

CAREERS IN THE WOOL INDUSTRY



The Australian wool industry provides thousands of jobs both in Australia and overseas. No matter where your interests lie, the wool industry has a career path suited to you.

Careers in the wool industry can be divided into two main areas — on-farm and off-farm.

On-farm

Working in the on-farm sector involves a career that supports wool production.

People who enjoy working with animals might consider one of the following careers:

- livestock manager
- veterinarian
- shearer
- woolhandler
- livestock nutritionist
- farm consultant
- working dog trainer
- livestock agent

Fast facts

- The wool industry offers a career opportunity for everyone — no matter what your skill or passion.
- Jobs that relate to wool production are as diverse as woolgrower, to researcher to bank manager.
- Graphic designers, marketing executives, fashion designers and retailers all have career opportunities in the wool industry.

- wool broker
- wool classer.

Someone who is more interested in plants might consider a career as a:

- plant breeder
- pasture agronomist
- environmental scientist
- pasture researcher.

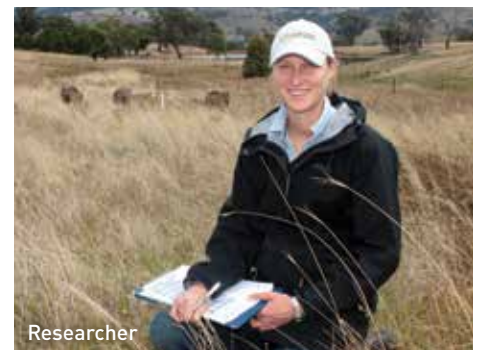
Many careers that support the on-farm sector might not seem to be in the wool industry, but are indirectly involved:

- bank manager
- accountant

Did you know?

- Australian scientists travel the world looking for pasture species that will thrive in Australia's variable climate and provide a nutritious source of feed for Australia's sheep.

- rural counsellor
- truck driver
- mechanic
- teacher
- university lecturer
- rural merchandiser.



Career opportunities: The Australian wool industry has thousands of jobs to suit any interest and skill level.



Off-farm

There is a wide range of jobs that support the wool industry based in large cities, both in Australia and overseas.

People who are creative could find the perfect career in:

- graphic design
- fashion design
- advertising
- rural journalism.

Many more people are employed in the wool industry in:

- research and development
- science communication
- wool buying and processing
- retailing
- sales and marketing.

The opportunities are endless!

More information

- Beyond the Bale: beyondthebale.wool.com
- Career Harvest: careerharvest.com.au

Shearing: ticket to the world (case study)

A career in shearing and woolhandling can provide the opportunity to travel, compete and work overseas as well as around Australia.

Australian shearers and woolhandlers have a good reputation internationally for their skills and work ethic.

“How would you like to go to Ireland?” were the words of trainer Pete Artridge to his students at smoko during the shearing school at Wagga Wagga TAFE. Dan Lewis and Mitch Small jumped at the chance and started making plans to defer university for six months so they could take off around the world.

Students at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga NSW, Dan and Mitch travelled to Ireland to shear the short summer season.

The boys worked with shearing contractor Roy Collier of County Wexford, who set a new Irish and British Isles record in 2012 when he shored 521 lambs in a nine-hour shear.

The pair also participated in shearing competitions across Ireland and Scotland.

The competitions proved to be a highlight for Mitch, who enjoyed seeing and meeting some of the best shearers in the world at the shows.

Dan warned that shearing can be just as hard work in Ireland as it is in Australia and conditions and practices are very different.

“Generally the average day saw us leaving home at about 6.30am and driving two hours to a job. Between tea stops and showers of rain we managed to shear the sheep using a portable three-stand

shearing trailer. Depending on travel times and sheep numbers, on any day we could manage to shear at three farms — sometimes more,” Dan said.

“An Irish day’s shearing has no set hours; it continues until the job is done, in some cases as late as 11pm.”

“There are no shearing sheds filled with nice dry sheep — instead we shored in a holding shed or outside — even when it rained.”

Unlike in Australia, there was no respect for the wool in Ireland according to Dan.

“The fleeces were cast to the side and eventually picked up and thrown into a pack — unskirted.”

But the biggest difference Dan and Mitch found was the type of sheep they had to contend with. The Irish sheep are all British breeds; Scottish black face, Suffolk, Belclare and Cheviot.

The shearing was faster (with Dan and Mitch both shearing more than 40 sheep per hour), but the sheep were harder to handle.

“The opportunity to shear internationally is a privilege and gave us valuable experience and a chance to learn from the best in the world, as well as getting a firsthand look at farming techniques on the other side of the world,” Dan said.

