



Press release – for immediate release

October 7th, 2018

VITALE BARBERIS CANONICO WOOL EXCELLENCE AWARD

7TH OCTOBER, 2018

WINNER ANNOUNCED

“A Recognition of Excellence in Wool”.

For nearly 150 years the Crawford family of Sierra Park have shown unwavering dedication to producing the highest quality Saxon merino wool. Last night they were rewarded for this commitment at the annual Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Award, where the family were announced as the winners for 2018.

The celebration and award presentation were held at the Calyx located in the heart of Sydney’s Royal Botanic Gardens. With stunning contemporary architecture and horticultural displays, it was a fitting backdrop to the prestigious event. In attendance were *Vitale Barberis Canonico* (VBC) representatives, *Wool Excellence Club* members from NSW, Victoria and Tasmania, industry representatives and media.

As the winners of the esteemed Award renowned Victorian Saxon breeders, Bill, Jenny, Will and Prue Crawford were ecstatic to receive such an honour. “We thank VBC for continuing to recognise the attributes of Saxon wool, which after all the pressure of technology, will allow us to continue breeding sheep we treasure.” Bill Crawford, Sierra Park.

Mr. Davide Fontaneto (Raw Procurement Manager), of *Vitale Barberis Canonico* presented Bill, Jenny, Will and Prue with the award, which included a cash prize to the value of \$50K along with an all-expenses paid trip to Italy to meet with Vitale Barberis Canonico representatives in the Biella region of Italy. The Award is a coveted honor for Wool Excellence Club members, who all strive to produce the best saxon merino and seek to gain the opportunity to observe the transformation of their wool through to luxurious fabrics.

Davide Fontaneto said of the winning clip, “This year we identified someone within the Club with a long history, someone who could be considered as one of the leaders in Saxon merino production. The Crawford’s utilise the lessons and skills from their past whilst looking forward to the future. They have maintained their Saxon breeding and they are committed to WEC’s aims. The 2018 winning clip presented a thick, dense, resilient and sound staple with a tight but defined crimp. The wool from Sierra Park displays the model characteristics of the Saxon wool which is so valuable and sought after by VBC. The genetics, management and dedication by the Crawford family has elevated Sierra Park to a well-deserved winner.”

To be eligible for the award growers must be members of the *VBC Wool Excellence Club*. Members are specially selected by VBC using strict criteria and must demonstrate sustainable wool production and notably the attributes of superfine saxon Merino wool which is most highly regarded by Vitale Barberis Canonico for their high-end fabric production.



The *VBC Wool Excellence Award* is just one of an array of initiatives created by the company to encourage saxon wool producers. All members of the *Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Club* need to be accredited under the SustainaWOOL™ Integrity Scheme, a scheme sponsored by Vitale Barberis Canonico and managed by New England Wool. This is a scheme promoting ethical, environmental and high-quality wool production. *VBC Wool Excellence Club* members benefit from special “purchase contracts” at significant premiums to the physical market, and regular Club meetings where information can be shared between members and with Vitale Barberis Canonico.

“We are now a Club with more than 30 members. We have improved quantities and quality. We have succeeded in following and advancing our ideas, in producing great wool that in our hearts is the same word as passion. We are a strong group of people looking forward to the future.”
Davide Fontaneto, VBC.

2017/18 Winner:

The Crawford family, “Sierra Park”, Victoria Valley, VIC

Situated in the Victorian fine wool growing region of Victoria Valley in the Western Districts, Sierra Park is approximately 6000 acres running 15,000 sheep and is currently operated by two generations of the Crawford family, Bill and Jenny Crawford and their son Will together with his wife Prue.

The Crawford family arrived in Geelong in 1852, from Dumphries Scotland.

In about 1870, William and his wife Helen took up selection of about 700 acres in Victoria Valley. Together with his brother James they commenced sheep breeding and started a fine wool Saxon sheep stud, purchasing cast for age stock from the Woodhouse stud, south of Dunkeld.

The brothers were exhibiting their sheep as grass fed at local shows with good success. Rams were purchased from Tasmania, including from Belle View.

In 1930 Lin Crawford, aged 13 took over the running of the stud. (After successfully challenging his father to the identity of their stud ram). With keen interest he ran the stud, purchasing many rams from the world renowned Winton stud, from 1946 to the present day.

Lin and Margaret recommenced showing and selling rams, winning many champion prizes at the Melbourne sheep show, and local shows.

Sierra Park held the world record price of 10 shillings a pound for wool in the 1950s.

In 1981 Bill and Jenny took on the management of Sierra Park after Lin’s untimely death. The stud has continued on very much as it always has, breeding the best Saxon sheep it can, exhibiting the best high performance traits Saxon wool is noted for, always bulky high compression wools that perform so well in the finished garment.

Over the 150 years, Sierra Park has grown from about 600 acres to around 6000 acres. Originally running very few sheep to now shearing around 14-15,000 Saxon sheep.



“We are currently running a mixed enterprise, with a small portion of crossbred lambs bred for meat production and cropping for feed grain and canola.

Will has been a vital member of the Sierra Park team for the last 13 years, with his wife Prue joining us a year ago.

Thankfully we all work together cohesively, this serving us well for the future.” Bill Crawford, Sierra Park.

About Vitale Barberis Canonico

For more than 350 years, the wool mill of Vitale Barberis Canonico has been creating prestigious textiles for the clothing industry in the historical factory in Pratrivero, Piedmont, Italy. Vitale Barberis Canonico employs more than 455 employees, has 40 agents throughout the world, and produces fabrics from two state-of-the-art factories in the Biella region. Vitale Barberis Canonico is among the top companies across the world in regards to technology and business management producing prestigious textiles completely Made in Italy and is the largest exporter on a global level in terms of both value and quantity.

Heritage, Innovation and Elegance are the key words of the company philosophy.

In 2017, production reached more than 10 million metres, and the turnover rose to €170m (in contrast to €155 m in 2016). In October 2013 Vitale Barberis Canonico became a member of the international club Les Hénokiens, a Club reserved for family companies with at least two hundred years' history.
