



# PASTORA

## POLL MERINO

NEWSLETTER | AUGUST 2024



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# 2024 Pastora Newsletter

# WELCOME



Welcome to our 2024 Pastora Newsletter!

It has been a hard slog here at Pastora through the Autumn and Winter periods. All of our ewes have been in confinement pens since their removal from crop stubble back in March, till their point of lambing in July. Although pasture growth has been slow, and we have had to spread the ewes out across every paddock available for lambing, it all appears to be going well, with marking to occur in late August. At the time of writing, in the colder months, wet and windy weather events have not been too severe, thankfully.

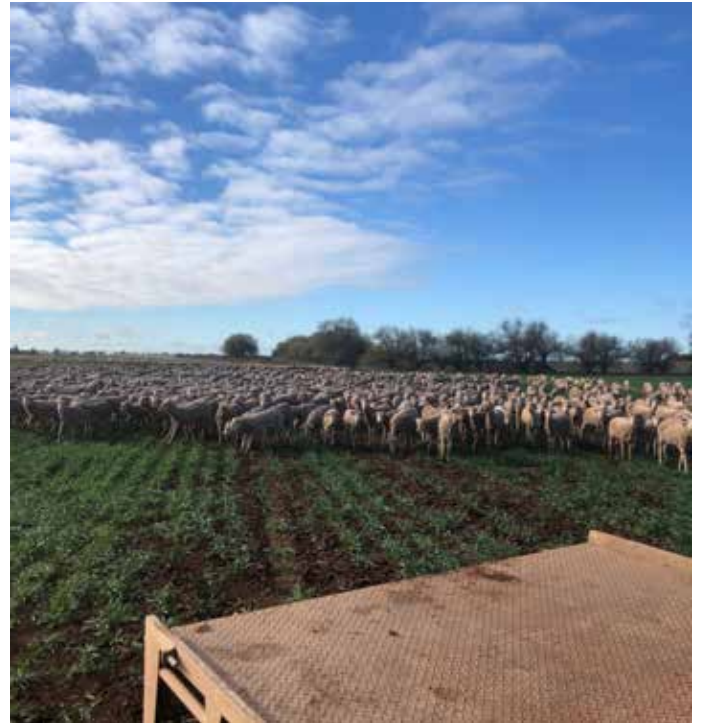
Last year due to very low sheep prices, we chose to retain all our wethers and most of our surplus ewes, meaning we have been very overstocked the past twelve months. To produce earlier feed availability than usual, we reduced the amount of barley we normally grow and expanded our grazing wheat and vetch acreage, hopefully allowing us to market the extra stock. The plan hasn't gone quite the way we would have liked due to a dry and frosty start to winter. The grazing crops were ready about a month later than we

expected meaning the weaners and wethers were moved from confinement to the crop on the 20th of July. Added to this, we were trying to time the sale of these sheep to match the usual shortage that occurs in July and August. I believe if you're going to carry excess stock for long periods in the hope of higher prices, they need to be of high wool value, allowing the extra wool to cover feed costs. In this instance, the stock was on a full ration for 16 weeks costing \$21.40 (grain value \$300). The wool was sold from them in June grossing \$75 per head from the adult sheep. So, all we need now is for the grazing crops to do their job, adding an extra condition score, hoping to add an extra \$100 compared to their value last spring.

