

Queensland Merino Stud Sheepbreeders Association

By QMSSA Secretary Candice Roberts from Victoria Downs Merino Stud, Morven.

In September 2014, the Queensland Merino Stud Sheepbreeders Association (QMSSA) decided to head west for the 2016 State Sheep Show and so it was that preparations in Longreach began.

At the time, there was a little uncertainty about how the Show would be received due to the persistent drought years, the wild dog problem and a decline in the number of sheep in the area. However, the Longreach Show Society could not let the chance to host the State Sheep Show go by and they put everything they had into revamping the Sheep & Wool Pavilion and getting things ready for the Show. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-14/longreach-sheep-industry-on-cusp-of-change-as-wool-prices-up/7414914>

Some 84 stud sheep, over 100 flock ewes and 200 fleeces filled the pavilion when the Show opened on May 13th and it was wonderful to see so many proud merino breeders gather together with local Longreach sheep producers and prove that the industry is alive and well. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-13/queensland-sheep-show-highlights-optimism-in-industry/7411372>

The Merino industry's research, development and marketing body, Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), saw the opportunity to attend the Show and find out firsthand what wool producers in Western Queensland are facing. AWI's presence was well received and it was great to hear CEO Stuart McCullough speak to western Queensland producers and listen and learn about the issues that are affecting western Queensland wool production. It is support like this that wool producers need during tough times and a big thanks must go to Stuart and his team for making the trip to Longreach.



(AWI CEO Stuart McCullough and Wild Dog Program Manager Ian Evans addressing local producers at one of two woolgrower forums)

To add to the success of the weekend, local producers were honoured to have Wool Ambassador for AWI, Catriona Rowntree, at the State Sheep Show. Catriona was very delightful and a wonderful MC for the QMSSA Gala Dinner on

the Friday night. Her enthusiasm for the wool industry was contagious and the passion she has for the premium fibre of wool is just fantastic.



(Queensland Merino Stud Sheepbreeders' President Karen Huskisson (left) with AWI Wool Ambassador Catriona Rowntree.)

A State Sheep Show isn't complete without a Fashion Parade, with local resident and boutique owner of the 'The Tack Room' Ele Deane organising a wonderful showcase of woollen garments. The collection of woollen garments on the catwalk was beautiful and it is great to see someone like Ele supporting the wool industry and making woollen garments available to Western Queensland communities.

In the end, it is the sheep themselves that steal the spotlight and the line-up of stud sheep were a credit to their breeders. On the way to winning Supreme Exhibit, Mitchell Stud Mt Ascot took out Supreme Merino Exhibit, Queensland Ram of the Year and Queensland Junior Ram of the Year with their outstanding ram.

<http://www.queenslandcountrylife.com.au/story/3911336/mt-ascot-ram-reigns-supreme/?cs=4846>

Jolly Jumbuck Stud, also from Mitchell, had the honour of becoming the first Queensland Stud to win Supreme Poll Merino Exhibit and it is great to see the young Stud Masters Felicity, Charlie and Lachlan Brumpton doing so well on the show circuit. Jolly Jumbuck were also victorious in the Poll Merino Breeders Group which is an outstanding effort.

With their quality Merino ewe, Victoria Downs Stud from Morven claimed Queensland Ewe of the Year and Queensland Junior Ewe of the Year. They also won the Merino Breeders Group and will be heading to Bendigo in July after winning the Queensland Pair.

Roselea of Muckadilla won Grand Champion Fleece of the show with an exceptional fleece.

The level of competition in the show ring and on the wool tables is a credit to all Queensland Studs.

The State Sheep Show is also a chance for up and coming Merino Breeders to shine and congratulations must go to Mathew Backer for winning the Stud Sheep Junior Judging and Gregory Childs for taking out the Junior Fleece Judging competitions. QMSSA and all of Queensland's wool producers wish both Matthew and Gregory the best of luck when they head to the National Finals next year.

A huge thanks must go to all those involved in making the Longreach State Sheep Show such a success in 2016. The QMSSA was overwhelmed by the outstanding facilities and really appreciate just how much effort the Longreach Show Society put into this year's Show.