

Research sheds new light on carbon

Wool the way to go for ETS?

by
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SHEEP farmers concerned about agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions will be heartened that wool has an intrinsic carbon value only just being realised.

Growing wool could be a way to counteract greenhouse emissions according to recent research by the Wool Carbon Alliance (WCA).

WCA, which is the latest initiative taken by wool producing countries towards establishing a single standard for the carbon footprint of wool, found wool was 50 per cent made up of carbon captured and permanently stored from the atmosphere. Each kilo of the ready fibre stored 0.3kg of carbon.

Marius Cuming, manager corporate communications Australian Wool Innovation limited, who issued a statement on the research, admitted that on the surface it seemed impossible to have more than a kilo of carbon present in only a kilo of wool. But, he said, it could occur due to the much heavier molecular weight of carbon relative to oxygen.

Research is underway to assess the carbon sink in soil and the claim by many farmers that grass is a carbon sink. If research confirms these

theories, agriculture could be in carbon credit sooner rather than later, according to the report.

Details of international research into carbon in wool were one of the topics discussed at last month's International Wool Textiles Organisation conference held in New Delhi.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) leads research into the carbon footprint of wool and similar work is being undertaken by New Zealand and United Kingdom researchers.

Delegates at the conference agreed research may vary from country to country because of different environments but they will all be based on the same criteria, making them comparable not only to each other but to other fibres.

Once the trials are complete, the information will be used to help position wool as a positive product within the climate change debate.

Further to this, the information will be used as a marketing tool to promote wool as a natural fibre.

IWTO president Gunther Beier welcomed the initiative and said an international one-voice approach from the entire wool industry was essential for the organisation's marketing and lobbying activities within the global textile industry.

The Australian Federal Government has welcomed the research and recognised the positive role that farming and wool growing will play in the carbon cycle.

"Wool is 50 per cent made up of carbon . . ."
