



## Sub-clover Red Leaf Syndrome Update

November 2017

Newsletter # 48

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*Bec Swift<sup>1</sup> and Alice Butler<sup>2</sup>, Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, 1 Northam, 2 Albany*

Sub clover red leaf syndrome (SCRLS) has been an intermittent issue for sub clover pasture growers in Western Australia for over 25 years. The reddening of clover leaves is caused by a pigment called anthocyanin, and is produced by sub clover when the plant is under stress.



*Figure 1. Sub clover red leaf syndrome in the Great Southern. Photo taken by Alice Butler.*

Stresses that may cause these symptoms include inadequate nutrition, poor nodulation, drought, root rots and virus infection. Major outbreaks of the syndrome were previously reported in 2007 and 2016. During 2017, there have been widespread reports of the syndrome from across the Great Southern, South Coast and Brookton regions.

A survey of paddocks from the Esperance, Great Southern and Brookton regions has

found the presence of two viruses that may have played a role in the syndrome this season: Soybean Dwarf Virus (SbDV) and Turnip Yellow Virus (TuYV) (Note SbDV has been called Sub Clover Red Leaf Virus in the past). These viruses were detected in 8 of the 11 paddocks sampled. Where virus was detected in plants with red leaf symptoms, it was primarily SbDV. TuYV was detected on fewer occasions, including in plant samples without red leaf symptoms. These viruses are not new to WA, both are endemic, and are usually more common in seasons with an early break and a 'green bridge'. The viruses are not seed borne and need green host plants to survive the summer. A number of volunteer crop species and weed species can act as hosts for these viruses including peas and faba beans, for SbDV and TuYV; and lucerne, wild radish, marshmallow, nightshade, fleabane, afghan melon and stinkweed, for TuYV.

Early season aphid control may reduce the spread of the viruses, and during the 2017 outbreak of SCRLS, a number of growers reported no infection or a reduced incidence of SCRLS in paddocks where sub clover had been sprayed with an insecticide.

Past experience with SCRLS is that paddocks affected in one season can recover in following years to be productive pastures, depending on paddock seed reserves and weather conditions in subsequent years. Alternatively, pastures like serradella that are not affected by SCRLS, may be management options in the short term.

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## Sub-Clover Red Leaf Syndrome Update cont.

If producers are concerned and want to discuss their particular situation, they should contact their agronomist or Paul Sanford at DPIRD.

The MLA and AWI are seeking feedback on the spread of Sub Clover Red Leaf Syndrome in WA and producers affected by the syndrome are encouraged to share information on the health of their clover pastures by completing the survey. The information will be used to inform a suitable research approach to identify short and longer term management strategies. Please google 'MLA red clover survey' to find the web page with the survey.

### Impact of insecticide use on severity of SCRLS – some grower observations

Brad Bassett from Brookton sprayed his pastures on 26 June to control cutworm and the mix contained 15 mL Trojan ® (gamma-cyhalothrin). One paddock was sown around 20 years ago with a Dalkeith-Nungarrin sub clover mix and, in this paddock, Brad only managed to get one lap sprayed before the tank ran out. The whole paddock was sprayed again in August for RLEM and as an anti-feed. The strip that missed out on the spray in June shows clear symptoms of SCRLS while the sprayed section recovered from the syndrome (Fig 2). It is not known whether the SCRLS was caused by a virus or other stress factors in this scenario.



Figure 2. Brad Bassett's 2017 sub clover paddock sprayed with insecticide on the left, and unsprayed on the right (Photo courtesy of Brad Bassett).

Dave Pearce also observed less SCRLS where he had sprayed insecticide on his farm in Woogenellup. Dave divided a paddock into two less than 18 months ago and prior to that, management of the two paddocks was the same. Dave's paddocks contain a mixture of old and new

sub clover varieties. In the first week of June 2017 he used an insecticide on one of these paddocks for RLEM; however, he decided against spraying the other paddock as there was no damage from RLEM early in the season. The unsprayed paddock started showing reddening of the sub clover in patches in September 2017, and about 5 per cent of the paddock was affected. In contrast, the paddock that had been sprayed had very little reddening of the sub clover, except for one or two random leaves. Dave said the reddening of sub clover has been less severe in 2017 compared to 2016.

