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Revitalised scheme to set new benchmark for sustainable wool production assurance

A new integrity and sustainability program will boost Australia's position as a globally recognised supplier of sustainably and responsibly grown wool and set a new standard for wool production and sourcing.

Announced at the International Wool Textile Organisation Congress in Adelaide today, the [Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme](#) (AWSS) signals a new era for the integrity of sustainably certified Australian wool.

The Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme is managed by the Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX) and is an evolution of the former SustainaWOOL Integrity Scheme.

AWEX Chief Executive Officer Mark Grave said the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme is a fit-for-purpose integrity system that independently verifies sustainability practices from farm to fibre to meet market expectations.

“A review in 2023 highlighted the need to evolve the former SustainaWOOL program to meet the changing needs of the marketplace,” he said.

“In the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme, we have a robust program underpinned by innovative practices on-farm, which are informed by research, backed by industry, regulated by government and demanded by customers.

“The Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme is fully aligned to industry sustainability frameworks and commitments, including the Australian Sheep Sustainability Framework and the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework, and builds upon existing industry programs, leveraging growers' hard work through one accreditation to meet market requirements.”

The outcomes-focussed Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme Grower Standards will outline the performance criteria and evidence options wool growers can use to demonstrate their on-farm sustainability commitment and credentials. The Standards include four sustainability pillars; caring for the environment, sheep, people and industry as well as clip preparation and integrity requirements.

The Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme has two pathways of accreditation – SustainaWOOL and ResponsiWOOL – reflecting the production diversity in Australia, and the differing sustainability expectations of the global market. They differ only in the accepted practices for flystrike control, all other program requirements are identical.

SustainaWOOL accreditation means wool is produced to the Standard of animal health and wellbeing practices for controlling flystrike that does not include mulesing.

ResponsiWOOL accreditation means wool is produced to the Standard of animal health and wellbeing practices for controlling flystrike that includes breech modification with appropriate pain relief.

An expert panel made up of qualified, respected and experienced subject matter experts has been appointed to provide guidance on standards and evidence for the Scheme.

“Certification through the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme will capture the extensive sustainability on-farm practices of wool producers in one place, in a way that suits the needs of buyers, processors and consumers Australian wool, and by a trusted partner in AWEX,” Mr Grave said.

“Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme accreditation will capture the wide range of sustainability practices to demonstrate the responsible stewardship of natural resources; health and wellbeing of sheep; care for people, customers and communities; and vitality and resilience of the industry, while upholding the highest quality standards and integrity for Australian wool.

“Maintaining market access is central to the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme. As regulations and market requirements change around the world, this fit-for-purpose Australian sustainability scheme will provide the evidence to meet those changes.

“Critically, the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme meets the needs of brands – credibly verifying the wool inputs they source, satisfying their sustainability and quality needs, and providing trusted traceability foundations to support reporting requirements through the use of WoolClip and eBale.”

The new program, including new standards and processes, will be in place from 1 July 2024.

Current SustainaWOOL Integrity Scheme Grower members will be contacted about the changes and the opportunity to transition to accreditation with the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme .

ENDS

For media interviews, contact:

Kathleen Allan
Program Manager Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme
kallan@awex.com.au
0466 932 035

For more information about the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme, [watch this video on YouTube](#).

About AWEX

Since 1993, AWEX has been the trusted business partner of the global wool supply chain. AWEX works behind the scenes delivering services that strengthen, inform and increase confidence in the quality and integrity of Australian wool.

AWEX's independence and expertise underpins the Australian Wool Sustainability Scheme (AWSS), providing unrivalled integrity the entire supply chain can rely on.