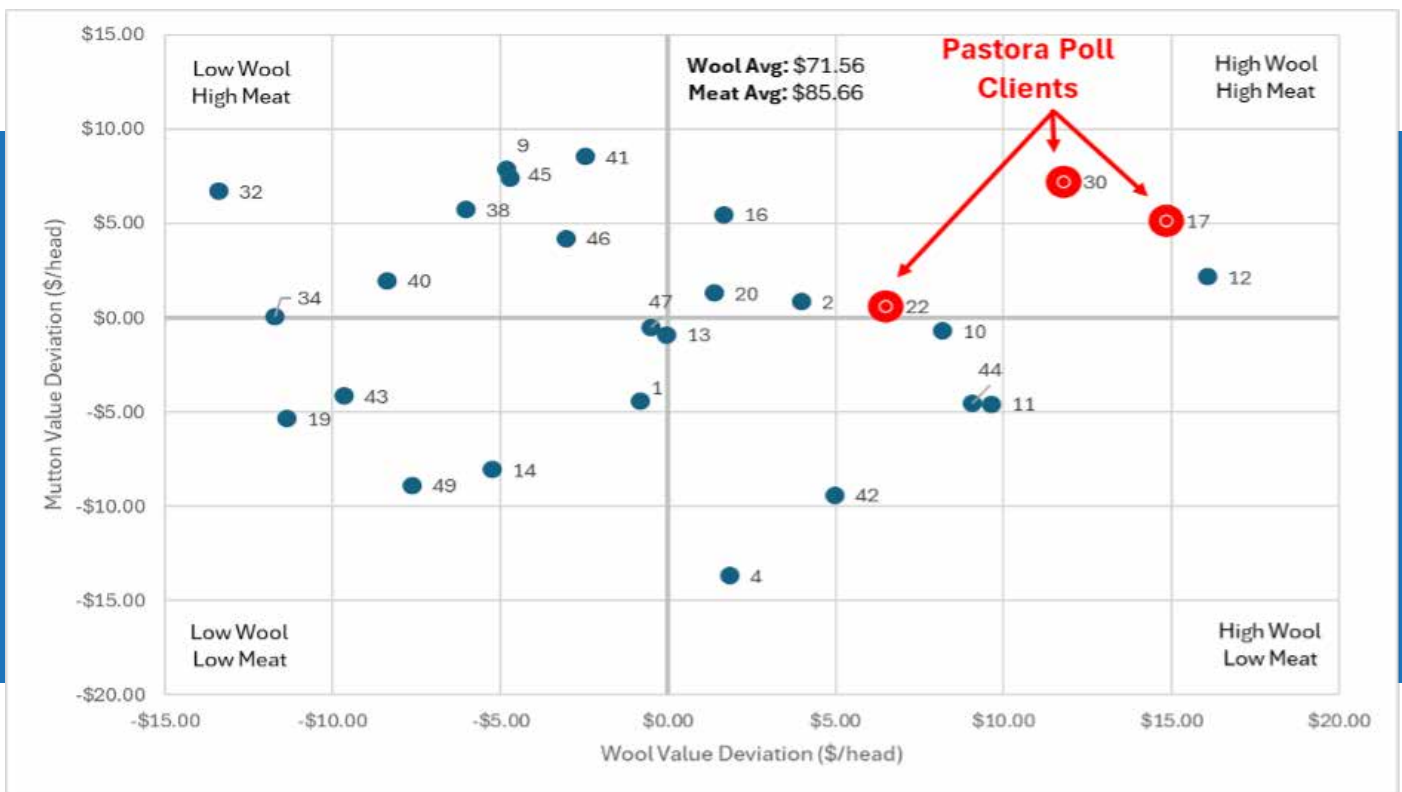
This year was our biggest wool clip grown to date at Pastora. The year yielded 518 bales with around 400 wethers to shear later in the year. Our wool clip has returned \$385/ha if determined over our 2023 winter grazing area (cropping country excluded). Our sheep enterprise this year is well on its way to surpassing our cropping program in terms of gross margins again!

The Pastora Annual Ram Sale will be held on Wednesday the 4th of September, commencing at 1 pm. Inspection is from 9 am, at the Pastora Woolshed and an Inspection Day will be held on Wednesday 30th August, from 10 am till 2 pm. Elders will once again be our selling agents, alongside BlueChip Livestock. 120 rams will be offered at auction with private sales commencing in the preceding days. I would ask our clients who live nearby to please refrain from picking extra rams after the sale, as we would like to allocate that time to cater to clients that have travelled a distance.





# WETHER TRIALS



*Spring drop wool and meat value graph Pastora clients in red*

Once again Pastora clients have shown the dominance held in the industry. The most recent results in The Australian Merino Production Trial resulted in all Pastora teams finishing in the top 13 for wool value at the first shearing. Overall, there were fifty teams entered. Three teams in the spring drop and one team in the winter drop averaged \$13 above the spring and winter groups, respectively. All four teams were well above average for wool value and slightly above average for meat value which is one of our key performance objectives (excellent wool values and moderate frame). This, I believe, is the best domain to maximise profit per hectare.

