

WOOL

Rain washing out a smaller clip

THE Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee says Australia's premium fibre continues to be in short supply because of poor rainfall across the southeast of the continent and lower than expected fleece weights.

The committee also expects that supply will not rebound in 2009-10.

It revised forecast for Australian shorn wool production this season is 355 million kilos greasy, 15mkg greasy lower than its forecast in December and 10.5 per cent lower than in 2007-08.

Committee chairman Russell Pattinson said the very dry conditions throughout the past three months in the southeast have been the main reason for the downward revision.

He said the committee anticipated this possibility in December.

AT A GLANCE

- State production forecasts
- NSW - 129 mkg (down compared with 2007-08 by 6pc)
 - WA - 82 mkg (down 11pc)
 - Victoria - 72 mkg (down 11pc)
 - South Australia - 46 mkg (down 21pc)
 - Queensland - 18 mkg (down 6pc)
 - Tasmania - 8.5 mkg (down 12pc)

Updated indicators, including AWTA wool test results, AWEX brand analysis, ABS statistics on sheep numbers, slaughterings and live sheep exports, all point to a further reduction in supply for this season.

"Even though there has been good rain in northern Australia and in Western Australia, fleece weights there have not been as

good as expected," Mr Pattinson said. "The significant shift in the structure of the flock, with a greater proportion of ewes and lambs and a much smaller proportion of wethers, has meant that even in states where rainfall and seasonal conditions have been reasonable, fleece weights have remained below historical levels.

"Another contributing factor identified by the state committees was the reduced use of fertiliser on pastures due to its significant price increase, which has reduced carrying capacity."

The committee also released its first forecast for the 2009-10 season and predicted that shorn wool production in 2009-10 will fall by around 6pc to 335mkg greasy.

"The committee expects sheep numbers to be lower at the start of the 2009, 2010

season, even with a normal autumn break and reasonable rainfall across wool producing regions of Australia," Mr Pattinson said.

To assist it with its forecast for 2009-10, the committee drew on a survey of more than 1300 woolgrowers taken at random from across Australia in February, supervised by the WA Agriculture Department and funded by Australian Wool Innovation.

"The recent softer wool prices in comparison to continued good prices for sheepmeat and lamb are causing growers to consider their options, with a further move towards the use of terminal sires for prime lamb production," Mr Pattinson said.

"However, from a positive perspective, Australian farmers are largely remaining with sheep and Merino ewes as the base of their operations."

Italians discover Aussie wool origins

LUCA Bellandi, the man behind Italy's biggest woollen manufacturing companies, Bellandi, knows about beautiful fabrics.

But while he can intricately outline the cloth specifications needed for a high-end woollen suit and stylish overcoat, where his treasured textile originated from has been little more than a made up image in the back of his mind.

That was until recently when he and his father Paolo Bellandi travelled to Australia and saw first hand the workings of a Merino sheep property.

"To see the flocks, to experience the live shearing and last but not least, talk to those who stand out on the side of the pond, quite literally, from us, but make our business from the very start, it was

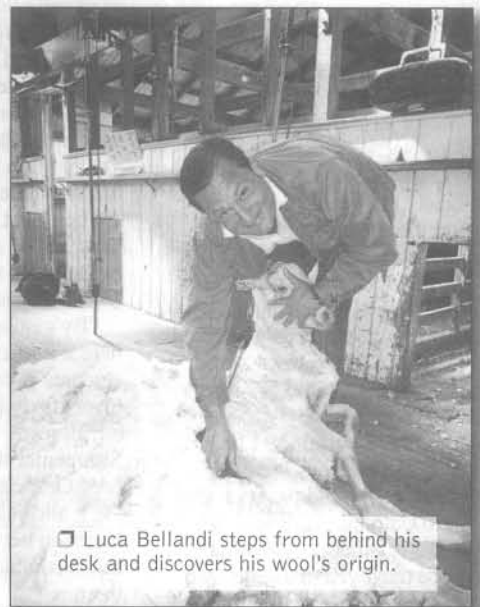
particularly fascinating," Mr Bellandi said.

He was hosted during his visit by vertically integrated wool company, The Merino Company (TMC), and said that the experience of visiting Clive and Anna Jamiesons' Stony Point, Darlington, property was a truly an "impressive" experience.

He and his father saw the origin of the wool which they have used to structure one of Italy's biggest weaving and spinning companies' in Prato, Italy.

They have made making fabrics for women's coats and jackets for brands such as H&M and Zara, while producing the exclusive Duemilagori fabric.

The visit could be the catalyst for cementing a direct supply relationship between Bellandi and TMC.



□ Luca Bellandi steps from behind his desk and discovers his wool's origin.



Premiers in Wool

Ph: (08) 9494 2967 ~ Rob Thorn: 0438 364 920 ~ Andrew Basire: 0417 950 914

www.spearwoodwools.com.au • admin@spearwoodwools.com.au

1275911