The National Council of Wool Selling Brokers of Australia Inc

NEWSLETTER

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From the desk of Chris Wilcox, Executive Director



- Report on the 2019 IWTO Congress: The second instalment
- NCWSBA 2019 Wool Broker Award
- NCWSBA 2019 Annual General Meeting and Forum and Wool Week events
- Australian Wool Industry Medal 2019 – Nominations close on 5th May
- Other upcoming industry events

In the previous edition of the *Weekly Newsletter*, I reported on the presentations given in the Market Intelligence session of the **88th IWTO Congress** held in Venice. This week, I report on other presentations and themes that emerged during the rest of the Congress.

One item I neglected to cover in my previous *Newsletter* from the Market Intelligence session was about a video that has been prepared by AWI to show the **devastating impact of the drought in Australia**. Don Macdonald, an AWI Director, introduced the video. In my presentation, I had explained the impact of the drought on wool production in Australia in 2018/19 and the forecast impact in 2019/20. The video brought home the message loud and clear – as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. I had many of my colleagues from around the world tell me during the Congress how the video meant that they understood the wool production forecasts much more clearly. You can see the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFJqzhshuhc.

As I said in the previous *Weekly Newsletter*, the major themes through-out the 2019 Congress were **sustainability, traceability, animal welfare and supply chain transparency**. These themes were mentioned in virtually every session, from the opening session, through the market intelligence session, the retail session, the wool interiors session to the final session at Benetton.

The Congress' opening session on Tuesday featured **Livia Firth, the founder and creative director of Eco-Age**, an advocacy and sustainability consultancy with growing influence around the world. Livia talked about the importance of telling the world's consumers the wool industry's message about sustainability and care and welfare of sheep. She showed an excellent video about her travels to Tasmania to investigate how woolgrowers there are meeting the challenges of sustainability, stewardship and the highest standards of animal welfare. You can see the video at https://youtu.be/HiNfQUwPfUg.

The Sustainability session on Wednesday featured **Harriet Vocking, the Chief Brand Officer at Eco-Age,** who talked about what Eco-Age does in working with retail brands to counter the impact of PETA and ensure that they don't simply ban the use of wool in a knee-jerk reaction. She commented that the wool industry must focus on the industry's environmental and animal stewardship, social wellbeing and economic prosperity which are closely intertwined: without one, you cannot have the others. She said that the industry needs to communicate this. This was supported by Giorgio Todesco (CEO of Marzotto Wool) in his presentation when he said that the industry needs to communicate the current high animal welfare standards practiced by the industry. He noted that non-mulesed wool is in demand.

For me, the most telling point of the whole Congress came during the Panel discussion in this session. Heinz Zeller (Principal Sustainability at Hugo Boss) commented that the only issue for wool is mulesing. In response, Harriett said that the industry should accept and embrace that it will take time to move away from mulesing. It cannot be done overnight. The wool industry's focus should be on communication: the industry needs to tell the story of the journey to reach non-mulesed wool production. In my view, this is a

message and challenge that all in the Australian wool industry should accept and address. Rather than ignoring it and hope it will go away, we should be proactive and tell the industry's story to the world.

It is frustrating, therefore, to see the lack of funding within the IWTO for **communication on animal welfare standards**. The IWTO executive is seeking a bit over €6,000 to fund an update of its *Specifications for Wool Sheep Welfare* booklet. IWTO has very little money available for animal welfare activities and at the General Assembly the IWTO Secretary-General made a plea to IWTO members for funding for this modest communication activity. In contrast, IWTO's sustainability activities are supported by matching € for € funding from AWI, with a total of €83,500 available in 2018. AWI does not provide matching funding for animal welfare activities.

The issue of **traceability** was covered in a number of sessions. It also created a significant amount of discussion, notably about who should pay for implementing traceability protocols and systems. Heinz Zeller of Hugo Boss commented in his presentation that transparency is a top priority for the fashion industry, mainly because of animal activists. Given that, he argued that transparency/visibility of supply chain was required, rather than traceability *per se*. He made the distinction that transparency meant that fashion and retail companies can 'see' where the wool is coming from, rather than actually tracing all wool consignments. All of this, of course, will cost money to implement and this is where he was challenged. Klaus Steger (MD of Sudwolle) and Giovanni Schneider (the Schneider Group) both asked why should growers and processors pay for this, with the benefits going to the retail and fashion brands? An interesting question which was not resolved.

There were other presentations through the Congress including on health and wellness. There as a presentation by Evelyne Orndoff of NASA about their testing of wool clothing for astronauts and the benefits of wool which have been highlighted by this research. The Congress concluded at the Benetton head office with presentations by Benetton. I thought that it was one of the most interesting Congresses that I have been to (and I have been going since the early 2000s). The topics raised were very thought-provoking and relevant, with open discussion and frank exchange of views.

REMINDER: CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS – NCWSBA WOOL BROKER AWARD 2019

The **NCWSBA Wool Broker Award for 2019** recognises excellence in wool broking by a younger member of our industry. This year's Award winner will be granted an **all-expenses paid trip Tongxiang in the Zhejiang Province, China to attend the 2020 IWTO Congress in May 2020.** Arrangements will also be made for the Award winner to visit the wool textile industry in China. Closing date for nominations is Friday, 21st June. Please contact me for an application form – chris.wilcox@ncwsba.org or call me on 0419344259.

The **NCWSBA's 2019 Annual General Meeting and Forum** will be held on Thursday, 22nd August at the RACV Club in Melbourne. It will be part of the 2019 **Wool Week** events which will be held on 22nd-23rd August 2019. These events include the Wool Week dinner on Thursday, 22nd August and the FAWO Annual General Meeting on Friday, 23rd August. **Put the dates into your diary – I will send further details in June**.

REMINDER: Nominations for the **2019 Australian Wool Industry Medal** close on 5th May 2019. The Medal recognises men and woman who have made an exceptional and sustained contribution to the Australian wool industry above and beyond what is expected in their normal paid employment. The nomination form and further information can be found at www.fawo.org.au.

OTHER INDUSTRY EVENTS

The **Nanjing Wool Market Conference** will be held in Qufu, Shandong on 20th to 23rd September 2019.

The **2019 IWTO Round Table** will be in held in Queenstown, New Zealand on 2nd to 3rd December 2019.

The **2020 IWTO Annual Congress** will be held in Tongxiang, China on 18th to 20th May 2020.

WOOL SALES WEEK BEGINNING 29th APR 2019 – week 44 (roster as at 24/4/2019)

Sydney	
Wed, 1st May, Thurs 2nd May	11,701 bales
Melbourne	
Wed, 1st May, Thurs 2nd May	24,041 bales
Fremantle	
Wed, 1st May, Thurs 2nd May	10,896 bales

Information in the Weekly Newsletter is intended to provide general information only and is not intended to constitute advice for a specific purpose.