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Letters - The Land

Forty years ago the Australian lamb industry was a poor and unprofitable cousin of the wool industry. A basket case!

Had the lamb industry not undertaken consumer eating and satisfaction trials, determined consumer requirements, introduced meaningful genetic improvements to help meet consumers demands and adopted planned national and international marketing programs, the wool industry would be far smaller than it is today. *Lamb has been the saviour of wool.*

Thirty or more years of lost opportunities could describe progress for wool! Perhaps those who plan to vote at the upcoming AWI elections should ask; has customer research been timely and adequate and has there been sufficient genetic progress to quickly and reliably help meet consumers' demands? Recent decisions to cease support of the 'Bred Well Fed Well' program is one example of an important lost opportunity and irrational thinking which can only limit improvements for producers and the industry as a whole.

Growing demand for lamb and mutton has 'kept the wool industry's head above water' but also provides a template for what is achievable with well planned and well executed whole of industry improvement programs. The wool industry should take note!

Progress has been made over the decades, but progress has been slower than needed and changes to improve production efficiency which meets consumer demands has been limited.

Comfort has been an issue limiting the use of wearable wool for decades. It is only recently that means of assessing prickly and handle of garments at point of sale have become more widely available. Convincing clients that a purchase will prove to be suitable, is essential if confidence and demand is to increase.

AWI has failed to progress the industry as well as it might. More progressive people with the experience to support and implement industry improvements and restore profitability for both producers and downstream industry participants are needed. *Without change, the Wool Industry will continue to regress, or, progress at a much slower rate than is necessary to maintain or improve profitability and the wool industry's existence. Changes to the way AWI thinks and operates are needed, now.*

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