

# From Farm to Fashion:

The Story of Wool Production in Esperance



Alex Hough, Taylor Gray and Emma Scott  
Esperance Primary School





## **Enviro-Stories**

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

[www.envirostories.com.au](http://www.envirostories.com.au)

## **Cotton Research and Development Corporation**

Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) is a partnership between the Australian Government and the Australian cotton industry. CRDC invests in and manages a portfolio of research, development and extension projects that seek to enhance the environmental, social and economic values associated with cotton production systems for the benefit of cotton industry participants, regional communities and the Australian people.

[www.crdc.com.au](http://www.crdc.com.au)

# From Farm to Fashion: The Story of Wool Production in Esperance

Author: Alex Hough, Taylor Gray and Emma Scott

Teacher: Mrs. Debra Sanger

School: Esperance Primary School

This book has been published as part of the 2021 Fabulous Fibres Enviro-Stories program. Students used their imagination to write and illustrate stories that highlight the where natural fibres come from and how they have been a part of our everyday lives for thousands of years. This program was supported by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation and CSIRO.

© Cotton Research and Development Corporation 2022

This publication has been prepared as a resource for schools. Schools may copy, distribute and otherwise freely deal with this publication, or any part of it, for any educational purpose, provided that the Cotton Research and Development Corporation is attributed as the owner. This publication cannot be used for commercial gain.

Enviro-Stories is a PeeKdesigns initiative, [www.peekdesigns.com.au](http://www.peekdesigns.com.au).

Hough, A, Gray, T and Scott, E. 2022. *From Farm to Fashion: The Story of Wool Production in Esperance*. Cotton Research and Development Corporation, NSW.



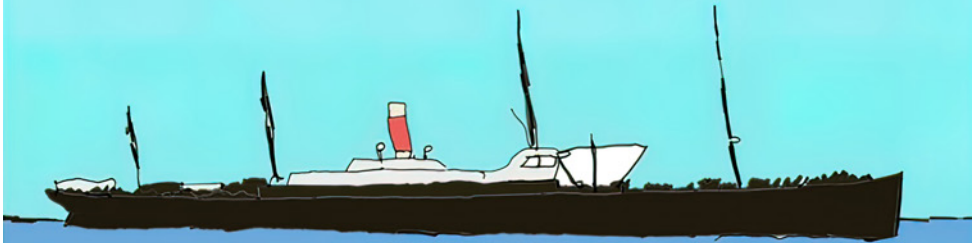


Hi, I'm Alex and I live on a farm called 5PH Grazing. Our farm is about 60km out of Esperance, a small town on the south east coast of Western Australia. On my farm we have beef cattle, sheep and crops.

On my farm we raise sheep for their fibres. A fibre is any hair-like raw material that comes directly from a living thing. Wool is one such fibre. Wool fibres can be used to make clothing, baskets, bags and fabric.



In 1869, the Dempster Brothers came to Esperance and they opened up large parcels of land for cattle. It is from here that agriculture began to flourish in the Esperance area. In 1971 live sheep exports began and by 1978 over one million live sheep had been exported from the Esperance Port.





Our merino sheep produce some of the best quality wool in the world. Merino wool is ultra-fine and soft, making it perfect for clothes and blankets. This is my friend, Emma, she loves her merino wool blanket!



Merino sheep were brought to Australia because they were well suited to the Australian environment and they are an excellent wool producer. By the late 1800s wool had become Australia's major export. Australia still produces more than half of the world's merino wool.





We work hard to keep the fleece of our sheep in tip top shape. We really like it when we have a wet winter because this keeps the grass seeds away. When we have a good winter we often get the best yield for our wool. This means our wool is free from pests, weeds and staining.

Raising sheep sounds really easy, but there are many problems that we need to address to ensure that our herds survive. Some of these problems include worms, flies and grass seeds.




Farmers spend a lot of time and money trying to control these problems. We dock the tails of our lambs to make sure that they don't get "fly strike."





Our sheep also get a needle called, “scabby guard”, which is like an immunisation for sheep. My mum was helping to immunise the sheep when she got accidentally infected. The needle helps our sheep but it isn’t as friendly to human hands!

