

MEDIA RELEASE

WoolProducers: COVID-19 impacting wool growers

29 June, 2020

Peak wool representative body, WoolProducers Australia (WoolProducers), has today released findings of an online survey of woolgrowers gauging the initial impacts of COVID-19.

Key findings from this survey included that the vast majority of woolgrowers believe that COVID-19 has impacted their businesses both in financial and non-financial ways, including significant reductions in income, difficulties accessing farm inputs and labour, and declines in the wool price seeing many woolgrowers withhold or withdraw their wool from sale at auction, leading to reduced cashflows.

WoolProducers President, Mr Ed Storey said, “The global response to COVID-19 has obviously impacted nearly every facet of how the world operates, and the wool industry is no exception”.

“Respondents to the survey estimated an average 32.6 per cent financial loss to their businesses during this time and further, over half of the respondents are currently not offering wool for sale.” Mr Storey said.

After analysing the results, WoolProducers has made a number of recommendations to the federal government for short-term assistance measures and medium and long-term recovery support activities to assist Australian woolgrowers.

Mr Storey said, “The current environment and operations of the wool industry due to the pandemic, both domestically and internationally have the ability to potentially affect the viability of wool growing businesses in the short, medium, and long term.”

“WoolProducers have therefore identified a number of actions that government can undertake to assist Australian woolgrowers during this difficult time”. Mr Storey said.

The short-term activities are designed to help with immediate cash-flow and support services, including more effective communications regarding currently available government support measures.

While medium- to long-term recovery policy requests are aimed at trade diversification and other activities to mitigate trade exposure risks.

“Woolgrowers have repeatedly proven that they are resilient, and we have faced adversity many times before.”

“WoolProducers would like thank those who participated in the survey as it has helped us better understand what is happening on ground and how we can best advocate these needs to government.” Mr Storey said.

A copy of the full report can be found at [WoolProducers Australia](https://www.woolproducers.com.au) website.

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About WoolProducers' Australia

WPA plays a critical role in working closely with companies and entities funded by woolgrower funds including compulsory levies or fees for service.

Its mission is to develop constructive and profitable outcomes for woolgrowers nationally.

The agency is responsible for appointing a director to each of the Australian Wool Exchange and the Australia Wool Testing Authority, promoting good corporate governance and ensuring that the interests of growers are met.

WPA maintains a working relationship with Australian Wool Innovation as the voice of woolgrower shareholders. It aims to contribute to AWI's programs for the benefit of growers, promoting responsible use of levy funds and ensuring good corporate governance.

WPA is the sole wool industry member of Animal Health Australia, and as such, carries a significant responsibility for decision making on behalf of the industry in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak.

As the only wool grower organisation with membership of the National Farmers' Federation, WoolProducers is responsible for providing key policy advice on behalf of our members, and other wool growers, to Australia's peak farm body.

WoolProducers also works closely with the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment on key issues such as animal health and welfare, biosecurity, pest management control, natural resource management, drought preparedness, emergency animal disease outbreak preparedness and industry development, including research and trade.