

Organic wool's jump start

By MARIUS CUMING

A NEW line of jumpers made from organic Australian Merino wool will hit the shelves of UK retailer Marks and Spencer within weeks.

Marks and Spencer expects to put about 11,000 naturally organic wool men's "sweaters" in stores next month to retail for just under 30 pounds (about \$470).

The wool is being supplied to the retailer and value chain partner Ciel Textiles by The Merino Company (TMC), which expects to supply about 140 tonnes of 19.5 micron organic wool for the range in the next year.

TMC is also supplying point-of-sale marketing material that will showcase Australian organic woolgrowers and their properties.

In addition garment traceability will allow customers to see exactly where the wool in their jumper came from.

TMC sees the new range as just one example of how consumer concern for the future and the environment is being manifested in market niches.

TMC is now testing the water, not only for the demand for organic wool, but also for other brands, including "ZeroCO₂ carbon neutral" wool, "Generation W ethically produced" wool and even "Antipodes heritage" wool, which has been produced by one family from a particular area for six generations.

One producer thrilled about the new Marks and Spencer line is former Australian Wool Corporation chairman and Queensland wool-grower Mac Drysdale.

"To have my organic wool marketed directly to a retailer such as Marks and Spencer, with branding that could have an individual property name on the swing tag, is an unbelievable achievement and I applaud it," Mr Drysdale said.

"To achieve a more consistent premium, combined with the knowledge that TMC is as



committed to maintaining the organic status of my wool, as I have been, is very satisfying."

For Mr Drysdale, who produces organic lamb and wool at his Augathella property, Perola Park, the organic movement is more than a market niche – it is a philosophy based on his reduced reliance on chemicals in a very dry climate.

He hopes to receive a 25 per cent premium for selling his wool as organic.

The payments are made in two parts. Firstly Mr Drysdale is paid the full spot value of his wool straight away.

Secondly, he receives an additional premium once the full value of the TMC organic wool pool has been finalised. The final premium will be paid after the end of the pool's

financial year – by September 30, 2008, at the very latest.

"I am really delighted with the system because traceability is the key here as it maintains the credibility and producers like me get a kick out of knowing exactly where my wool is going and that may well mean right through to retail," Mr Drysdale said.

"We hope TMC can take the wool as far down the processing chain as possible."

Mr Drysdale has been an organic producer for many years and sells organic lamb for up to \$120 a head.

While a very good financial result he would be happy to sell his 19 micron wool for \$40 to \$50 per ewe fleece and hopes to achieve a \$7 premium through selling in this way.

■ The Merino Company's marketing manager Mark Suttie is helping the company test the water for lines of wool produced and marketed to tap into consumer demand for a product that is organic, sustainable and ethically produced.

In brief

Seam-free Merino hits the US

A NEW range of seamless Merino sport and body garments are destined for the US. The high tech range, to be released in US stores this month, is the result of collaboration between Australian Wool Innovation and one of Europe's most prominent makers of seamless apparel products. Memteks supplies quality, innovative seamless intimate apparel, active wear, swim wear, maternity wear and yoga wear; and is regarded as one of the leading research and development groups in the seamless industry. Based in Turkey with US operations, Memteks developed the range of seamless Merino wool bodywear products using the latest computerised seamless knitting machines and computer assisted design (CAD) systems. An AWI spokesman said sports apparel had been revolutionised by the introduction of seamless garments which provide comfort while dramatically reducing production costs. With regular garment manufacture a garment needed to be cut out and assembled. However, new machines were now creating garments from a single line of thread, in one continuous piece.

COOPWORTH



- Self-replacing maternal breed
- Excellent fertility, ease of lambing and superior mothering ability
- High milk production
- Guarantee of genetic gain
- Tough sheep and very tolerant to foot problems and internal parasites
- A valuable wether lamb carcase
- All registered breeders record on Lambplan

Coopworth Society Secretary
Ph (03) 5571 1797
Fax (03) 5571 1142
<http://www.coopworth.org.au>



"If it's a problem that's always going to happen you should try to prevent it."

CLiK®

SPRAY-ON

Treat 'em and forget 'em.



HOWARD TEMPLETON
"Carinya"
Coleraine VIC

"CLiK is the most effective product that we've used. It's as good as its maker's claims - CLiK gives us a protection that no other product gives us. Once they've been CLiKed we know we don't have to touch them again. We always try to prevent rather than treat and CLiK fits in perfectly with our management program."

CLiK® gives you season long protection from blowfly strike in one spray-on application.

 **NOVARTIS**
ANIMAL HEALTH

CLiK® contains dicyclanil.
For full product details contact NOVARTIS CUSTOMER ADVISORY LINE on 1800 633 768 TOLL FREE between 9.30am and 5.30pm E.S.T. Monday to Friday. Novartis Animal Health Australasia Pty Limited, ACN 076 745 198, 54 Waterloo Road, North Ryde NSW 2113 © Registered trademark of Novartis AG, Basel, Switzerland