

No-itch wool sheets and nightwear

Wool sheets? No way, you'd think. What about the itch? But thanks to AgResearch scientists, wool sheets, PJs and nighties are about to give you the kind of glorious night's sleep you've only dreamed of.

It's taken 25 years of research to discover the causes of wool fabric prickliness, and then develop lightweight, wool woven and knitted fabrics that feel good against the skin. The key has been careful fibre selection, using compact and low 'hairiness' fine yarns, and fabric finishing which gives a smooth surface with no protruding fibres that feel prickly.

AgResearch's Textile Science and Technology Apparel Team, led by Dr Surinder Tandon, have also cracked the weight and washing problems of wool, producing wool sheeting fabric that 'breathes', regulating the temperature you sleep at and keeping you dry and pleasantly warm. And, you can throw them in the washing machine and tumble dryer. So they're a great choice for the demanding wear sheets get



Silken slumber - Dr Surinder Tandon with the AgResearch-developed luxury wool sheeting

in rest homes, hospitals, and hotels. The sheeting is also environmentally friendly and produced without shrink-resist chemicals.

Funding to develop the no-itch sheets came from Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand Inc. Its R&D Manager, Ian Cuthbertson, says "the challenge now is to find the right commercial partners and generate some success stories in the marketplace."

The new pyjamas and nightwear fabrics, developed with South Canterbury Textiles, are results of innovative combinations of merino

wool and other natural fibres such as bamboo and silk with novel yarn structures, fabric weaves and knits, and special finishing procedures. Textiles NZ's industry scheme Transform has also supported the development.

"These new textiles have real advantages over other sleepwear fabrics," said South Canterbury Textiles CEO Andrew Miller.

It's hoped the sheeting and sleepwear will be on the market next year.

More information:
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Wool traceability technology further proves its worth

Success in second-phase testing of a wool traceability technology looks set to add substantial value for New Zealand wool growers.

Elders Primary Wool (EPW) and AgResearch recently completed the second stage of testing and proving Verifi TT technology in wool carpets. Developed by AgResearch, Verifi TT technology enables textiles to be manufactured containing a customer-distinct tracer fibre. A small handheld device run over the product gives a reading of its origins.

Elders Primary Wool has negotiated a world-wide exclusive option for the technology to track the origin of wool used in carpets. Verifi TT enables Elders to prove that carpets carrying the 'Just Shorn™' brand contain Elder's-supplied, premium New Zealand strong wool – giving differentiation, and boosting value.

The results of the full-scale tests show the Verifi TT fibre can be added in very early in the carpet manufacturing process, giving an accurate origin



AgResearch Textile Science & Technology Section Technician Mihaela Hnat with the Verifi TT hand-held reader that gives textile traceability by detecting a unique 'signature' in yarn, fabric or carpet.

reading from the finished carpet within a minute.

"This is an important step in the journey

to deliver better returns to wool growers," says Elders Managing Director Stuart Chapman.

Supporting women in science

Two AgResearch staff are doing their bit for women in science – recently voted onto the Association for Women in the Sciences (AWIS) Executive Committee.

Dawn Willix-Payne has been nominated Secretary of the Association, while Dr Liz Carpenter joins the Executive Committee team.

Founded in 1985, AWIS encourages women to use and develop their scientific abilities and achieve their full potential.

Dr Carpenter has been involved in AWIS since 1995, setting up the Association's Palmerston North branch. She sees AWIS as providing a focus and network to allow women interested, or working, in the sciences to share information, experiences and skills.

"Equally, we act as the 'mouth piece' to

explore and speak on issues related to women and science," she says.

Ms Willix-Payne hopes to see the Executive look at how AWIS can best be meaningful and valuable for women in science, and provide something that they are not getting elsewhere.

Helping farmers get smarter about feed

A series of farmer workshops aims to equip sheep and beef farmers with the tools to maximise their most important asset – forage supply.

