



December 2024

New Zealand

Wool Classers Association

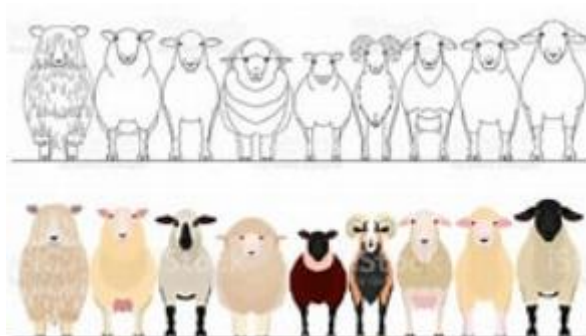


A sight every wool classer respects, a focused wool handler – this is Cheyenne Harvey captured working with merino wool in Northern Southland in September.

Photo: Charly Harvey

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A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR



Here we are at the end of 2024, only 9 months until we shear again - closer than that for many of you!

It has been a busy year for the NZWCA, we farewelled two champions of wool with the retirement of Laurie Boniface and Richard Gavigan and welcomed Rebecca Braddick-Tohiariki and Emma O'Sullivan in their place. We believe that it is vital to the wool industry going forward that the integrity of the training is maintained so that New Zealand can continue to have world leading wool classers.

Our industry day in Mosgiel was a great success and we are looking at making it even better for 2025. If there is anything you would like us to cover or address, please drop us an email or give us a call - all of the Board members contact details are on the website.

This season saw a reduction in sheep numbers across the board, a poor autumn and winter coupled with land use change being the two main drivers. Fine wool prices saw a lift and well graded strong wool held. It was disappointing to hear that Kainga Ora recently announced that they would not be using wool carpets in their homes, our thanks go out to the Ministers and others who are supporting the industry.

I want to say a big thank you to our registrar Marg who puts in an enormous amount of work and to the board members who work on your behalf behind the scenes. Without their voluntary contribution the association would not be in the good heart it is. All the best for a safe and happy festive season.

*Tracy Paterson M2133
NZWCA Chair
Matakanui Station*

MARK THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY

South Island Industry Day returns to Canterbury

The 2025 NZ Wool Classers Association AGM/Industry Professional Development Day date has been set for Friday 9th May 2025.

May 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

The venue will be a separate building within Lincoln University. Full details will be confirmed to members by email and publicly on our website www.woolclassers.org.nz nearer the time, but the day's format will be similar to previous years: Wool exercises first up, speakers, AGM straight after lunch, more speakers then activities including an organised visit to a wool industry site.

Approximate timing is 8.30am-4pm. Smoko and lunch included. All are welcome, no cost to members, non-members to pay an amount to be advised.

A student rate will be available on enquiry.



Why we class – contrasting Polwarth wool bins showing clear classing distinction

TOP WOOL STUDENTS AWARDED

Wool industry workforce and knowledge boosted by 12 graduates of
NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing in 2024

Announcing the 2024 NZWCA SIT/Telford prizes:

Overall top student who completed in 2024, and recipient of the NZWCA
perpetual trophy is *Kelly Harvey*

Other awards:
July 2024 Completion

Top Practical – *Richanna Clarke*

Top Theory – *Richanna Clarke*

November 2024 Completion

Top Practical – *Lewis McLellan*

Top Theory – *Kelly Harvey*

Award certificates are to be posted to all of the above, however recipients are encouraged to attend the NZWCA Industry Professional Development Day/AGM at Lincoln on May 9, 2025, where they will be acknowledged and Kelly Harvey (if attending) will be presented with the NZWCA cup, which resides permanently at Telford.

Congratulations to all 12 students who completed the two-year distance learning NZ Certificate in Wool Technology and Classing course this year. We look forward to your contribution to the NZ wool industry workforce. Holders of the Cert Wool Tech are able to pursue a range of wool sector opportunities, including being able to apply to NZWCA for their Provisional Wool Classing stencil registration by going to our website <https://woolclassers.org.nz/> and clicking on the “Join” tab.

