RIGHT. DO NOT EXPECT THEM TO BE HANDED TO YOU ON A PLATE IN WHATEVER DIRECTION YOU DECIDE TO TAKE”.**

*By Barbara Newton (A723) for NZWCA*

**It is hard to believe that it has been 47 years since I embarked on a career in wool and entered an industry that was to become my lifetime passion.**

Since graduating in the mid 1970's from Massey University with a Diploma in Wool & Wool Technology I have spent the past 45 years involved in the NZ wool harvesting industry, initially as a broker classer before embarking on a 40+ year career as a self-employed professional shed classer. While my wool classing has been based on the merino sector my interest remains with the entire NZ clip.

Although tempted to cross the ditch I believe I had the best of everything, at my back door.

Personal commitments kept me in Dunedin where to be honest in my eye Otago pre-lamb wool was the Mecca of wool in New Zealand, plus I had fantastic working environments and clients. I've classed fine wool, halfbreds and merinos, and been to a lot of places, but mainly in the Central Otago, upper Waitaki regions, including a five-year stint at “Man-O- War” on Waiheke Island.

### **Beginnings as a classer**

My initial interest in wool began in my early teens via my mother, with her fleeces spread out in front of the fire from which I would select out staples for her to card and then spin. Of course, I was brought up in an age when wool was the fibre for clothing. With two grandmothers and my mother keen knitters and craft persons there was never any shortage of woollen garments produced throughout my childhood.

I was born in the Chinese year of the sheep and aptly named Barbara, so obviously I was destined to be involved in the sheep industry! On leaving school I wished to pursue a career in science, but for various reasons that was never going to eventuate in a hurry. I also had two uncles in the wool trade: one a wool store manager, and the other in marketing at Alliance Textiles, Oamaru.

At the suggestion of the former my I decided to do the wool course at Massey to give me some background in the industry, and then looking to apply that with my science to wool research which was in its early beginnings with Wool Research Organisation of NZ based in CHCH. I was in fact awarded a scholarship from WRONZ with that very idea in mind.

However, as it turned out I had a natural flare and feel for the raw product it, so I continued down that road.

My first specific job, in between the two stages of study at Massey, I worked at Donald Reid Wool store Dunedin. There I was firstly dispatched to the oddments department and where for the first few months during the off season “picked pieces”, literally taking out stain from crutching's, over a table. This didn't impress me much, so I was determined not to spend the first 10 years of my wool career doing such things as I was led to believe from the senior classers I was working with before being even considered to do fleece wool and classing. At that time a huge percentage of clips were classed in the stores.

During this first period of wool store employment, between my two years of study, I gained my full broker classer registration. I believe I was the first female to attain this.

*“Satisfied the examiners appointed by the New Zealand Wool Handling Committee of his (?) skill and competence in classing to the standards set by the Committee is registered as a broker Classer”*

I had started at a time when there were very few females in the industry, at least at broker level, and classing was pretty much a male dominated profession, unless of course if you worked in the office!

Consequently, I was a bit of an anomaly in the beginning as a female classer in the store, although I believe Pam Liverton - A 246 had a brief foray in the Dunedin WS store during her studies at Massey, and of course my fellow classmate Jenny Te Whata (nee Street), became an influential classer and contractor in Central Otago in the early 1980's when the classer registration system was becoming established. Of course, there were plenty of women working in the sheds in the mainly family orientated gangs that travelled throughout NZ.

Following the completion of my Massey studies in 1975, and after spending a year working in at the Wrightson wool store Timaru (initiated by Harold Smith of Wrightson's Dunedin), I was lured back to Dunedin to work in the Dalgety store, but mainly because I wished to continue with my sporting interest of cricket.

After about 4 seasons (1976-80) working in various wool preparation facilities (Donald Reid, Reid Farmers, Careys Bay Scour, Wrightson Timaru and Dalgety Dunedin, the R.F Wool Scour) I was approached again by Harold Gloag who asked if I would be interested in classing a merino blade run in the Upper Waitaki in 1981. Of course, I jumped at the opportunity and pretty much never looked back, embarking on what was to become 40 years of shed classing during the pre-lamb period of the season.

