

PROTECTING THE REPUTATION OF AUSTRALIAN MERINO WOOL

Australian Merino wool has enjoyed a high reputation and price premium for more than one hundred years because it produced wool tops with low levels of dark and medullated fibre contamination. Recently, early and later stage processors of Australian wool have noticed increased occurrences of dark and medullated fibres in wool tops produced from Australian Merino wool.

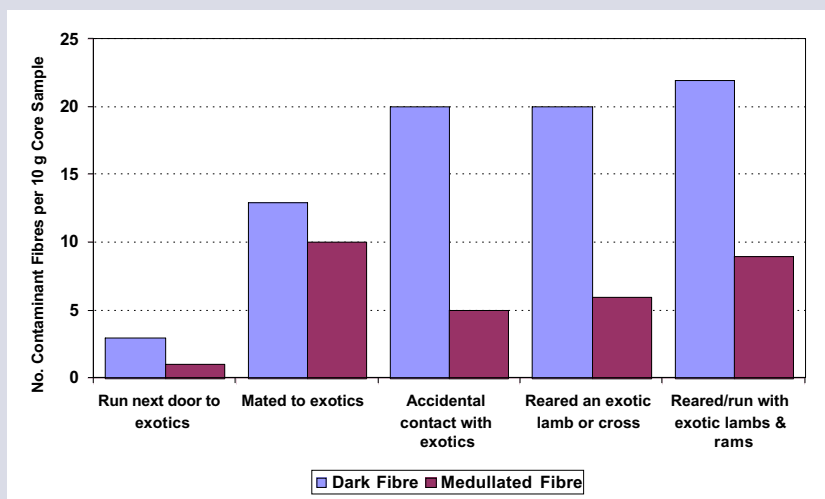
THE TRADITIONAL PROBLEM

- Dark fibre contamination limited to isolated clumps of urine stained or pigmented fibres.
- Low presence of medullated fibres.
- Australian Merino wool generally has less than 100 dark fibres per kg of top.

THE NEW PROBLEM

- Exotic breeds - Dorper, Damara, Awassi and Karakul shed dark and medullated fibres.
- Increased dark fibre or medullated fibre contamination occurs when exotic breeds are in contact with Merino sheep (see chart below).

- Dark fibres cause major problems in white/pastel fabrics. Medullated fibres cause major problems in dark/black fabrics.
- 10 grams of either contaminant in 10,000 kg of greasy wool is not visible, yet will exceed commercially acceptable quantities of contamination.
- IT IS VITAL THAT AUSTRALIAN MERINO WOOL GROWERS PROTECT THEIR REPUTATION AS SUPPLIERS OF WHITE NON-CONTAMINATED WOOL BY OBTAINING A DARK & MEDULLATED RISK RATING ON THEIR WOOL.

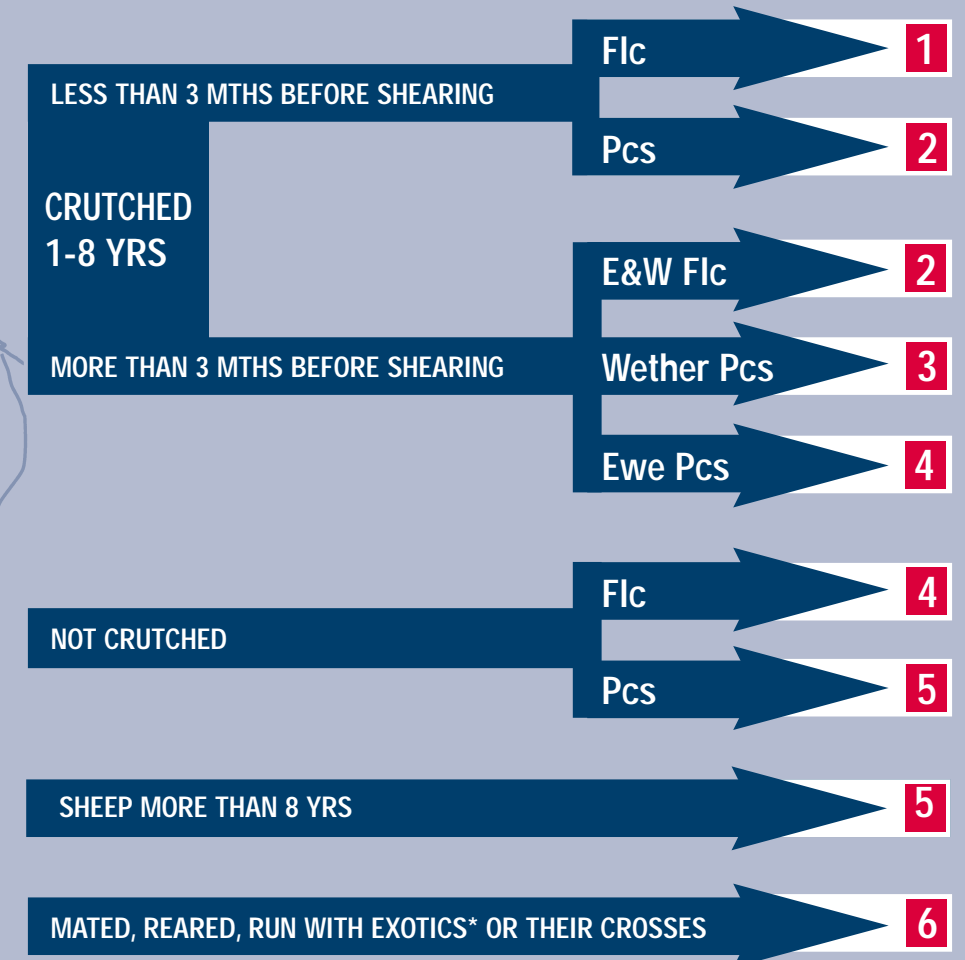


MANAGING THE RISK OF DARK AND/OR MEDULLATED FIBRE CONTAMINATION IN AUSTRALIAN MERINO WOOL

DMFR RATINGS	
DMFR Rating	Estimated no. dmf/kg top
1 =	< 50
2 =	50 - 100
3 =	100 - 200
4 =	200 - 500
5 =	> 500
6 =	*EXOTICS

DMFR Ratings 1 and 2 are commercially acceptable for sensitive end-users

Merino Dark and Medullated Fibre Risk (DMFR) Scheme for Fleece and Pieces



* Exotic sheep are Awassi, Damara, Dorper and Karakul

To allow Australian Merino wool growers to safeguard and maintain their reputation as the world's major supplier of "white" wool, certain information will need to be supplied on the classer's specification.

This data will be transmitted by the broker/agent to AWTA where it will be used to calculate the DMFR Rating.

From 1 July 2004, this Rating will appear on test certificates and in all brokers catalogues.

If no data is supplied by the wool grower then "NOT DECLARED" will appear in the catalogue.

HOW DO YOU BENEFIT?

The DMFR Rating will provide:

- Wool growers with the ability to inform processors that their Australian Merino wool is not contaminated by dark and medullated fibres.
- Customers with increased confidence that your Australian Merino wool will meet their requirements.