The New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition

1994 - 2004

A Decade of Excellence
Contents

Page

1-2  The Ultimate Clip Competition
3-4  Vitale Barberis Canonico
5-6  Successori Reda
7-8  A Decade of Excellance - Summary of Winners
9-10 Winner 1993/94
11-12 Winner 1994/95 & 1995/96
15-16 Winner 1997/98
17-18 Winner Photo Gallery
19-20 Winner 1999/2000
21-22 Winner 2000/01
23-24 Winner 2001/02
25-26 Winner 2002/03
27-28 Winner 2003/04
29-30 Photo Gallery
31-32 Looking to the Future
New England Wool Pty Ltd was founded in August 1990. Purchasing approximately 5000 bales in the first season, it rapidly established itself as a major force in the Australian fine wool industry. New England Wool developed strong rapport with professional woolgrowers and brought these woolgrowers into contact with the company's Italian fabric making shareholders. The resulting two-way flow of information between producer and manufacturer has been the solid foundation upon which New England Wool has grown.

The ongoing support in the market from Vitale Barberis Canonico SPA and Reda SPA via New England Wool has been welcomed by woolgrowers. The willingness of shareholders to differentiate well bred and prepared wools from inferior types through price premiums has sent a strong message of quality to the fine wool segment of the industry.

Early in 1993 New England Wool was approached by the New England region committee of the Australian Superfine Wool Growers Association. The association wanted to establish a competition to encourage fine and superfine growers in the region. The New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition was the result of this request. It was designed to encourage the natural production of fine/superfine wool and focuses on the entire clip. It rewards producers displaying best practice in the breeding and management of their stock, where stock are bred and managed to achieve their natural potential; and wool is prepared with the quality fabric maker in mind.

New England Wool saw the competition as a great vehicle to communicate its message of quality to woolgrowers. The competition was designed to specifically meet the requirements of the Italian shareholders and communicate New England Wools’ philosophy to woolgrowers. Woolgrowers who adhere to this philosophy are generally rewarded by creating maximum competition for their clips at auction.

In 1998 New England Wool and its shareholders raised the profile of the competition by offering a trip to Italy for the winning clip. Tim & Sybilla Bower of Stanley Vale were the first to receive this award. In the 2000/2001 season the competition was opened up to all fine wool growers from NSW. Queensland was added in the 2003/2004 season to cater for the rapidly developing Traprock region.

The Ultimate Clip Competition attracts approximately 180 woolgrowers with clips measuring 18.5u or finer. The competition runs from May to April each season with a presentation dinner for 200 people held each June to announce finalists and winners.

This publication is in recognition of the first decade of the competition. It provides an historic record of its development and highlights the winners over the years. The New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition has become a major highlight of the fine/superfine wool industry calendar and will continue to evolve into the future.
New England Wool Team
Andrew Blanch, Andrew Raeber, Murray Bragg
Over 360 employees, 50 agents worldwide, and two factories at the leading edge of technology and management methods.

Vitale Barberis Canonico is located in the Biella textile district and has been producing for many years, high quality worsted fabrics for men’s wear, marketed at an excellent quality-price ratio and with a first-rate service.

The Company was founded in 1936 and became a limited company in 1971, however the first documents that certify the family's involvement in the wool-trade date back to 1663.

Vitale Barberis Canonico is a completely vertical mill including dyeing, spinning, weaving and finishing departments. It is highly automated and produces over six million metres of fabric per year.

The Company is specialised in worsted fabrics for traditional formal suits and is one of the biggest of this type of business in the world.

Vitale Barberis Canonico fabrics are exported to nearly one hundred countries throughout the world: from the UK to Pakistan, from Brazil to Central Africa. The main markets are the United States, China, Germany and Japan.
Ongoing research for the highest efficiency and quality leads the Company to continuously develop and upgrade its production equipment with substantial investment.

The mill is equipped with highly advanced technologies, exclusive software and machinery that have been specifically designed by Vitale Barberis Canonico. For example, the yarn warehouse, the finished goods warehouse and the dyeing department are all fully automated.

Vitale Barberis Canonico is very meticulous as far as wool buying is concerned, always looking for excellence. This is the first requirement to achieve the highest quality standards during each stage of the production process. The Company is not just satisfied with the classic parameters of wool, like fineness, length and strength. It goes further, evaluating the more hidden and inner aspects which contribute to the style of the wool like brightness, crimp and resilience, and the amount and dimension of the scales on the fibre. All in all, only the most suitably bred for an excellent fabric.

With the support of New England Wool, the Company is constantly providing the wool producers with the necessary feedback and information to help them achieve the highest quality. The Ultimate Clip Competition is an integral part of this process.

Once the bales arrive in Italy they are inspected thoroughly one by one, with specific emphasis on classing standards. The results of these inspections have enabled Vitale Barberis Canonico to build an impressive and useful archive including each single breeder.

Most of the wool is sourced from Australia, where the most precious Saxon Merinos in the world are produced.

Ing. Alberto Barberis Canonico
The History

In 1816, with the first stroke of a power loom in the village of Valle Mosso, the industrial revolution began in Italy. Biella soon became the heart of the wool industry. It was right here, in Valle Mosso, that after approximately one century, the family Botto Poala took over the mill, Lanificio Giovanni Reda e Figli, which later became Successori Reda SpA.

From the very beginning, the goals at Reda were;
- Specialisation;
- A high level of creativity;
- Constant industrial modernisation;
- An extreme pursuit of quality and
- Improvement of service.

