

Elenora rewarded with the VBC Wool Excellence Award for 2016

Dedication to the Saxon Merino breed has paid off for the Western District's Meek family. Garry and Sharon Meek, Elenora, Mininera, Victoria, have won the Wool Excellence award from 350 year-old Italian luxury textile maker Vitale Barberis Canonico. The Award was presented on 8th November at an exclusive function held at "Vue de Monde" in Melbourne attended by VBC Wool Excellence Club members and invited guests and media.

Mr and Mrs Meek are the third generation of woolgrowers on the property and have continued a 50-year tradition of breeding Saxon sheep based exclusively on Sierra Park bloodlines.

Besides the Saxon bloodline and careful breeding, Mr Meek's skill in traditional classing and exceptional preparation has propelled the Elenora clip into the winner's circle.

Vitale Barberis Canonico raw wool buyer Davide Fontaneto said the company was proud to award not only the wool but also the passion and the heritage behind the wool.

"The Meek family is committed to these fundamentals and the result of their hard work is fantastic wool," Mr Fontaneto said.

"We award people, because only people can build the future. And only people who continue to build can have a bright future."

All members of the Vitale Barberis Canonico Wool Excellence Club need to be accredited under the SustainaWOOL Integrity Scheme, a scheme sponsored by Vitale Barberis Canonico and managed by their agency, New England Wool. This scheme promotes ethical, environmental and high quality wool production and members benefit from "purchase contracts" at significant premiums to the physical market.



Vitale Barberis Canonico's Phoebe Croyle and raw wool buyer Davide Fontaneto with the 2016 winners of the global Wool Excellence Award, Sharon and Garry Meek, Elenora, Mininera. Photo by Annabelle Beale.

The award presentation was attended by Alberto Barberis Canonico, Davide Fontaneto from VBC Italy and Phoebe Croyle, who manages the VBC Wool Excellence Club within Australia.

The Meeks' prize included a cash prize of \$50,000 along with an all-expenses paid trip to Italy to meet with Vitale Barberis Canonico representatives in the Biella region of Italy in mid-2017.

The November Award marks the pinnacle of the 2015/16 wool selling season, with the appraisal and judging of the very best wool suitable for Vitale Barberis Canonico from that wool selling season.

The winning wool clip displayed the unique Saxon style and character with a very traditional fine crimp. The staple was very dense and had a superior elasticity (resistance to compression), which is typical of the Saxon breed and passionately desired by Vitale Barberis Canonico.

Vitale Barberis Canonico employs more than 400 employees, has 40 agents throughout the world, and produces fabrics from two state-of-the-art factories in the Biella region of Italy.

It is the largest exporter on a global level in terms of both value and quantity – thanks to its respect for heritage coupled with innovation and elegance.