*The things wool store staff
find to do on their breaks*



NZ Wool Classers Assn Store Classer registration procedure and rules – adopted November 2024

It is acknowledged that to be eligible for upgrade of Provisional “P” classer prefix to Store “S” classer prefix the existing shed classer criteria is not relevant. Therefore, as of November 2024 NZWCA has adopted the following for store classers.

- *Store classer still needs to have an inspection done that parallels the shed management inspection but is one that is relevant to how the classer sets up and works in the store, including managing staff (if any). That inspection referred to as “store management inspection”. Working area, bins, fadges and wool in sale sample boxes will be included in the inspection. **Request for inspection to be made to NZWCA Registrar email reg@woolclassers.org.nz***
- *Store classer required to submit at least three bin fleece lines and four bin oddment wool lines, each prepared for a sale, and relevant test results, per wool category (merino, mid micron and crossbred) to pass and get their prefix upgraded from Provisional. Therefore, if they pass upgrade for Crossbred only their prefix would be SX. For Mid Micron only SH. For Merino only SM. For Crossbred and Mid Micron SB. For Crossbred and Merino SC. For Mid Micron and Merino SD. For all wool types SA.*
- *An “S” prefix stencil is only valid on wool classed in a wool store, not in a shearing shed.*
- *The inspector, a person with proven store classing experience appointed by NZWCA Registrar, must not be employed by the same company as the classer seeking upgrade*
- *The inspector to make one face to face store management inspection, and the same inspector must also pass subsequent clip classing by checking test results submitted to them by store classer*
- *Clips submitted must be from separate wool sales*

This criteria was arrived at following consultation with classers with store classing experience and/or holding the old store classer stencil, wool brokers, wool reps and wool buyers. This initiative has been taken because there was no documentation existing for the “old” store classer registration category



CLASSER PROFILE Terence Mulcahy D1473

Where are you based? Timaru

When did you begin working in the wool industry? 1984

And how did that come about? I started in the Canterbury Farmers wool store in Timaru as a barrow boy straight out of school. Not quite 15 years old! I stayed in the same building but went through four mergers while working there. I learnt how to drive the forklift, worked on the grabline and became a junior classer then classer. I learnt a lot, young.

In what area of NZ do you mainly work? Mid-South Island. I class April-December and do close to 100,000 fleeces a year

How long have you been classing? I went to Lincoln in 1986, at the time I was a store classer for Wrightsons in Timaru. In 1991 I started classing in the sheds

What/who made you decide to become a NZWCA registered stencil holder? As a store classer I had to, so it was natural progression to get my shed stencil as well. As a store classer we had to learn 600 different types of wool back then. We had to know them all, we had inspectors checking on us all the time, working in the stores

With regard to classing, what are your future aspirations?

Retiring! I will continue working for a while yet, but I do have a bit of knowledge I want to pass on

What do you enjoy most in the shed? Meeting people

What annoys you the most in the shed? Drugs

What wool related event/achievement are you most proud of? There are quite a few highlights through the years, but I am proud of having classed at Bog Roy Station for 33 years and counting. I really enjoy building good relationships with my clients. I would like to acknowledge all the clients who have entrusted me with their wool through the years. Another aspect I am pleased to be able to be involved in is as a NZWCA Board member, sharing knowledge and giving back to the industry

Have you worked in any other areas of the industry, or overseas? If so where and doing what? I have classed in the wool stores in Perth, Western Australia. I am a wool classer/buyer for Mulcahy Wools, which is a family business run by my brother Barry and started by my father Terry in 1948.

Are you involved in any other activities (shearing, hobby, sport etc)? I'm on the Board of NZWCA. I was Celtic Rugby Club (Timaru) president for two years and 10 years club captain and during that time we won the championship 10 years in a row

What is the best thing about being a registered classer? The range of people you get to work with, and of course playing with the wool



Recent NZWCA Classer and Grader Registrations and Upgrades

Congratulations and welcome to the following:

Provisional classer stencil applications approved:

Lea Brabant P2242

Jessica Murray P 2243

Morgan Brewster P 2245

Provisional grader stencil applications approved:

Nikki Joseph QP 2244

Owner classer stencils approved:

Mark Brooker FD 2246

Sarah Murray FM 2215

Professional classer stencil prefix upgrades:

Jase Nahona C to A 1575

Samantha Harmer P to M 2214

Katrise Saunders (nee McDonald) P to H 2232

Ingrid Neera P to H 2197

Ian MacKenzie P to H 1382

Explanation of registration prefixes here:

<https://woolclassers.org.nz/members-area/registration-prefixes/>

The number after the prefix represents the holder's lifetime registration number with the New Zealand Wool Classers Association.