These were ambitious ideas. However, these ideas have been unfailingly pursued, notwithstanding the innumerable difficulties that have had to be dealt with over the years. Thanks to this forward thinking, today the Company has become a world leader in the manufacture of pure wool worsted fabrics for men’s wear. Producing around 6 million metres each year, more than 70% is sold in the most important foreign markets of Europe, America and Asia.

The need to be competitive in both national and international markets has been the stimulation for Reda to keep constantly up to date. Nowadays the structures, the machinery and the facilities are highly technological and the people are extremely specialised.
The New Plant

Over the years the company has increased its facility; especially towards the end of the 1970’s. This was when the first settlement in the land division of Crocemosso occurred. Situated approximately 5km above Valle Mosso, this settlement was proof of the Company’s affection for this land and of the trust they had in the professional competence of its people.

The “dream” which began more than 20 years ago became reality at the end of the 1990’s when the new plant of over 20,000 sqm was built at Crocemosso. This allowed the concentration and rationalisation of all the activities and services of the Company. It is here that all operations related to the transformation of wool (imported from Australia and New Zealand) takes place. The new facility (which originally included only the spinning, warping and weaving departments) has now become the company’s reference point for all the new programs. On this site more than 350 people work to create pure wool worsted fabrics, which still remains the exclusive element of our production.

The Mission

Our passion for wool takes us to the faraway lands of Australia and New Zealand where our dedicated New England Wool staff purchase the best merino wool on our behalf. This passion has persuaded us to buy properties in the region of North Otago (Rugged Ridges and Otamatapaio Station) in the South Island of New Zealand. In Australia and New Zealand (synonymous for excellence in sheep-breeding) we select the merino wool that best suits our yarns. The New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition provides us with the perfect conduit for sharing our requirements with professional wool growers.

The yarns produced in the modern facility of Crocemosso with the most advanced technology, find a perfect union with the experience and the professional competence of our employees. Innovative collections are generated with the target of producing fabrics at the highest level of research, according to fashion trends and in perfect harmony with the needs of our customers.

Ercole Botto Poala
### Summary of winners

#### 1993/94
- **1st**: DZ / TEANGI / NE  
- **2nd**: IC / TARRANGOWER / NE  
- **3rd**: CM / KELVINVALE / NE  
  
  Venue: ‘Old Bishops Court’, Armidale, NSW

#### 1994/95
- **1st**: CM / KELVINVALE / NE  
- **2nd**: JW / URALLA  
- **3rd**: IC / TARRANGOWER / NE  
  
  Venue: ‘Old Bishops Court’, Armidale, NSW

#### 1995/96
- **1st**: CM / KELVINVALE / NE  
- **2nd**: DR / GOSTWYCK  
- **3rd**: JW / URALLA  
  
  **Encouragement**: JEH / GREENWAY  
  
  Venue: ‘Old Bishops Court’, Armidale, NSW

#### 1996/97
- **1st**: JW / URALLA  
- **2nd**: IC / TARRANGOWER / NE  
- **3rd**: L – H / KYABRA / DZ / TEANGI  
  
  **Encouragement**: HBR / MT LYDIA  
  
  Venue: ‘Old Bishops Court’, Armidale, NSW

#### 1997/98
- **1st**: HBR / STANLEY VALE  
- **2nd**: CM / KELVINVALE / NE  
- **3rd**: JW / URALLA / RJW / ESSEX HILL / NE  
  
  **Encouragement**: L / INGLEHOLME / WALCHA  
  
  Venue: ‘Archie’s’, Moore Park Inn, Armidale, NSW

#### 1998/99
- **1st**: JW / URALLA  
- **2nd**: JHC / TALISKER / NE  
- **3rd**: CM / KELVINVALE / NE / GLENFIELD / NE  
  
  **Encouragement**: JAW / NE  
  
  Venue: Ex Services Club, Armidale, NSW

#### 1999/2000
- **1st**: IC / TARRANGOWER / NE  
- **2nd**: AAY / BALNAGOWAN / NE  
- **3rd**: JW / URALLA  
  
  **Encouragement**: HOLYWELL / MPC  
  
  Venue: Ex Services Club, Armidale, NSW

#### 2000/01
- **1st**: JHC / TALISKER / NE  
- **2nd**: DR / GOSTWYCK  
- **3rd**: AAY / BALNAGOWAN / NE  
  
  **Encouragement**: RC / THE VALE  
  
  Venue: ‘Noahs on the Beach’, Newcastle, NSW

#### 2001/02
- **1st**: LAC / QUEENLEE / NE  
- **2nd**: JHC / TALISKER  
- **3rd**: WV / P / GLENBROOK / NE  
  
  **Encouragement**: NOVAR  
  
  Venue: ‘Noahs on the Beach’, Newcastle, NSW

#### 2002/03
- **1st**: W V / P / GLENBROOK / NE  
- **2nd**: GG – HG / WILLANDRA / MUDGEE  
- **3rd**: GOWRIE / NE / DRW / BOXHILL / OAK HILLS / PYRAMUL  
  
  **Encouragement**: CLAVERING / MUDGEE  
  
  Venue: ‘Hunter Valley Gardens Resort’, Pokolbin, NSW

#### 2003/04
- **1st**: GOWRIE / NE  
- **2nd**: IC / TARRANGOWER / NE  
- **3rd**: A / KC / NE / GLENFIELD / NE  
  
  **Encouragement**: SUNNYSIDE / BIGGA  
  
  Venue: ‘Hunter Valley Gardens Resort’, Pokolbin, NSW
Description of Property & Enterprise:

- Location – 50km east of Guyra, NSW (New England Region)
- Size – 2835ha (7000ac)
- No. of sheep – 10,000
- Average micron – 18.5u
- Other enterprises – 500 breeding cows
- Soil Type – mixture of granite and basalt trap

History of Property:

Teangi was first settled in the 1880’s as part of the large Fishington property. Since that time soldier settler blocks were acquired.