These experiences appear to support a correlation between insect control and the impact of the red leaf syndrome. However, the presence of aphid vectors and virus infection were not confirmed. While aphids can transmit viruses, it is difficult to predict the benefit and best time to spray as aphids migrate and build up at different times each season, and the red leaf symptoms appear in sub clover well after infection takes place. Legumes resistant to the red leaf syndrome, such as serradella, are an alternative option to sub clover; however sub clover will continue to underpin livestock production as it has been widely adopted in broad-acre farming systems, is well adapted to the WA climate, and suits grower preference to graze pastures hard.

### Acknowledgments

Thank you to Phil Nichols, Paul Sanford, Jeremy Lemon, David Ferris, Brenda Coutts, Ben Congdon and Monica Kehoe from DPIRD and the growers Brad Bassett and Dave Pearce for their contribution.

### GRDC Project Number:

DAW00256 Building crop protection and production agronomy R&D capacity in regional Western Australia

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## Sub-Clover Red Leaf Syndrome Update cont.



Figure 3. The unsprayed paddock with patches of red-dying sub clover throughout. Photo taken by Alice Butler.

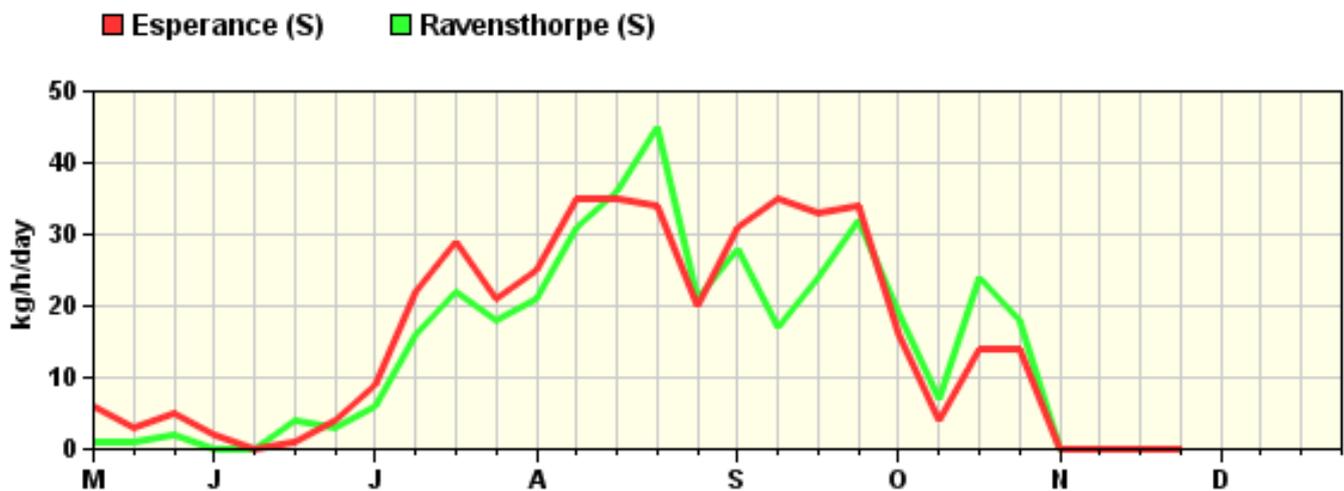


Figure 4. Paddock sprayed with insecticide in the first week of June. Photo taken by Alice Butler.