This registration can only be used on wool they prepare providing they are a financial member of the NZWCA.



A stark reminder of the bale contamination issue – these ribbons found in a bale spotted hanging on a bin in the Mosgiel wool store

CLASSERS AT WORK PRELAMB 2024

*Amberlee Kahukura-McGinnis
P2241 at Bonspiel, Moa Creek*



*Heidi Middleton P2084 at Nokomai
Station, Northern Southland*



*Tracy Paterson M2133 at Matakanui
Station, which she farms with
husband Andrew, near Omakau*

NOTES TO CLASSERS

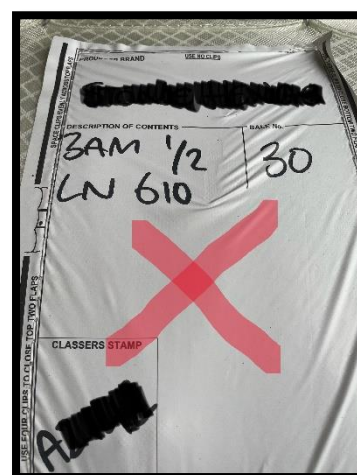
Line number placement on bales, social media awareness and maximising returns

The following information was emailed out to NZWCA classer and grader members in September but is being repeated here in case you missed the email amongst the busy-ness of the pre-lamb season.

Here is some recent feedback from wool brokers that is relevant and deserves to be passed on with the comment from one of them: "You all do a fantastic job out there, it's hard work. Sometimes we just need a wee tweak and then we're away and everyone's happy".

- If you are using a Line number system (for example, as used for NZ Merino Company clips) it has been requested that the Line number is not placed on the bale label in the Description of Contents box. Instead, for better visibility in the wool stores and in the processing chain, put the Line number in the bottom right of the label.

Correct bale labelling when using Line Numbers



Incorrect bale labelling when using Line Numbers

- And this reminder that every fleece should be put in front of the Classer, prompted by a broker rep sighting on several different shed visits this pre-lamb a woolhandler placing a whole unskirted (yellow) fleece into a stain fadge. A broker rep said: "It should have been skirted and put on the classing table for the Classer to make the decision where it went. The Classer gets paid by the fleece, they are there to maximise the value of a grower's wool clip. Growers are under much financial pressure so every cent counts."

In addition to the general comment about every fleece going in front of the Classer, one broker's rep further wrote this explanation in particular in relation to the stain line:

"The problem with stain is you don't often get a four-bale line. Some of the big sheds may do but it's very mixed with heavy pen stain, blood and mud. Sometimes this can be the rubbish bin for anything.

"So with one to two bales of stain it goes into the Interlots Group with other growers stain. It's not easy selling stain as the buyer doesn't know really what he's getting.

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“Merino stain in the interlot are worth around \$1.50 kilo.

“Merino condition or yellow fleece can be up to \$10 per kilo.

“Half bred stain in the interlot are worth 30cents per kilo (so after cost the grower is in the negative).

“Half bred, yellow or condition fleece are worth \$3.50.

“Also a good mention as always keep oddments as oddments and fleece as fleece and treat your backs as a fleece line.”

- To close, a word on social media responsibility from another wool rep, and NZWCA: Recently a NZ Facebook post showed, in the background not as main content, a shearer stitching up a ewe. Accidents do happen, and stitching up is the right thing to do. But it's vital to be mindful that some people don't understand this and the potential for damage to the wool industry is very real. Encourage pausing to review content before posting online. And, getting permission from the people who can be identified in any videos or photos, and from the property owner.