Bloodlines & Breeding Philosophy:

The original Teangi flock came from classed 3, 4 and 5 year old pure Havilah blood ewes. These were bought from Abington during a drought some time in the 1950’s. Cressbrook rams were used during the 60’s and 70’s. My earliest recollection of sheep classing was helping my father select Cressbrook rams using the first AWTA micron tests, when I was eleven years old.

Auchen Dhu rams were introduced in the 1980’s and Greg Fletcher taught me how to look into wool and see its characteristics.

The Teangi super fine stud was established in 1986 using Grathlyn rams and I learnt basic breeding principles from the Rayner family.

The Teangi property was sold in 2000 (a sad day). Core breeding stock were maintained and a concerted effort began to develop a breeding program to produce consistent quality fibre for the Italian textile market.

The basic philosophy is to breed consistent and high quality fibre for the textile industry. In doing so, the aim is to develop and disseminate the acquired genetics and associated knowledge to other like-minded super fine wool producers.

The New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition has become the benchmark of excellence. It has raised the standards of breeding, preparation and presentation of super fine wool. Participation in the competition is a measure of the passion which super fine wool growers possess for the industry.

Tim Robertson
Classing and Preparation:

I consider low micron, first page wool to be one of nature’s wonders - sheer purity and beauty. It is disappointing to see that growing this luxurious fibre for the elite garment market is under so much economic pressure.

As a wool producer and classer I am completely obsessed with growing the best fleece possible. The cycle starts when the shorn sheep leave the board and slide down the shute. From that moment, everything possible is done to produce spinner or better type wools.

Throughout the year the aim is to manage the environment to minimise wool faults. Reducing the quantity of tender wool is achieved through supplementary feeding and grazing management.

Vegetable matter is kept to a minimum by using sheep coats, slashing and grazing techniques. I endeavour to reduce the amount of dust penetration by watering yards and gateways when moving or handling stock.

I am continually trying to improve wool style. This is achieved through a number of means.

- Ram selection – purchasing of both rams and semen, with emphasis on style.
- Sheep classing.
- Fleece measurement - used for sheep selection, sheep classing and most importantly wool fibre knowledge.
- High lambing percentages - allows for increased selection pressure.
- Animal health.

I get a huge amount of satisfaction classing superfine wool, so shearing is a special time of year. The main thing with classing is to keep it as simple as possible. This involves concentrating on wool types and making sure there is a home for every piece of wool.

I am a perfectionist and like to surround myself with competent people so I can do my job without having to worry about anything else in the shed.
Clip Name: CM / KELVINVALE / NE

Owners: Greg and Peter Munsie

Classer: Peter Munsie

Description of Property & Enterprise:

- Location – 5km East of Uralla, NSW (New England Region)
- Size – 2118 ha (5470ac)
- No. of sheep – 14,000
- Average micron – 17.1μ
- Other enterprises – Fat lambs and cattle
- Soil Type – Basalt, trap and granite

History of Property:

The property has been in the Munsie name for four generations. The superfine tradition was started in the early 1900s by grandfather Thomas E.C. Munsie (known as Tec Munsie). Tec Munsie topped the market many times in Sydney before the advent of wool sales in Newcastle.

The tradition was carried on by parents Claude and Thel Munsie, who received the highest price at market in Newcastle on several occasions. Kelvin Vale have proven consistency in quality by producing unhoused 1PP bales for 13 consecutive years in Newcastle February sales.

Bloodlines & Breeding Philosophy:

The Kelvin Vale flock was founded by Tec Munsie on “Winton” bloodlines. Merryville rams were introduced in 1950. In 1964 Claude Munsie purchased two Hillcreston rams from Sam Picker. Since then only Hillcreston rams and genetic material have been used. One of the recent highlights has been a very successful artificial insemination program using semen from the top Hillcreston sire Super Snowy.

Our philosophy is to keep breeding and producing bright, stylish superfine wool with the heaviest possible cut per head for this type.
Classing and Preparation:

At Kelvin Vale we believe it is important to look at the twelve months leading up to shearing as an integral part of our classing and preparation regime.

Over this period all sheep have to be kept free from all internal and external parasites and kept in the best possible wool growing order. This is the domain of Greg who does an excellent job. His work throughout the year makes the professional work in the shearing shed (the domain of brother and partner Peter) possible.

On the side of preparation we make sure that all staff (from the shearers to the presser) are of the highest quality and take pride in their work. Only qualified, experienced and professional wool men are employed in the shed.

Peter is not a great believer in the measurement of the whole flock as it can contribute to poor preparation. This can place too much emphasis on micron and not enough on style, length and visual quality.

