

Ed Storey **NSW Farmers**

This year has been a productive time for the NSW Farmers' Wool Committee, which in 2016 focused its attention on farm husbandry practices, traceability systems, and new biosecurity regulations for NSW.

At this year's NSW Farmers Annual Conference, members passed policy that strongly encouraged the use of pain relief and called for the National Wool Declaration to be made mandatory. NSW Farmers believes that woolgrowers have a positive story to tell about caring for their animals and using farm management practices that are appropriate for their own situation. Growers are continually looking for premiums on non-mulesed wool and wool mulesed with pain relief, and we believe that better uptake of the National Wool Declaration will add more transparency in the industry and allow for premiums to flow back to growers.

This year also saw farmers in NSW continue to campaign against the introduction of mandatory electronic identification (eID) tagging for sheep and goats. NSW Farmers opposes the introduction of mandatory eID on the basis that it will be unworkable and costly. While eID tags are useful to some producers, we believe that farmers should be able to make decisions on implementing technologies that are most suited to their particular farm business. NSW Farmers worked with our members and peak industry councils to raise our strong objections to Victoria's mandatory electronic tagging scheme, and we continue to work with governments on our joint commitment to the mob-based system within NSW.

In 2015, the NSW Government introduced new biosecurity legislation to come into effect from 2017. The new Biosecurity Act introduces the concept of the General Biosecurity Duty, which focuses on shared responsibility for biosecurity risk management. NSW Farmers is working with the NSW Government to ensure that the General Biosecurity Duty is effective in dealing with biosecurity risk for sheep, and we support the introduction of mandatory Sheep Health Statements when buying and selling animals. In the biosecurity space, NSW Farmers has also pushed awareness of Ovine Brucellosis and footrot after extraordinary spring rainfall led to an increased expression of footrot in some NSW regions.

In 2016-17, the Wool Committee is focusing on a number of priorities including wool selling, research and development, biosecurity, traceability, and animal wellbeing. NSW Farmers is also kicking off a campaign for government action on Q fever, calling for free vaccination clinics and a public awareness program to address infection risk for people working with livestock, including farmers and shearers. We will continue working with the NSW Department of Primary Industries on increasing the accuracy of the National Vendor Declaration to maintain commitment to the mob-based system and ensure that NSW remains at the forefront of sheep traceability.