

eBale FAQs – “Delivering What the World is Demanding”

What is eBale?

eBale is a technology system that supports the traceability of Australian wool. It includes wool packs that have a unique (matching) QR code and RFID microchip – these are known as eBale packs.

To maximise the success of the technology, the QR Code can be read on farm using WoolClip, an electronic wool classing & data App and the RFID is used in commercial warehouse settings.

Technically:

The eBale technology only carries a unique number (a string of 24 numbers), for example:

Unique Tag Id: 093253480000021002346917

Company Prefix: 9325348 (this identifies the object as an Australian (AWEX registered) wool pack)

Asset type: 00000

Check digit: 2 (this can differ between tags)

Serial component (unique): 1002346917 (actual number used as the eBale moves along the supply chain).



The number may be scanned many times along the wool pipeline, i.e. on farm, freight, warehouse, core-line, dump, shipping, scourer/top maker warehouse and processing line. The key is that the unique number can be linked to the farm data (using WoolClip and broker systems) and is accessible only by those with express permission, viz. grower, broker, exporter, processor.

What are the data privacy risks associated with eBale? How will farmers' data be protected?

All eBale data is securely stored in the cloud using best practice security measures. The data is only provided to the grower, classer or the nominated wool marketing organisation.

Why is traceability important?

eBale will support the traceability of Australian wool, which is important in marketing, biosecurity and quality assurance. It will help protect Australian wool's global reputation as being the supplier of high quality wool of known provenance.

Has Australia considered how the RFID technology could be used in the case of an exotic animal disease outbreak?

It is likely that an exotic disease outbreak could severely impact trade and having an improved and digital identification system will benefit the industry allowing it to resume trade as soon as possible. The Australian wool industry (& all agricultural industries) have been actively pursuing scenario planning should a biosecurity event occur. This exercise, led by WoolProducers Australia and Animal Health Australia, was called Exercise Argonaut.

The details can be found at https://www.sheepcentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Exercise-Argonaut_Report.pdf

When is eBale being rolled out?

From 1 January 2023, the only bale labels available to be purchased by wool pack manufacturers are eBale labels, containing a RFID microchip and QR code.

Do all Australian wool growers and warehouses need to use eBales?

No. However, there are many growers, brokers and exporter's customers who are demanding it and will use it to improve their record keeping, logistics and wool handling capability, and quality assurance.

Is there a transition period for eBale?

eBale wool packs will become commercially available from January 2023, with only eBales imported into Australia from July 2023. Wool growers can use up any "non-eBale" wool packs they may have purchased.

- There is no end date for the use of "non-eBale" wool packs.
- Wool in "non-eBale" wool packs does not have to be repacked into eBales.
- "Non-eBale" packs do NOT have to be fitted with a QR code, but this is available for those who would like to transition quickly (see below).

Where do I buy eBale wool packs?

To purchase eBale packs contact your usual wool pack supplier/retailer.

AWEX has already received its 1st orders for eBale labels, with the manufacture of eBale packs underway.

What is the cost of the eBale technology?

The eBale technology costs an additional 60 cents per pack. This is paid for by the pack manufacturer when they purchase an eBale label.

Importantly, the use of the WoolClip App (to capture wool data and eBale in shed) by the grower and classer is free to download and use.

Together, the eBale and WoolClip system will save growers time, and improve information quality and its transfer along the value chain. The first stage is the direct transfer of the electronic Classer's Specification and NWD information from the farm to the broker.

Can I retro-fit my "non eBale" wool packs?

AWEX has had enquiries from growers and brokers who are interested in (retro-fitting) adhering the RFID tag (with printed QR Code) to the outside of their "non eBale" wool pack labels – this has been trialled and proven to be successful. The eBale tag adheres best to a clean label on a "non eBale" wool pack.



Sample: eBale RFID/QR Code tag

It is anticipated that the new eBale packs will flow through naturally. However, for interested parties, eBale RFID/QR code tags are available to purchase A\$0.88 each (GST inc.). If you are interested in purchasing eBale RFID/QR code tags to adhere to your "non eBale" packs, contact AWEX, your broker or your pack retailer.

How is AWEX helping individual Growers & Classers make the change?

AWEX is supporting growers and classers to learn and understand eBale via its extension team. Equally, AWEX's team is actively training growers, classers and brokers to use WoolClip. Support is available 7 days a week.

Does industry support the move?

YES. AWEX has received full support for the implementation of eBale from all major brokers, warehouses, exporters, processors and ALL industry associations (Domestic and Overseas).

eBale is “Delivering what the world is demanding!”

What about Australia’s wool processing customers?

European and Chinese processing mills assisted AWEX to undertake the proving trials of the technology and have since provided their support for the implementation of eBale.

Do other countries have a similar system?

No, it is a world-first. Australian wool enjoys a global reputation for quality and the eBale system will help to protect this point of difference in the market.

SUMMARY:

Is there an expiry date for using my old wool packs?

No. Growers can continue to use the old wool packs as they currently do. The wool industry has never introduced an expiry date on old wool packs when new standards have been implemented. For example, we still do see the occasional Jute (rarely), or HDPE (infrequently) wool pack used.

Once the old packs have been used and flushed through the supply chain, the only packs available to be purchased will be the new eBale wool packs. This will progressively increase through 2023.

Do I have to apply a RFID/QR tag to my old wool packs?

No. Some warehouses and growers do want to quickly transition to eBale and there may be a combination of old packs and the new eBale packs in use at shearing, but growers do not have to apply a tag in this situation. WoolClip can capture both old packs and eBales.

If a wool grower wants to transition quickly, they should contact AWEX or their broker to purchase the eBale tags. Cost \$0.88 each (GST inc.).

What is the difference between the QR Code and RFID?

They are two different technologies but they both hold the same unique identification number.

- The QR Code is for use on farm using a smart phone or iPad with the WoolClip app.
- The RFID is for commercial warehouse use (domestic and overseas), where dedicated RFID readers will be used.

Is the technology the same as the Sheep electronic ear tags?

No. The frequency of the technology is different, and the sheep ear tag readers will not work for eBale. eBale RFID uses UHF – Ultra High Frequency – which works best with the properties of wool bales and their transfer along the supply chain.

What changes from 1 July 2023?

For wool growers nothing. Growers can continue to use any non-eBale wool packs they have purchased as normal. Growers do not have to apply a RFID/QR Code tag to their packs.

Warehouses may start to prepare for the introduction of eBale packs and understand what benefits this can bring to their businesses. Warehouses should contact AWEX and their software suppliers to discuss how the integration of eBale and WoolClip can add value and efficiency to their business.

WoolClip

WoolClip is a mature on-farm platform designed to capture all wool information at the point of origin, the wool shed. WoolClip was developed to also capture the eBale unique bale number. The combination of WoolClip and eBale will add greater accuracy and efficiency in capturing and transferring wool data from the wool shed to the warehouse.

It is highly recommended that growers, classers and brokers attend one of the many WoolClip pop-up workshops around the country to prepare, learn and train in the use of WoolClip and understand what the real benefits are for them.

To find out more about the WoolClip pop-up training workshops contact John Cox, WoolClip Program Lead, AWEX and follow AWEX on our Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/woolexchange/?ref=page_internal

Alternatively, contact your broker or AWEX to find out the schedule of pop-up training workshops in your State in 2023 or to arrange a training session in your area.

Implementation Calendar

Date	Action
31 December 2022	Production of old "non eBale" label ceased
1 January 2023	New eBale label & pack production commenced
1 July 2023	Only eBales imported into Australia

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