

TO THE EDITOR

22.9.13

Dear Sir or Madam,

Woolgrowers have a clear choice now to influence the direction of the Australian wool industry, to invest their levies with modern genetic tools and sheep productivity gains.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) has been making poor decisions recently in the areas of genetic research and extension, with cuts to funding for the successful ‘Bred Well Fed Well’ workshops and world first Genomic Nucleus Flock.

This comes at a time when lambing rates this year are reported as only 50%-60% in many areas, showing the new productivity tools presented at these innovative workshops are desperately needed.

Despite this AWI strangely wants to ‘disentangle’ itself from this popular, co-operative, leveraged workshop funding with Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and is now creating a brand new ‘wool only’ workshop. A return to wasteful duplication is now underway at AWI.

This distinct lack of vision for our future follows last years retrograde statement by the AWI Chairman, that “science has little to offer the merino breeder” (The Land 22.5.12). It should be no surprise that senior research staff are now resigning from AWI. Our industry desperately needs the brightest and best research scientists and extension specialists.

Woolgrowers need leadership that unites the industry. They need the best research, extension and commercial tools available to continue to be productive and profitable.

Woolgrowers can make AWI relevant and accountable, and deliver progress for wool. That is why I am standing for election to the AWI Board in 2013 for a return to funding important national genetic programs with MLA, for the benefit of all those still passionately growing merino wool.

Martin Oppenheimer

Candidate for the AWI Board 2013

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