This blade run was for the clips of *Te Akatarawa, Rugged Ridges* and *Waitangi Stations*. We did the ewes, hoggets, and wethers before heading off to each station in turn, beginning in mid-August and finishing hopefully by Labour weekend. By 1982 I had obtained my registration shed classer division in Merino, with stencil M 723, and the following year became D723. I recently found my original classer registration cards.

After two seasons I took a small break to have our two sons, but still managing to do the odd bit of classing in the ensuing years until the late 1980's when I restarted my classing in earnest. I was indebted to my husband, family and friends who made it possible to continue with my classing. As the boys got older, I undertook more classing and for the past 20 years was pretty much away from home for the 3-4 months of pre-lamb.

It was a two-way thing. I got to do something I was passionate about and for my children it was a learning curve. In their high school years when I spent longer periods away from home, they had to become a lot more self-sufficient- looking after themselves- new skills- cooking, washing, organized, time management etc.

During this period, I was appointed the first wool classer representative to the Wool Board Classer Registration Advisory Committee, serving three terms from 1998-2002 effectively as a voice representing wool harvesting interests, and then as an inaugural member of the NZ Wool Classers Association Inc in 2005 when the NZ Wool Board was disestablished.

I took up wool judging at Shearing and Wool handling competitions to keep up contact with the people in the industry and have enjoyed watching the progress of competitors in this important sport, training and setting the bar for preparation standards in the industry in addition to the many friendships made around the country. For the last 15 or so years I have been an active committee member of the Otago Merino Association promoting excellence in fine wool.

### **Changes in the industry**

I've witnessed a lot of changes in the wool harvesting over the past 40 years:

The switch from classing the majority of clips in the store to shed classing; the introduction of objective measurement a big one; selling options; the integration of females in the industry across the board especially in regard to shed harvesting; the improvement in the standard of preparation in the sheds; the professionalism and competency now shown by many of the shed staff and employers; rise in skill level in particular that of the wool handlers.

The most disconcerting change (or lack of) to face the classing aspect of the wool harvesting industry has been the demise of the educational opportunities. This includes the cessation of the Lincoln course, Massey becoming extra mural, and with all the recent changes of providers etc. It's all very well wanting to be a classer, but vital learning opportunities and relevant institutions have shrunk dramatically.



I was also extremely saddened by the discontinuation of the Dunedin wool auctions. It was an event where shed personnel, classers, growers, brokers and buyers could mingle together, view the entire range of clips and meet and discuss the relative merits with all concerned. We lost a valuable learning opportunity when this disappeared.

Of course, we have had improvements such as replacement of jute /hemp packs and the need for a needle and twine replaced by synthetic and nylon packs and stainless-steel clips; felt pens replacing stencils, coarse brushes and ink; crank down box presses are now a rarity superseded by hydraulic models complete with scales making bale more uniform in size shape and weight. Long gone are the straw brooms, for the most part blades, shearing machines and gear has moved up to a new level. For classers we still have to use the same tools, our hands and head, but we can specifically class for end use.

But some things never change. The industry is still faced with the same issues and concerns: double numbers; incomplete specifications; contamination issue; presentation of sheds and sheep, shed conditions, provision of clean running water and most importantly the provision of a functioning toilet- still too often third world conditions, sadly lacking in many shearing facilities.

From a townie background I came into classing never having worked as a wool handler, but I am proud to say I have worked alongside the world's best. I was truly indebted to work with Joanne Kumeroa, establishing a friendship of nearly 30 years from the late 1980's. She taught me the 'way of the sheds'.

I have always loved the smell of the shed, the camaraderie, the physicality, working under pressure, as well as learning a wide range of other skills such as: never taking anything for granted, communications, working under pressure; attention to detail, making decisions every 20 seconds; physical work- finger, hands and arms, and legs; multitasking; amateur psychologist; being accountable; upholder of standards; specifications and personal accounts; IRD, ACC. Most of all being competent, reliable, and respected.

I believe there will always be a place in the future for the competent wool classer/shed manager. The classer stands at the coal face of the wool harvesting and fibre production chain, providing the vital link that ensures preparation is always done to the best possible standard at the time of shearing.

It has been my absolute pleasure over the past 40+ years to have been paid for handling and preparing each pre-lamb with the world's most beautiful fibre. My classing career has pretty much been a family affair, in the shed, and with the families I have had the privilege to work for, in particular the Graham and Hore families with whom I have had a long association, made lifetime friendships, shared many experiences and made awesome memories.

