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“AWI Balance Sheet must be full, open and detailed” says AWGA

As Australian merino wool prices plunge to new lows every week, the Australian Wool Growers Association today has asked for a full tally on the total monetary costs spent to date fighting animal rights groups over the past 12 months.

AWGA Chairman, Chick Olsson, and Vice Chairman, Martin Oppenheimer believe that this ill fated and expensive approach, undertaken by AWI may now well run over the \$10 million mark.

“When you start adding up some of the costs to date, it is frightening to see how costly this ‘old guard’ pugilism has been “explains Chick Olsson.

AWGA believes that costs to date include the following:

1. Court case to date: \$2 - \$3 million with the action yet to be taken to trial.
2. Taskforce expenditure: \$3 - \$5 million
3. Fly on the shoulder campaign \$2- \$4 million
4. AWI time and expenses \$1- \$2 million.

”Best case scenario \$8 million dollars, worst case \$14 million both of woolgrower levy funds and federal government dollars.

“The most distressing component of this foolish fight is that these costs are going to continue into the next year” states Martin Oppenheimer.

With wool production forecasts still at low levels and fresh wool prices still in decline, the available revenue to AWI is in major decline.

”Surely this highly inflammatory and expensive moral crusade by AWI must end. Just imagine if this money was spent on marketing Australian merino wool or invested into mulesing alternatives...what a wasted golden opportunity” says Chick Olsson.

”The potential for this endless, and questionable strategy has the prospect to bankrupt the industry”, says Martin Oppenheimer.

AWGA believes that AWI must come clean and let the industry know how much this whole campaign has cost the Australian wool industry. No rubbery figures, no fancy accounting, simply the truth.

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