April 2023

Australian Wool Production Forecast Report

Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee

Summary

- The Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee's (AWPFC) fourth forecast of Australian shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 328 Mkg greasy, a 1.3% increase on the 2021/22 estimated shorn wool production of 324 Mkg greasy.

- Most key wool producing regions experienced a favourable summer season, a reasonable autumn and are heading into winter with a sufficient supply of feed.

- The Australian sheep flock is forecast to stabilise at 71.5 million sheep shorn during 2022/23, down slightly (-0.1%) compared with 2021/22. New South Wales has the largest sheep flock (25.9 million sheep shorn), followed by Victoria (16.1 million), Western Australia (13.0 million), South Australia (11.1 million), Queensland (2.8 million) and Tasmania (2.6 million).

- Average cut per head is expected to increase to 4.59 kg greasy (up 2.2%) the result of historically high levels in most states and reflects the current run of three good seasons.

- Shorn wool production is forecast to increase in New South Wales (up 5.0% to 119.0 Mkg greasy), South Australia (up 1.1% to 56.7 Mkg greasy) and Queensland (up 27.0% to 11.3 Mkg greasy). Decreases in shorn wool production are forecast in Victoria (down 5.3% to 70.0 Mkg greasy), Western Australia (down 1.0% to 60.6 Mkg greasy) and Tasmania (down 1.0% to 10.2 Mkg greasy).

- AWTA wool test volumes to the end of March 2023 were up 2.5% on a year-on-year basis.

- AWTA key test data show small year-on-year changes in mean fibre diameter (down 0.1 microns to 20.8 microns), staple length (up 1.0 mm to 89.6mm), staple strength (down 0.1 N/ktex to 34.5 N/ktex) and yield (up 1.1% to 66.4%). There was no change in vegetable matter at 2.2%. Both staple length and yield are at their highest levels for more than 20 years.

FURTHER INFORMATION
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- Firsthand offered wool at auction to the end of March (week 40) was on par with the same time period in 2022, up 0.7%.
- The BOMs outlook for April to June 2023 is for below median rainfall for the majority of Australia, with the exception of the south-eastern region of Queensland, coastal New South Wales and southern Tasmania which are expected to have average median rainfall. April to June maximum temperatures are likely to be above average across much of the country excluding some regions of the central coats of New South Wales and central to north-eastern Victoria which are expecting more average maximum temperatures.
- Table 1 summarises Australian wool production and Table 2 shows the total shorn wool production by state. Table 3 provides a snapshot of AWTA key test data from July 2022 to March 2023.

Table 1: Summary of Australian wool production

	2021/22	2022/23 Fourth Forecast	*Change y-o-y (%)*	2023/24 First forecast	*Change y-o-y (%)*
Sheep numbers shorn *(million head)*	71.6	71.5	*-0.1%*	72.7	*1.7%*
Average cut per head *(greasy kg/head)*	4.52	4.59	*2.2%*	4.58	*0.0%*
Shorn wool production *(Mkg greasy)*	324	328	*1.3%*	332	*1.4%*

Table 2: Total shorn wool production by state (million kg greasy)

Season	NSW	VIC	WA	SA	TAS	QLD	AUSTRALIA
2020/21 *(Mkg greasy)*	99.2	70.7	56.5	51.5	9.4	7.2	294
2021/22 *(Mkg greasy)*	113.3	73.9	61.2	56.1	10.3	8.9	324
Change y-o-y (%)	*14.2%*	*4.5%*	*8.3%*	*8.9%*	*9.6%*	*23.6%*	*10.0%*
2022/23 Fourth Forecast *(Mkg greasy)*	119.0	70.0	60.6	56.7	10.2	11.3	328
Change y-o-y (%)	*5.0%*	*-5.3%*	*-1.0%*	*1.1%*	*-1.0%*	*27.0%*	*1.3%*

Table 3: AWTA key test data for 2021/22 and 2022/23 (July to March)

	2021/22	2022/23	*Change y-o-y*
Mean fibre diameter (µm)	20.9	20.8	- 0.1
Staple length (mm)	88.6	89.6	+ 1.0
Staple strength (N/ktex)	34.6	34.5	-0.1
Yield (%)	65.3	66.4	+ 1.1
Vegetable Matter (%)	2.2	2.2	0

- More detailed information on the shorn wool production by state in 2022/23 can be found in Table A1 in the Appendix to this report.
- The Appendix also provides historical data for Australia, including sheep shorn numbers, average cut per head and shorn wool production (Table A2) as well as the micron profile (Table A3) since 1991/92.

Detail on shorn wool production for the 2022/23 Forecast

Major data inputs

The AWPFC forecasts are based on detailed consideration by the state and national committees of data from various sources including:

- AWTA wool test data for the 2022/23 season from July 2022 to March 2023;
- AWEX auction statistics for the 2022/23 season from July 2022 to March 2023 (Week 40);
- ABS sheep and lamb turn-off for the 2022/23 season July to December 2022;
- Information on current and expected seasonal conditions from the Bureau of Meteorology; and
- Survey information from the MLA/AWI Sheep Producers Intentions Pulse Survey conducted in February 2023.

AWTA wool test data

Every month AWTA releases data on the volumes of greasy wool tested within the various diameter categories for the month and the season to date. Data for the 2022/23 season from 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023 are compared with the same months in previous seasons (2018/19 to 2021/22) in this report.

The month-by-month comparison of wool tested for the past five seasons (Figure 1) shows the monthly test volumes for December through to March being the highest for the past five seasons.

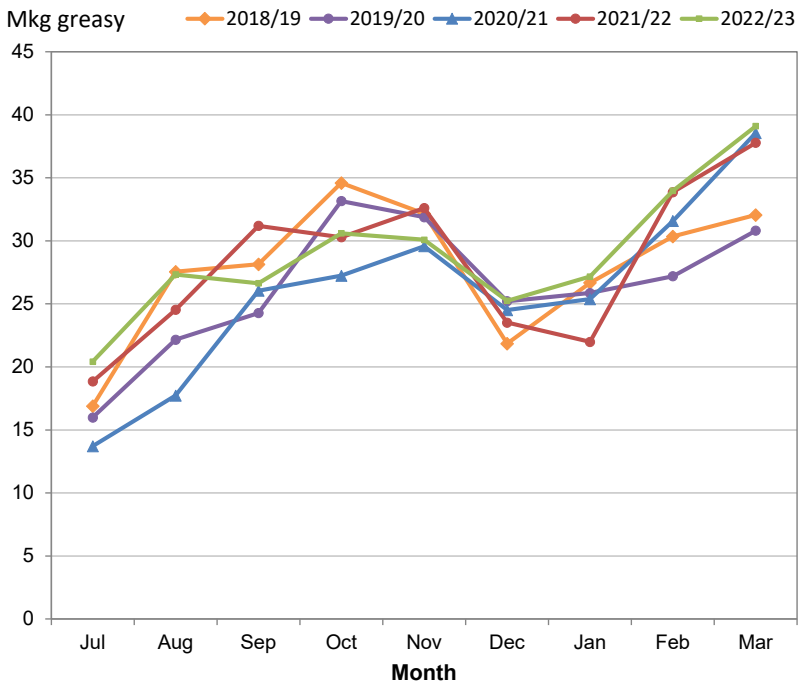


Figure 1: Comparison of monthly AWTA key test data volumes for July to March in the 2022/23 season with the same five months in previous seasons (2018/19 to 2021/22)

AWTA national wool test volumes data for July to March during the 2022/23 season (Table 4) shows:

- Volumes of wool tested were 2.5% higher than the 2021/22 season and were 3.8% higher the five-year average from 2017/18 to 2021/22.
- There were increases in the weight of wool tested in all the micron categories except the 20, 21 and 29 to 30 micron categories (down 3.1%, 5.9% and 10.1% respectively).
- The largest micron categories by volume are the 19-micron (51.66 Mkg greasy), 18-micron (43.43 Mkg greasy) and 20-micron (40.97 Mkg greasy) categories.
- The micron split (% of total weight of wool tested) from July 2022 to November 2023 was similar to that tested during the same nine months in 2021/22.