The four-hour workshops are a Meat & Wool New Zealand and AgResearch initiative, with support from Pastoral 21.

Led by AgResearch Senior Scientist Tom Fraser, the programme seeks to give farmers an introduction to the importance of feed planning and feed budgeting, and a better understanding of animal requirements, pasture masses, and pasture quality.

The workshops look specifically at how farmers can go about changing pasture quality, the different requirements for animals throughout the year, and the impact of over or under-feeding animals. Also up for discussion is the importance of understanding feed or forage supply

to enable forward planning, and the importance of making early decisions to allow measures to be taken if supply seems likely to go into deficit or surplus.

"The feed on a farm is the cornerstone of the whole operation. It's crucial to be able to establish the best, most efficient way of converting that feed into saleable animal product," Mr Fraser says.

He says the workshop programme pulls together various tools and information to give farmers an integrated package that enables them to make effective forage demand and supply decisions.

"It's about making all this information readily available in farmer language

so they can understand what feed budgeting is all about, understand the importance of it and how it can have a huge impact on the farm's performance, and hence the dollar output at the end of the year."

While only held in the North Island so far, the workshops have been well attended with positive feedback from farmers. In one area, a follow-up workshop is planned to help further cement the learning package. Further workshops throughout the country are due to be held this spring.

For more information freephone 0800 696 328 or email help@meatandwoolnz.com



Workshops are helping farmers maximise the cornerstone of their operation – forage

See our new Dairy Research Farm at Tokanui

FREE OPEN DAY – November 20 – 9am–3pm

See our state of the art milking and animal data collection system. Talk with our scientists about how they are helping farmers. Tour the farm.

It's 40 minutes south of Hamilton on State Highway 3. Turn into Te Mauhai Road, left into Farm Road.



See the short videos of the farm: www.agresearch.co.nz
For more information: wayne.green@agresearch.co.nz
Phone: 07 834 6620

Three new AgResearch Board Members

Three new members have joined the AgResearch Board of Directors. Dr Mike Dunbier and Barry Harris started in September, while John Loughlin will begin his term in November.



Three new AgResearch Board members - Barry Harris, John Loughlin and Dr Mike Dunbier.

Dr Dunbier is presently Chairman of Lincoln University's Bioprotection Centre of Research Excellence and Chairman of the Pastoral Genomics Research Consortium. Both these roles mean Dr Dunbier has been in close contact with AgResearch science. Dr Dunbier was previously Director of the DSIR Crop Division, and went on to be Chief Executive of Crop and Food Research. He is a plant scientist with a developed understanding of what drives a Crown Research Institute, and of the subtleties of the Government's R&D funding system.

Mr Harris is presently a senior consultant to Fonterra, having until recently been Global Milk Supply General Manager, reporting directly to Fonterra's CEO. He

was previously Chief Executive of the Wellington Regional Council and before that Chief Executive of Environment Waikato. Mr Harris is a highly-regarded figure in environmental policy and management circles, and has been a member of AgResearch's Agriculture and Environment Science and Technology Group advisory panel.

John Loughlin is a senior figure in New Zealand's community of directors and a leader in the New Zealand food industry. For a long period he was the Chief Executive of the progressive Hawke's Bay red-meat (lamb and beef) food company, Richmond, prior to its acquisition by the then PPCS. He is now, amongst other responsibilities, Chairman of Zespri and Chairman of Allied Farmers. He also

owns a vineyard in Hawke's Bay.

The three new Board members will join the existing team of Sam Robinson (Chair), Susan Huria (new Deputy Chair), Danny Chan, Dr Jane Adams and Dr Andrew Macpherson.

Chairman Sam Robinson says he welcomes the three new board members enthusiastically.

"I am grateful that they have found the time to join the AgResearch Board of Directors. I know that all three will make a very strong contribution and enhance an already strong Board that is committed to serving the ongoing needs of New Zealand's pastoral sector."