Team No	FD Dev	GFWp	Yld Dev	CFWp	SD Dev	CV Dev	SL Dev	CWWp	GWWp	WTP	Wool Value Dev	Carcase Value Dev	Sheep Value Dev
1	-0.5	93%	-1.5	91%	-0.2	-0.5	-4.1	94%	97%	95%	-\$0.82	-\$4.48	-\$5.31
2	0.0	112%	-1.7	109%	-0.2	-0.9	6.7	107%	110%	101%	\$3.96	\$0.82	\$4.77
4	-1.5	80%	1.6	82%	-0.3	0.0	-7.4	83%	81%	84%	\$1.83	-\$13.65	-\$11.83
9	1.5	110%	0.9	112%	0.4	0.8	-4.1	107%	105%	109%	-\$4.81	\$7.90	\$3.09
10	-0.4	106%	-0.8	105%	0.0	0.5	-9.1	103%	105%	99%	\$8.18	-\$0.64	\$7.54
11	-0.2	107%	0.1	107%	0.0	0.2	-1.2	108%	108%	95%	\$9.65	-\$4.62	\$5.02
12	-0.4	117%	0.9	119%	-0.1	0.1	7.9	119%	117%	103%	\$16.07	\$2.10	\$18.17
13	-0.1	99%	-0.7	98%	0.0	0.2	2.6	99%	101%	99%	-\$0.05	-\$0.90	-\$0.95
14	-0.4	89%	-2.9	86%	-0.1	0.0	-3.3	91%	95%	91%	-\$5.24	-\$8.04	-\$13.28
16	-0.2	102%	-0.3	101%	0.0	0.3	-8.7	101%	101%	106%	\$1.65	\$5.40	\$7.04
17	0.1	125%	0.6	126%	0.4	2.1	-2.7	120%	119%	106%	\$14.85	\$5.10	\$19.94
19	-0.1	88%	-1.8	86%	0.2	1.3	-5.4	87%	89%	94%	-\$11.38	-\$5.32	-\$16.70
20	-0.2	98%	-1.3	96%	0.2	1.3	-5.3	101%	103%	102%	\$1.39	\$1.25	\$2.63
22	-0.2	106%	0.7	107%	0.1	0.7	-0.1	106%	105%	101%	\$6.48	\$0.50	\$6.98
30	-0.1	118%	-1.2	116%	0.2	1.1	-4.8	113%	114%	108%	\$11.78	\$7.20	\$18.97
32	0.3	85%	-1.9	83%	-0.2	-1.2	16.3	90%	92%	108%	-\$13.40	\$6.76	-\$6.65
34	0.4	84%	1.3	86%	-0.1	-0.9	3.6	89%	88%	100%	-\$11.71	\$0.10	-\$11.62
38	1.2	99%	0.7	101%	0.1	-0.9	5.9	106%	105%	107%	-\$6.02	\$5.75	-\$0.28
40	0.6	99%	0.3	99%	0.0	-0.4	11.3	95%	95%	102%	-\$8.39	\$2.04	-\$6.36
41	0.4	97%	3.6	102%	0.0	-0.5	2.6	102%	97%	110%	-\$2.48	\$8.56	\$6.08
42	-0.9	91%	2.8	94%	-0.2	-0.5	-3.3	93%	89%	89%	\$4.98	-\$9.45	-\$4.48
43	1.6	107%	0.5	108%	0.3	0.2	7.9	104%	104%	95%	-\$9.65	-\$4.08	-\$13.73
44	-0.7	101%	0.9	103%	-0.2	-0.2	-2.7	101%	100%	95%	\$9.08	-\$4.56	\$4.51
45	0.7	104%	1.5	106%	0.0	-0.5	9.9	105%	103%	109%	-\$4.72	\$7.45	\$2.73
46	0.0	105%	-4.8	98%	-0.1	-0.4	-6.1	97%	103%	105%	-\$3.05	\$4.26	\$1.20
47	-0.5	91%	1.9	94%	-0.3	-1.1	-7.9	92%	89%	99%	-\$0.50	-\$0.49	-\$1.00
49	-0.4	85%	0.5	85%	-0.2	-0.8	0.9	86%	86%	90%	-\$7.65	-\$8.86	-\$16.51
<b>Spring Drop Averages</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>70.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>\$71.56</b>	<b>\$85.66</b>	<b>\$157.21</b>
	um	kg	%	kg		%	mm	kg	kg	kg	\$/head	\$/head	\$/head