Table 4: AWTA key test data volumes (Mkg greasy) for July to March by micron range during the 2017/18 to 2022/23 seasons

Parameter	Season	<16.6um	17um	18um	19um	20um	21um	22um	23um	24um	25-26um	26-28um	29-30um	>30.5um	TOTAL
AWTA FY Total Mkg greasy	2017/18	8.15	22.63	41.74	51.46	45.78	29.78	16.63	8.22	5.14	11.62	17.35	11.65	8.99	279.12
	2018/19	14.58	27.84	45.36	47.93	33.73	17.44	9.82	6.22	4.91	13.26	14.83	7.50	6.98	250.40
	2019/20	12.22	25.09	44.09	48.12	34.13	16.52	7.80	4.88	4.47	11.71	14.02	6.85	6.74	236.65
	2020/21	8.60	20.17	40.49	47.81	37.50	21.96	10.52	5.20	3.83	8.48	13.11	8.59	8.18	234.43
	2021/22	9.43	22.59	42.00	51.32	42.30	23.02	9.16	5.95	4.69	10.94	15.00	8.41	9.48	254.27
	2022/23	11.22	25.16	43.43	51.66	40.97	21.66	9.64	6.04	5.05	12.95	15.76	7.56	9.51	260.59
Change y-o-y (%)	*2022/23*	*19.0%*	*11.4%*	*3.4%*	*0.7%*	*-3.1%*	*-5.9%*	*5.2%*	*1.5%*	*7.7%*	*18.4%*	*5.1%*	*-10.1%*	*0.3%*	*2.5%*
Micron Split (%)	2021/22	3.7%	8.9%	16.5%	20.2%	16.6%	9.1%	3.6%	2.3%	1.8%	4.3%	5.9%	3.3%	3.7%	
	2022/23	4.3%	9.7%	16.7%	19.8%	15.7%	8.3%	3.7%	2.3%	1.9%	5.0%	6.0%	2.9%	3.6%	
5 year av. 2017/18 to 2021/22	Mkg greasy	10.60	23.67	42.74	49.33	38.69	21.74	10.79	6.09	4.61	11.20	14.86	8.60	8.08	250.98
	% change 22/23 vs 5 yr av	*5.9%*	*6.3%*	*1.6%*	*4.7%*	*5.9%*	*-0.4%*	*-10.7%*	*-0.9%*	*9.6%*	*15.6%*	*6.0%*	*-12.1%*	*17.8%*	*3.8%*
	Micron split %	4.2%	9.4%	17.0%	19.7%	15.4%	8.7%	4.3%	2.4%	1.8%	4.5%	5.9%	3.4%	3.2%	

Note: The micron categories refer to a range of -0.4 and +0.5um around each number. For example, 18um is between 17.6 and 18.5 microns

- The micron profile of the Australian wool clip continues to have two distinct peaks, one centred around 19-micron wool (finer than 16.6 microns up to 23 microns) and a second centred around 27 - 28 microns (from 24 microns to 30.5 microns and broader) (Figure 2).

- The fibre diameter profile continues to reflect the favourable seasonal conditions since the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons. A historical comparison of the Australian wool clip's micron profile percentage share and average micron can be found in Appendix Table A3 (at the end of this report).

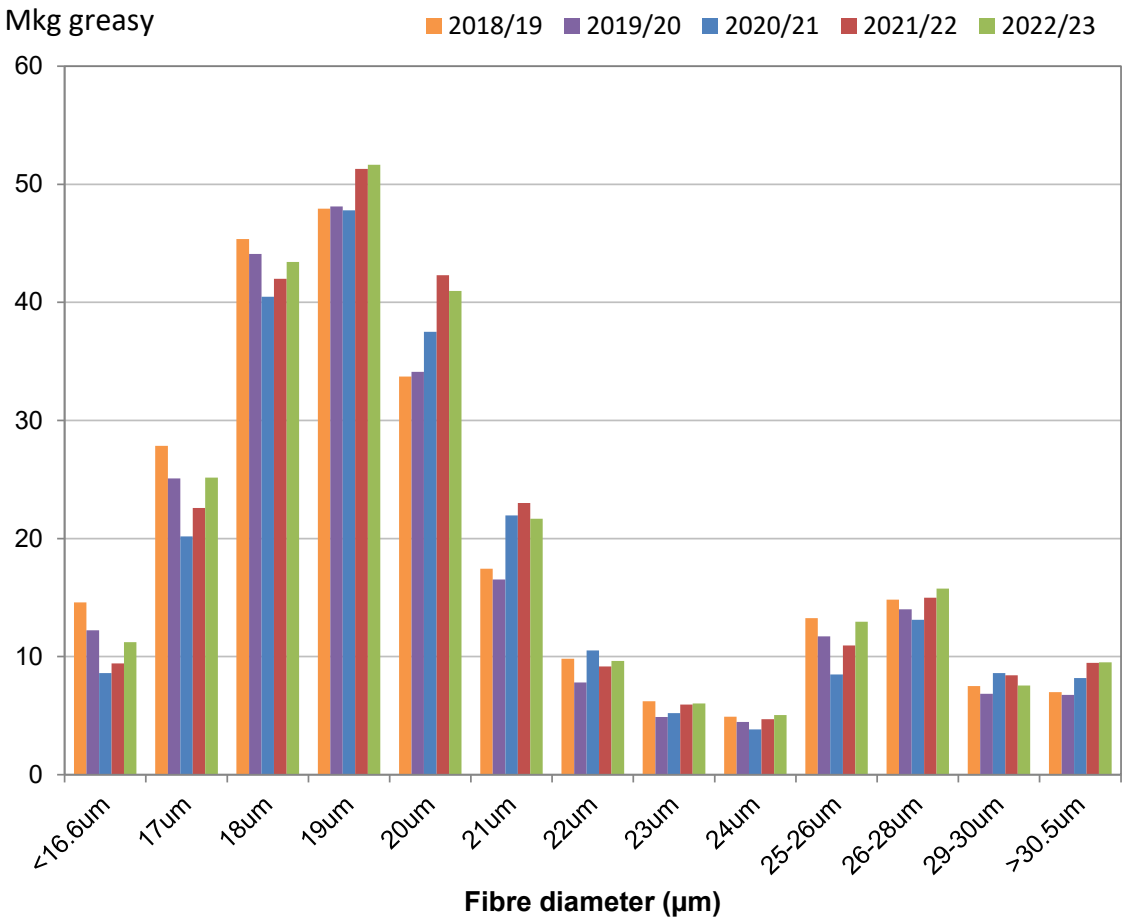


Figure 2: Australian fibre diameter profile – 2022/23 July to March compared with the same nine months during the 2018/19 to 2021/22 seasons

- Based on data by Wool Statistical Area (WSA), the volumes of wool tested between July to March during 2022/23 increased in Queensland (up 17.3%), New South Wales (up 6.8%) and Western Australia (up 0.4%) (Figure 3). Test volumes decreased in all other states. South Australia was down by 1.5% followed by Tasmania (down 1.0%) and Victoria (down 0.8%).