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## Pasture Growth Rates

### Shire PGR Comparisons - 2017



## ASHEEP South West Trip Review– August 2017

By Anita Chalmer  
ASHEEP Project Officer

### Day 1

A chilly -6°C start to a Katanning winter morning found us wallowing in an icy foot bath due to a plumbing mishap at the caravan park before heading to the Katanning Saleyards for a well-deserved cooked breakfast. The saleyards were built in 2014 and are owned and maintained by the Katanning Shire council. The project is a credit to the shire after being quoted \$44 million for the project, managed to employ local trades and businesses and keep the final costs down to \$26 million. The yards have several interesting design features such as a louvered roof system allowing complete shade throughout the 4.2ha yard complex and excellent airflow allowing noise and hot air to escape. Some other notable design features were the whole yard system is set up on 3m x 3m grid so all gates meet each other and all yards open up completely to allow for easy cleaning. All holding yards have stock water flowing through a PVC pipe watering system which is turned off when not in use to stop algae growth, slam gate latches, vertical rollers on entry to the drafting race to prevent crowding, rain water collection with 1.6 million litre capacity used for stock water, truck wash and treated for use in canteen building and a 4.2 kilowatt solar panel farm. After a quick peek at the sale, we moved on to Techspo, a conference and field day run by Southern DIRT showcasing the latest and greatest in agricultural technology now and in the future.



*At the Katanning Sale Yards*

We had a look around the livestock demo area at Techspo at the array of various sheep handlers and cattle crushes before listening to presentations about biomass estimation, drones and virtual fencing. The virtual fencing by Agersens could be game-changer and we are hoping to have some collars in Esperance next year. The virtual fence works by putting collars on cattle (similar to those used on dairies) fitted with a GPS locator, beeper and a zapper. Using a base station and computer/tablet/phone, a virtual fence is set up using GPS references and when a beast approaches the fence (within 30m) the collar beeps first quietly then louder. When it crosses the fence the collar gives an electric shock. The Agersens representative describes it as a bit worse than a static electricity shock and I am happy to take his word for it. Eventually the cattle learn from the audible beep where the fence is and avoid that area.

Unfortunately we had to leave Techspo to get to Busselton in time for a formal dinner at Amelia Park restaurant which proved worth the drive. The mashed potatoes personally recommended by Peter Walsh were indeed luxurious, as were the oysters, croquettes, parfait, charcuterie, wagyu fillet, lamb shoulder, crème brulee, cheese plate, chocolate pudding and other delights. The ale and vino flowed freely but as midnight struck, it was time to go home as we had an early start in the morning.



*Simon Fowler & Steve Bingham at V & V Walsh*

## ASHEEP South West Trip Review– August 2017

### Day 2

This morning we drove to V&V Walsh abattoir in Bunbury. V&V Walsh specialise in beef and lamb providing the domestic market with their own premium Amelia Park line and Woolworths, and expanding export markets, most notably into China. Once on site, we were provided with the must-have fashion items this season white lab coats and hairnets. Through some careful behind the scenes planning, the sheep and cattle being processed on the day were all from Esperance. Walsh's ensured that at the same time we were walking through the carcasses belonged to growers on our tour and gave a unique insight in to the paddock to plate process. It was great to see the high quality of meat being grown in Esperance and certainly a very memorable experience.

From there we visited a lamb feedlot on the outskirts of Bunbury owned by Alan Garston who backgrounds lambs for V&V Walsh. Some lambs were finished in a shed, but the majority were fed outside in small paddocks with feeder troughs in them. Alan makes his own grain ration supplemented with persian clover silage.

### Day 3

After breakfast at the slowest fast food shop in Australia, we visited Ed Cox to have a look around his dairy. Ed has 300ha on his main farm and milks 900 head in a rotary dairy, split into two mobs one morning milking and one afternoon. He has 56ha under irrigation from a 430m long pivot irrigator. Cows graze a ryegrass based pasture and are supplemented with a grain ration. As a silage contractor and having completed a Nuffield scholarship



*At Ed & Kate Cox's Busselton Dairy Farm*

into 'Improving Forages for Dairy Cows', silage has an important role on the farm. Ed grows maize over summer to be turned into silage at a slightly later maturity, providing a higher starch content to the ration. The protein component of the ration mainly comes from lupins, and there is always room for novel ingredients from human food waste products such as barley leftover from the malting process or sliced bread past its use-by date.

