

17 February 2023

AWI Shearing Update

Australian Wool Innovation's Chairman Jock Laurie says extensive work continues to tackle the challenge around shearing.

"Shearing is the number one issue facing many growers and AWI is doubling down on efforts to tackle the problem.

We are doing this through helping roll out modular race delivery systems, increasing training and retention programs for shearers, investigating robotics and working on improving biological defleecing.

The beauty of the modular race delivery system is taking out some of shearing's most physically demanding task - the catch and drag.

As sheep have got bigger that is additional stress on the shearer's body, the modular system removes that.

AWI is working with six engineering companies to take the AWI led design and make them commercially available to growers around Australia.

- Haynes Engineering, Naracoorte SA
- Proway Livestock Equipment, Bomen, NSW
- Stockpro, Condobolin, NSW
- Kyabram Steel, Kyabram, VIC
- Commander AG-Quip, Albany, WA
- RW Engineering, Darkan, WA

Interested growers are either looking to retrofit or construct a new shed incorporating the system to reduce costs in upgrading, utilising or replacing older infrastructure".

AWI applied for and received a grant of \$45,000 from the WA Government to further develop the Race Delivery System with a manufacturer in Western Australia. With matching funding from AWI, this will bring the total investment to \$90,000 in 2023. The funding is now being used to engage with RW Engineering and developments are underway to innovate the design and uptake of the Race Delivery System.

September 2022 - Dennis Gleeson, Colligen Creek Station, Wakool NSW

- Due to the size of their sheep, shearers at Colligen Creek expressed their apprehension to continually shear in a conventional shed. AWI loaned Dennis 5 stands (4x manual, 1x Pneumatic) to complete his shearing.
- Approx. 10,000 ewes were shorn in the system, with some slight modifications to the existing shed to provide access into the units.
- Contractor sentiment was high, and they expressed without the units it would not be feasible to continue shearing excessively sized sheep of due to the increased risk of injury.
- Dennis has now engaged with a contractor to build the system into the existing shed, removing the catching pens.



October 2022 - Jarrod King, Warralea Merino Stud, Gairdner WA

Facilitated by the AWI WA Engagement Officer, AWI held an on-farm 'innovation day' with approx. 60 growers in attendance to showcase how the Race Delivery System designs from AWI had been adapted into an existing shed, and the possibilities around the innovation of the current design. Jarrod has confirmed large interest from local growers.



November/December 2022 - Banyandah Pastoral Co, Riverina Districts NSW

Due to extensive flooding in Riverina areas in December 2022, many growers were unable to complete or continue shearing.

Ian, Camilla and Will Shippen, Banyandah Pastoral Co had half of their usual sheds operational at the time of flooding. AWI were contacted and organised 5 modules owned by AWI, and 2 more owned by Haynes Engineering available.

The Shippen's converted an existing hay shed into a 'shearing shed' by pouring a concrete slab, running power, adapting and building existing yards to complement the Race Delivery. The existing shed also allowed AWI to configure the modules into an 'L' shape, with a fabricator creating a corner to allow the sheep to flow.

They have since shorn approx. 15-20,000 sheep through the system and have confirmed their intention to purchase the modules from AWI and Haynes engineering as they now have a fully operational shed at a fraction of the cost of other designs.



February 2023 - Wool Harvesting Innovation Day, Jamestown SA

A Wool Harvesting Innovation Day is currently being planned in conjunction with PIRSA & SheepConnect SA for Friday 24th February at the Jamestown Showground.

National Wool Training Advisory Group (WoolTAG) meeting

Based on the highly successful WoolTAG initiatives in operation for a number of years in South Australia and Victoria, AWI have worked with key industry stakeholders to establish similar groups in New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

This week has seen representatives from these groups meet, along with other key national industry bodies including Australian Wool Exchange, AWI, National Council of Wool Selling Brokers, Shearing Contractors Association of Australia, WA Shearing Industry Association and Wool Producers Australia to establish a National WoolTAG.

While the group has a focus in wool harvesting training, other issues were discussed and actioned, including staff shortages at peak times, spiraling costs and Work Health & Safety.

The WoolTAG has appointed AWI Director Don MacDonald as its Chair, with an undertaking to formalise the process and work collaboratively on national issues such as VISA options to access

overseas workers, shearing shed safety and contractor training support.

Mr MacDonald says co-operation and collaboration is the key, “it is very positive to get a national group that represents all elements of the wool harvesting industry together and whilst we all agree that there are some very difficult issues confronting the industry, working together offers an opportunity to deliver better outcome”.

AWI Shearing Shed Design & Safety Resources

AWI has an extensive range of Shearing Shed Design and Safety resources available for woolgrowers available both online at www.wool.com/sheddesign or to order via the AWI Helpline 1800 070 099.

- Shearing shed design considerations guide: This guide aims to outline some of the considerations that can be made when designing new or retrofitted shearing sheds. The guide is broken down into five topic guides: In-shed pens, shearing board, wool room, general design and construction and equipment.
- ‘Arrow Park’ - Innovative New Shearing Shed Design: Information and engineering plans for this innovative shearing shed are available free online
- SafeSheds, The Shearing Shed Safety Program: A Best Practice guide and self-assessment resource which has been developed with input from right across the industry, to assist growers and contractors identify and rectify safety hazards and provides options to manage risks and conditions in the shearing shed.

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