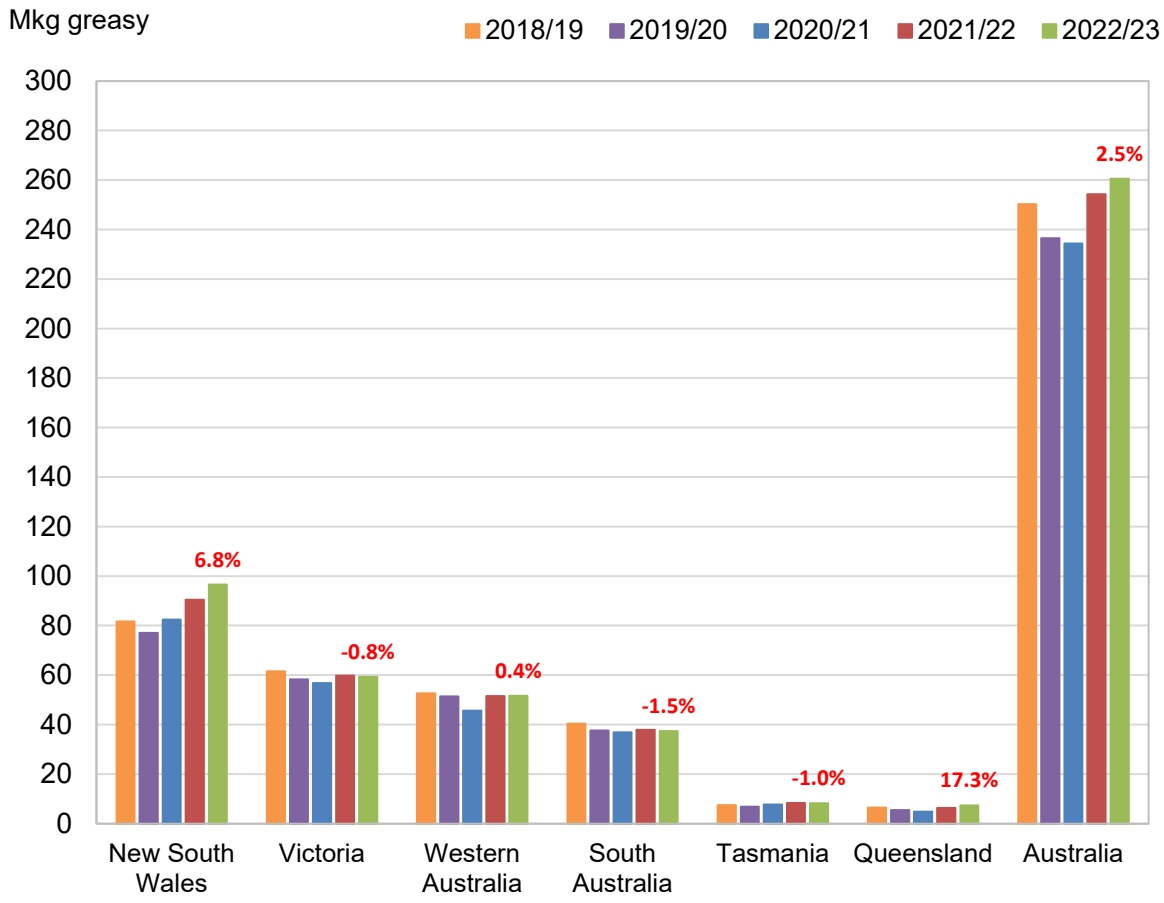


Figure 3: Volume of wool tested during July to March (AWTA key test data) compared with the same nine months in previous seasons (2018/19 to 2021/22). *The percentage change in red font is the 2022/23 season compared with the 2021/22 season*

- A graphical representation of the AWTA Key Test Data changes in mean fibre diameter (MFD), vegetable matter (VM), staple length (SL), yield (YIELD), staple strength (SS) and hauteur (TEAM 3 H) from the 2000/01 season to the 2022/23 season is shown in Figure 4.
- On each graph the red dot represents the mean value of each characteristic for the 2022/23 season while the blue dot represents the mean for the 2021/22 season.
- The values above the gauge on the left-hand side of each graph show the mean and standard deviation respectively for that characteristic from 2000/01 to 2022/23.
- Each coloured segment on the gauges represents one standard deviation with the mean at 12 o-clock (centre). For MFD, VM, SL, YIELD and SS, the mean and standard deviation are based on data from the 2000/01 season onwards. For TEAM 3 the mean and standard deviation are based on data from the 2006/07 season onwards.
- The red line on each gauge is the mean for the 2022/23 season (TY), while the blue line is the mean for the 2021/22 season (LY).
- On a national basis, compared with the 2022/23 season, mean fibre diameter was down 0.1 micron to 20.8 microns, staple length was up 1.0 mm to 89.6 mm and staple strength decreased by 0.1 N/ktex to 34.5 N/ktex (Figure 4a). Vegetable matter was unchanged at 2.2%, yield was up by 1.1% to 66.4% with predicted hauteur (TEAM 3) up by 0.4 mm to 72.3 mm (Figure 4b).