If you're at the Wanaka Show on 7 and 8 March 2025, be sure and drop by the NZ Wool Classers Assn stand and say giddyay.

Thanks to the generosity of the show's wool committee, we'll be flying the NZWCA flag in the same spot as last year, on the edge of the sheep stewards' tent, next to the building that houses the competition fleeces.

LETTER SHARED WITH PERMISSION

NZWCA received this
letter from
Kelly Paku-Taylor
D2105, following her
being unable to be
present to receive
her Classer Merit
Award in May

Hi this is Kelly Paku-Taylor.

Just thought I'd write a wee note to you regarding me and my appreciation for the awards and gifts I have received from NZWCA over the years.

Anyway, some of my family are at Peter Lyons, and other places down Central working, with the last name they have had many people approached them regarding me and my classing and pretty much said how "wow" they would love to meet me want to know about me all because of the awards I receive from you.

I have always been a (reserved) person who doesn't do recognition well and always thought well it's not just me it's my team I don't deserve my name on that because if my team wasn't there I may not have got that. I really truly feel that is true.

I also couldn't do this without my inspirations, firstly was Gina Nathan super tidy, her eye for micron even to a point i.e. 18.5 she taught me my early years of wanting to be like her. On to

Sharon Lawton, for speed, accuracy, how to lead a happy team.

Tina Rimene, now she was what got me precision, she was hard, like why did you put that there, and her eye for like for like.

My most thankful inspiration would be a man with soooooo much knowledge and passion for wool, any question I have about wool or sheep breeds just anything to do with sheep and wool and who is so keen and eager to pass his knowledge on to me Peter McCusker (PGG Wrightson wool rep) I honestly say to this day I couldn't have been as good as I am today without this man who I call a dear friend.

So, if you think, she never comes to receive these awards is she grateful.

I 100% AM and I appreciate it so much, so that my whole hallway is full of these awards but it's always when my big shed starts and that's my welcome to pre-lamb shed P.S I love the blanket

Signed
Kelly Paku-Taylor
D2105

LATEST WRONZ SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED



Congratulations to the following NZ Certificate of Wool Technology and Classing (NZCWTC) students who are the most recent (Semester 2 2024) recipients of WRONZ Scholarships:

Charles Finnie of Christchurch, Opal Tahana of Waikari and Renee Bonney of Waimate

All these students are in their first year of NZCWTC study in 2024, which is the requirement for applicants to be eligible.

NZ Wool Classers Assn administers the Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand (WRONZ) scholarship which is valued at \$1000 per recipient.

This is paid in four instalments as the recipient passes stages in their course. But it represents more than cash to help with study and living costs for the two-year distance learning course. NZWCA suggests to recipients that they can maximise the scholarship by using it as an opportunity to network and connect with wool industry organisations and people.

The presentation letter from NZWCA to the recipients reads: “One way you can do this is by communicating with WRONZ and NZWCA giving progress reports on your study, things you have enjoyed learning or aspects of the wool industry that particularly interest you. Additionally, you can share information about how you are using the money, and how it is helping you.”

There are typically two intakes each year for the Cert Wool Tech, with the Semester One intake being the largest. We announced recipients from those who applied for the WRONZ scholarship in Semester 1 at our AGM/Industry PD Day at Mosgiel in May this year. The above recipients were chosen from applicants who commenced their wool studies in both Semester 2 and Semester 1 2024.

**Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand www.woolresearch.com
New Zealand Wool Classers Association www.woolclassers.org.nz**



From the New Zealand Merino Company area managers

We have seen a very challenging fine wool season!

Drought affected wool was prominent in most areas, resulting in wool weights being significantly down and most clips testing finer.

The preparation and classing of the clips this season has been of a very high standard. Classers have done a good job identifying tender, and or, shorter wools and keeping these separate from the sounder better grown fleeces.

It is seasons like this that really test a classer's experience, knowledge and confidence. Your ability to class what is in front of you, and not to have preconceived ideas, is what will aid in your success in a high-pressure environment.