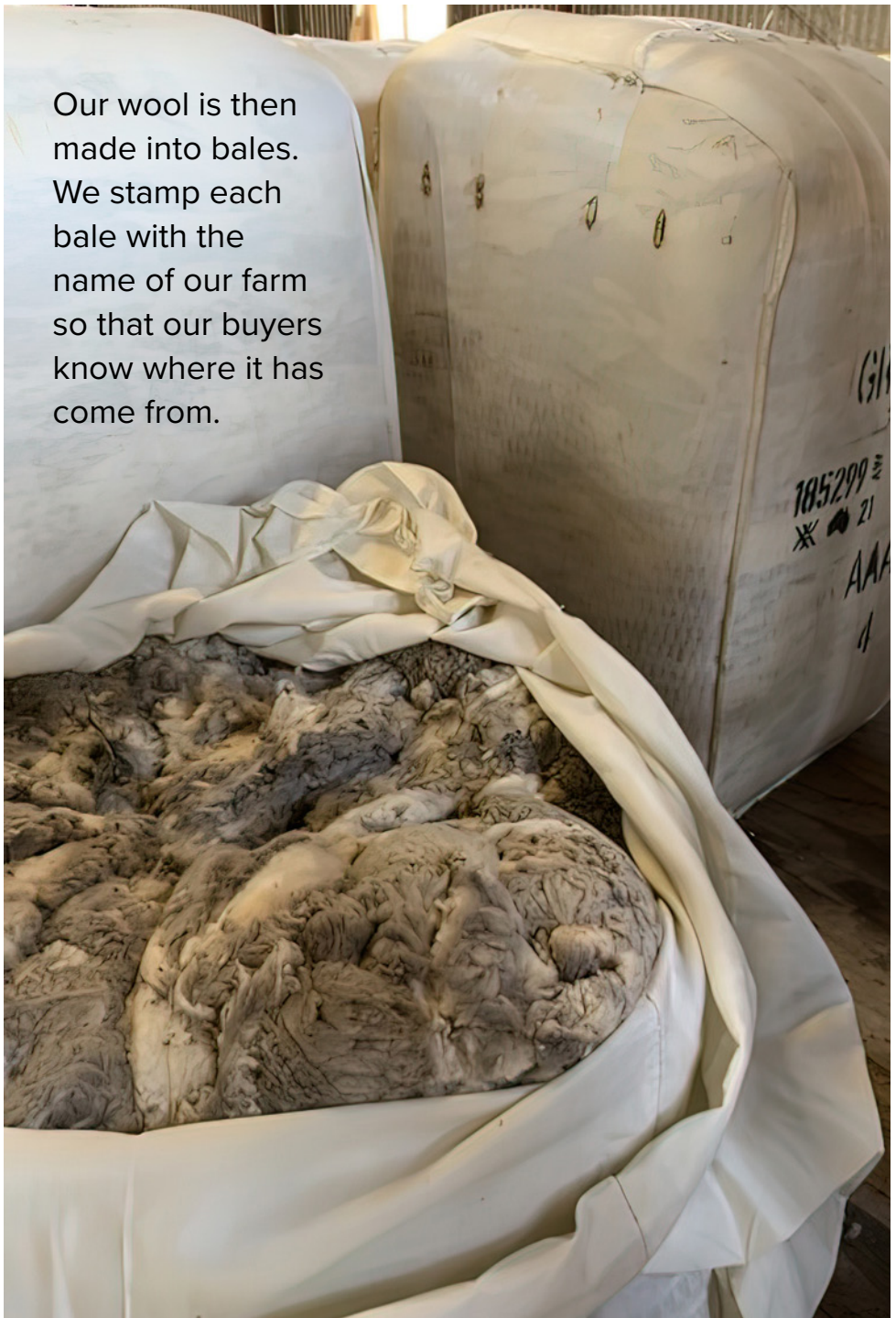
A person wearing a dark t-shirt with a blue star on the back is shearing a sheep in a shed. The sheep is lying on its side, and the person is using a pair of clippers to remove wool from its back. A large pile of white wool is on the floor to the left. The shed has metal railings and a green door in the background.

Shearing regularly also helps to care for our sheep. In between whole body shearing, our sheep are crutched. This is where the excess wool around their bottoms is removed and disinfected. This helps prevent pests and staining. Blacklining stops wool lice, a line is literally drawn down their backs.



There are three different classes of wool produced at 5PH Grazing. They are called cotted, tender and fine. The cotted wool is a heavy, hard matted fleece that is unable to be skirted. Skirting is when the freshly shorn fleece is laid out flat on a table and the edge of the fleece is neatened up.