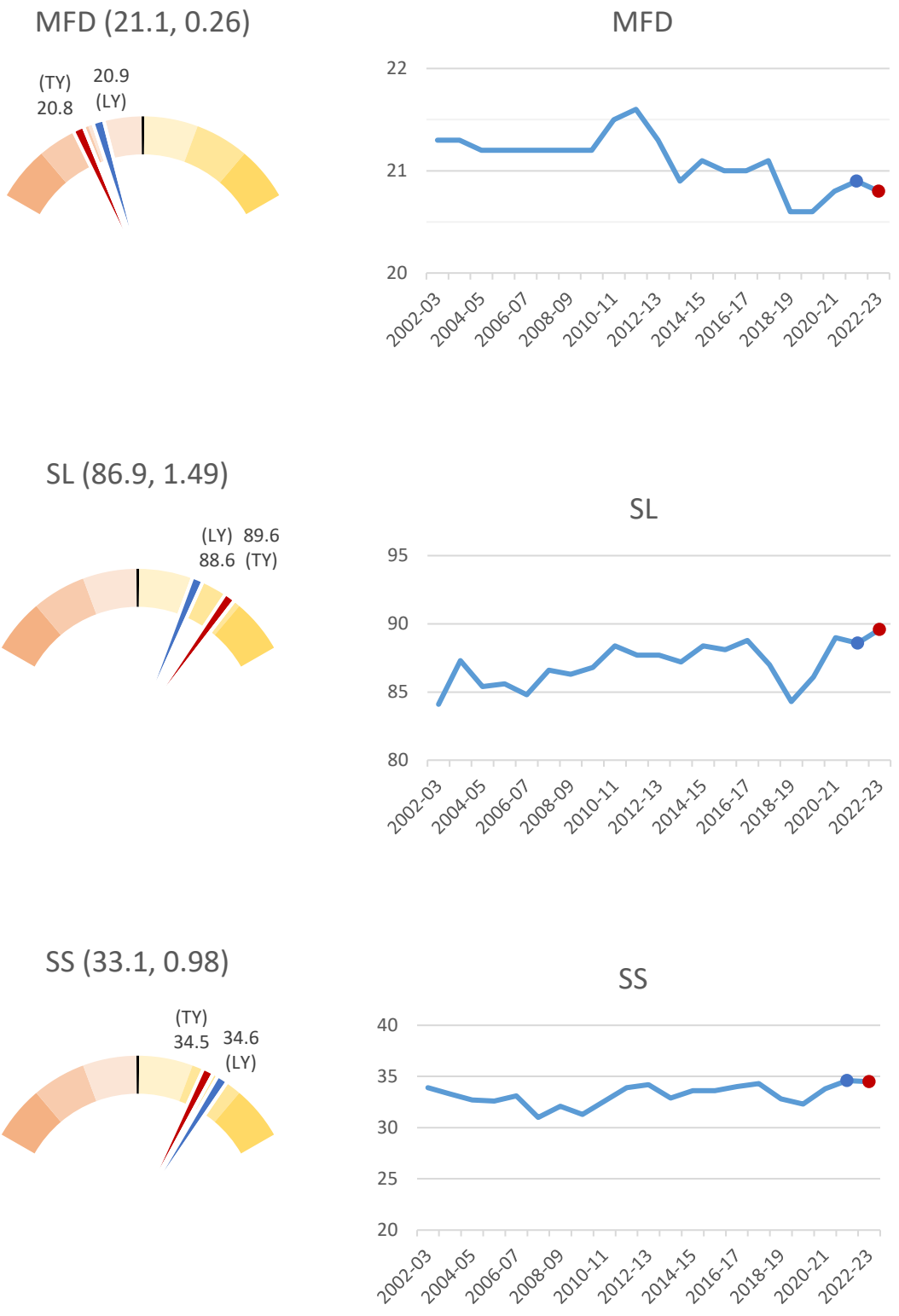
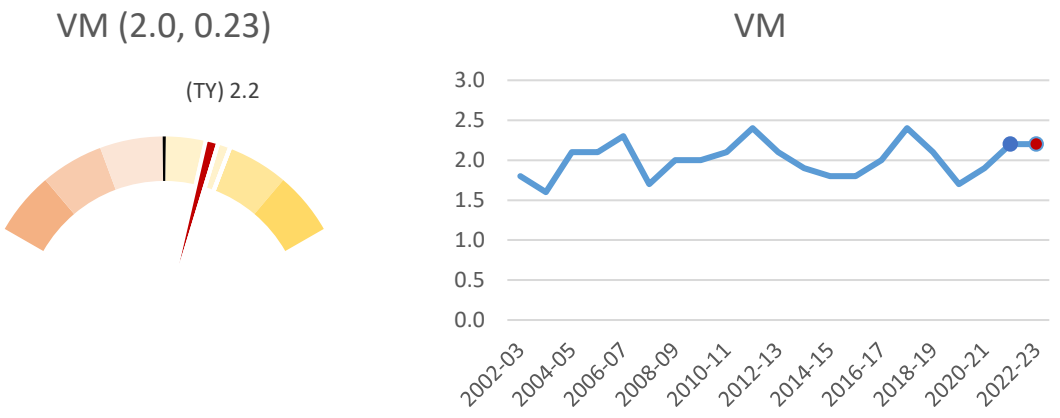
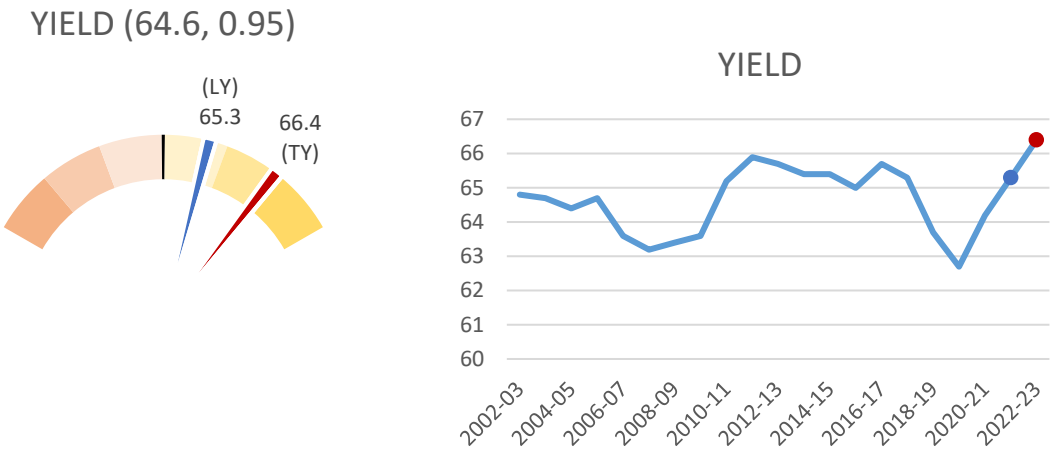


Figure 4a: AWTA Key Test Data (by sampling site) mean fibre diameter (MFD), staple length (SL) and staple strength (SS) for the Australian wool clip for July to March (2000/01 to 2022/23)





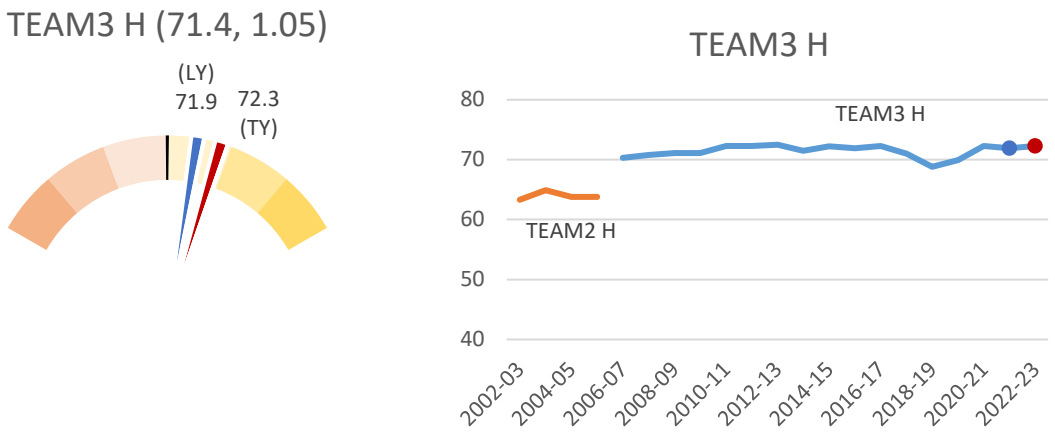


Figure 4b: AWTA Key Test Data (by sampling site) vegetable matter (VM), yield (YIELD) and TEAM 3 H (TEAM 3 H) for the Australian wool clip for July to March (2000/01 to 2022/23)

AWEX auction statistics

The AWEX auction statistics for the 2022/23 season to week 40 (31 March 2023) show a slight increase in firsthand wool offered volumes compared with the same weeks during the 2021/22 season (Table 4).

- Firsthand bales offered (i.e. excluding reoffers) for Australia were 0.7% higher compared with the 2021/22 season.
- Firsthand bales offered increased in Queensland (up 15.9%), New South Wales (up 3.0%) and Western Australia (up 1.9%). In Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania firsthand bales decreased by 4.3, 2.0 and 1.3% respectively.
- There was a 0.3% decrease in the volume of first-hand Merino wool offered across Australia, and a 4.3% increase in first-hand Crossbred wool offered. The share of Merino wool of all first-hand offered wool was 78.9% between July and March during 2022/23 compared with 79.7% in 2021/22.
- There was a 2% decrease in the volume of 'Prem-shorn' Merino fleece between July 2022 and March 2023 (12.4 Mkg) compared with the same 9 months in 2021/22 (12.6 Mkg).
- As a percentage of the total, 7% of Australian first-hand bales offered were prem shorn up to 31 March during 2022/23. On a state-by-state basis this ranged from 1% in Tasmania to 47% in New South Wales.