At Kelvin Vale however, testing can be a handy tool. 250 ewes and 250 wethers are chosen annually (on visual quality attributes) to be placed under rugs. These 500 sheep are micron tested to eliminated those that fall outside acceptable micron ranges. Similarly, approximately 600-800 weaner fleeces (chosen on style) are tested. This allows the selection of bales testing 14.1 to 15 micron.

We are very proud of our achievements with our wool clip and stud over the years. We also take much delight in sharing our knowledge with other interested wool growers. Our shearing sheds are always open for inspection to those who want to see our system first hand. Our success over the years in a number of competitions, and obtaining record wool prices, is testament to our method of preparation and our breeding strategies. Two Kelvin Vale ram clients have won the New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition (JW/URALLA 1999 and JHC/TALISKER 2001).

Additional quality clips on Kelvin Vale bloodlines include:

- GLENBURNIE / NE
- WJP / KARANA
- ESSEX HILL / NE
- CMC / FAIRVIEW / NE
- SUPERIOR ACE / NE
- PJF / NE

Kelvin Vale holds an On Property Ram Sale in January each year and a surplus sheep sale is held each March.

Joff and Claude Munsie circa 1920
Description of Property & Enterprise:

- **Location**: 4 km east of Uralla, NSW (New England Region)
- **Size**: 1000 ha (2470ac)
- **Number of sheep**: 6500 merino sheep
- **Average micron**: The average micron over the last ten years has varied between 17.2 and 17.4
- **Other enterprises**: 350 to 400 Beef Cattle
- **Soil type**: Soil types vary over the whole property but include basalt, fine granite and trap types

History of Property:

The original property has been in the family for about 100 years. It has been expanded from 300 ha to the current 1000 ha in the last 20 years. The family was known more as horse breakers in earlier times however old records show that sheep (wool growing) have been part of the property's history from the initial days of ownership. Increase in cattle numbers from a handful to current numbers has only occurred over the last 20 years.

Bloodlines and Breeding Philosophy:

Up until the last 20 years a variety of different bloodlines were used. A decision was taken about that time to become predominantly a superfine wool growing enterprise. Genetic material was then sourced from the Hillcreston Stud as well as Kelvin Vale Stud (a daughter stud of Hillcreston). This program continues today, however a couple of experimental variations are currently being trialled by virtue of an AI program. The type of wool produced is that sought after by the Italian processors; traditional superfine wool.
Classing and Preparation:

Classing for the following year’s clip effectively starts when the sheep goes down the shute after being shorn. Mobs that are going to be grouped together at the next shearing (12 months away) will be exposed to similar nutritional levels and management practises over this period.

Approximately one month prior to shearing all sheep are visually appraised. After the initial assessment (if numbers are sufficient) micron testing is utilised to identify the broader sheep. This allows for cull sheep to be removed for sale once shearing is complete. More importantly, it gives us an indication as to the likely standards of our coming wool clip. With this knowledge we will discuss with our broker any necessary measures we need to adopt when classing and preparing our wool clip, given the current market conditions and/or requirements.

We have four separate shearings; lambing ewes, young ewes and wethers, wethers and hoggets. We operate a three stand shed with two wool tables. Each table has a supervising person (usually family member) who endeavours to ensure consistent preparation as well as identifying inferior fleeces. All staff are given clear instructions as to their role as well as the importance of that role in the finished product. There are no weak links. Everyone from shearer to presser is involved in discussions to identify and improve our efforts. If any problem occurs all staff members will be part of the solution.

We try to be innovative and progressive. We also keep up-to-date with market demands and trends. Once you believe you know it all and can do everything perfectly, it is time to give up, because you’ll get left behind.

The Italian Experience:

Like all other winners that have been to Italy, we regarded it as a trip of a lifetime. Besides the hospitality that our hosts bestowed upon us which was fantastic, the insight into the operation of the mills and their commitment to the industry was extremely enlightening and should be a must do exercise for all woolgrowers. I believe all players in the industry need a better understanding of the operations of each other if the industry is to survive and grow. This may be a factor of the Reda and Barberis success as they have exposure to, and an appreciation of, all stages of the wool industry.
Description of Property & Enterprise:

- **Location** – 10km east of Uralla, NSW (New England Region)
- **Size** – 810ha (2000ac)
- **No. of sheep** – 5500
- **Average micron** – 17.0u
- **Other enterprises** – Merino stud, beef cattle and fat lambs
- **Soil/pasture type** – Soil varies from heavy black basalt to loamy soils and also varies from flat terrain to undulating hills. Pastures are a mixture of native and improved which receive an annual super phosphate application

Bloodlines & Breeding Philosophy:

Originally ewes and rams were purchased from Gostwyck Station. Then Tasmanian bloodlines were introduced. Later Merryville bloodlines were used. In recent times Stanley Vale has used its own genetics.

Occasionally new sires are introduced into the stud. All of these potential sires are first progeny tested on a small number of ewes and their progeny is assessed. Only after a successful assessment will a sire be introduced fully into the stud.

To minimise the chances of disease an extensive artificial insemination programme is carried out annually. A progeny test is also performed on any new AI sires to be introduced.

Stanley Vale is committed to the breeding of traditional superfine merinos.

History of Property:

Heinrich Bower with his wife and sons emigrated from Germany in 1854. In 1865 the family purchased three blocks of land which they named Stanley Vale. Heinrich was a farmer in Germany and continued to use his knowledge of farming on his new property. It was Heinrich’s son Henry who first showed an interest in Merino sheep and wool growing.

