

WOOL TESTING - ABOUT US

Wool Testing Services has been operating in New Zealand as an independent wool quality certification body for over 40 years. It was originally a branch of Wool Testing Services International, based in England, which provided similar services to clients throughout Europe, Central Asia, and South America. The archive photo shows core sampling being demonstrated by WTS staff to London woolbuyers in 1962. Since 1988 Wool Testing Services has operated as a division of SGS New Zealand, part of the Société Générale de Surveillance group, and has continued to commit resources to a continuous quality improvement programme.

Most of the work undertaken on greasy and scoured wool is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the standards and regulations of the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO: www.iwto.org). This organisation was created to defend the interests of the wool industry as a whole - from woolgrowers to wool textile traders, processors, spinners and weavers. Its members are the national organisations representative of the above interests in its 24 member-countries, themselves representative of some 90% of the wool textile activity around the world. In New Zealand the representative body is the National Council of New Zealand Wool Interests.

Whilst the majority of our testing is carried out at the Wellington central laboratory, condition tests are also carried out in some of our 5 branch offices covering the major raw wool sales and scouring centres throughout New Zealand. The Wellington laboratory is centrally located for the country. It is in Kilbirnie, 5 minutes from the airport, and whilst there is no other wool-related activity in this particular suburb of Wellington, there was a local scour here in 1916 (photo, courtesy the Bourke family).



Milestones for SGS Wool Testing Services have included moving the Wellington laboratory to purpose-built premises in 1990, with laboratory accreditation to ISO Guide 25 (now ISO 17025) in the same year; commissioning of the first commercial Length After Carding test line, together with certification of the management system to ISO 9002 in 1993; commissioning of Length and Strength testing, together with an intensive programme of laboratory systems streamlining through 1995. In 1996 the Timaru laboratory became the first in the world to be accredited to ISO Guide 25 (now ISO 17025) for fleece testing. Improvement processes continued through the second half of the 1990's with upgrading and streamlining of laboratory systems and computer and communications systems. In 2000, we brought online a new generation of computer systems that will improve the services and communication options we can offer to all our clients in the coming years. The turn of the millennium also saw us getting more involved in on-farm sampling and testing.

FOR ENQUIRIES

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