



5 March 2007

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

McLachlan “Cruels” wool industry

Dear Sir,

The recent statement by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) Chairman, Ian McLachlan, that “You cannot convince anyone that mulesing is not cruel” (Weekly Times 21.2.07) cannot be tolerated by woolgrowers.

Why say this when AWI is taking Federal Court action against animal rights activists? When added to his past performance, it is appropriate to question how much Ian McLachlan is costing the Australian Wool Industry, and whether he is a suitable leader of the proposed Research and Marketing company formed by integrating AWI and WoolMark.

Last year he called one of wool’s largest buyers, Laurence Modiano, a “hypocrite” for challenging AWI’s ability to lift demand for wool. Last year a marketing deal with major brand Benetton collapsed.

Last week Ian McLachlan continued AWI’s anti-innovation attack on Tri-Solfen, the new commercially available pain management and antiseptic for mulesing.

AWI have spent millions of woolgrowers’ and taxpayers’ dollars on research to find alternatives to mulesing, as they should. We accept that research is expensive and unpredictable. But to fail to support one of the few innovations for mulesing (Trisolfen), while making damaging statements linking woolgrowers with cruelty, is ethically and financially reckless.

The sheep and wool industry is worth over A\$4 billion. The “cruelty” statements by Ian McLachlan cannot stand, as they damage the perception of our products and the reputation of woolgrowers.

There is so much to do to build confidence in our industry, at all levels from growers, processors, retailers and consumers. The recent successful test marketing campaign in the US, funded by IWTO and woolgrowers, and professionally run by Brenda McGahan and her team at WoolMark, are the example of what we need to do on a large scale.

Now we need new leadership, with vision and commercial drive, to build confidence in our Industry. We need leadership that can build real demand based on consumer confidence in our renewable and ethically produced fibre.

It’s time for Ian McLachlan to stop damaging wool’s image. Wool needs a positive change in direction now.

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AWGA - News Update

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