



# FASHION GIANT LEARNS ABOUT ANIMAL WELFARE

Hugh Attard and Dan Baker of 'Gostwyk' at Uralla hosted a visit by Alexandre Capelli and Cathelijne Klomp from LVMH to learn about animal welfare, environmental and sustainability issues.

**The head of sustainability from world leader in luxury LVMH – which owns high profile fashion brands including Louis Vuitton, Dior, Lora Piana and Givenchy – recently visited Australia to meet woolgrowers and learn more about practices to combat flystrike.**

**H**eadquartered in Paris, luxury goods group Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH) is a world leader in luxury.

Its fashion business includes many famous luxury brands including Louis Vuitton, Dior, Givenchy, Céline, Marc Jacobs, Fendi, and Lora Piana which is particularly well known for its use of wool. In addition to its fashion business, LVMH is also strong in perfumes and cosmetics, wine and spirits and watches and jewellery.

The company has 4,374 stores across the world and 145,000 employees. It had a revenue in 2017 equivalent to about A\$25 billion from its fashion business alone, a growth of more than 20% from 2016.

Global apparel businesses are increasingly focused on sustainability and traceability, covering a wide range of issues, such as the environment, labour conditions, animal welfare, product safety and life cycle assessment.

These companies are paying closer attention to the raw ingredients and processes required at every step of their supply chains, to make sure they are responsible and sustainable.

For wool, the spotlight largely focuses on animal welfare, but also the environment and life cycle analysis.

Each year, Peta Slack-Smith, AWI's General Manager of Corporate Affairs and Market Access leads a delegation (including a woolgrower and a researcher) to meet with key brands and retailers, retail associations, welfare groups and NGOs to discuss a range

of sustainability issues, with a strong focus on animal welfare.

In June, LVMH representatives travelled from France to visit a number of farms in the New England region of NSW to learn more about animal welfare and practices to combat flystrike ('Congi' T.A. Field Estates Pty Ltd, Woolbrook; 'Nerstane', Woolbrook; 'Gostwyk', Uralla; and CSIRO Armidale). Alexandre Capelli leads the sustainability work across all LVMH brands, and Cathelijne Klomp works across all LVMH brands advising on raw materials and their supply chains.

"Our target is to implement environmental and sustainable practices in our wool supply chain," said Alexandre. "But to do that, it's very important to be able to go in the field and understand what the practices on farms really are – and that's why we were here." "Consumers are asking more and more for traceability and transparency. They are asking more and more for animal welfare. It's definitely a trend that I don't think is going away."

Cathelijne said that, although they tried to come without any preconceptions, prior to the trip they had thought that mulesing might not be a technique beneficial to animal welfare. But their trip showed the issue is not as clear-cut as they had thought.

"After visiting the three farmers, who each had different practices, we now understand that the animals' best welfare is the objective of all the farmers, whether they are mulesing or not mulesing. They all have different justifications for their choice of practice,

and they are all valuable and good reasons. Taking care of the animals is something that we really saw during our visits," Cathelijne said.

Alexandre said he found the visit very insightful because they "saw that mulesing is not a black and white issue, there were a lot of grey shades", but he thinks that if woolgrowers do mules then they should do so with pain relief.

"We have more and more demanding requirements about animal welfare and, while I understand that mulesing might be useful in certain locations of Australia, it should be done with pain relief and anaesthesia."

Cathelijne noted that although learning about animal welfare was the main reason for their visit, LVMH tries to focus on all sustainability topics, including environmental and social issues, and the livelihood of farmers.

"We understand that there is another dimension that is highly important to us, which is the welfare not only of the animal but also of the farmer him or herself, especially given the situation at the moment in Australia with many areas affected by drought," Cathelijne added. **B**

## MORE INFORMATION

Hear more from Alexandre and Cathelijne in the second half of Episode 46 of The Yarn podcast, available at [www.wool.com/podcast](http://www.wool.com/podcast).