Table 4: AWEX Auction Statistics 2022/23 season to week 40

2022/23	NSW	VIC	WA	SA	TAS	QLD	AUSTRALIA
First hand bales	3.0%	-4.3%	1.9%	-2.0%	-1.3%	15.9%	0.7%
Merino first hand	1.0%	-5.3%	1.3%	-2.7%	-2.0%	16.1%	-0.3%
Crossbred first hand	10.2%	-1.9%	19.0%	1.5%	0.0%	42.9%	4.3%
Merino first hand	76.5%	66.6%	94.2%	80.9%	69.6%	98.0%	78.9%
Crossbred first hand	23.5%	33.4%	5.8%	19.1%	30.4%	2.0%	21.1%
Merino First Hand 'Prem' Shorn Fleece							
Weight *(Mkg)*	5.8	1.3	2.3	2.6	0.1	0.4	12.4
% share of total	47%	10%	19%	21%	1%	3%	7%
% change on 2021/22	0%	-13%	5%	-7%	13%	43%	-2%

Note: Data on 'prem shorn' wool from AWEX is based on the assessed length of the wool being offered. it is defined as <85 - 75 mm, depending on micron and excluding weaners and lambs wool

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data

Sheep turn-off

Australian sheep and lamb turn-off statistics for July to December 2022 are shown in Table 5:

- There was a 12% increase in sheep slaughter and a 5% increase in lamb slaughter compared with the same 6 months during 2021/22.
- Sheep slaughter was 12% below the five-year average with lamb slaughter 3% higher than the five-year average.
- Live exports were up by 27% between July to December 2022, but were 38% below the five-year average.

Table 5: ABS Sheep turn off data for 2022/23 from July to December 2022 compared with the same six months in 2021/22

Parameter	Financial year			5-yr FYTD	
	July 2021 to December 2021	July 2022 to December 2022	% Δ	Avg	%Δ
Sheep slaughter *('000 hd)*	3,265	3,661	*12%*	4,149	*-12%*
Sheep weights *(kg/hd cwt)*	27.5	26.8	*-2%*	25.6	*4%*
Mutton production *(tonnes cwt)*	89,641	98,029	*9%*	106,335	*-8%*
Lamb slaughter *('000 hd)*	10,457	10,995	*5%*	10,657	*3%*
Lamb weights *(kg/hd cwt)*	23.8	24.5	*3%*	23.1	*6%*
Lamb production *(tonnes cwt)*	248,564	269,441	*8%*	245,961	*10%*
Live exports *('000 hd)*	269	341	*27%*	547	*-38%*
Total Turnoff *('000 hd)*	13,991	14,656	*5%*	15,353	*-5%*

Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal rainfall seasonal outlook

Above average to highest on record rainfall deciles were recorded throughout New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. Average rainfall deciles were evident thoughout most wool producing regions of Western Australia, except for the south west corner with a below average rainfall deciles. The central and western regions of Tasmania also had below average rainfall deciles, with the remainder of the state average to above average.

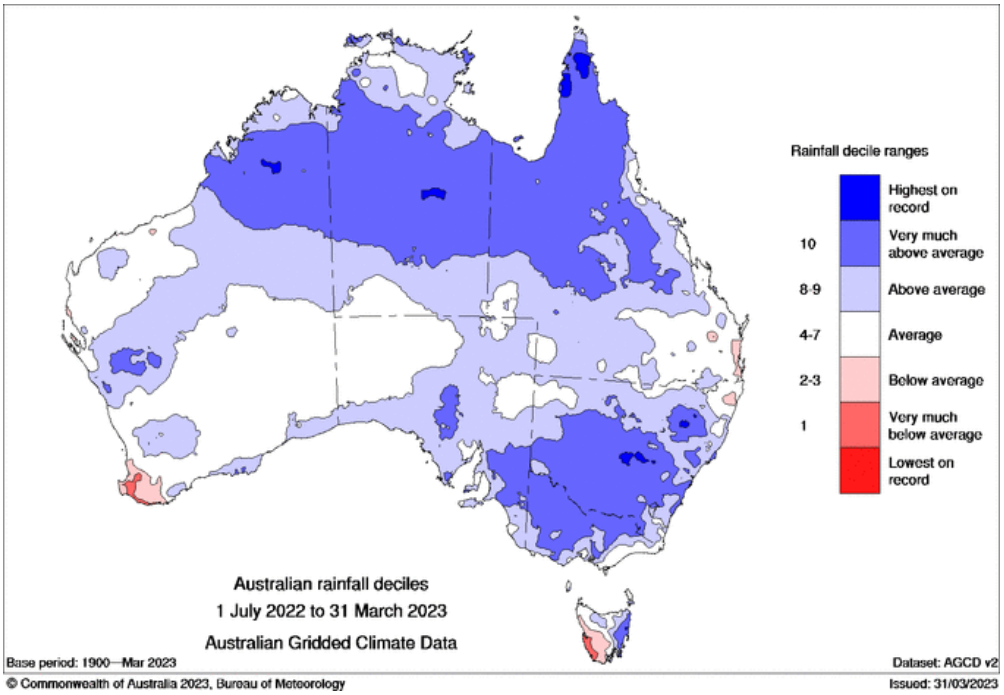


Figure 5: Australian rainfall deciles, 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023

The Bureau of Meteorology's outlook for April to June 2023 is for below median rainfall for the majority of Australia, except for the south-eastern region of Queensland, coastal New South Wales and southern Tasmania which are expected to have average median rainfall (Figure 6). April to June maximum temperatures are likely to be above average across much of the country excluding some regions of the central coats of New South Wales and central to north-eastern Victoria which are expecting more average maximum temperatures (Figure 7).

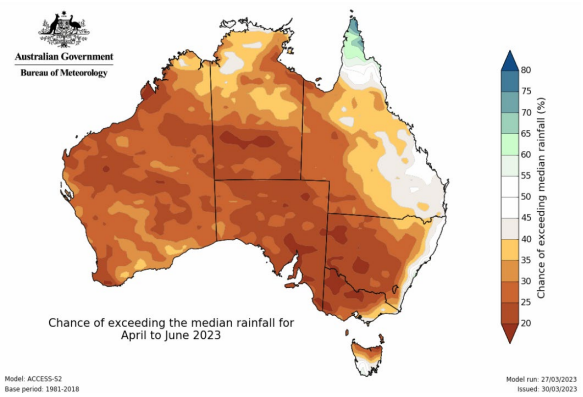


Figure 6: Chance of exceeding median rainfall (Apr - Jun 2023)

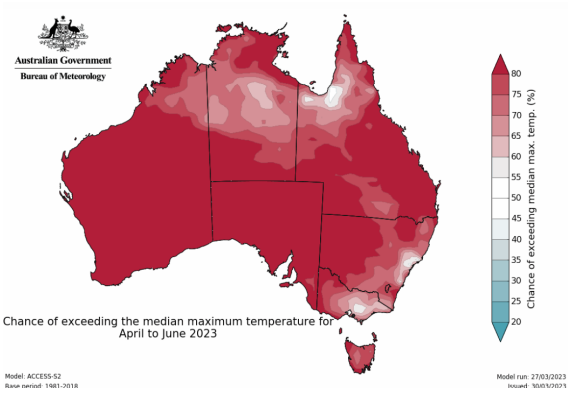


Figure 7: Chance of exceeding median maximum temperature (Apr - Jun 2023)

In its update on 30 March 2023, the Bureau noted that their forecast is being influenced by several climate drivers including an ENSO-neutral pattern (neither El Niño or La Niña) that is tending towards El Niño in the latter part of the forecast period, and the chance of a positive IOD later this year, as well as longer term trends. An El Niño watch is current.