Although I anguished at the thought of retiring, I know I've given it my best shot. We have experienced some great seasons of late and I felt the time was right to finish on a high note.

Classing is not rocket science but remember that attaining a piece of paper/qualification is just the beginning of your experience. It is up to you to seek out opportunities, you have to earn the right. Do not expect them to be handed to you on a plate in whatever direction you decide to take.

I believe here are plenty of people to provide fresh eyes and hands and to give the next generation of growers a chance to build relationships with someone new.

I will miss the fabulous fibre, the atmosphere and most of all the people. I wish you all the best in your wool classing career.

### ***Process for organising classer and grader shed management and clip inspections***

**Classers and Graders seeking prefix upgrades, and Farmer Classers seeking to complete their registration now need to submit their request for their shed management and clip inspections directly to the NZWCA Registrar.**

The Registrar will then appoint an Inspector from a pool of experienced wool people including wool broker reps and retired or experienced wool classers in the relevant area. The form outlining the details required by the Registrar in order to allocate an Inspector can be found on the NZWCA website <https://woolclassers.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Request-for-Inspection-of-Shed-Management-and-Wool-Classing-or-Grading-Report-May-2022.pdf>

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- The details on the form must be provided to the Registrar at least 14 days prior to the anticipated shearing date – it is accepted that a firm date can't always be given.
- It is vital the classer/grader finds out from the grower the name of the wool broker representative/area manager for the clip and supplies that information with the request for inspection detail

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## *2022 AGM and Classer Professional Development Day busy but successful*

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### **Karakia part of welcome for NZWCA AGM/Classer PD Day in Mosgiel**

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At the beginning of our day at Mosgiel on May 5,  
the NZWCA vice-chair Sonya Johansen offered a karakia to bring us together:

**Ko te tu o te tama tane**

**Ko te tu o te tama wahine**

**Mauri ora ki te rangi**

**Mauri ora ki te whenua**

**Mauri ora ki matou hui i tenei rangi**

**Tuturu whaka maua kia tina**

**Haumi e Hui e taike e**

Sonya explains: "Roughly translated this means to bless the men and women here today at this place  
and to support our hui. We are united and ready to progress together."

**That's us! Nga mihi nui Sonya.**

### **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENT:**

Just a short comment to add to my Annual Report which is in an earlier part of this newsletter.

The Professional Development Day in Mosgiel can only be described as a success. Marg, who even the night before was worried it wasn't going to go well, did an incredible job of organising the day.

The speakers were top line, getting such credible speakers is an illustration of the esteem NZWCA is held in. Much of it is in recognition of the efforts of Bruce Abbott who accepted the awarding of Life Membership at the day, it was an honour to make the presentation.

To have the Chairman of National Council of New Zealand Wool Interests (Rosstan Mazey) attend for the day and speak was an honour, as was having Andy Caughey CEO of Strong Wool Action Group, which is evolving into Wool Impact NZ (which may see Andy out of a job). Amongst others also addressing the day was John McWhirter CEO Wools of New Zealand, wool pressers Vorne Wheki and Cameron Young, Grant Campbell of Tahi Ngatahi, Graeme Bell of PGGW and Blair Davies of NZ Merino Co. Definitely a group of speakers with influence in the New Zealand wool industry, those that didn't come missed a very informative day.

Also having all the Merit award recipients in attendance was an achievement that I don't remember seeing before, congratulations to Marg for managing to achieve this, the bar for these days remains high. The days get better each year and are more informative and interesting. The usual wool exercises were also held where all attending would have learnt something, even if it is how much I had forgotten.

On that note I hope that at next year's Professional Development Day & AGM we see a bigger turnout, might even crack the 100-attending mark.

*Bill Dowle NZWCA chair*



**Mitchell Young, Associate Member,  
Wool Works**

## REGISTRARS COMMENT:

Pulling together AGM/Classer Professional Development Days is a big task, and not part of my skill set. Thank you to all involved for bearing with me while I learn on the job!