Around 1872 the Bower’s purchased an unknown quantity of stud rams and ewes from Gostwyck Station. These sheep formed the foundation stock of Stanley Vale breeding. The HBR brand was registered in 1866 as a cattle brand and continues to be used as the head brand on the wool bales today.
The Italian Experience:

The trip to Italy was an experience of a lifetime. The sights, sounds, smells, tastes, history, scenery, food and wine were all wonderful, amazing and unforgettable. Visiting Biella and seeing first hand the huge investments made by the Italians, and listening to them speak with such passion about superfine wool, gave us encouragement and faith in the future of our Industry.

Classing and Preparation:

Clip preparation begins with the selection of rams and semen. Sires are matched to the ewes with emphasis placed on wool quality and confirmation.

Preparation for shearing begins 12 months beforehand. Weed control is of major importance to keep vegetable matter to a minimum. Appropriate fertiliser is regularly applied to pastures to maintain solid wool growth. On Stanley Vale we regularly monitor the number of worms in the sheep to increase tensile strength. High worm counts cause tender wool and reduce cut per head. A high culling percentage is maintained to keep the quality of the flock to our high standard. When sheep are brought to the yards a watering system keeps dust penetration to a minimum.

In preparation for shearing all sheep are crutched to ensure they are stain free. Mobs of sheep brought into the shed to be shorn are of a similar type and style. This means that a more even product can be presented to the wool classer, giving more time to class for more subtle wool characteristic like strength, length, colour and handle.

At Stanley Vale we endeavour to maintain a shearing shed with good, even light especially for wool classing and preparation. A ruler is permanently marked on the table for measuring the length of wool staples. There is a separate area with hooks to hang clothing to eliminate the chance of any contamination. There must be enough labour in the shed to enable everyone to do a quality job. Our view is that there is no point in taking care of the sheep for twelve months and then ruining it at shearing due to a lack of staff to prepare each fleece properly.

When employing staff for shearing, shedhands must have an interest in, and experience with, superfine wool. Most importantly we source only the best quality shearers.

Every fleece is assessed individually. As each fleece arrives on the table it is first tested for strength and then it is skirted accordingly.

The job is still not finished when the wool leaves the shearing shed. The best way to benchmark our clip is by talking to wool buyers and gathering information on their requirements and by comparing the preparation of other wool clips. Entering the Ultimate Clip Competition always provides reliable and practical feedback for our family and staff.

When you think you have done the best job possible just remember that you can do better.

This is our motto and we believe that it is our formula for success. We take enormous pride in being a family run business. Kevin (Bower) who is 81 has been classing wool all his life and now his children and grand children are actively involved.

The Ultimate Clip Competition
Clip Name: IC / Tarrangower / New England

Owners: Don & Fay Tully

Classer: David Waters

Description of Property & Enterprise:

- Location - 40km north-east of Armidale, NSW (New England Region)
- Size - 1457ha (3600 acres)
- No. of sheep - 9500
- Ave micron - 16.9 adult 14.9 hogget
- Other enterprises - Steer growing and fattening
- Soil/Pasture type - Mainly trap soil, improved native & new pastures and crops

History of Property:

Until 1979 Tarrangower was part of the 1300 acre property Girrakool, owned and operated by Ross and Peg (Coventry) Tully. Superfine wool production has always been the main enterprise on Tarrangower. Glenn Tully and Angie (Tully) Waters have been involved since 1996 and are the fifth generation of wool producers.

Bloodlines and Breeding Philosophy:

The original bloodline was Merryville with later infusions of Ledgerton, Westvale and Hillcreston blood. Our aim is to produce superfine wool of the highest quality, required by the Italian market. We aim to produce sound, stylish and bright wool of suitable length and micron.
Classing and Preparation:

The preparation of the Tarrangower clip starts with a good animal health program. The flock is brucellosis and footrot free and has MN3 status for Ovine Johnnes Disease. Regular monitoring for worms and the introduction of Maremma dogs (to guard some mobs against attack by feral animals) are two ways in which production has been improved.

All sheep on the property are classed at least once a year using hand/eye and fleece measurements. Ewes are joined in their micron groups and sheep arrive for shearing in these established groups.

The modern raised-board shearing shed has fantastic lighting. A situated light well above the classer’s table gives an even light throughout the day. Great care is taken with the cleanliness of the shed and Occupational Health & Safety issues. Group dynamics is also very important. There is no doubt that hand-picked, happy and satisfied employees perform better.

Two shed staff are employed for each of the three shearsers. A maximum of 500 sheep are shorn per day allowing time to prepare the required end product. The woolclasser is a dedicated professional with a very keen eye for all the attributes of a well classed clip.

The Italian Experience:

We believe that the Ultimate Clip Competition has been largely responsible for the immense improvement in the way wool is prepared in New South Wales. The award gives growers an opportunity to discuss their business with leading Italian mill owners and operators; and we welcome any grower and processor interaction. As winners of the prestigious award in 2000 we were thrilled to visit Biella for a week as part of our prize. To see first hand what Reda and Barberis were doing with our raw product was exciting. It was also encouraging to note their absolute faith in our end of the wool industry in their use of ultra modern technology and machinery, as well as their amazing quality control throughout the operations.