*Spring drop wool and meat values expressed in percentage form*







# CLIENT NEWS

As we moved through our private ram selections in 2023, it was evident that most had experienced excellent lambing percentages. The results below are marking results from ewes joined. Please keep in mind that the breeding ewes of these clients average just over 17 microns and their fleece weights are just above or below 7 kilograms.

The following clients deserve congratulations!

- The Taylor family from Caragabal, with 126%
- The Patey family from Boree Creek, with 120%
- The Molloy family from The Rock, with 121% (3-year average 117%)

- J. & E. Drew from Eurongilly, with 121%
- P. & M. Drew from Bethungra, with 125%

(In addition, the Drews finished in first place at the 2021-23 Australian Merino Production Trial)

- R. & C. Smith from Lockhart with 123%
- The Trevaskis family from Lockhart with 117%
- Steve Aughey from Wongarboon (near Dubbo) with 123%
- 'The King' of Osborne with 117% which is down on his 2022 result of 130%. The King's lamb marking contractor and my Dad, gave him this name many years ago because he always outperformed us, ordinary mortals, in terms of lambing percentages!

- D. & C. Gowland from Milbrulong, with 121% (The Kings lamb marking contractor)

Of note, these clients do not use melatonin implants and utilise naturally occurring fertility. For more than 40 years, Pastora has made selections for twin-bearing ewes and excellent fleece values, producing a product that leads the industry.



# NEW SHED & YARDS

Our last yard upgrade at Pastora Woolshed has now been completed. 2024 will be our first ram sale under the new structure. The covered yards, with a ramp system into the woolshed and dedicated ram selling area, aim to improve labour efficiency and lower stress on animals and staff!

The yards have already made it very easy to move sheep into and out of the woolshed during the recent shearing and one day before a storm we had around 2500 undercover. We'll be wondering how we managed without them in years to come!





# SHEARING SCHOOL

For the second year running, we hosted an intermediate shearing school at Pastora. Delivered by AWI, it was great to see some young and keen students participating under some exceptional instructors. It's encouraging to see that there is still a strong interest in the wool sector, which should lead to the production of excellent shearers and shed workers who can continue to provide labour and get the wool off for years to come.

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# LIVE SHEEP TRADE

Recently I had a conversation with a client regarding the live sheep trade which has prompted me to add the below. I found it very difficult to piece this together from various sources, but here goes.

