Media release

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Growers to vote on wool levy in early 2027

Wool growers will vote next year on a proposed levy to invest in work that supports greater demand and value for New Zealand wool.

New Zealand Wool Collective - formed through the amalgamation of Campaign for Wool and Wool Impact - and Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) have jointly announced that the vote will be held as part of the B+LNZ six-yearly referendum in February-March 2027.

Under the proposal, the levy would fund collective work to build a stronger future for New Zealand wool and wool growers through investment in market insights to understand opportunities for wool, strengthening the evidence behind wool through standards and research, training and education to improve wool quality and sector capability, extension activities to inform on farm practice and provide a united voice for wool.

It brings together work currently being undertaken by New Zealand Wool Collective and new areas identified through discussions with the wider industry.

The planned programme would be carried out under the umbrella of B+LNZ, utilising the structure that farmers already invest in - but have its own dedicated wool team and budget.

Ross McIsaac, Chief Executive of New Zealand Wool Collective, says the proposal is a natural step in securing investment and focus for wool.

“It builds on the consolidation of the work being done by Wool Impact and Campaign for Wool NZ and the innovation and investment being made by individual wool businesses across the sector.

“Momentum behind wool is evident in price lifts, brand activity and consumer interest. That momentum needs to be sustained and built on.

“We’ve worked with commercial wool businesses, with input from growers and brands using wool, to refine a programme of work that addresses foundational sector needs that underpin demand, while leaving commercial activity to individual businesses. This is the work that no one business or grower can do alone.

“Being part of B+LNZ would allow us to deliver dedicated wool work in a cost-effective way without doubling up on administration and overheads.

“It’s about securing the long-term financial backing needed to realise greater value for growers, industry participants and the wider wool sector.”

Kate Acland, Chair of B+LNZ, says the levy proposal is a positive step forward to build profitability for sheep farmers.

“As a sheep farmer, keeping the wool part of our businesses profitable will be a critical part of our ongoing financial sustainability. Although values have increased recently, there are some great opportunities to do more. Collective investment in key areas will help grow and sustain stronger wool prices at the farmgate.

“With funding for New Zealand Wool Collective coming to an end in late 2027, a grower levy will be essential to continue building on the work that is underway. It would also fund wool-specific activities behind the farm gate, ensuring wool is considered as part of the whole-farm system.

“Bringing wool-focused work into B+LNZ is a positive and practical step - it provides the most cost-effective way to undertake this work.

“Farmers should not pay twice for administration and overheads. The structures and reach B+LNZ already has in place will allow for the most efficient delivery of wool activities. A dedicated wool team and budget will ensure that wool levies are only spent on wool-related work.”

The proposed grower levy is likely to be 2-3 cents per kilogram of greasy wool. The structure, rate and work programme are being finalised and full information will be available from the middle of January 2027.

Mr McIsaac says wool industry businesses are supportive of collective work being done alongside and in support of their individual work. Additional funds from industry and government will be sought for specific projects to leverage grower-funded work and boost its impact.

If approved, the wool levy would likely start to be collected in December 2027 or early 2028.

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New Zealand Wool Collective exists to grow the value of New Zealand wool. It brings together the work of Wool Impact and Campaign for Wool NZ to build markets, evidence and capability across the wool value-chain to strengthen the sector and support more sustainable long-term returns for New Zealand wool growers.

New Zealand Wool Collective is currently funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries through their Primary Sector Growth Fund, WoolWorks, ASB, Silver Fern Farms, Campaign for Wool NZ and Wool Research Organisation of New Zealand. Prior funders of this work include ANZCO, Alliance, Ovation and AFFCO.