The trip to Italy was a great reward for years of dedication to preparing the best possible clip. Andrew and his Italian associates left nothing to chance in making our time in Italy both a rewarding business experience and a wonderful holiday in one of the world’s great destinations. The attention to detail was very much appreciated, including the services of an interpreter (now friend) Paola Caniggia, and an opportunity for us to practice our Italian.
**Description of Property & Enterprise:**

- **Location** – 10 kms South of Uralla, NSW (New England Region)
- **Size** – 1010 ha (2500 acres)
- **No. of sheep** – 8000
- **Average micron** – 17.0u
- **Other enterprises** – Poll Hereford and Angus Cross cattle.
- **Soil/Pasture Type** – The area has an average elevation of 1000m with a basaltic soil base. The native and improved pastures respond well to an 800 mm long term average rainfall.

**Classing and Preparation:**

On Talisker we are constantly classing our sheep during routine animal husbandry practices to cull out any inferior sheep with conformation or wool quality faults.

Prior to shearing all sheep are classed into even lines based on age and wool type. This leads to greater efficiency of wool classing at shearing time.

We are vigilant in the elimination of all possible sources of contamination. The main steps taken to achieve this include:

- Crutching of all sheep one month prior to shearing to remove any trace of stain
- The elimination of all contaminants from paddocks, yards and wool shed. Excess clothing items, towels, smoking and eating are prohibited in the wool room and board area
- Use of modern yards with concrete floors designed to reduce dust and mud contamination

The shed design provides an efficient flow of wool from the shearing board to the classing table. At Talisker there is never pressure on the wool handlers. We maintain a staffing level that allows wool handlers to have sufficient time to do their jobs thoroughly and accurately, so that fleeces are effectively skirted and suitably prepared for the classer.

During skirting all necks, backs and hind legs are removed. The aim is to make the wool as even in length and style as possible. All our wool handlers are qualified wool classifiers selected on their ability to recognise soft handle and superior style. We employ an additional wool handler to “pick” the skirtings and to separate them into Pieces and

**History of Property:**

The Carlon Family established itself on the Salisbury Plain in 1858.

**Bloodlines & Breeding Philosophy:**

The flock is based on Saxon bloodlines and has always had the primary focus of producing a traditional spinners type wool.
The Italian Experience:

As winners of the 2000/2001 New England Wool Ultimate Clip Competition we were lucky enough to win a trip to Italy. We toured all over Italy but the absolute highlight was Biella. Biella, located in Northern Italy allowed us to visit some of the most spectacular sights including the Italian Lakes district and Portofino.

We were wined and dined by the Reda and Barberis companies at many superb restaurants. The hospitality we received was fabulous. It was definitely a unique holiday that we will never forget. We will return to the area again one day.

We visited both the Reda and Barberis mill operations. We found these tours most informative. This thorough understanding of the production process made us fully appreciate why various wool characteristics are so important. This also reinforced why the two families insist on professional wool classing procedures in our shearing sheds. We now fully understand and agree that if we do not conform to these standards, our the wool may not be acceptable to these companies.

The Ultimate Clip Competition is making a huge impact on developing awareness for classing excellence and not simply chasing microns. We have visited mills in other countries but one notable feature of the Reda and Barberis mills was the massive investment (and re-investment) in infrastructure and cutting edge technology. This insight allowed us to leave Italy feeling reassured that such high investment in wool processing means there is a bright future for those growers in Australia who continue to strive for excellence in superfine wool production.

Broken. The Fleecy Broken portion resulting from this additional cost of labour is usually well rewarded in the auction room.

The wool is classed into suitable lines for the Italian weaving market using traditional classing methods with an emphasis on tensile strength, style and handle. We believe that the hand/eye approach is the best way to class the superfine wool on Talisker. Fleece measurements are used as an aid to traditional classing when selecting rams and replacement ewes.
Description of Property & Enterprise:

- Location – 37km South of Armidale, NSW (New England Region)
- Size – 2830ha (7000ac)
- No. of sheep – 14000
- Average micron – 17.8u
- Other enterprises – 900 Poll Hereford cattle
- Soil Type – Mixture of trap and highly improved basalt which is supered annually

History of Property:

The Carlon Family have been breeding fine and superfine merinos for over 140 years. In 2005 the Queenlee Stud will celebrate 70 years in the New England region. Andrew Carlon came to New England around 1854 where he worked as a shepherd and gradually purchased small blocks of land.

When Tony and Barbara Carlon inherited Queenlee it was 870ha (2150ac). Today the family has 2830ha (7000ac).

Tony, Barbara, their son Philip, his wife Jenni and their three sons Thomas, Joseph and Samuel (6th generation) are working together to improve and promote the Australian Merino and its wool; a fantastic natural product.

They are dedicated woolgrowers who love their lifestyle and take very good care of their sheep and land.

The country is open (not much timber) as it has always been a natural plain. It is undulating with no steep hills. Over the years trees have been planted (shelter belts) near the sheep camps to protect the sheep during cold, windy weather which can occur during shearing and lambing. The trees also help with erosion and other land care factors.

Bloodlines & Breeding Philosophy:

The Queenlee Stud was founded in 1935 on Merryville and Tasmanian bloodlines. Queenlee rams are run on highly improved basalt that is supered annually. Sale rams are fleece measured three times to eliminate rams that experience a significant micron increase as they age.

The aim at Queenlee is to breed large superfine sheep with good constitution, good conformation and dense soft handling wool.

In past years Queenlee has been able to lower the average micron to 17.4u, while still maintaining fleece weight, body weight and crimp frequency. The Queenlee flock has MN3 status, is Footrot Free and Brucellosis Accredited.
**Classing and Preparation:**

Queenlee has been adapting its infrastructure, technology and animal husbandry practices to reduce input costs and improve its wool clip.