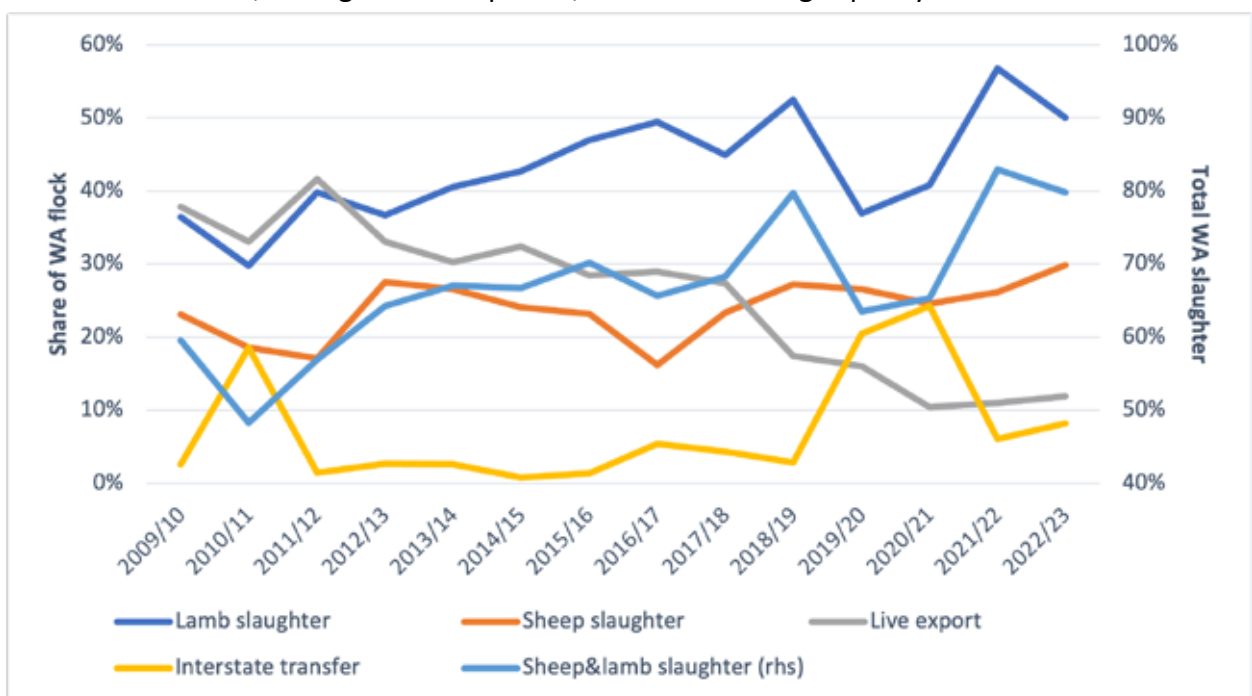
Australia exports live cattle, sheep, goats, dairy cows, buffalo and alpacas. Cattle comprise 90% of total live exports and Australia is the world’s largest exporter of sheep meat, exporting about 70% of the sheep meat we produce.

At this stage, live export will be banned on the 1st of May 2028, supposedly allowing four years for a staged approach for domestic markets to evolve. Industry consultants had asked for a 10-year window, but this was not granted. The liberal party has stated that if they win office, they will reinstate the boat trade.

Over the past 4 years, an average of 700,000 per year were exported live by sea from WA, which equates to an average of 12% of their total sheep market turnover. Also, during the same period, an

average of 800,000 per year or 15% sold, have been transported from WA to the eastern states destined for either abattoirs or farms. This has grown in tandem with the slowdown in the boat trade and the recent drop in sheep prices in Western Australia. Eastern state buyers deduct the travel cost from the livestock cost, so typically growers get \$30-40 less than we would get for the equivalent sheep. Coincidentally, \$30-40 dollars was around the price for mutton in Spring 2023 in the eastern states during the boat trade suspension.

WA does not have the capacity or workforce to process the sheep that currently leave on boats, especially in late Spring when large numbers flood WA’s market. The boat trade was a pressure valve for the extra numbers. However, Fletcher’s is building a 110,000-head feedlot in WA and the industry will work towards increasing capacity if it’s needed and viable.





	State					
	NSW	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
<i>Base:</i>	572	56	272	45	384	379
Total reported flock size for 2023:	9,634,296	520,533	4,069,020	1,094,302	6,672,533	5,056,466
Total expected flock size for 2024:	9,195,846	526,536	3,919,668	929,058	6,459,935	3,925,925
Difference of:	-438,450	6,003	-149,352	-165,244	-212,598	-1,130,541
% forecast change on 2023:	- 5%	+ 1%	- 4%	- 15%	- 3%	- 22%

From the WA farmer’s perspective, confidence is at an all-time low. In terms of the breeding flock, 55% of growers intend to decrease their breeding ewe base and there is a serious intent to lower stock numbers with MLA figures suggesting lamb production which is at already low levels to fall by another 22% in 2024. After speaking to several farmers these numbers could be optimistic as there are areas of WA in a decile 1 drought in late July 2024. The MLA graph above demonstrates the drop in lamb numbers.

