

The Sheep and Wool Industry was traditionally the major primary industry, with the country south of St. George and between the Moonie and Balonne and Narran Rivers regarded by some as the best natural sheep breeding areas in Queensland.

The first fleet in 1788 bought some sheep to Australia but it was not until 1797 that a small consignment of Spanish sheep were imported which become the forerunners of the famed Merino breed. Pastoralists were already in the district below St. George when Sir Thomas Mitchell journeyed on his survey trip of 1846, which had declared St. George's bridge because of a natural bridge of felspar rock afforded easy crossing of the Balonne River.

Early merino flocks were used to open up vast tracts of pastoral country and St. George's history is rich in stories of the pastoral pioneers who started to earn an income from new land with sheep. Management of various sheep enterprises varies under pressures of environment and the type of production pursued. Standard rules of productivity do however apply to any form of sheep production. These include the basic aims of getting a high number of lambs from a given ewe flock, increasing wool weights and carcass weights as appropriate for the type of sheep run, planning safe stocking for the type of country to ensure production in a variety of seasons and organising adequate animal health programs like worm and blow fly control to minimise losses caused by internal and external parasites.

Wool is marketed largely through an auction system with the majority of the clip sold at the wool selling centres of Sydney, Melbourne & Newcastle. Sale by description and sample in sale catalogues, private treaty, tender and forward contracts are other methods of selling wool. Sheep are sold in the paddock, through saleyard system and auction by description (through computer aided livestock marketing –CALM), over the hook (on carcass weight after the animal is slaughtered) through CALM, livestock agent, direct to an abattoir and private contract.

The Merino is the dominant breed of sheep in the shire. In later years - crossbreds, prime lambs and course hair (woolless) sheep have gained in popularity. There are approximately 300,000 sheep in the shire cutting on average 4kg of wool, worth about 500 cents per kilogram greasy.