Queenlee annually employs four shearsers, seven shedhands and one man outside during shearing time. Expert shed hands are hard to find in the industry. Queenlee is fortunate to have family members who make themselves available to help with the preparation of the wool clip (4 are qualified classers). Family participation plays a big part in the shed and helps ensure that the clip is prepared to the best of our ability. To present lines well, any tender wool is kept totally separate from the rest of the clip. Fleeces are lightly skirted before having backs, necks and hind legs removed.

In 2003 Queenlee was able to upgrade and extend the woolshed. This considerably improved conditions for shearsers, shed staff, and sheep and wool movement. Extensive consultation has resulted in the Queenlee shed having a raised board, more space and very good light around the wool tables making the whole process easier. Simple access to wool bins allows wool to be distributed quickly and facilitates wool pressing and bale storage. Extra space is also available to shed sheep in inclement weather.

Efforts are being made to maintain Queenlee's clip preparation standard. The high cost of production, drought feeding and fluctuating wool prices makes this a constant challenge.

**The Italian Experience:**

Queenlee was honored to win first place in the Ultimate Clip Competition in 2002. Tony paid tribute to the shed staff saying it was a team effort and not possible without them.

Our (Philip and Jenni) trip to Italy in May 2003 was wonderful and seemed worlds away from life on the farm in rural Australia. It was exciting to see where our raw product goes after it's sold. The mill tours of Reda and Vitale Barberis Canonico were very informative and interesting, giving us a greater understanding of how wool is processed into fabric. It was amazing to see first hand the millions of dollars invested in the mills and the passion of the Italians for their business and product.

On the days we were not at the mills we saw many beautiful sights in and around Biella and were wined and dined in great Italian style. The second week we were able to travel to Florence, Sienna and the Cinque Terra. We will always treasure our memories of Italy and the people we met. We will be working hard to get back there one day.
**Description of Property & Enterprise:**

- **Location** – 40km north/west of Armidale, NSW (New England Region)
- **Size** – 1400ha (3460ac)
- **No. of sheep** – 7000
- **Average micron** – 17.8u (adult average)
- **Other enterprises** – 120 hereford x santa gertrudis cows plus replacement heifers and steers
- **Soil/Pasture Type** – Soil is trap. Pasture is native with introduced subterranean and white clovers, and rye grass

**Bloodlines and Breeding Philosophy:**

In the period between 1960 and 1984, rams came from the Fletcher Family's Auchen Dhu Stud in Walcha. In 1985 Glenbrook Merino Stud was founded on Grathlyn bloodlines. Since the stud's foundation additional rams have been purchased from the Grathlyn and Merryville Studs.

Glenbrook aims to produce large framed sheep cutting 4.5 – 5.0kg of stylish, traditionally crimped wool of 80 – 90mm in length.

At Glenbrook approximately 50 rams are sold each year to a small clientele. Close neighbours, clients from the wider New England Region and Tooraweenah (in the Central west New South Wales) make up our client base.

**History of Property:**

Glenbrook was originally part of Boorolong Station which consisted of 140,000 acres. Boorolong was purchased by Mathew Henry March in 1840. Boorolong was then subdivided around 1900. The original portion of Glenbrook where the homestead stands was only 150 acres. This was owned by the Drabs family.

In the following years Glenbrook was owned by H. Jackson and then the Jenkins family. Neighbouring land was purchased from the Saunders and Stanley families. In 1947 W.D. Pearson purchased Glenbrook which by then consisted of 2200 acres. Superfine sheep breeding commenced in 1952. In 2000, 1300 acres of neighbouring land (Dunoon) was purchased by Clive.
The following testimony from the Tooraweenah client sums up the potential of Glenbrook rams.

“I was amazed at the softness and evenness of the rams and the good structure they had for superfine sheep, which is important in this area. We have been buying up to 8 rams per year over an 8 year period. We have seen a big lift in the style of our wool. The sheep are growing bigger bodies and our wool cut has increased by 1.5kg per head. The micron has decreased to now be an average of 17.0u across the entire clip. We have achieved all this in an area where we were told we should not be growing fine wool”.

Timothy Gale

Classing and Preparation:

The sheep are visually classed at 1.5 years of age. The ewes are then micron tested and drafted into micron mobs for joining and shearing. Wethers and weaners are hand/eye classed only. At shearing fleeces are classed according to crimp structure, strength, length and handle. Every fleece has the back and neck removed.

Our Wool rollers are both wool classers who have been with us for many years. They take pride in how they present the skirting lines and fleeces for classing.

It is important for the person on the board to be able to class the belly wool and adequately present the fleece to the wool rollers.

The Italian Experience:

Our experience in Italy was wonderful. It was a fantastic opportunity to see the finished product and to discuss directly with the mill owners the issues of concern at either end of the chain.

The chance to meet the processors and learn about their country and traditions was a wonderful and unique opportunity which was greatly appreciated.
**Clip Name:** GOWRIE / NE  
**Owners:** David & Betty Cameron  
**Classer:** David Cameron

### Description of Property & Enterprise:
- **Location** – 36km west of Guyra, NSW (New England Region)  
- **Size** – 584ha (1445ac)  
- **No. of sheep** – 3000  
- **Average micron** – 17.5u  
- **Other enterprises** – 35 breeding cows  
- **Soil/Pasture Type** – Generally trap soil with small pockets of basalt. Pasture was seeded from the air many years ago but is now going back to natural grasses. We are now reintroducing pastures by planting with ryes, fescue, cocksfoot and clovers.