I owe a massive vote of thanks after the Mosgiel event to three main groups of people

1. The approximately 80 of you who registered to attend and the 70 who got themselves there from near and far and participated so fully and positively.
2. Our speakers (Bill has listed them all above). Really honoured to have each and every one of you there. Most of you made a special trip to Mosgiel for the day, from as far afield as Wellington. Thank you for making it so easy for me; every person I approached to make a presentation did so willingly, no one declined. NZWCA was honoured to have each of you there. Special mention to our top pressers Vorne Wheki and Cameron Young who stepped way out of their comfort zones to make their presentation, and absolutely nailed it. I'm still kicking myself for not videoing what Vorne and Blair had to say.
3. NZWCA Board members who helped with whatever I asked for in the months and weeks prior, and who turned out in force to support the staging of the day. The set up the day before, the engagement during the day and the pack up afterwards was all down to NZWCA Board members. Our association is very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of people who make such events happen.

*Marg Forde NZWCA Registrar*



**Lucy Gee-Taylor P2212 ponders her  
wool exercise answers**



**Massive, accumulated wool knowledge right here. Left to Right:  
Don Urquhart M486, Ian Shaw A514 and PGGW wool rep and  
speaker on the day Graeme (Ding) Bell A223**



**Borgia QP2216 & Nathan QP2217 Daniels**



**Scone anyone?  
Great catering  
thanks Taieri  
Bowling Club**





## Wool Exercises at Classer PD Day May 5 in Mosgiel

We had four wool exercises using samples and one devised to highlight the differences in line naming for wools being sold in NZ and wools being sold in Melbourne. (This information for the latter exercise is included on Page 25 of this newsletter.) The emphasis was on the learning and discussion; however, these top scorers were recognised with certificates on the day:

### Top Scoring Micron Wool Exercise

***Cassie Johnston H2182***

### Top Scoring Oddment Wool Exercise

***Hani Ropata (student)  
of McConachie Shearing***

### Top Scoring Style/Type identifying for contracts Wool Exercise

***Sharlene Adamson A2014***

### Top Scoring Line-Naming Wool Exercise

***Rose Barnett A1565***

### Top Scoring in a Breed-Micron Wool Exercise

(Merino/Polwarth/Halfbred samples  
all within 3.5 micron range)

***Cassie Johnston H2182***



***Rose Barnett A1565 & Rebecca Braddick P2103***



***In discussion after wool exercise marking, L to R Terence Mulcahy  
D1473, Brent Cole D1723 & Cassie Johnston H2182***



***Andy Caughey of the Strong  
Wool Action Group (SWAG),  
speaker***

***McConachie Shearing  
Manager Mike Maguire (at  
right) drove a van full of  
keen staff up from  
Southland for the day***



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## 2021 Season NZWCA CLASSER AWARDS

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### MERINO MERIT AWARD

#### WINNER

A723

Barbara Newton for Stonehenge, Te Aka, Hartfield and Patearoa

#### COMMENDATIONS

A1678	Guy Palmer for Haldon
M1465	Anne-Marie Parcell for Mt St Bathans
A1579	Vanessa McAlister for Ben Dhu
M2150	Mary-Anne Satterthwaite for Muller
A1883	Graeme Goodger for Grays Hills

A514	Ian Shaw for Bendigo
M1563	Sharon Lawton for West Edge
A1864	Pip McConway for Aschworth
M2140	Cedric Aramoana for Huxley Gorge
P2176	Sarah Lewis for Merino Ridges



*Merino Merit Award recipient Barb Newton with Blair Davies of category sponsor NZ Merino Company*



### CROSSBRED CLASSER OR GRADER MERIT AWARD

#### WINNER

B686

Marilyn Dalzell for Cromdale

#### COMMENDATIONS

FC1420	Peter Chamberlin for Norwood
A1040	Bridget Speight for Whare Creek

FA1202	Ken Gillespie for Glen Eden
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*Crossbred Merit Award winner Marilyn Dalzell with Rosstan Mazey of category sponsor WoolWorks*





## OWNER CLASSER MERIT AWARD



*Owner Classer Merit Award recipient Alan Paterson  
with Graeme Bell of category sponsor PGGW*

### WINNER

FD713

Allan Paterson for Armidale

### COMMENDATIONS

FC1420 | Peter Chamberlin for Norwood

| FA1202 | Ken Gillespie for Glen Eden



## ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD

### WINNER

QB2193

Diane Webster

Grader for Bedford Farming  
and Rokeby Farming



*Encouragement Merit Award recipient Diane Webster with guest  
speakers Vorne Wheki and Cam Young representing sponsor Peter  
Lyon Shearing*