On the way home, we stooped in to see Craig Heggerton in Kojonup who has an incredibly multi-faceted business. As well as four separate sheep breed studs, he also runs Genstock artificial breeding company and a wool testing lab as well as Kojonup Feeds, a sheep pellet mill all on farm.

## WA Shearing Industry Membership Benefits

ASHEEP is a member of the WA Shearing industry which entitles our members to access the benefits of the WASIA. Some of the WASIA benefits that are available to ASHEEP members include-

- Use of WASIA Website to advertise and find shearing & training events, employment opportunities
- Access to direct Prime Super support and assistance relating to your superannuation funds;
- Discount Personal Accident, Illness, House and Motor Vehicle Insurance – McKenna Hampton;
- Access to Legal Services with at preferential rates;
- Membership & Shoprite Card – Access to

DISCOUNT Product and Services including:

- White & Brown Goods (household appliances and electronics for home and car);
- Motor vehicles - New & Used; Diesel and Petrol Fuels and Oils; Tyre Balancing, Wheel Alignments and some Tyres;
- Some Professional Services (dental, optical);
- Travel Services;
- Health Saver Card;
- Many, many other Products and Services.

See the WASIA website for further information on the role of the association and complete member benefits. <http://www.wasca.asn.au/>

## ASHEEP September Field Day Review

Fifty six people turned out for the 2017 September field day. Pasture gurus John Howieson & Brad Nutt from Murdoch and Ron Yates & Phil Nichols from DPIRD were in attendance. The day started at Jon Knox's Neridup property where we saw a good stand of Bartolo Bladder clover sown April 2017. Bartolo bladder clover will be preferentially grazed by sheep but requires heavy soil types with adequate P levels to thrive. Bladder clover will struggle on the sandy soils. Cape weed is an on-going issue in Bartolo pastures and to tackle it Brad suggested 2 years of cereal crop before going back into pasture. During the pasture phase Broadstrike is more effective if followed by a graze as the chemical sweetens broadleaf weeds for sheep. If you want to see the effectiveness of any treatment, it is always a good idea to leave a strip untreated (i.e. leave a strip out of crop in year following pasture phase to test Bartolo regeneration, leave a strip unsprayed with Broadstrike to test effectiveness on capeweed).

Next stop was Alistair McIntyre's property also in Neridup. Here we saw Santorini Serradella and Dinninup Clover. The importance of controlling capeweed was highlighted here as we saw serradella thriving due to good weed control at the March knockdown. If you want a pure stand of Serradella a method to consider is to nuke the first germination of serradella & broadleaf weeds with Spinnaker. The serradella will regenerate as the hard seed bank breaks down. This will only work for the hard-seeded varieties.

We also saw a Dinninup Clover pasture paddock seeded in the 1960's. Phil Nichols reminded us of the sheep health risks associated with some older varieties of clover (see ASHEEP's August 2017 newsletter for more information on this). Alistair has had problems with Red Clover Syndrome in one paddock of Dinninup, but not in the neighbouring paddock and he wanted to know why. Phil said that a wide range of stressors can cause clover to go red, a good starting place to determine the cause is to check your pH is right for the variety of clover growing, make sure the right inoculant strain has been recently incorporated (MALDI ID test will tell you if the right strain is in the nodules of your legumes) and to take care with chemical use and plant back periods.

From here the group headed to Rancho East in Condingup with Matt Ryan. We saw a Ryegrass variety trial established by Dan Bell from Landmark, a well presented and interesting site as is the norm for Landmark trails.



