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from my desk at the farm

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Uruguay is one of the main high quality wool producing countries in the world. Throughout its history, wool has been for many years one of Uruguay's most important exportation product.

Uruguayan wool producers have dedicated their lives into upgrading wool producing genetics, wool quality, improving its harvesting and presentation, all while taking care of animal wellbeing and natural resources. All of this has allowed their production to access the most demanding markets.

PRODUCTION


Uruguay has a flock of 6.5 million sheep. Although some of sheep are of breeds orientated to meat production, most of them are of breeds which main product is wool.

The latest surveys show that 23 mkg of greasy wool of a wide spectrum of micronages are produced each year in Uruguay.. See Table 1.

Table 1

URUGUAY : WOOL PRODUCTION BY MICRON				
In mkg greasy basis				
MICRONS	1997	2007	2015	2019
<22.5	3.20	5.46	6.50	7.50
22.6-23.5	8.00	3.36	1.75	1.90
23.6-25.0	7.20	2.10	0.75	1.00
25.1-26.5	12.00	3.78	1.50	1.10
26.6-28.0	26.40	4.20	2.75	2.10
28.1-29.5	20.00	10.08	8.25	5.90
29.6-31.5	3.20	8.82	2.50	3.00
>31.6	0.80	2.94	1.00	1.00
Total	80.00	42.0	25.0	23.5

Source: 1997 – CMPP
2007 – R. Cardellino based on wool Industry and wool Exporter data
2015 – estimate LTSA
2019 – Delta Agro Consultants based on wool Industry data



Most of the volume of wool produced is of micronages under 22,5 microns. Wool in this range of micronages is as well the one whos quality has allowed it to access the most important markets of the world. The characteristics of this wool are comparable to the one produced in the most important wool



producing countries. Uruguayan wool has valuable qualities as appropriate length, low vegetable content, high strength, good colour, etc. As to the finest section of wool, Uruguay produces 2 mkg greasy basis of wool between 15 and 20 microns.

EXPORTS

Uruguay is worldwide recognized as an exporter of high quality wool. According to figures published by the IWTO (International Wool Textile Organization), Uruguay is one of the main producer/exporter countries of greasy wool and semi-processed wool, among other countries as: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina.

The main products exported by Uruguay are raw wool, scoured and wool tops.

Raw wool

In the last year (2021), Uruguay has exported approximately 8.5 mkg of raw wool, for a total of 42.1 million US dollars.

“Estancias Puppo S.A. was the largest exporter during the period, with 62.2% of total exports in US dollars.”

The main destination countries for Uruguayan raw wool were: China (63%), Bulgaria (27.1%), Italy (6.2%), followed by India, the United States, Egypt, Belgium and Germany.

Table 2

URUGUAY: RAW WOOL EXPORTS		
IMPORTING COUNTRY	Total USD FOB	% FOB
CHINA	26.534.728	63,00%
BULGARIA	11.400.686	27,10%
ITALY	2.591.152	6,20%
INDIA	647.057	1,50%
USA	524.663	1,20%
EGYPT	294.992	0,70%
BELGIUM	79.650	0,20%
GERMANY	53.923	0,10%
TOTAL	42.126.850	100,00%
SOURCE: DNA		

Scoured wool

Regarding foreign sales of scoured wool during the year 2021, Uruguay exported a total of 32.4 million US dollars and 4.4 mkg actual weight. Although China was the main buyer (39.1% of the total), there were also 18 countries that bought this product.

Wool Tops

In 2021, Uruguay exported a total of 11.3 million kilos of wool tops, for a total of 83.6 million American dollars.

Among the 29 destinations for Uruguayan wool tops, Germany is the main buyer (29.8% of the total), followed by Italy (22.4%), Turkey (8.5%), Mexico (6, 3%) and China (5.2%).