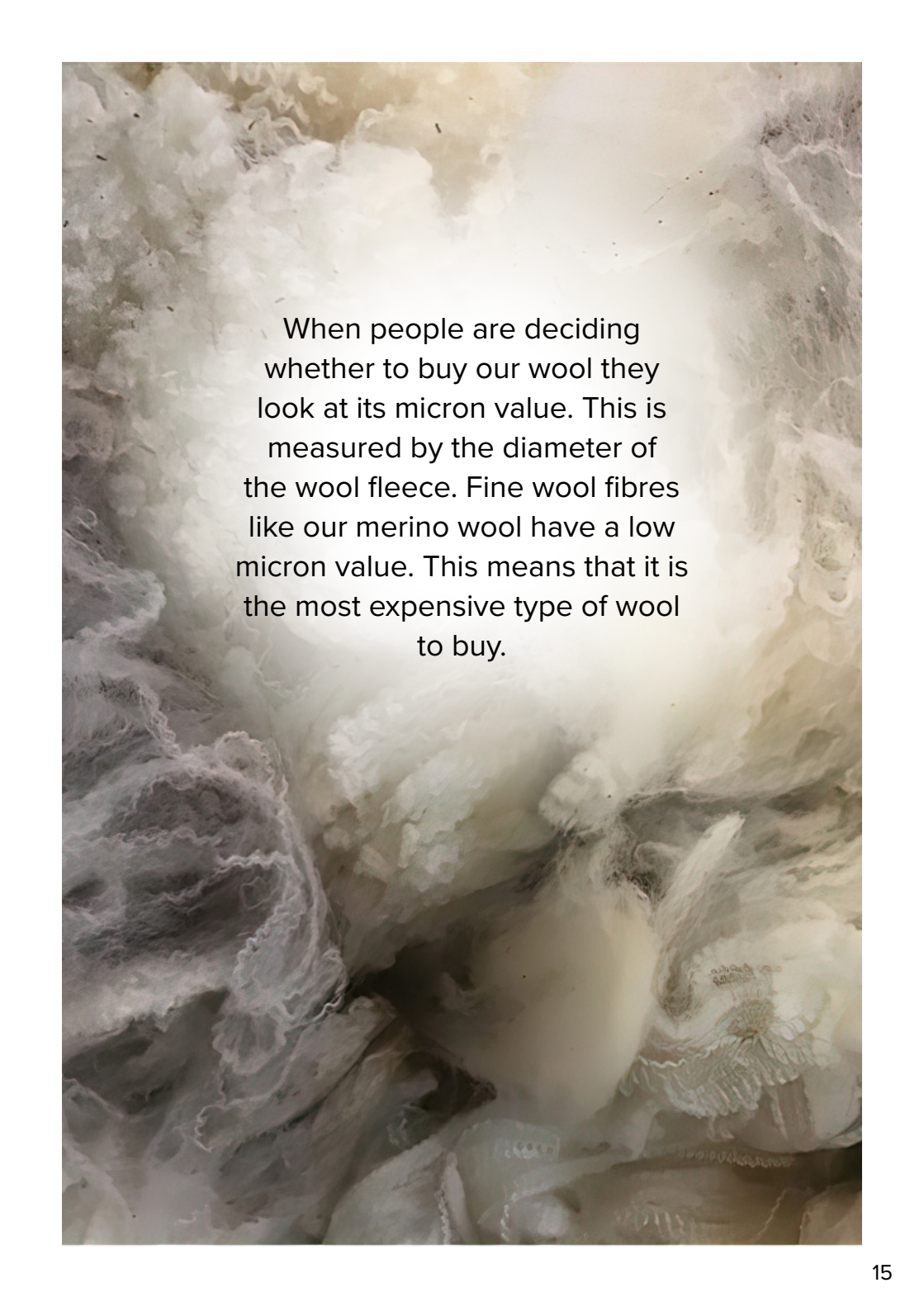
Our wool is then made into bales. We stamp each bale with the name of our farm so that our buyers know where it has come from.



When we have finished shearing our wool buyer, Mike, comes to collect the bales of wool. He takes the wool to Perth where it is auctioned off. About 80% of the wool that we produce here in Western Australia goes to China. Other countries such as India, the United States and Japan buy the rest.







When people are deciding whether to buy our wool they look at its micron value. This is measured by the diameter of the wool fleece. Fine wool fibres like our merino wool have a low micron value. This means that it is the most expensive type of wool to buy.



Once our wool is bought it goes into making clothes, bedding and other fashionable items. Our wool even makes it onto the fashion runways of the world.

*From farm to fashion, our wool has a really interesting journey!*





Alex Hough, Taylor Gray  
and Emma Scott  
Esperance Primary School,  
Year 6 2021