*From L-R Brad Nutt from Murdoch, Wayne Lewis (the winner of the 'Show us your Nods' competition) from Gibson and John Howieson from Murdoch.*

The last stop of the day was at Alan Hoggart's property in Condingup where ASHEEP's Legumes in Kikuyu trial is located. This is an MLA funded project that is finishing up this year. ASHEEP's project officer Anita Chalmer is in the process of completing the final report which will appear in a future newsletter. Alan's property is predominately deep white sand with permanent Kikuyu pasture. Alan had dug a soil pit which showed the active growing zone for Kikuyu was isolated to the top 10 cm which could be why legumes find it difficult to thrive in these paddocks.

The day finished with the presentation of the 'Show us Your Nods' award. Judges Brad Nutt, John Howieson and Ron Yates had assessed legume plants from various farmers on the size and quality of their nodules. The first prize went to Wayne Lewis (AKA the Nod King) with Simon Fowler and Ian McKenzie a close 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>. The prizes were generously donated by EOPP. Thankyou to the ladies from the Condingup P & C for a delicious dinner and to Wayne Lewis and Landmark for providing the refreshments.



*The group in Serradella at Alistair McIntyre's property.*

## Sponsor Update– Elanco

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Length of protection	Up to 29 weeks <sup>1</sup>	18–24 weeks <sup>1</sup>	Up to 11 weeks <sup>1</sup>
Prevents body strike	✓	✓	✓
Prevents breech strike	✓	✓	✓
Prevents poll strike	✓	✓	✓
Protects marking wounds	✓	✓	✓
Protects mulesing wounds	✓	✓	✗
Application timing	From 4 weeks after shearing	Any wool length	From 3 weeks after shearing
Wool Withholding Period	3 months	3 months	1 month
Meat Withholding Period	14 days	28 days	7 days
ESI	9 weeks (63 days)	60 days (long wool) 120 days (6 weeks wool or less)	21 days
Storage life	2 years	5 years	3 years

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## **MerinoLink DNA Stimulation Project** ***Call for Expressions of Interest***



### **What is your ewe flock's genetic potential?**

#### ***And how does it compare to others in the Esperance region?***

Using genomics you can assess the genetic potential of your flock for various production traits. This information can be used to make better ram selections and management decisions. ASHEEP has partnered with MerinoLink to deliver the 'DNA Stimulation Project' which aims to double genetic gain for project-participating merino producers by 2022.

The purpose of the MerinoLink DNA Stimulation project is to work with a group of seed stock and commercial breeders to increase their use of genetic and genomic tools currently available. ASHEEP are involved as a sub-project to increase the knowledge of commercial merino breeders and seed stock producers about the genetic qualities of their flock and offer an opportunity to benchmark against others in the region.

***"If you don't know what you have, you don't know what you can achieve"***

### **How are Esperance Merino Producers involved?**

A cross section of 30 commercial flocks from the Esperance region will be benchmarked by using a genomic Flock Profile. The Flock Profile involves taking a DNA sample from 20 randomly drafted 2017 drop ewe lamb/weaners. The sample will be submitted to the Sheep CRC via MerinoLink for genomic analysis. An ASHEEP staff member will be able to come and assist with the sampling process.

Each participant is expected to attend a workshop to work through the results and options for ram purchases in 2018. A repeat Flock Profile will be conducted on the participating flocks in 4 years (2021) to compare with the initial results and assess progress.

A report will be provided showing each participant and where they sit within the group. Overall you will be armed with additional information to assist you to make better ram selection and breeding decisions. We are calling for expressions of interest from Merino Producers in Esperance to be involved with this project.

**For information on costs and to get involved contact  
Emma Graham from ASHEEP on 0457 937 774 or  
eo@asheep.org.au**

## Price incentives needed to shift focus from volume to quality in Australia's red meat industry

**Australia's red meat industry needs to develop clear price incentives to encourage producers to focus on quality rather than volume, if it is to withstand intense competitive pressures from other global producers and proteins, according to a recently-released industry report.**



*By Angus Gidley-Baird*

*Senior Analyst*

*Animal Proteins*

**A change in focus for livestock marketing in Australia**, a report by agribusiness banking specialist Rabobank, says new pricing mechanisms are needed to close the gap between what is produced (driven by volume) and what consumers want (reliable high eating quality), in order to capture value growth in the red meat market.

