ANNUAL REPORT

CAPE WOOLS SA CONTRACT:

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD

1 JULY 2025 – 30 JUNE 2026

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Overview

This report provides an overview of the activities and progress made within the National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA) Training and Development Portfolio during the reporting period. The report focuses on key target areas aimed at improving wool classing standards, strengthening training and skills development, promoting animal welfare and biosecurity, and supporting sustainable production practices within the South African wool industry.

Key activities included the continued development of AgriSETA-accredited qualifications, the implementation and expansion of Springbok Head (SBH) Wool Classing training, the revision of training material, and collaboration with industry stakeholders to improve technical support and knowledge transfer. The report also outlines initiatives relating to social media communication, animal handling and welfare, biosecurity awareness, and the exploration of regenerative farming practices.

Collectively, these initiatives support the NWGA's strategic objective of maintaining internationally recognised wool classing standards, developing industry capacity, and providing practical support to producers, shearing contractors, wool classers, and farm workers throughout South Africa.

The progress made within each target area is summarised in this report.



Target Areas

1. AgriSETA

Continued collaboration with AgriSETA remains ongoing for the development of skills programmes within the wool industry that are more relevant to the needs of the industry. The proposed skills programmes for development are:

- Sheep Shearer (Blade and Machine)
- Shearing Team / Shearing Contractor
- Predator Controller
- Animal fibre classer (Wool & Mohair)

These skills programs were resubmitted to AgriSETA for approval from QCTO in June 2026 and approval from QCTO is to be confirmed.

In addition, one staff member of the National Wool Growers' Association has already successfully completed the Assessor Course. AgriSETA Assessor courses are now much more accessible and cost-effective, as these courses are being successfully offered online.

2. Wool Handling and Wool Classing Standards

2.1 SBH (Springbok Head) Committee and Instructors

- The Springbok Head Wool Handling Course continues to progress well, with courses being presented by instructors across the industry. This training would not have been possible without the hard work and support received from the entire wool industry.
- We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Springbok Head Instructors who continue to present these courses, namely Piet Venter, Robert Scott, Keith Coetzee, Tinus van Schalkwyk and Louis Hayward from BKB, as well as Jacques Vlok and Brent de Coning from OVK, together with Andries Strauss, Olona Jokozela, Herman Maartens, Andries Pretorius and Jasper Coetzee. These individuals are doing exceptional work for wool training within the South African wool industry.
- The Terms of Reference for the SBH Committee was presented and approved at the last Wool Forum meeting. Minor adjustments were recommended and will be followed up on in the coming months.

2.2 Wool Classing Manual

- The revised Wool Classification Manual has now been completed in Afrikaans, and the English version is still in progress. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Hannelie du Plessis for the revised layout and translation, as well as all the Springbok Head Instructors who contributed to the revised version.
- All Springbok Head Instructors are encouraged to use this revised version during wool handling training courses.
- The translation of this manual into additional languages is the next important step. This is essential to improve training access for shearing contractors, classers, and farm employees.

2.3 SBK Instructors & In-service Training

- Springbok Head Instructors and in-service training will remain on the agenda. There are Springbok Head Instructors retiring within the next few years, and significant efforts will need to be made to identify new candidates as Springbok Head Instructors to ensure continuity in training and to maintain classing standards.
- Lungani Maqaqalana, Innocentia Sheba, Sibusiso Ndwanya, and Luvuyo Nyamela attended the SBH Course at Grootfontein Agricultural College as assistant instructors. They performed their

duties to a very high standard and made a valuable contribution to the successful delivery of the course.

2.4 SBH Wool Classer Database & Feedback System

- SBH Courses and Classer information can be fully uploaded onto the system (shearing App), including all attendees and their results.
- A major challenge remains linking producer numbers, clip classification, and SBK Classers to generate detailed feedback reports for shearing contractors or classers for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

2.5 Current Wool Classers, SBK Classers, and Shearing Contractors

- A renewed effort will be made to contact shearing contractors regarding information on current and prospective wool classers. As previously mentioned in the last report, feedback from shearing contractors has been unsatisfactory, with only a few responding and submitting information for database capture. This matter will be followed up in the coming year.
- To improve classing quality and recognise classers who perform excellently, more comprehensive information on current active classers is required.

2.6 SBH Wool Handling Course 2026

- Several Springbok Head Wool Handling courses are planned for the second half of 2026, with courses currently scheduled for Ermelo, Glen College, and Vryheid.
- It is clear from the enquiries received following the social media posts about past and upcoming courses that there is strong demand for wool handling training. However, consideration should be given to whether all enquiries justify a full Springbok Head course, and whether a shortened wool handling course should be developed that offers more than just piece picking.
- During the course presented at Grootfontein Agricultural College, four Communal Production Advisors attended with the objective of equipping the National Wool Growers' Association (NWGA) Communal Production Advisors to qualify as Springbok Head (SBH) Instructors. Two of the advisors successfully completed the course and were awarded the SBH Wool Classing Certificate. The remaining two served as assistant instructors during the course and carried out their responsibilities with great competence and professionalism.
- During the 2024/2025 financial year, a total of 370 participants attended Springbok Head Wool Classing Courses, and 52 candidates were awarded the Springbok Head Wool Classing Diploma. During the 2025/2026 financial year, 397 participants attended 17 SBH Wool Classing Courses, of whom 46 successfully met the required standard and were awarded the SBH Wool Classing Diploma. From the beginning of 2026, the NWGA also introduced the issuing of Wool Classer Certificates to participants who attend the course but do not meet the Springbok Head qualification standard. This initiative supports improved traceability of wool classers operating within the industry and provides official recognition for participants should they attend a future SBH Wool Classing Course. A total of 89 Wool Classer Certificates were issued during 2026.

