

VER ANNUAL FLEECE COMPETITION -21ST ANNIVERSARY

2016

IN LOOKING BACK – SOME FACTS

-Held annually on a Saturday night in conjunction with the VER Awards' Presentation Dinner with the exception of the inaugural year (1995) when the competition was held for Huacaya fleece only and judged as part of the Region's Show at KCC Park - Lyndhurst on Sunday, 29th October 1995. Champion and Class winning fleeces were on display at the Awards Dinner at Kenloch Restaurant, Olinda on Cup Eve, 6th November 1995. A cash prize of \$1000 was awarded for the Champion Huacaya fleece.

-In the 21 years since inception, the competition has been held on 19 separate occasions. A Regional policy decision to shift the date of the competition from November to May resulted in a "leap frogging" of 1997 in favour of 1998. Lack of support in 2006, led to the cancellation of the event.

-Regional records do not identify the number of Fleece entries in 1995 or 1996. However, in the years 1997 to 2015 inclusive, some 880 fleeces were entered in the competition, at an average of 52 fleeces each year. The high point being 86 entries in 2011; the lowest being 30 in 2000.

- Suri was introduced in the 7th year of the competition (2002), when 4 fleeces or 6% of total were judged. Since that date, the proportion of Suri entries has progressively increased, with the past 8 years to 2015 each accounting for approximately 33% of total entries. A cash prize for Suri Champion was not available until 2008 and only offered on the condition that at least 10 entries were received.

-The Fleece Schedule for the Competition has changed markedly from the early days of 1995 when 3 classes, all colours (Huacaya only) were offered, as follows:

Class 1: Saddle of Fleece Under 18 months.

Class 2: Saddle of Fleece 18 to 30 months.

Class 3: Saddle of Fleece 30 months and over.

Of recent years, including the yet to be held 2016, the following classes are now offered in 6 colours for:

Huacaya: (5 Classes, 6 colours)

Skirted Fleece - 6 to under 12 months

Skirted Fleece - 12 to under 18 months

Skirted Fleece - 18 to under 30 months

Skirted Fleece - 30 to under 48 months

Skirted Fleece - 48 months and over

Best Colour - White, Light Fawn;

Medium/Dark Fawn; Brown; Grey/Roan; Black

Suri (3 classes, 6 colours)

Skirted Fleece - 6 to under 18 months

Skirted Fleece - 18 to under 30 months

Skirted Fleece - 30 months and over

Best Colour - White, Light Fawn; Medium/Dark Fawn; Brown; Grey/Roan; Black

- All Cash prizes for Fleece Champion (Suri & Huacaya) and 1st Place Class winners were discontinued in 2013 in support of Regional austerity measures arising from a need to better manage costs. As at 2016 they have not been re-instated.

- Other than the inaugural year (1995), the competition has been held at 5 different venues - Imperial Inn, Dandenong (1996); Tatra Reception Centre, Mt Dandenong (1997); Melaleuca Lodge, Beaconsfield (4 years, 1999 - 2002); Amstel Golf Club (4 years, 2005; 2007 - 2009) and Cardinia Cultural Centre, Pakenham (9 years, 2003 & 2004; 2010 - 2016)

-16 different judges have presided over the event since inception, multiples being Cameron Holt (1995,1996 & 2001); David Williams (2005 & 2007) and Jillian Holmes (2013 & 2016).

Prepared by Jean & David Daddo May 2016.