Report author, Rabobank senior animal proteins analyst Angus Gidley-Baird says while Australia's reputation as a provider of high-quality meat is strong, the industry needs to remunerate producers to reflect eating quality in order to shore up that position and to avoid competing in the commodity trade market.

"For this shift to a quality-based system to occur, the marketing of livestock in Australia needs to be modified, with new technologies developed to measure the traits that deliver the quality that consumers demand."

### Driving change from volume to quality

Mr Gidley-Baird says despite Australian livestock producers using a range of marketing options to sell their cattle and sheep, the key factor dictating the return from the animal is its weight.

"Currently 16 per cent of cattle and 20 per cent of sheep procured by abattoirs are purchased through the saleyards, with producers paid per beast or by weight," he says. "The remainder are brought through direct consignment, either through feedlots or from producers."

While abattoirs use a 'grid' pricing mechanism – which has some parameters around age, weight and body conformation – it is only loosely attributed to eating quality, he says.

"Some abattoirs provide a premium for Meat Standards Australia (MSA)-graded meat, which measures attributes such as carcase weight, rib fat and marble score, but the

premium is often a single market rate for achieving MSA grading and doesn't reflect the incremental improvements in quality along the MSA index," he says.

### Price-setting mechanism

The report says for the red meat industry to move to a more quality-based marketing approach, it will need to develop a more complex price mechanism to reward certain practices that consumers are willing to pay for.

Mr Gidley-Baird cites the US's formula-based system as an example of a pricing mechanism which reflects quality attributes and has supported a dramatic improvement in meat quality.

"The system in the US was instigated by producers (feedlotter) who felt they were not getting rewarded for the improved quality they were producing," he says. "The formula-based system uses a benchmark price (generally the weekly cash price) which is then adjusted depending on yield and carcase quality," he says.

While US formula-based pricing shares aspects with Australia's current grid system, Mr Gidley-Baird says, the US system has five grades for quality based on marbling, compared with those captured in Australia's standard grid – weight, age, conformation and fat depth – which are not clearly aligned to quality.

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**Rabobank**



15 December 2017

Well, it's all over – 2017 done and dusted and all take a bow. What a year to be a Merino wool grower!

The EMI closed at a new record high of 1760c and the WMI to a record of 1816c! This year the EMI has gone up 405c, which is a 30% increase, and annual wool revenue for Australia was \$3 billion, so what a contribution you all are making to assist our economy. Of course, this is only half the record year of 1987-88, when wool eclipsed all other commodities and earned Australia more than \$6 billion, however the clip was more than twice what it is now.

It was an interesting week, as many exporters bought wool, but in fact not many were offering large volumes as the week went on. Many were completing contracts for December delivery and the large mills, which buy directly from the auction, were getting some quantity to tie them over for the three week recess we have now entered.

The pleasing thing is that we should start 2018 with the same vigour, as demand is strong for all Merino sectors and even in Italy, they have finally come around to thinking that this boom is here to stay, albeit a bit late to take advantage of. Our man on the ground in Italy said many processors in Prato are screaming for offers and many just don't know what to do. They left their run late and are now paying 25% more than they would have earlier in the year.



We are now in the period where next season's fashion is being priced on the new price levels and this is where things could become a little unstuck. Most fabric manufacturers are saying they will have to put less wool in garments as the end user (the consumer) will not appreciate a huge increase in items. They say that most consumers can tolerate some increases, but for them to price new season garments using the prices of today, the increases would just be too much.

