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Time to revisit WoolPoll levy says PGA

Jenny Bartlett

AUSTRALIAN Wool Innovation (AWI) is undeserving of the two per cent levy and farmers should vote for no more than 1pc when the 2012 WoolPoll voting opens next week. This was the call from two industry organisations, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) and the Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA).

The PGA has not made recommendations in the previous two WoolPolls but PGA livestock committee chairman Digby Stretch said it was time AWI re-visited its business plan.

"Wool growers are sick and tired of AWI preaching the benefits of levy-funded marketing when the market rises but being nowhere to be found when it falls," he said.

"There is no clear data out there that supports AWI's unsubstantiated spending on promotion.

"By voting no more than one 1pc, levy payers are sending a strong message to AWI."

AWGA WA chairman Shane Edwards said the association hadn't been supportive of the 2pc right from the beginning of this round.

"We believe AWI has more than sufficient funds in the bank to justify a small reduction in the levy," he said.

"Given we considered 1.5pc was the correct amount to be paying for the next three years we now have no choice other than to look at the 1pc and we believe all growers should seriously consider 1pc."

AWI had previously indicated it would be recommending a change from the current 50:50 marketing versus research and development to a 60:40 ratio in favour of marketing.

While Mr Edwards said he was happy with the ratio changes he was angered about the way the change had taken place.

"AWGA believes it should have been a supplementary question in the WoolPoll for growers to vote on," he said.

"We are however, supportive of the bigger share going into marketing."

But Mr Stretch did not agree and called for the AWI to increase its support for the "genuine research and development our wool industry really needs".

Mr Stretch also called on all growers to exercise their rights when it came to this year's WoolPoll.



Kojonup farmer Neal O'Halloran was still undecided on which way to vote in this year's Wool Poll