When more time is required to be spent assessing each fleece, skirting levels need to be accurate, having clear communication with your wool handling team is vital, making good shed management key.

Overall, a great result in terms of seeing lines of wool, once grabbed and cored, have visual differences for micron, style, length and strength, with the test results confirming those differences.

Most lines that were skirted correctly and classed to the specs for the various contracts were accepted.

You should all be proud of your efforts, as always, we are only a phone call away should you have any queries about the clips you classed.

From the NZM Area Managers, we wish you all a safe and happy festive season!



NZM Wool Classer Development Scholarship 2024

The recipients of the 2024 NZ Merino Company (NZM) classer development scholarships were Samantha Harmer P2214 (now M 2214) and Tegan Caves P2177. Their mentors were Rose Barnett A1565 and Vanessa McAlister A1579. The scholarship period ran from July to October this year. NZWCA Register Marg Forde took these photos when she visited them at their work.

Here is an edited version of the NZM summary of the company's classer development scholarship:

Overall the classer programme for 2024 was a huge success with a great combination of having the right trainees and the right mentors contributing to the majority of the positive outcomes.

The main objective, of bridging the gap between theory and practical experience and knowledge, was definitely achieved. The outcomes were all met and some well exceeded. The length of the programme appears to be right with some minor tweaks to the induction and conclusion process.

Commenced in 2023 the initiative aimed to recognise and empower individuals pursuing careers as wool classers, contributing to the growth and sustainability of the wool sector. The primary objective of the scholarship programme is to identify and reward outstanding individuals committed to advancing their expertise in wool classification, by providing financial assistance, mentorship, and educational resources.

The successful recipients of the NZM Wool Classer Development Scholarship programme received a comprehensive package that included financial support for accommodation and travel expenses, access to specialised training programmes, along with the expert guidance from the mentors. The aim was to equip scholars with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their roles as wool classers. The programme has already begun to yield positive outcomes, with last year's scholarship recipients demonstrating enhanced proficiency in wool classification techniques and a deeper understanding of the industry's intricacies. These participants have both gone on to classing their own sheds with one of these including working in South America.

NZM Classer Scholarship recipient Tegan Caves P2177 (at right) with her mentor Vanessa McAlister A1579 at Omarama Station, McKenzie Country



NZM Classer Scholarship recipient Samantha Harmer M2214 (at right) with her mentor Rose Barnett A1565 at Otematata Station, McKenzie Country

From NZWCA Registrar

I'm grateful for wool in many ways, and this selfie taken nestled in an Otago wool bin in September represents one of those ways. Jeepers it was cold this pre-lamb wasn't it, that damp cold that gets right in.



I've worked every pre-lamb in the South Island since 1987. Maybe I'm getting old (and not moving fast enough) but I have to say I can never recall being so cold for so long in the wool shed during a pre-lamb. Of course, I was wearing multiple layers of wool, but the only time I thawed out for quite a few days in a row around the middle of September was when I burrowed into a wool bin after eating my lunch. Wool for the win! One of the things that's really heartened me this year is the increasing number of classers engaging with NZWCA process; more Provisional stencil holders are making efforts to get their shed management inspections done and classers of all prefixes are submitting clips for inspection, for prefix upgrades. There are some great classers working hard out there to gain experience and skill. I am mindful that much of this couldn't happen without the co-operation and time input of wool broker reps and in some cases experienced classers and NZWCA Board

members. The collaboration within our industry is something that deserves to be recognised and acknowledged. Thank you to all who so willingly contribute, you know who you are!

Unlike Australia, where all classing matters are overseen by a strong body funded by wool grower levies, here in NZ we have to rely on our members and sponsors supporting the work of NZWCA in order to maintain a classer/grader system of integrity. Thank you to our sponsors and members for recognising the value of this.

And while I'm on my thank yous, I need to express my sincere gratitude to our NZWCA Board members, who have been particularly understanding of my low productivity in recent months, following surgery which knocked me around more than expected. Our (unpaid) Board members are a really supportive group of people, passionate about our industry, bringing a wide range of wool industry experience and wisdom to the NZWCA table. I am very grateful for you, and all NZWCA members should be too!