Cyberspace meeting for Scottish and NZ agricultural experts

In a move showing how to have sustainable meetings, AgResearch and Scotland's Agricultural College jointly hosted more than 100 agricultural and rural experts from both countries in a virtual conference last month.

Entitled 'Rural Futures; Meeting Policy and Market Challenges' the two-day conference identified potential for research between the two countries in a range of key areas of interest. It was held via video conference – saving money, and carbon emissions.

Issues explored included how technology can assist agriculture; the role of food culture (branding, farmers markets etc) in the future of agriculture; the economic futures of rural communities without agriculture; and dealing with the global demand for food production

while maintaining environmental integrity.

The initiative has come out of a partnership agreement between AgResearch and the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) aimed at finding ways science can best assist agriculture, rural businesses and rural communities.

AgResearch Rural Futures Programme Leader Dr Liz Wedderburn says that conference participants are raving about the approach and the content. Sharing the experiences between a rural based

economy and communities based on contrasting interventions (regulation versus market) focused the discussion and took things outside the square.

"The conference gave us an opportunity to learn from the experiences of both countries to gain a greater understanding of the policy, industry and research implications of current and future pathways for agriculture and rural development," Dr Wedderburn says.

For more information contact liz.wedderburn@agresearch.co.nz

Scientist honoured as RSNZ Companion

AgResearch Senior Scientist Dr Allen Heath has been presented with a certificate marking his election as Companion of the Royal Society of New Zealand (CRSNZ) for his passion and dedication in communicating science over many decades.

The Companionship title recognises outstanding leadership in science, and contributions to the promotion and advancement of science and technology in New Zealand.

He also developed a pioneering fly-trapping programme for schools named 'Flytrack', and spearheaded AgFacts, a single sheet document communicating basic facts on insect control to farmers.

Dr Heath has taken science to the airwaves, with presentations on Radio New Zealand National in recent years.

For more information contact allen.heath@agresearch.co.nz



Dr Allen Heath (left) receiving his award as a Companion of the Royal Society of New Zealand (RSNZ) from RSNZ President Dr Garth Carnaby.

AgResearch Annual Report available

AgResearch has moved to a new format for its Annual Report – a slim highlights brochure, accompanied by a ring-bound document containing the financials, along with eight video clips from key senior staff which are available on the AgResearch website. (see links below)

In his section of the report, AgResearch Chairman Sam Robinson said recent harsh times have underscored the importance of the pastoral sector to our economy and the critical role science plays in its vitality.

"For AgResearch this was a year of significant scientific progress amid a rapidly changing global agribusiness and economic landscape. AgResearch has not been immune to the recessionary climate, but has responded realistically," he said.

Key achievements included:

- * Creation of the 'Centre of Reproduction and Genomics' with the University of Otago
- * Investment in Tokanui, a substantial research dairy farm;
- * Publishing the full sequence of the Bovine Genome;
- * Sequencing the Ovine genome;
- * Developing and strengthening strong collaborative relationships with Lincoln, Auckland, Massey, and Otago Universities;
- * Production of high-lipid GM ryegrass and highly digestible alfalfa;
- * Formation of ParaCo, a subsidiary company working on ways to better control livestock parasites;
- * Commercialising a technology allowing traceability and

authentication for New Zealand woollen carpets; and

- * Establishment of the Pastoral Foods for Human Health Research Centre with the Liggins Institute.

The Annual Report announced an after-tax loss of \$754,000 and noted staff losses and reductions in some activities.

AgResearch earnings before interest, reinvestment, restructuring and tax were \$9million (50% up on last year), representing a 6% gross margin, achieved through 4% net operating revenue growth and 2% operating expenditure growth.

For more information;

AgResearch Annual Report 2009
Download file [CLICK HERE](#) 

AgResearch Highlights 2009
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Relating to the AgResearch Annual Report 2009;

AgResearch Annual Report 2009 Videos
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