When a market is booming, one should not make any wild predictions about where it is going, but to finish the year off we will say that we feel we are running along the peak, with some upside still there. Maybe the technical

analysts are correct when they say that \$2–3/kg lifts are still possible over the next 6–12 months. However, we must take into account consumer trends and most punters want a better garment for a cheaper price, so we are fighting our client base at the end of the day and this could be the stumbling block.

So sit back and enjoy the festive season. You all deserve a well-earned break and maybe splash out and buy something special with those extra dollars you have collected from growing MERINO!

Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Travel safe!

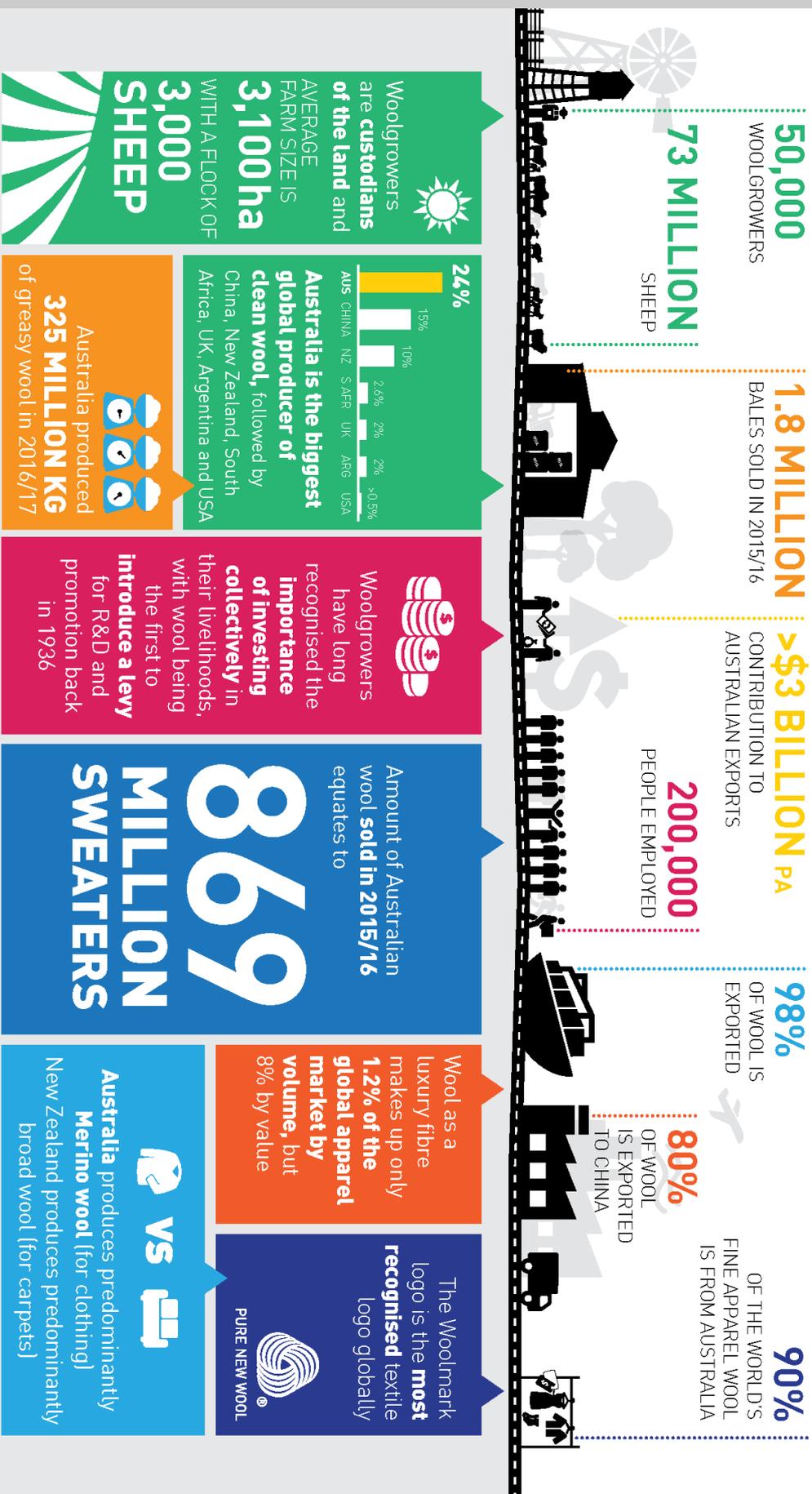
**Good luck.**

**MARKET INFORMATION FOR FORWARD THINKING GROWERS BY EXPERT ANALYST WILLIAM DAVIDSON**

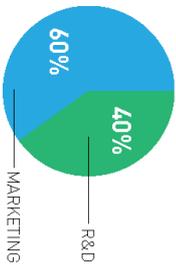


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# THE AUSTRALIAN WOOL SUPPLY CHAIN



AWI: INVESTING IN R&D AND MARKETING TO MAKE WOOLGROWERS MORE PROFITABLE



**60:40**

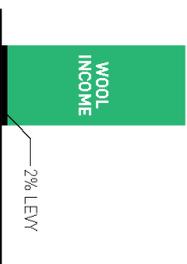
AWI invests on a 60:40 split between **Marketing and R&D**



Growers can determine the future of AWI at **WoolPoll** every 3 years



\$59 million invested in animal welfare, including **\$34m on flystrike** since 2005



Growers pay **AWI 2% of their income** from wool to invest in Marketing and R&D



AWI Board is directly elected by **woolgrowers**



4,266 shearers and wool handlers trained in 2015/16. **\$12.2 million** invested in shearing since 2013



**Most of AWI's income comes from woolgrowers**, with 17% from the federal government, and 10% from the sale of Woolmark licenses

**Sports and outdoor fabric development** has seen manufacturing volume **grow 10%** year on year and generated 1 million kg of demand



On average, the return on investment for growers is **\$2.90 for every \$1** spent by AWI