- Over the past 12 months, all Springbok Head Instructors were requested to notify the NWGA Office of every SBH Wool Classing Course presented, including courses where no candidates were recommended for either the Springbok Head Wool Classing Diploma or the Wool Classer Certificate. To date, the NWGA has not received reports of any such courses. It is therefore assumed that all courses presented during this period resulted in recommendations for either the Springbok Head Wool Classing Diploma or the Wool Classer Certificate.





2.7 Social Media

- In collaboration with Plaas Media, an extensive interview was also recorded and broadcasted on Plaas Media platforms and RSG radio regarding wool classing standards in South Africa and how the South African clip compares with the rest of the world. The interview also covered what a SBH classer is, where it originates from, and what a wool classing course entails.
- Interviews were also granted to Plaas Media during NAMPO Harvest Day on the technical aspects of wool classing.
- The ongoing planning and production of weekly voice notes covering topics relevant to the wool industry remain an integral part of the Production Advisors' monthly social media strategy. These voice notes are distributed through the NWGA WhatsApp groups to keep producers informed of current industry developments and technical information.
- In collaboration with Plaas Media, the Production Advisors also contribute to the planning and development of topics and content for the NWGA's social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



3. Animal Handling, Welfare, and Management Practices

3.1 Biosecurity

- Due to the significant impact of foot-and-mouth disease and its widespread occurrence across the country, short biosecurity awareness adverts were developed and distributed, as well as a comprehensive biosecurity presentation that production advisors can use at information days and farmer days.



3.2 Animal Handling & Management Practices

3.2.1 Animal Handling & Management Practices Videos

- With the widespread outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, NAMPO Harvest Day, like many other agricultural shows and events, decided not to allow cloven-hoofed animals at the event. The National Wool Growers' Association therefore had to find an alternative approach to present a meaningful exhibition of the wool industry at NAMPO. It was decided to produce a series of professional training videos in collaboration with Plaas Media. The videos are as follows:

    1. Picking up and throwing of a fleece.
    2. Skirting and classing of the fleece.
    3. Classing of outsorts.
    4. General sheep handling.
    5. Correct catching of sheep for shearing purposes.
    6. Machine shearing.
    7. Blade shearing.
    8. Castration and tail docking.
    9. Identification of sheep.
    10. Sheep handling facilities.
    11. Preparation of blades for shearing.

- These videos were not produced exclusively for NAMPO, but also for general training purposes by production advisors in the future. The videos were produced with an Afrikaans audio track, but it is intended that they will be translated - either with dubbed audio or subtitles - into English, isiXhosa, and Sesotho.



3.2.2 Animal Handling Courses in Collaboration with BKB

- BKB invited the NWGA to collaborate on presenting animal handling courses across South Africa for wool producers and their employees. After discussions regarding responsibilities, course content, and training materials, BKB and NWGA jointly presented the first course in September 2025. NWGA Production Advisors primarily focused their portion of the presentation on animal handling and welfare, along with basic wool handling and woolshed hygiene. Where agendas aligned, NWGA Production Advisors and BKB successfully organised these courses throughout South Africa, reaching a significant number of farm workers.

- 1348 farm workers and students were reached during 26 courses presented in collaboration with BKB and the NWGA.



3.3 Regenerative Farming

Annelize Smit van Niekerk also attended the Regenerative Agriculture Congress in Reitz, which is organised by Landbouweekblad in collaboration with the farmers' association. The event was insightful; however, the congress focused mainly on crops such as maize, soybeans, and potatoes.

Pastures were also covered to some extent, but there was minimal focus on how livestock farming and regenerative farmers could benefit sheep producers. The concept of regenerative agriculture was, however, well conveyed to the audience.

It is a holistic approach with a robust environment. It is long-term in nature, and attention must be given to YIELD versus INCOME/PROFIT.

There are already various companies, institutions, and individuals advising farmers and offering courses on regenerative farming, which is generally based on the five principles of minimizing soil disturbance, maintaining soil cover, keeping living roots in the soil, promoting biodiversity, and integrating livestock where appropriate.

Approaches to regenerative farming differ from area to area in terms of agricultural land and the methods that should be applied.

How and at what level this practice will be incorporated as part of production advisory services still needs to be carefully discussed and planned.

Discussions are also being held with the Agricultural Research Council to receive training later in the year together with ARC officials on the veld monitoring project across South Africa.

The aim of this project is to obtain reliable and new data regarding South African grazing conditions and, in doing so, also become part of long-term veld monitoring in each area. This can furthermore be incorporated with regenerative farming practices in South Africa for the benefit of producers.

4. Conclusion

The past reporting period reflects continued progress in strengthening training, maintaining wool classing standards, and supporting sustainable production practices within the South African wool industry. The ongoing success of the Springbok Head Wool Classing Programme, together with strengthened partnerships with organisations such as AgriSETA, BKB, Plaas Media, and the Agricultural Research Council, has contributed significantly to skills development and industry capacity.

While challenges remain, particularly in strengthening industry databases and developing the next generation of Springbok Head Instructors, the strong demand for training confirms the value of these initiatives. The NWGA remains committed to improving training opportunities, supporting producers and wool classers, and maintaining the high standards for which the South African wool clip is internationally recognised.

Signed at Middelburg on **31 July 2026**



Annelize Smit van Niekerk

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