In the course of my role as Registrar I connect with a lot of NZ wool industry people, on a wide range of matters. The following interaction, just this week actually, is one I feel is important to share. In contact on another matter, an experienced classer (who handles some of the top merino clips in NZ) and I found ourselves debriefing on our respective prelambs, things we knew about others, and mulling over the question:

What Makes a Top Wool Classer?

Here's our summary:

You can't escape the importance of every classer understanding how essential individual professionalism and accountability is. Each clip no matter the breed or size, is important and should be handled with great care and attention. Being punctual - arrive early, have good tidy bookkeeping skills, making sure you have your wool specifications done on time - this is not a job for the farmer or wool buyer, it is the classer's job and responsibility.

*Good communication with your team: They need to clearly understand what it is you would like them to do, it is a good idea to do a demonstration fleece. Have conversations with the presser about the press-up early on. Have your press-up worked out ahead of time, by trying to end on straight bales if you can and avoid bin bales where possible. Walking out and leaving your presser to finish the job at the end to make decisions regarding the wool when you are not there to ask - **is not ok.***

A wool classer is employed to maximise the profit of the wool clip, look after it - a good decision can make thousands a poor one can cost thousands. A more efficient job can be done if you have done your homework to prepare for shearing beforehand and follow through to the last bale being pressed. Instead of leaving the shed at the end of shearing - stay and clean up. Your team should help you do this. Aim to leave things tidier than you found them - that is presentation and leaves a good impression.


Professionalism is so important. Be approachable, liaise with all the necessary people involved in handling of the wool clip. Show respect to the wool grower and the property.

To uphold a high standard of wool classers' within the industry, these factors, alongside wool knowledge and experience matter hugely.

We agreed that integrity was at the heart of the wool grower client - wool classer relationship; the client had every right to expect the highest standard of work. And, that this integrity extended to the classer charging a fair and realistic fee for their work.

Organised, professional classing,
minimising the chance for mistakes –
Vanessa McAlister's whiteboard at
Omarama Station makes sure
everyone working in the shed knows
what's what

A1574



Wool Grower
Accredited by Wools of New Zealand

LN: ODDMENTS

FERMARK QUALITY PROGRAMME

BIN#	LINE	FLC LINES	
1	250	4 A M (EX FINE L) SPIN	286-3AM-NKS/B
2	255	4 A M (EX FINE S) SPIN	284-3AM PCS
3			282-3AM BLS
4	245	4 A M (FINE STYLE S)	292-AM PCS
5	230	4 A M (FINE STYLE L)	288-M FRIB
6	253	4 A M (MED S)	
7	210	4 A M (MED BWT S)	
8	240	4 A M (MED BWT L)	
9	274	3 A M (MED BREAK MID)	
10	273	3 A M (FINE BREAK MID)	
11	275	3 A M (WEBBY)	
12	LN: 200	BOTTOM I-B	
13	205	4AM (I-B)	
14	215	4 A M (EX FINE L SPIN)	
15	270	4 A M (EX FINE S SPIN)	

So, don't be too shy to ask questions, if you would like to talk about this further, please reach out. Or talk to someone who has been in the industry a long time, has good wool knowledge, experience and built up a good reputation. The NZWCA Board is working on refreshing and updating our Constitution and Classer Code of Conduct wording. We are open to suggestions for the Code of Business Conduct document. What are your non-negotiables and expectations? You can view the current one here <https://woolclassers.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NZWCA-CODE-OF-BUSINESS-CONDUCT.pdf>

The Constitution scrutiny is to ensure that the forthcoming new Government requirements around non-profit entities are met and is being overseen by our chair Tracy Paterson, who conveniently also happens to be a lawyer. Righto that's it from me for now. Thanks for reading this far!

Wear wool, use wool, give wool for Christmas, and stay safe out there this summer.

Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete me Te Tau Hou

Marg Forde A1260
NZWCA Registrar



Gratitude

The NZ Wool Classers Association is a nimble, independent organisation funded only by membership fees and these generous 2024 sponsors listed below:



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!