Results from the MLA and AWI Sheep Producers Intentions Survey

The MLA and AWI Sheep Producer Intentions PULSE Survey - February 2023 found that the majority of sheep producers who responded made some changes to their planned lamb sales volumes with 51% reporting they sold fewer lambs than expected, 13% sold more lambs than expected and the remaining 36% sold the number of lambs they had planned.

The key reasons for the few lamb sales were weather conditions impacting on producers' ability to achieve their targeted level of lamb performance, lamb prices were below expectations, fewer lambs than expected were available to sell and other on-farm priorities overtook the lamb sales process.

State Committee input

The following provides a summary of seasonal conditions and wool production forecast in each state during the first nine months of the 2022/23 season as reported by the AWPFC state committees in April 2023.

New South Wales

A good season over most of New South Wales with most sheep producing regions heading into their fourth consecutive good autumn. Producers appreciated the dry summer which gave their flocks a reprieve from flies, worms and feet problems. Lambing ewes struggled with maintaining condition during lactation due to the wet weather, but their lambs were good quality. Recent April rains have sparked green pick in paddocks, although producers continue to supplementary feed. The New England region is moving into winter in good shape with early grazing crops and good pastures. Some western and north western regions are looking for rain in coming weeks to build on patchy falls from storms. Some large drafts of sheep are being sold from these regions, not for slaughter but into other regions of New South Wales as feed is now unsuitable for sheep. Some transition into Dorpers and goats has occurred. The central west region is about a month behind the rest of the state and still waiting for the break.

Sowing has commenced in many mixed farming regions, although recent April rainfall will bring some to a halt. Cropping is currently a higher priority than sheep enterprises in these regions although the high cost of cropping inputs is causing some concern. The ratio of livestock to cropping is relatively stable.

Sheep are in good condition with positive scanning reports. Average cut per head is expected to be similar to 2021/22. Wool quality is now improved, water damaged and cotted lines have moved through the auction system. Labour remains an on-going issue. Recent wet weather has caused 7- to 10-day delays in shearing with increases in shearing contract prices continuing to cause concern.

Crossbred sheep producers are increasingly looking toward moving to shedding breeds. Sheep numbers are now back to pre-drought levels. Many sheep producers have retained older ewes and Merino lambs due to the drop in sheepmeat prices as they had enough feed to carry the higher numbers forward. **The New South Wales Committee's fourth estimate of shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 119.0 Mkg greasy, up 5.0% on 2021/22.**

Victoria

The impacts of the extremely wet spring have carried over into sheep production. Young Merino sheep struggled with the prolonged wet conditions and associated high worm burdens, particularly in north and western regions with barbers pole worm extending into new territory. The dry summer has helped to alleviate the impact of worms and allowed delays in shearing to be caught up. Young sheep were not able to gain weight and grow until January, even those usually finished in central regions on stubbles. Crossbred lamb production was impacted with many lambs being retained on farm as they were not in sufficient condition for sale to slaughter.

Early scanning results were variable. Some ewe mobs re-joined due to poor scanning, later scanning percentages were improved. Older ewes were retained in some regions and re-joined to a terminal sire rather than sold due to low mutton prices. These ewes will be sold in

the new season. Merino sheep are becoming a less important breed in central districts, with producers moving to composites and crossbreds. Composite producers continue to bear the high cost of shearing wool of little to no value.

A widespread seasonal break occurred during autumn which will set up good feed for sheep production during winter and spring. Clover germination has been good. Recent rains have prompted mixed farmers to begin their cropping program, although more rain in the next week or so may cause delays. The movement of cropping into more southern and western regions of Victoria reported in December is continuing. Decreases in the value of sheep meat will increase cropping. Many producers are wary of the forecast El Nino kicking back in during spring. This is likely to lead to a reduction in sheep numbers as producers are nervous about the upcoming spring. **The Victorian Committee's fourth forecast of shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 70.0 Mkg greasy, down 5.3% on 2021/22.**

Western Australia

A good season in the northern and eastern wheatbelt following good rains. Cropping programs are underway with some crops already emerging following a good break to the season. Southern regions have had more average conditions. Cyclone Ilsa was expected to bring significant rain to the northern pastoral region. Northern coastal regions remain dry (last rain was in September) but are expecting an autumn break. Generally, a favourable season for wool production with the long dry summer maintaining stubble quality and boosting per head production. Shearing delays of 4 to 6 weeks also contributed to the increased per head production.

There is a strong prevailing negative sentiment among sheep producers. Sheep turnoff is currently double the processing capacity in Western Australia with the phase out of live export heavily weighing on sheep producers' minds. Young sheep that were not able to be processed due to limited processing capacity and older ewes were retained on-farm due to the falling mutton price. An estimated 1.4 million sheep will be carried over into the new season. Scanning rates in southern sheep regions were better than last year. Retained ewes were joined and will be lambed down prior to selling in the new season.

Live export numbers are currently slightly up as is the mutton kill, however processors will begin to book in lambs for processing mid-May and move away from mutton. The current negativity will impact sheep production in the new season and into 2025. Low sheepmeat prices and wool returns are making wool production gross margins unfavourable for mixed faming enterprises. The Committee expects many mixed farmers to move out of sheep following their spring shearing. The value of mutton will be a key factor determining the speed of the move away from sheep (i.e. a slow exit or dramatic sell-off). **The Western Australian Committee's fourth forecast of shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 60.6 Mkg greasy, down 1.0% on 2021/22.**

South Australia

All pastoral regions have had good rain and the feed supply is abundant. Merino wool producers in these regions are increasing sheep numbers with lower sheep slaughter rates. Large wool cuts are expected along with an increase in staple length. Vegetable matter levels are expected to increase due to spear grass. Construction of the dog fence is progressing

well. Other regions have also had widespread rains with many properties at capacity in terms of sheep numbers. Sheep numbers are stable and excess sheep will be sent to slaughter.

Good average wool cuts are expected, and producers are optimistic about the sheep industry. Crossbred clips in the southeast are 1-2 µm finer due to the tough start to last season. Clips normally in the 24 to 26 µm range have dropped into a lower micron category. These clips are also approximately ½ kg lower in average cut.

The cost of shearing continues to increase and is a big issue. Some shearing delays continue to occur, due to shearer availability and wet weather, which may account for the 2.3 mm year-on-year increase in staple length (to 92.4 mm). Reports of some wool remaining on-farm and not yet tested as mixed farmers are still catching up on other farm jobs due to the persistent wet weather.

Reports of good scanning rates across the state, although plenty of scanning is continuing. Lots of requests to scan Merino ewes prior to flock dispersal sale which is an indication of a move away from Merinos. Some talk of a potential change in enterprise to cattle in preference to shedding sheep breeds. Older ewes were held over at the end of 2022 rather than sold. Big drafts of older ewes are now coming onto the market from both pastoral and inside country. **The South Australian Committee's fourth forecast of shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 56.7 Mkg greasy, up 1.1% on 2021/22.**

Tasmania

Dry conditions since the December meeting have produced average seasonal conditions throughout most of the state. Northern regions have good ground cover, the few frosts to date have not hampered pasture growth, and forecasted rain in mid-April is expected to promote further growth prior to winter. Southern regions are not so good having received subsistence rainfall, although heavy dews have allowed pastures to slowly tick along. The next 3 to 4 weeks will determine the winter feed wedge and set up the spring.