WA’s total sheep flock was 14.3 million in 2018, 12.4 in 2021 and it’s hard to verify but it could be as low as 9 million now. It appears that their flock is in such a decline that there may be no surplus available for a boat trade in the future. If that happens there will cease to be an effect on Eastern state markets as seen last spring.

Probably most disturbing is how this has all come into being. It appears that the Albanese government made a deal with the Animal Justice Party (AJP) over live exports to gain the AJP preference votes in the recent Dunkley by-election in March. The Labor Party denies this but on the AJP website, they openly admitted to doing such a deal and are claiming victory. So sad that a whole state industry is thrown into disarray for a few hundred votes.

The AJP states on their website:

*We are already in deep preference negotiations with major parties for the upcoming federal election, laser-focused on*

*1- Ensuring Labour enshrines the end of the trade in law before the election*

*2 -Making the end of live cattle export the next AJP policy and political win.*

The AJP had just 0.60% of the votes at the last

federal election.

Australia has made significant investments in animal welfare and transport standards and has strict regulations and self-imposed standards. We are the only country that regulates animal welfare standards at the other end of the journey. The AJP may not realise but their interference has just lowered animal welfare from a worldwide perspective as the animals needed for religious festivals will simply be sourced now from a country with lower welfare standards.

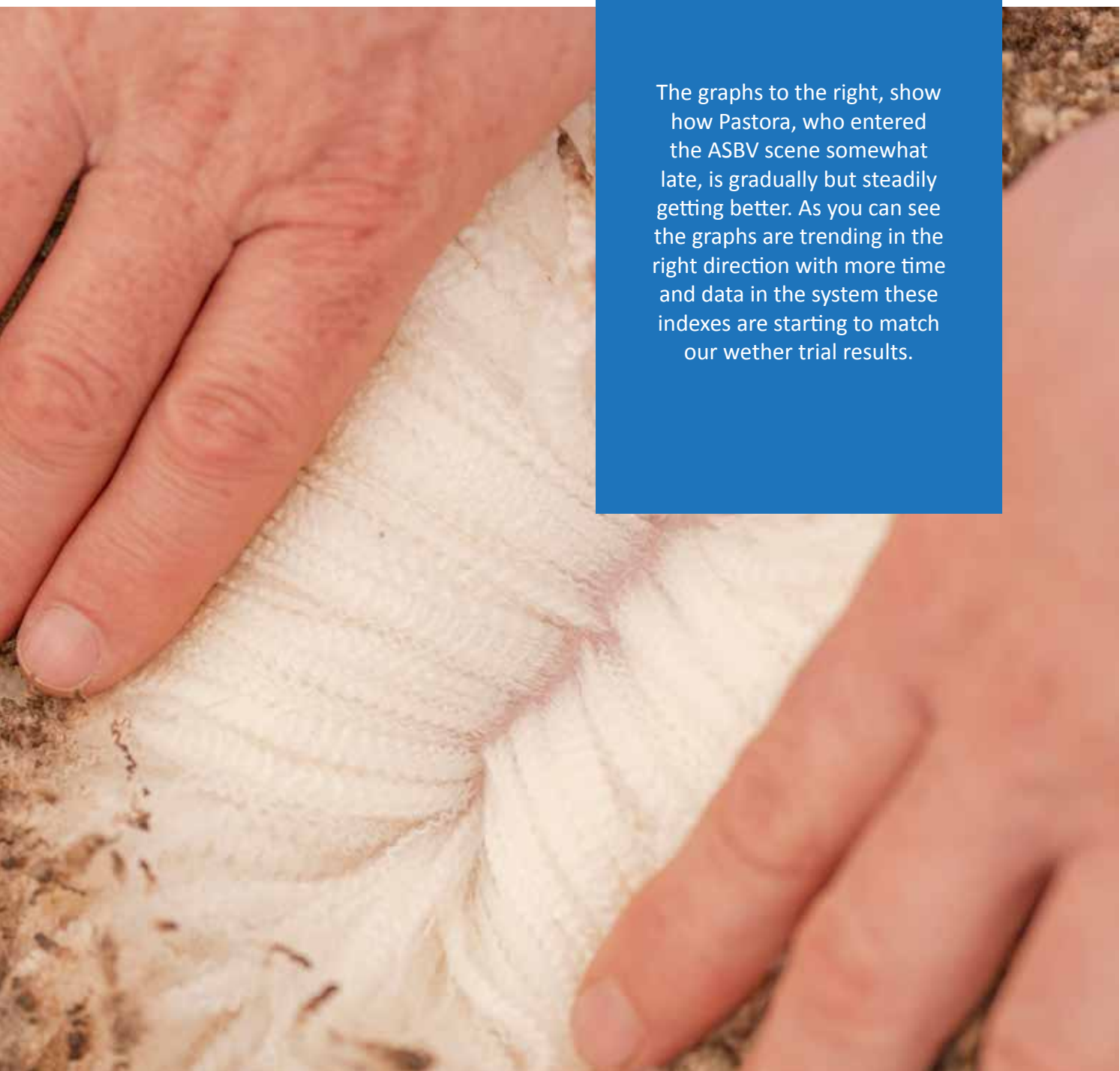
The anger is high amongst WA producers and connected industry bodies. The mental and financial scars are cutting very deep amongst WA producers and this is heightened by the dry weather, with high feed costs.

