

SHORT REPORT ON SHEEP HANDLING CHALLENGE

The SMBAWA has aimed to promote the Western Australian merino industry by introducing events that encourage and engage students from the 6 state ag colleges with merino sheep. With the motto “Investing In The Future” we set up the AWI Merino Sheep Handling Challenge which we received support from AWI through sponsorship and resources of Stuart Hodgson, Jim Murray and local AWI shearing trainer Don Boyle.

The challenge involved 8 students per team with a total of 8 teams participating in our first event. It was held at Katanning State Sheep Expo and Perth Royal Show.

- Two students shored 1 sheep each and were judged per WA competition shearing scoring.
- Two students completed wool handling of fleeces and were scored per WA state wool handling scoring.
- Two students classed 10 merino ewe hoggets selecting the top 5 hoggets for wool production and quality, conformation and constitution with Stuart Hodgson overjudging. Students were scored on correctness of placing, presentation, but more importantly handling and oral presentation of their sheep selections.
- Two students judged 8 first cross merino lambs selecting best three lambs for muscle and fat cover while also giving estimated weights on lambs. Students were scored on presentation, handling, correctness of placings and ability to explain placings to the overjudge.

In conjunction with our AWI merino wether challenge which was based on SA successful event and our Merino Lamb Muster Carcase Competition and support for traditional junior judging we were able to run events that gave us coverage and promotion of the merino regularly for an 8 month period through Farm Weekly.

Steven Bolt

SMBAWA

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