AWI activities are driven by **growers' priorities** identified through ongoing consultation

IN 2016-17  
AWI INVESTED  
**\$71 MILLION**  
IN 398 PROJECTS  
WITH 140 PARTNERS



AWI has **157 staff** in **13 offices** worldwide

140 wild dog control groups see on average a **\$10,700 pa** benefit per flock



INTERNATIONAL WOOLMARK PRIZE

The **International Woolmark Prize** has an **alumni of 384 designers** worldwide.



NATIONAL MERINO CHALLENGE

The National Merino Challenge has encouraged **473 next generation growers**



Lifetime Ewe Management **increases weaning rates by 10%** and reduces ewe mortality by 30%



## Esperance – Expressions of Interest Australian Woolclasser & Owner Woolclasser

*AHC41316 – Certificate IV in Wool Classing*

*AHC33016 – Certificate III in Wool Clip Preparation*



**AHC41316 – Certificate IV in Wool Classing** – This qualification is a specialist wool classing qualification for wool classers and enables you to apply for registration with AWEX as a professional Australian Woolclasser.

**Cost:** \*\*\$4454.80

**AHC33016 – Certificate III in Wool Clip Preparation** – This qualification will enable you to apply for registration with AWEX as an Owner Woolclasser. An Owner Classer is registered only to class wool on farm from sheep that: they own or part own or of which they are the manager; or, their mother and/or father owns or part owns, provided that the Owner Classer works on the property; or, their son and/or daughter owns or part owns, provided that the Owner Classer works on the property.

**Cost:** \*\*\$4117.60

\*\* Approximate cost for 2018 - prices subject to change

\*\* Concession price available with valid concession card

**Dates:** February / March 2018\*\*\*

\*\*\*delivery in Esperance is subject to minimum number of 10 participants

**Contact:** Narrogin campus on 9881 9000 for further information or to register your interest.

 Narrogin campus  
59 Fortune Street

 9881 9000  
Freecall 1800 621 445

 narrogin@srtafe.wa.edu.au  
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