Sheep condition is average. Young sheep had challenging growing conditions due to worms, but there were no reports of widespread losses. Maiden ewes did not have sufficient feed to grow and maintain fleece production, their wool cuts and staple strength are expected to be lower. Adult ewes were less affected, so pre-lamb shearings are expected to reflect the average season. Lower mutton prices prompted producers to retain older ewes and join again rather than shear and sell them to slaughter. The mix of Merino and crossbred sheep in the state flock has settled at the current proportions. **The Tasmanian Committee's fourth forecast of shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 10.2 Mkg, down 1.0% on 2021/22**.

Queensland

Good seasonal conditions across most of Queensland. Some regions report the best season since the 1950s or 1970s. The Central west region around Longreach is fantastic. Regions around Winton, Mitchell and Cunnamulla are dry with producers looking for more rain and sold stock during January and February as the late start to the season lead them to expect a dry winter. The season has turned around in the south east and south west from mid-February.

Sheep producers remain optimistic, despite dealing with flies and other good season animal husbandry issues (i.e. worms). Although falling meat prices have dampened some

enthusiasm. In the central west, ewes are in good condition in their third trimester heading into lambing which augurs well for good birthweights and high lamb survival rates.

Sheep numbers are building mainly through increases in Merinos. Some producers are contemplating shedding breeds due to labour availability (general staff and shearers). Goat numbers ebb and flow depending on prevailing meat prices which are currently very low. Sheepmeat prices are historically low in late March through to April but are expected to lift from May through to July. This will prompt increased turnoff rates of young wethers and adult sheep. An increase in wild dog activity was reported during March with dog numbers inside (due to storm damaged fencing) and outside exclusion fencing increasing. This highlights the need to maintain the integrity of the exclusion fences and continue wild dog control measures.

Wool receivals have been extraordinary through March following a relatively quiet February. AWTA wool testing volumes to 12th April are well up and expected to remain 8-10% up for the remainder of the season with AWTA expecting a in a 25% to 28% year-on-year increase. **The Queensland Committee's fourth forecast of shorn wool production for 2022/23 is 11.3 Mkg, up 27.0% on 2021/22.**

Appendix

Table A1: Comparison of shorn wool production in 2021/22 against the 2020/21 season and the fourth forecast for 2022/23 against the 2021/22 season

At their September 2022 meeting, the AWPFC National Committee resolved to include a clean estimate of shorn wool production for the 2021/22 season based on the yield (%, Schlumberger dry top and noil yield) from the AWTA key test data for 2021/22. This was calculated for the 2020/21 season for comparison.

2020/21	NSW	VIC	WA	SA	TAS	QLD	AUSTRALIA
Sheep Numbers Shorn *(million)*	21.8	16.6	13.3	10.8	2.4	1.9	66.9
Average Cut Per Head *(kg greasy)*	4.55	4.25	4.25	4.75	3.95	3.70	4.40
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg greasy)*	99.2	70.7	56.5	51.5	9.4	7.2	294.0
Yield *(%, Sch dry)*	63.7	65.9	61.2	61.9	70.0	60.8	63.9
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg clean)*	63.2	46.6	34.6	31.9	6.6	4.4	187.9

2021/22	NSW	VIC	WA	SA	TAS	QLD	AUSTRALIA
Sheep Numbers Shorn *(million)*	24.6	17.2	13.3	11.7	2.6	2.2	71.6
Average Cut Per Head *(kg greasy)*	4.60	4.30	4.60	4.80	3.95	4.10	4.52
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg greasy)*	113.3	73.9	61.2	56.1	10.3	8.9	324.0
Yield *(%, Sch dry)*	66.2	66.0	62.9	61.2	70.5	62.8	64.9
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg clean)*	75.0	48.8	38.5	34.3	7.3	5.6	210.3

% change y-o-y							
Sheep Numbers Shorn *(million)*	*12.8%*	*3.6%*	*0.0%*	*8.3%*	*8.3%*	*15.8%*	*7.0%*
Average Cut Per Head *(kg greasy)*	*1.1%*	*0.0%*	*8.2%*	*1.1%*	*0.0%*	*10.8%*	*2.7%*
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg greasy)*	*14.2%*	*4.5%*	*8.3%*	*8.9%*	*9.6%*	*23.6%*	*10.0%*
Yield *(%, Sch dry)*	*3.9%*	*0.2%*	*2.8%*	*-1.1%*	*0.7%*	*3.3%*	*1.6%*
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg clean)*	*18.7%*	*4.7%*	*11.3%*	*7.5%*	*10.6%*	*27.3%*	*11.9%*

2022/23 Fourth Forecast	NSW	VIC	WA	SA	TAS	QLD	AUSTRALIA
Sheep Numbers Shorn *(million)*	25.9	16.1	13.0	11.1	2.6	2.8	71.5
Average Cut Per Head *(kg greasy)*	4.60	4.40	4.65	5.10	3.90	4.10	4.59
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg greasy)*	119.0	70.0	60.6	56.7	10.2	11.3	328.0

% change y-o-y							
Sheep Numbers Shorn *(million)*	*5.3%*	*-6.4%*	*-2.3%*	*-5.1%*	*0.0%*	*27.3%*	*-0.1%*
Average Cut Per Head *(kg greasy)*	*0.0%*	*2.3%*	*2.2%*	*6.3%*	*-2.5%*	*0.0%*	*2.2%*
Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg greasy)*	*5.0%*	*-5.3%*	*-1.0%*	*1.1%*	*-1.0%*	*27.0%*	*1.3%*

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Historical Australian Production Figures

The tables below provide historical sheep shorn numbers, wool production, fleece weight and micron share statistics since 1991/92 for background information.

Table A2: Australian wool production statistics since 1991/92

At their September 2022 meeting, the AWPFC National Committee resolved to include a clean estimate of shorn wool production for the 2021/22 season based on the yield (%, *Schlumberger dry top and noil yield*) from the AWTA key test data for 2021/22. The AWTA key test data yield (*Sch dry*) for 2001/02 to 2020/21 has been used to calculate shorn wool production for these seasons.

Season	Sheep Numbers Shorn *(million)*	Average Cut Per Head *(kg greasy)*	Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg greasy)*	Yield *(%, Sch dry)*	Average Cut Per Head *(kg clean)*	Shorn Wool Production *(Mkg clean)*
1991-92	180.9	4.43	801			
1992-93	178.8	4.56	815			
1993-94	172.8	4.49	775			
1994-95	156.2	4.37	682			
1995-96	145.6	4.50	655			
1996-97	152.0	4.35	661			
1997-98	150.0	4.22	633			
1998-99	153.6	4.33	665			
1999-00	144.2	4.30	619			
2000-01	139.5	4.31	602			
2001-02	118.6	4.68	555	65.7	3.07	364
2002-03	116.6	4.28	499	64.2	2.75	320
2003-04	104.7	4.53	475	64.2	2.91	305
2004-05	106.0	4.49	475	63.9	2.87	304
2005-06	106.5	4.33	461	64.1	2.78	296
2006-07	101.4	4.24	430	62.9	2.67	270
2007-08	90.2	4.43	400	62.6	2.77	250
2008-09	79.3	4.52	362	62.8	2.84	227
2009-10	76.2	4.50	343	63.2	2.84	217
2010-11	76.2	4.53	345	64.9	2.94	224
2011-12	76.4	4.48	342	65.5	2.93	224
2012-13	78.8	4.47	352	65.1	2.91	229
2013-14	78.0	4.37	341	64.9	2.83	221
2014-15	76.9	4.50	346	64.9	2.92	225
2015-16	73.4	4.43	325	64.4	2.85	209
2016-17	74.3	4.58	340	65.1	2.98	221
2017-18	76.8	4.45	341	64.6	2.87	220
2018-19	72.5	4.13	300	63.1	2.61	189
2019-20	68.6	4.13	284	62.2	2.57	177
2020-21	66.9	4.40	294	63.9	2.81	188
2021-22	71.6	4.52	324	64.9	2.93	210
2022-23*f*	71.5	4.59	328			

