

# NOTES for DARK and/or MEDULLATED FIBRE RISK and CHEMICAL USE VENDOR DECLARATION when using WOOLGROWER'S DECLARATION

Note: Dark and/or Medullated Fibre Risk Declaration is for use by Merino woolgrowers on fleece and piece lines only. The Chemical Use Declaration may be used for all sheep breeds.

## 1. Dark and/or Medullated Fibre Risk (DMFR) Scheme

The DMFR scheme provides critical objective information on the contamination risk of Merino fleece and piece wool by urine-stain and isolated pigmentation and by pigmented and/or medullated fibre from contact with exotic breeds. The scheme is designed to provide white wool Merino growers with the opportunity to promote their wool as such and to provide buyers with quantified data about the potential for dark and/or medullated fibre contamination.

- A random screening program will be conducted on core samples to ensure that vendor declarations are made correctly.
- DMFR will be reported on test certificates and in sale catalogues.
- If a Merino woolgrower chooses not to declare the information required for determination of DMFR, then "Not Declared" will be printed on the test certificate and in the sale catalogue.

## 2. Completing the DMFR Vendor Declaration

(a) **Lot No, Description, No. of Bales and Individual Bale No:** Identify each line of wool to be declared; include breed and shed line information. Then, complete (b) to (g) below.

(b) **Contact with Exotic Breeds:** For the purposes of DMFR, **Contact** is defined as Merinos mated to, run in the same paddock as, or reared Exotic lambs/sheep or their crosses, while **Exotic** refers to breeds that shed pigmented and/or medullated fibres and are allocated an AWEX Breed Risk Rating of 5. Currently, these breeds are Awassi, Damara, Dorper and Karakul. **Contact with Exotics**, whether accidental or deliberate, for short or long periods of time, in yards or paddocks, must be declared as Yes (Y). If Yes (Y), it is not necessary to complete (c) to (f) for the determination of DMFR. However, the DMFR Declaration must be signed (see (g) below).

(c) **Sex:** Use codes provided (i.e. E = Ewes, W = Wethers, R = Rams, M = Mixed Ewes, Wethers, Rams).

(d) **Age:** Use codes provided (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4,...9 years etc.). If combined age groups, indicate range in ages (eg. 1-2, 4-6 years etc).

(e) **Crutched:** If mob was crutched in the year prior to shearing then Yes (Y), otherwise No (N).

(f) **If Crutched, was it within 3 months of shearing:** If mob was crutched within 3 months of shearing then Yes (Y), otherwise No (N).

(g) **Owner/Manager Signature:** Owners/managers who wish to make a DMFR Declaration for publication on the test certificate and in the sale catalogue, **must sign and date the DMFR Declaration.** A DMFR will not be determined and published unless the Declaration is signed.

## 3. Chemical Use Vendor Declaration

Currently, a vendor declaration made regarding use of chemicals is not reported on test certificates or in sale catalogues. However, due to a world-wide increase in regulations related to chemical residues, this situation may change. Therefore, woolgrowers are encouraged to become familiar with issues related to chemical use on their farm and complete the Chemical Use Declaration so they are prepared for any future industry requirements.

## 4. Completing the Chemical Use Declaration

(a) **Log of Chemical Use:** If Yes (Y), details of mob, date, purpose, type and amount of chemical(s) used must be recorded; and provided if requested.

(b) **Wool Residue Risk:** Nil (no chemicals used on mob/individual sheep), Lo (chemicals used according to manufacturer's instructions/wool harvesting intervals complied with), Hi (chemicals not used according to manufacturer's instruction/wool harvesting intervals not complied with), NA (residue status of mob unknown).

(c) **Owner/Manager Signature:** Owners/managers who wish to make a Chemical Use Vendor Declaration **must sign and date the Declaration.**

## Background Information on Merino Dark and/or Medullated Fibre Risk Declaration

- Contamination faults can result from dark fibres in white/pastel fabrics or white, medullated fibres in darker coloured products. If contamination levels are too high, then compensation is sought to cover the costs of rectifying the problem.
- DMFR scheme, involving a voluntary vendor declaration, has been introduced to protect the high reputation of the Australian Merino clip. It is based on CSIRO's dark fibre risk scheme, where knowledge of a Merino mob's age, sex, and crutching history, along with shed line can be used to determine the "Risk" of contamination by urine-stained and isolated pigmented fibres.
- Over the last two decades meat breeds, often called "exotics", have been introduced to Australia to meet the preferences of the live sheep trade and to produce fat lambs. Transfer of dark and/or medullated fibres from exotic breeds (or their crosses) to Merinos is an important source of contamination, with compensation claims increasing.
- DMFR scheme extends the dark fibre risk scheme to include the risk of dark and/or medullated fibre contamination incurred when Merinos comes in contact with an exotic sheep or their crosses.
- DMFR is reported on test certificates and in sale catalogues. It is expected that DMFR scheme will result in market signals that will benefit the producers of white Merino wool who declare the DMFR of their lots.
- DMFR Tree (see diagram below) can be used to determine "Risk" for each fleece or pieces line of wool.
- DMFR has scale of six (6), with each Risk Level corresponding to estimated numbers of dark and/or medullated fibres per kilogram (dmf/kg) of top. "Exotic fibre"s indicates contact with exotic breeds and therefore, this Merino wool has a high probability of contamination by both dark and/or medullated fibres
- Risk Levels 1 (less than 50 dmf/kg top) and 2 (50 - 100 dmf/kg top) are suitable for sensitive end-uses.

