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AWI made a mulesing mistake: Zegna

THE chairman of the world's largest user of extra fine Merino wool, Paolo Zegna, has re-entered the mulesing debate carrying an olive branch to growers, and is now calling for a "logical" approach to mulesing.

The chairman of the luxury brand Ermenegildo Zegna said last month that mulesing was the "best solution to flystrike to date".

The comments were an about face from the stance the company took in April this year when it pulled out of its exclusive Australian superfine fleece competitions, amid concerns about mounting retail angst towards the use of mulesed wool.

"I still believe that mulesing has been the best solution to flystrike to date," Mr Zegna told Woolnews in South Africa last month.

"Millions of sheep would have died a horrible death if it was not for mulesing.

"But it is time to move on - I believe pain relief is the best method at present."

He said the Zegna Group took the mulesing issue "seriously" and was prepared to pay for pain relief.

"Australian Wool Innovation made a mistake when it promised to cease mulesing by 2010. It built expectation with customers that it could not fulfill," he said.

Mr Zegna urged a logical approach to mulesing.

"Australia cannot just stop producing the finest world because of the mulesing issue. We all need wool, particularly fine Australia wool."

The Ermenegildo Zegna Company supplies 525 mono-brand stores and has 253 direct outlets in over 80 countries worldwide.

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