



AgForce Queensland Farmers Limited

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24 March 2021

Mr Mark Grave
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Wool Exchange Ltd
PO Box 651
NORTH RYDE NSW 1670
email: mgrave@awex.com.au

Dear Mark,

RE: 2021 Review of the National Wool Declaration (NWD)

AgForce is a peak organisation representing Queensland's cane, cattle, grain, and sheep and wool producers. The cane, beef, grain, sheep and wool industries in Queensland generated around \$7.3 billion in on-farm value of production in 2018-19. AgForce's purpose is to advance sustainable agribusiness and strives to ensure the long-term growth, viability, competitiveness and profitability of these industries. Almost 5,400 farmers, individuals and businesses provide support to AgForce through membership. Queensland producers provide high-quality food and fibre to Australian and overseas consumers, and contribute significantly to the social fabric of regional, rural and remote communities.

The AgForce Sheep & Wool Board (the Board) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment into the 2021 review of the National Wool Declaration, acknowledging AWEX's previous March 2020 commitment to further review the NWD with respect to mulesing status, with particular focus on the identification of wool from sheep treated with liquid nitrogen (freeze branding). The Board also appreciates AWEX's wishes that comment be only made to new or changed issues.

With respect to the use of freeze branding for alternative mulesing purposes, the Board do not believe there to have been adequate and thorough peer-reviewed research trailed since March 2020 to allow any consideration to including freeze branding within the NWD.

Changes to the NWD, relating to freeze branding, should not occur until all research and facts are known to all stakeholders.

The Board takes this opportunity to highlight to AWEX once again that woolgrower feedback suggests that much confusion still exists around the CM status, particularly with Property Status, which is leading to inaccurate completion of woolclasser reports.

The Board's opinions raised in letters to the 2019/2020 NWD review remain the same, these being:

- Remove Property Status section and identify individual Mob Status only, being either NM, AA or M; and
- Remove reference to Ceased Mulesing (CM) (page 2).

In addition (new), the Board also considers that the Property Status section could be replaced with a section that allows woolgrowers to voluntarily categorise any property certification under an accepted accreditation scheme, for example SustainaWool, Authentico Integrity Scheme or Responsible Wool Standard etc., hence simplifying the line of questioning for the woolgrower/woolclasser and providing additional confidence to wool buyers; and further helps to tell the positive story to the end consumer on the great lengths the woolgrower has gone to, to produce high quality wool whilst adhering to regulated animal welfare standards and environmental care and stewardship.

There remains a clear need for clarity on how to accurately complete the NWD, which can be achieved with improved communication to woolgrowers and woolclassers, in conjunction with wool brokers; and training, both in-shed and formally through completion of woolclasser qualifications.

The AgForce Sheep & Wool Board is very supportive of the NWD and its use by Australian woolgrowers. It is an important tool for the industry as it provides supply-chain partners with an understanding of the quality wools actually being produced by Australian woolgrowers; and therefore, the Board believes that the whole of industry should take greater ownership of the NWD and the value it represents. Industry needs to continue discussions on how best to improve uptake and use of the NWD.

Should you wish to discuss these matters further, do not hesitate to contact me on 0427 585 939 or alternatively, AgForce Sheep & Wool Policy Director Michael Allpass on 0427 250 045 or email allpassm@agforceqld.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Mike Pratt
President,
AgForce Sheep & Wool Board

Cc: WoolProducers Australia