### COMMENDATION

P2176 | Sarah Lewis for Merino Ridges



## MID-MICRON MERIT AWARD

### WINNER

A2047

Lavene Paul

for WS, Winfield and Five Mile

### COMMENDATIONS

D2105	Kelly Paku-Taylor for Black Rock and Nga-Motu	D1445	Richard Moriarty for Grassington and Marble Point
H2182	Cassie Johnston for Tokastone	A2086	Ian Kofoed for Invercroy
D1473	Terence Mulcahy for Clarendon	H2136	Sarah Hewson for The Throne
A825	Janet Hackshaw for Spec	A2014	Sharlene Adamson for The Forks
D1647	Phyllicia Jorgensen for CJI	A2120	Pagan Karauria-Rimene for Eden Creek
A1744	Ada Louise Watkins for Eskhead	B2110	Marie Whiu for Wainui Diamond



Mid Micron Merit award recipient Lavene Paul with John McWhirter of sponsor Wools of NZ



Terrance Mulcahy D1473



Ilan Kofoed A2086



Cassie Johnston H2182



Sharlene Adamson A2014



Janet Hackshaw A825





*Double commendation recipient Ken Gillespie categories Owner classer and pictured accepting his Crossbred commendation with Rosstan Mazey of WoolWorks*

## **Wool Exercise from Classer PD Day – no samples required so have a go yourself now!**

Here is one of the two Line naming exercises created for our Mosgiel Classer Day in May. It is a fictional clip. Use the reference material (supplied below) to describe and name the lines and give line numbers. One line has correct answers for use as an example

**Exercise B: Line Naming Identification Exercise** (no wool samples needed; NZ descriptions, AWEX descriptions and NZ Merino Co line numbers supplied)

### Exercise B - Part 1

You are classing a 3800 merino wether clip, there are no contracted lines, the sheep were bellied at crutching time. The two-tooths (2/T) were drafted out and came in separately for shearing. Each line is described in full on the left. Please use the supplied NZ descriptions and AWEX descriptions to fill in the columns for how you would name each line if the wool was being sold at auction in Christchurch, or at auction in Melbourne AWEX). Then fill in the third column using the supplied line numbers with the range of line numbers you would give the clip if the broker was NZ Merino Co. 1 point for each correct box

<b>CLASSER MADE THESE LINES</b>	<b>NZ DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>LINE NAME AWEX (if sold in Melbourne)</b>	<b>LINE NO RANGE IF NZ MERINO CO</b>	<b>TOTAL (one point for each correct)</b>
Sound wether fleece, includes finest 2/T (tested 15.9 micron, length 80mm)				
Sound wether fleece, (17 micron, 83mm)				
Sound wether fleece (18.5 micron, 86mm)				
Sound 2/T wether fleece (17.2 micron, 85mm)	2/T F Mer W AAAA	AAAAM	300-399	
Shorter wether fleece includes 2/T (17.4 micron, 68mm)				
Tender wether fleece includes 2/T (17.2 micron, 82mm)				

Hard yellow wether fleece includes 2/T (17.8 micron 82mm)				
Backs containing moit and VM not seed				
Neck collars and seed				
Skirted fleece, 1 <sup>st</sup> Pieces				
2 <sup>ND</sup> Pieces, bulky wool removed from Locks				
Locks				
Eye Clips				

## REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR ANSWERS AND USE WHILE CLASSING

### TRADITIONAL NZ WOOL DESCRIPTIONS (for wool sold within NZ by brokers other than NZ Merino Company)

*From Dave Burrridge of PGG Wrightson: "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 hoggets shorn as lambs) or '2/T' for two-tooth sheep and 'W' for wethers."***

Super Fine – SUP F; Extra Fine – EX F; Fine – F; Medium – M; Strong – STG; Extra Strong – EX STG

Some examples:

**Merino:** Sup F Mer AAA (under 16 micron), ExF Mer AAA; F Mer AAA; M Mer AAA; Stg Mer AAA; M Mer 2/T AAA; Mer AA (an off line such as tender, short, yellow or cot drops down to AA or just A) W added for wether, R for ram, 2/T for two-tooth, Hog for woolly hoggets not shorn as lambs and H for hoggets shorn as lambs.