The **#keepthesheep** campaign is targeting marginal Labor seats at the next election and I have shown my support through a monetary donation.

It’s imperative in the future when the government enter negotiations with activist groups that they have in the back of their minds that farmers are not going to keep taking their BS. If the activist groups can sway the major parties with 0.60% of the federal vote, then SO MUST WE. Our industry bodies and regional political representatives need to grow some balls and start representing us.

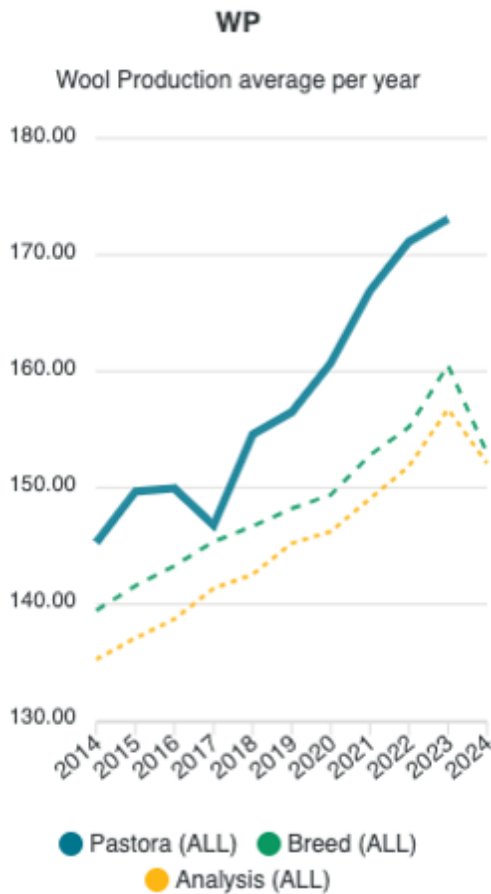
Don’t sit back and think it won’t affect us, these activists appear to have an agenda to stop all animal production and pet ownership and they are oblivious to how many animals are harmed or killed during the process of growing their vegetarian meals. We could be their next target. If the WA farmers are protesting in Canberra at any stage, I will be there with them!

# ASBVs



The graphs to the right, show how Pastora, who entered the ASBV scene somewhat late, is gradually but steadily getting better. As you can see the graphs are trending in the right direction with more time and data in the system these indexes are starting to match our wether trial results.



