



Western Sheep & Beef Producers

Bulletin – 13 May 2015

AUSTRALIAN WOOL PRODUCTION

Livestock Committee member Chris Patmore attended the most recent meeting of the Australian Wool Production Forecasting Committee. He gives the following overview;

- ✓ The committee forecasts shorn wool production for 2014/15 at 341 mkg, the same as the 2013/14 level. This reflects a small drop in shorn sheep numbers but offset by higher average fleece weights.
- ✓ The Committee's first projection for 2015/16 has been set at 332 mkg, down by 2.7% from 2014/15, a result of lower sheep numbers arising from the high sheep and lamb turn-off rates this season.
- ✓ Total greasy wool production forecasts for WA are;

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| 2013/14 Final Estimate | 71.8 mkg |
| 2014/15 April Forecast | 66.4 mkg |
| Change year-on-year | -7.4% |

SENATE INQUIRY INTO THE CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT (ANIMAL PROTECTION) BILL

Senator Chris Back has proposed amendments to the Commonwealth *Criminal Code Act 1995* that will prevent unnecessary delays in the reporting of malicious cruelty to animals by inserting a new part which relates to failing to report malicious cruelty to animals, and interfering with the conduct of lawful animal enterprises.

The PGA has made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into this bill that supports this change to better protect farmers and their businesses from illegal surveillance and trespass by animal activists.

Activists are not impartial. They do not seek to use the usual avenues open to the public to prosecute their agendas. They use the court of public opinion. Whatever activists collect, it is not testimony or evidence as it hardly ever makes it into a court of law. It is much easier to ignore the presumption of innocence and blacken someone's reputation in the public domain.

The PGA's submission made the following points;

- ✓ When animal activists make a release of inflammatory material into the public domain, the onus must be on them to prove its veracity. The release of such material outside of Australia's system of courts is an attempt to manipulate the law by moulding public sentiment in pursuit of their own strategy.
- ✓ There is a distinct difference between whistleblowers, who do act in good faith, and those animal activists motivated by an extremist desire to end all animal related enterprises who clandestinely seek employment in legitimate farm businesses.

In conclusion, the PGA notes that many of the assertions of animal cruelty made by animal rights activists are either anonymous or not reported in real time. Until allegations are submitted as either evidence or testimony, that cruelty will continue until animal activists see fit to release their material.

COMMITTEE MAKE-UP

It is with regret that the Chairman notes the recent resignation of Mr David Bolt from the committee.

David sold his farming interests in 2013 but continued his membership of the committee during his transition to semi-retirement in Australind. The Chairman and committee wish him well and thank him for his contribution to sheep debates.

The strength of an organization is in its membership, and if the PGA is to continue putting the case of agricultural producers and pastoralists before government, it needs interested members to represent it and join the committee.

Consequently, the Chairman asks any interested members to contact him with a view to joining the committee.

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