**Merino oddments:** Mer Bks AAA; Mer NKS AA; Mer BLS A; Mer 1<sup>st</sup> Pcs AAA; Mer 2<sup>ND</sup> Pcs; Mer Lox;

**Mid Micron:** As for Merino with the "Mer" dropped and either 1/2BD or 1/4BD added in according to the breed.

**Crossbred (strong wool):** As above but less distinctions for micron made; 2/S for second shear wool; 2/S B/P for second shear bellies and pieces; 1<sup>st</sup> LBS for lamb fleece; 2<sup>nd</sup> LBS for lamb bellies and pieces

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**NZ Merino Company**

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**MID MICRON LINE DESCRIPTIONS TO BE USED ON WOOL SOLD THROUGH NZM**

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This is for Half Bred (M2) and 1/4 Bred Wool only.

If Polwarth or Quarterbred use POL or 1/4 in DESCRIPTION instead of 1/2.

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**DESCRIPTIONS**

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EX F 1/2 AA Extra fine mainline

F 1/2 AA Fine mainline

M 1/2 AA Medium mainline

S 1/2 AA Strong mainline

M 1/2 A Short mainline

M 1/2 Yellow or cotts mainline

1/2 PCS 1st pieces of good length and style

1/2 BLS Bellies of good combing length and style

1/2 NKS Necks

1/2 BKS Backs that contain very high VM levels i.e.. birds' nest

1/2 LOX / 1/2 2nd PCS Lox - lines that include 2nd pieces/lox

OG 1/2 Overgrown fleece line i.e. doubles

STN 1/2 Any fleece affected by urine stain

STN BLS 1/2 Stained bellies (urine)

STN PCS 1/2 Stained pieces (urine)

DER 1/2 Any fleece affected by mycotic dermatitis

1/2 E/C Eye clips

1/2 CRT Crutchings good combing length and style

1/2 STN CRT Stained crutchings (urine)

1/2 FRIB Fribs

1/2 BRANDS Parts of fleece containing brands/raddle

1/2 SHANKS Socks

1/2 SKN PCS Skin pieces

1/2 DAG Dags

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**NZ Merino Company**

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**MERINO WOOL LINE DESCRIPTIONS TO BE USED ON WOOL SOLD THROUGH NZM**

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**DESCRIPTION**

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AAAAA M Spinners

AAAA M Best/good topmaking fleece (most main lines), can include yellow

AAA M Other fleece lines including flanks, very tender, high VM fleece, low VM backs and cotts

AA M All other fleece types including bacterial stain, very short lines including second shear

AAA M BKS Higher VM backs i.e. Birds nests

AAA M NKS Neck Lines

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AAA M BKN Choice pieces of combing length and good style
OG M Overgrown fleece lines i.e. Doubles BLK M Black fleece line
DDD M Dead fleece line
STN M Any fleece affected by urine stain (not hard yellow)
DER M Fleeces or part fleeces affected by mycotic dermatitis
AAA M PCS 1st pieces of best length AA M PCS 2nd pieces (where 2nd pieces have been removed from the lox)
AAA M BLS Bellies
STN M BLS Stained Bellies (urine)
STN M PCS Stained pieces (urine)
A M PCS LOX - lines that include 2nd pieces/lox (make sure A M PCS is on bales)
M E/C Eye Clips
AAA M CRT Crutchings
STN M CRT Stained Crutchings (urine)
M FRIBS Fribs
M BRANDS Parts of fleece containing brands
M SHANKS Socks
M SKN PCS Skin pieces
M DAG Dags

#### NZ Merino Company Line Numbers

Merino Ewe – 100 to 199	Merino Hogget – 200 to 299	Merino Wether – 300 to 399
1/4 BD Adults – 400 to 499	1/4 BD Hogget – 500 to 569	1/4 BD Lambs – 570 – 599
1/2 BD Adults – 600 to 699	1/2 BD Hogget – 700 to 769	1/2 BD Lambs – 770 – 799

***A North Island Classer Professional development day is  
planned for Napier in Mid-October.***

***Date to be confirmed***

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