Table A3: Australian micron profile of AWTA key test data volume statistics since 1991/92 (% share and average micron)

Season	<16.5	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25/26	27/28	29/30	>30.5	Average Fibre Diameter (µm)
1991/92	0.1%	0.7%	3.2%	7.9%	15.2%	21.5%	20.0%	13.4%	7.1%	5.5%	2.9%	1.6%	1.0%	22.0
1992/93	0.0%	0.3%	1.9%	5.4%	12.0%	19.9%	20.6%	15.6%	10.0%	7.9%	3.0%	1.9%	1.6%	22.4
1993/94	0.1%	0.5%	2.4%	5.9%	12.1%	18.8%	20.8%	15.7%	10.0%	7.4%	2.8%	1.9%	1.7%	22.4
1994/95	0.1%	0.6%	3.5%	8.6%	15.2%	20.9%	19.9%	13.0%	7.0%	4.7%	2.8%	2.0%	1.7%	22.0
1995/96	0.0%	0.6%	3.3%	8.2%	15.3%	20.8%	18.5%	13.2%	8.1%	6.0%	2.7%	1.8%	1.6%	22.1
1996/97	0.2%	0.8%	3.9%	9.7%	15.3%	20.1%	18.3%	13.1%	7.4%	5.3%	2.3%	1.9%	1.8%	22.0
1997/98	0.2%	1.2%	4.5%	9.8%	14.8%	19.4%	18.3%	12.8%	7.7%	5.4%	2.6%	1.8%	1.5%	21.9
1998/99	0.2%	1.1%	4.2%	8.8%	14.6%	19.6%	18.6%	14.0%	7.6%	5.1%	2.7%	2.0%	1.5%	22.0
1999/00	0.1%	1.0%	4.2%	9.3%	14.4%	19.1%	18.2%	13.6%	7.7%	5.2%	2.9%	2.4%	1.9%	22.1
2000/01	0.2%	1.3%	5.2%	11.1%	15.7%	18.5%	16.4%	11.4%	6.8%	5.1%	3.6%	2.8%	1.9%	22.0
2001/02	0.3%	2.0%	7.2%	14.4%	19.9%	18.9%	12.9%	7.7%	4.1%	3.7%	3.8%	3.1%	1.9%	21.6
2002/03	1.0%	3.9%	9.8%	15.7%	18.9%	17.6%	12.0%	6.6%	2.9%	3.4%	3.7%	2.9%	1.7%	21.2
2003/04	0.7%	3.6%	9.9%	15.8%	18.3%	16.6%	11.9%	7.5%	3.6%	3.5%	3.8%	2.9%	1.8%	21.3
2004/05	1.2%	4.2%	10.5%	16.5%	18.7%	15.9%	10.7%	6.2%	3.2%	3.6%	4.1%	3.1%	2.0%	21.2
2005/06	1.4%	4.7%	9.7%	15.1%	18.7%	17.1%	11.5%	5.9%	2.9%	3.9%	4.5%	2.9%	1.6%	21.2
2006/07	2.0%	5.9%	11.8%	15.9%	16.9%	14.0%	9.9%	6.2%	3.4%	4.3%	4.4%	3.2%	2.1%	21.2
2007/08	1.9%	5.3%	10.9%	16.8%	18.4%	14.3%	9.2%	5.5%	3.0%	4.1%	4.8%	3.6%	2.2%	21.2
2008/09	2.0%	5.7%	11.4%	16.6%	18.5%	15.0%	9.1%	4.4%	2.3%	3.8%	5.1%	3.8%	2.2%	21.2
2009/10	2.3%	6.2%	12.6%	17.1%	17.5%	13.2%	8.4%	4.6%	2.5%	4.1%	5.4%	3.9%	2.3%	21.2
2010/11	1.5%	4.8%	11.0%	16.8%	18.0%	13.5%	8.4%	5.4%	3.0%	3.9%	5.5%	5.0%	3.1%	21.5
2011/12	1.8%	5.6%	12.0%	17.1%	16.6%	12.3%	8.3%	5.3%	2.9%	4.2%	5.8%	4.7%	3.3%	21.5
2012/13	2.5%	7.0%	13.3%	17.5%	16.8%	12.0%	7.3%	4.1%	2.3%	4.6%	6.2%	4.0%	2.5%	21.2
2013/14	3.8%	8.4%	14.6%	17.8%	16.0%	10.9%	6.2%	3.4%	2.2%	5.2%	6.4%	3.1%	2.1%	20.9
2014/15	3.2%	7.9%	14.8%	18.5%	15.8%	10.5%	6.5%	3.5%	1.9%	4.4%	6.5%	3.9%	2.6%	21.0
2015/16	3.9%	8.5%	14.6%	17.8%	16.2%	10.8%	6.0%	2.9%	1.9%	4.6%	6.5%	3.6%	2.7%	21.0
2016/17	3.6%	7.5%	13.4%	17.4%	17.2%	12.1%	6.9%	3.4%	2.0%	4.4%	5.8%	3.4%	2.7%	21.0
2017/18	3.2%	8.6%	15.4%	18.6%	16.1%	10.2%	5.7%	2.9%	1.8%	4.1%	6.0%	4.0%	3.2%	21.0
2018/19	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	5.8%	20.5
2019/20	6.3%	10.9%	18.8%	21.1%	15.5%	7.4%	3.2%	1.8%	1.6%	4.4%	5.3%	2.1%	1.7%	20.5
2020/21	3.7%	8.6%	17.3%	20.4%	16.0%	9.4%	4.5%	2.2%	1.6%	3.6%	5.6%	3.7%	3.5%	20.8
2021/22	3.9%	9.2%	16.6%	20.1%	16.4%	8.9%	3.6%	2.3%	1.8%	4.3%	5.7%	3.2%	3.8%	20.8
2022/23*	4.3%	9.7%	16.7%	19.8%	15.7%	8.3%	3.7%	2.3%	1.9%	5.0%	6.0%	2.9%	3.6%	20.8

Explanation of revised AWPFC data series

At the December 2005 meeting, the national Committee made the decision to collate and review the key variables (shorn wool production, cut per head, number of sheep shorn) used in the committee from the available industry sources and to create a consistent historical data series at both a state and national level. This was required as some differences existed between industry accepted figures and the AWPFC data series and to ensure a consistent methodology over time. This process resulted in changes to the parameters 'average cut per head' and the 'number of sheep shorn' for some seasons at both a state and national level.

Modus operandi for the Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee

The Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee draws together a range of objective data and qualitative information to produce consensus-based, authoritative forecasts four times a year for Australian wool production.

The Committee has a two-level structure, with a National Committee considering information and advice from state committees. It is funded by Australian Wool Innovation Limited, which also provides an independent representative in the role of the Chairman of the National Committee.

The National and state committees comprise wool producers, wool brokers, exporters, processors, private treaty merchants, AWEX, AWTA, ABARES, ABS, MLA, state departments of Agriculture, sheep pregnancy scanners and AWI.

The Committee releases its forecasts in the forms of a press release and a report providing the detailed forecasts, historical data and commentary on the key drivers of the forecasts.