### History of Property:
Gowrie was originally settled in the mid 1800’s by Alexander Cameron (David’s great grandfather). It was sold out of the family in 1950 and was repurchased again in 1980. The property is now run by us (David and Betty Cameron) with the help of our two sons Adrian and Graham. Adrian’s children are now the sixth generation of Cameron’s in the Tenderden area.

### Bloodlines & Breeding philosophy:
The ewes are classed by Greg Andrews and we use a selective joining program that aims to correct faults and promote desirable traits. Gowrie is currently using Cromarty, Milandi and Delwick bloodlines. All lambs are numbered into their respective joining groups so that they can be monitored.

The aim at Gowrie is to produce very bright, stylish wool that has good length, soft handling and high tensile strength. The goal is for a comfort factor of 99-100% throughout the entire clip.

### Classing and Preparation:
The shed staff employed at Gowrie are hand picked. Our son Adrian and Grant Waters (with us for over 12 years) are the shearers and also perform our crutching throughout the year. There is one shed-hand and one woolroller. The woolroller works the table with us.

Clip preparation begins the month before shearing when all dry sheep are crutched. The week before shearing all ewes are crutched removing stain, wigs and any jowls.

During shearing Adrian and Grant shear approximately 250 sheep per day. This ensures the sheep are cleanly shorn and gives all the shed staff sufficient time to prepare the wool correctly. Shed-hand, Peter Tribe takes great pride in his job, throwing fleeces effectively onto the table and keeping the floor spotless. Peter’s preparation and classing of the bellies has to be seen to be believed.
On the wool table the job is a joint effort. After the initial double skirting and removal of necks, back and legs, there is usually much discussion about the handle, colour, style, strength and length of the fleece. While objective measurement is used as a guide for micron and comfort factor, every fleece is traditionally classed and must meet the criteria set for each line.

Our broker classes our ewes and also helps set up our fleece lines. Additional feedback and advice from the staff of New England Wool and other buyers is incorporated into the following year’s clip classing program.

At Gowrie we believe the combination of our love of wool, a very dedicated team and quality advice, ensures that we are able to produce the best wool clip possible each year.

The Italian Experience:

To win this award has been a great honour and would not have been possible without the dedication and expertise of the whole shearing team. We have been concentrating our efforts to producing and preparing the best clip possible. We know we can still improve and this award backs up our decision to keep following this path.

The best word to describe our week in Biella would have to be spoilt. We were really treated like King and Queen in every sense of the word. Both mills were very impressive, and our hosts were only too pleased to answer our questions; as silly as they may have sounded. It was obvious to us that both Barberis and Reda have great pride in their businesses. They continue striving to do better and stay one step ahead of their competition. They were particularly interested to learn about our property and showed great knowledge of the growing side of the industry.

The whole Italian experience was something we never dreamed would happen to us and we are grateful it did. A very special mention must go to Murray Bragg and Paola Caniggia (guide in Biella). Murray and Paola were fantastic and helped two nervous travellers fully enjoy and appreciate this wonderful experience.

Thanks must also go to Andrew and the New England Wool team for their constructive criticism and helpful advice every season.
Looking to the Future

The Ultimate Clip Competition has become a benchmark for professional fine wool producers. The Competition harnesses the competitive nature of the wool grower in a critically constructive manner. It brings enthusiastic individuals together and pitches them against their peers. This has proved to be motivational and educational for all involved. The feedback provided by our company on every clip entered into the Competition is designed to give growers an insight into our exacting requirements. It is also an aid to help them prepare the most commercially rewarding clip.

New England Wool would like to thank the Italian shareholders for their dedicated support of this Competition. The judging criteria used when assessing the clips is a direct reflection of the directives given by Successori Reda and Vitale Barberis Canonico to New England Wool. The message of quality becomes clear when the winners see first hand the processing of their wool into Top and through to Fabric. The individuals who have ventured to Italy and witnessed the passion for wool emanating from the Reda and Barberis operations return to Australia full of enthusiasm. This enthusiasm in turn is transferred to their wool grower neighbours and friends.

New England Wool looks forward to further developing The Ultimate Clip Competition as we move into the next decade. The Competition will continue to evolve in line with the requirements of the Italian shareholders and to the benefit of Australia’s fine and superfine wool industry. Plans are under way to bring producers from Victoria and Tasmania into the Competition. This will give the Competition a truly national flavour and provide the perfect conduit to spread our message of quality throughout Australia.

We look to the future with optimism and invite all fine wool growers to make the journey with New England Wool, as we venture into a second Decade of Excellence.

Andrew Blanch
Managing Director,
New England Wool Pty Ltd
The Ultimate Clip Competition
Andrew Blanch  
Managing Director

Andrew Raeber  
Southern Region/New Zealand

Murray Bragg  
Northern Region/New Zealand

Alana Campbell  
Office Assistant

Sydney Office:  
Room 10, Sydney Wool Centre,  
Yennora Distribution Centre,  
Dennistoun Avenue,  
Guildford, NSW 2161  
Phone: +61 2 9681 6943  
Fax: +61 2 9632 4324

Email: newenglandwool@bigpond.com.au  
Website: www.newenglandwool.com