



Your strong and independent
voice for livestock producers

LIVESTOCK SA...

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Changes to the ABS 2020-21 Agricultural Census

Livestock SA is the industry association that represents sheep, beef cattle and goat producers in South Australia. Currently there are over 3,500 members across the state.

As an advocacy body for the industry, we disagree with Australian Bureau of Statistics recommendations to the current reporting data system.

The suggested changes will result in no reporting for the following:

- the split between the number of pure Merino lambs marked versus all other breeds (including dual purpose, Dohnes, SAMMS and cross breeds)
- the number of ewes mated to produce lambs marked to Merino rams versus all other rams (including dual purpose, Dohnes, SAMMS and cross breeds)
- the split between the number of pure Merino breeding ewes versus all other breeds (including dual purpose, Dohnes, SAMMS and cross breeds)

From a wool perspective, it is vital to the industry to determine the breeds that are being produced. Knowing the split between breeds not only helps producers but is also vital to industry bodies which use the data to determine the growth of the industry, in each sector.

This information will assist both the sheep meat and wool sectors of the sheep industry. It provides key data on which the South Australian Sheep Industry Blueprint is built. It also provides details to assist both MLA and AWI with not only their strategic planning but the various projects both R&D Corporations are involved with or planning.

No additional data will need to be collected. ABS already collect the data regarding split between breeds, therefore the process of "data collection" will not change. And as such, yes, it will be understood by wool producers, meat producers along with industry bodies.

While there are several data collection processes for total sheep numbers, nothing else exists which provides the critical split between sheep whose primary function is wool production and those whose primary function is meat production.

Collection of this data is of great value but does not add to the cost for the ABS.

Since the initial Agricultural Census, over 150 years ago, the process has played a very important role in the development in agriculture in Australia. Since the formative days, the breadth of data gathered increased substantially as the years went by. Since those days, census data has played a major role in improving the productivity growth rate in Australian agriculture.

With increased information on a range of commodities, including on data relating to value of products, on data on crops, on livestock and farm performances, we have seen rapid improvement in the production and farming system processes.

At present Livestock SA would hope to see an increase in things being measured rather than a decrease. Most farmers find the data from a census greatly useful and do not see the gathering processes as a burden or an impediment to their farm operation.

From a livestock perspective, it is extremely important that not only do we have information on differing classes of livestock, but also, we have information on the differing breeds within a stock class. In contrast, the changes that are proposed will not provide sufficient differentiation between differing sheep breeds within the broad category of lamb.



Andrew Curtis
CEO, Livestock SA