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MULESING SOLUTION IN FRONT OF THEIR EYES

Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA) does not support statements made by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Chairman McLachlan that “You cannot convince anyone that mulesing is not cruel” (Weekly Times 21.2.07), yet AWI does not support commercially available pain management solutions.

According to AWGA Chairman, Martin Oppenheimer, AWI have failed to deliver any pain management techniques for mulesing, and have failed to support recent commercial solutions.

The Sydney Morning Herald story “Costello’s woolly attempt to outlaw shame game”, 26.2.07, includes the quote; “...a US based international organisation, was decrying the practice of mulesing,...without any form of painkiller.”

Oppenheimer says “The key point in the whole mulesing debate has been the welfare of the sheep. Now that effective pain management is available, growers are using it. Australian woolgrowers care about their sheep, and want to convey this to wool’s customers.”

“During 2006 approximately 576 woolgrowers used the one commercially available pain management product on 1.3 million mulesed lambs, recommended by 220 Veterinarians around Australia. This equates to 10% of merino lambs treated in the first year of commercial release. Drought conditions during 2006 obviously resulted in lower lambing rates, so this is an outstanding adoption success in anyone’s terms.”

“The mulesing issue has been solved now, and will be enhanced with effective new technologies and genetics as they develop and become available. Why wait until 2010 for a potential solution?”

“AWI’s role is to provide innovation and solutions to woolgrower’s problems and enhance the perception and value of our product. It helps no-one to be picking one technology over another and denigrating individuals or the whole industry. It appears the old “Not Invented Here” paradigm lives on at AWI. AWI should not stifle commercial innovation at the expense of the industry.”

“The immediate solution to the Mulesing debate is in front of AWI’s eyes now with commercially available pain management for mulesing. Longer term solutions, including genetic selection and novel technologies, will happen with time and the current levels of expenditure.”

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