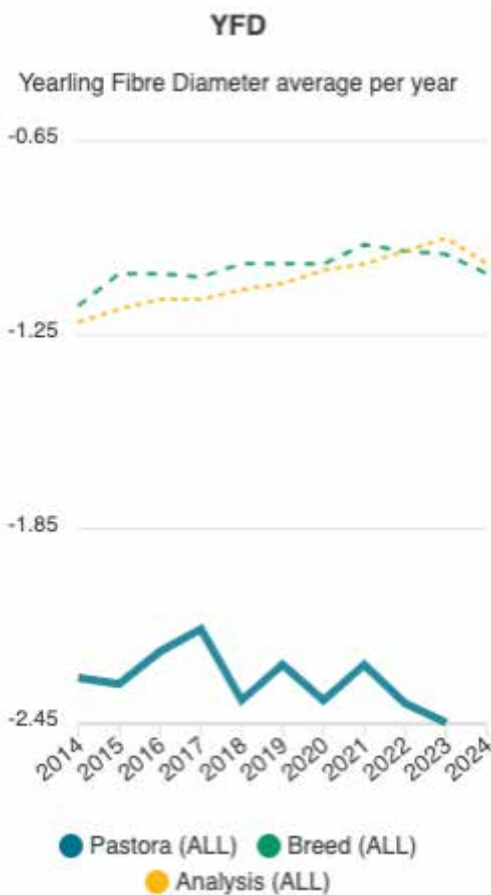


(left) Pastora's Wool Production Index average 173.12

The Breed Wool Production Index average 157.80

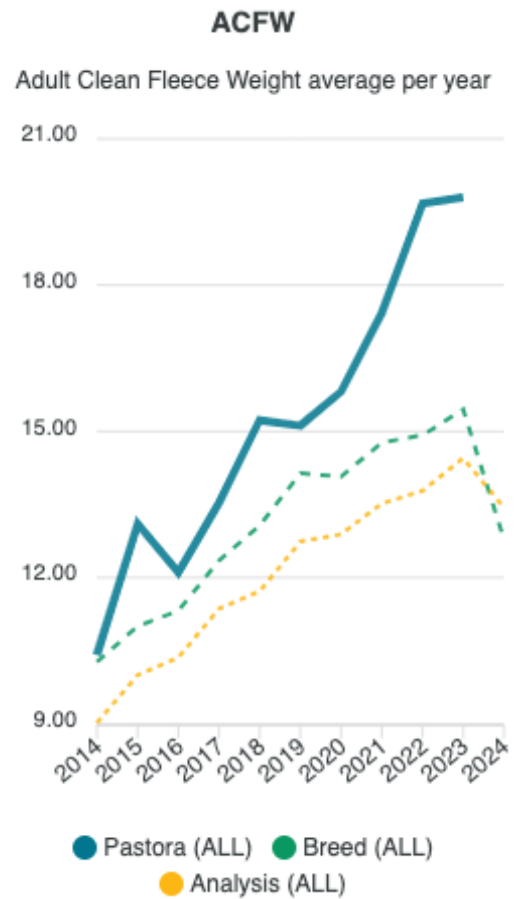
(Below) Pastora's Adult Clean Fleece Weight average 19.94

The Breeds Adult clean fleece Weight average 15.16



(left) Pastora's Yearling Fibre Diameter average -2.45

The Breeds Yearling Fibre Diameter average -1.07





The 2024 Peter Westblade Scholarship Winners were recently announced at the PWS Ball, held at the Wagga Rules Club, in May. Amongst many applicants, 6 Finalists were decided. Abby Byrnes, a wool technical officer and Doug Caldwell a sheep scanner, were inducted as the winners!

Applicants attended a Wyvern Weekend in February where they were provided industry knowledge and given the chance to highlight their skills and personability.

## **PWS ANNUAL STUD SEMEN & RAM SALE**

Save the date. The Annual PWS Stud Semen and Ram Sale run by AuctionsPlus will be held Tuesday 3rd September - 6th of September 2024.

More information can be found at <https://pwscholarship.au/>

All proceeds will go towards supporting the next generation of industry professionals.

Pastora is a proud supporter of the PWS scholarship and will be donating a \$1600 grade ram voucher redeemable at our auction.



*2024 PWS Wyvern weekend participants.*



# PAS

## THANK YOU

Call in and see us at the Henty Machinery Field Days  
Eastern end, Site 1033



**TIM & RACHEL WESTBLADE**

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