



23 July 2011

Pain relief won't stop Animal Lib

Author: TERRY SIM

ADOPTION of pain relief treatments before and after surgical mulesing of sheep would not end Animal Liberation's campaign to ban the practice, the body's executive director Mark Pearson said this week.

World-first on-farm trials of an injectable pre-operative pain relief system for sheep also involving the post-operative analgesic spray Tri-Solfen were thrown open for inspection near Goulburn in New South Wales last week.

The compound Xylazine is being trialled by the University of Sydney Veterinary School in partnership with the creator of Tri-Solfen, Animal Ethics, and research partner Bayer, as a pre-operative analgesic treatment before lamb marking, mulesing, castration and tail docking.

After inspecting the trial pre-operative treatment of lambs with an intramuscular Xylazine injection last week, Mr Pearson said researchers had come a long way in taking the serious step to address pain in farm animals.

Mr Pearson said Xylazine took effect within 10 minutes of injection into the rear leg muscle and with a post-operative Tri-Solfen spray treatment probably gave lambs about 80-85 per cent pain relief with less stress.

"The treated lambs mothered up quickly and their gait showed they weren't in anywhere near as much pain.

"But we will not stop campaigning until mulesing is gone, is phased out," he said.

Animal Liberation's campaign to ban mulesing would continue because animals treated with pre and post-operative pain relief were not being put under general anaesthetic, they were still suffering and the procedure could have been phased out years ago, Mr Pearson said. He said a faster acting pre-operative pain relief treatment would be preferable, but might not be possible without doing an intravenous injection done by a veterinarian.

Animal Liberation had always opposed any surgical procedures on animals without adequate pain relief, especially ring castration and he believed markets would eventually demand pre and post-operative pain relief of animals by farmers.

RSPCA Australia's scientific officer for farm animals Melina Tensen said the body supported the pre-operative pain relief research and hoped it would come up with a treatment that was viable, relatively easy and quick to use.

"We accept that mulesing needs to be carried in some circumstances on certain animals in certain environments.

"We certainly don't support the view that mulesing should continue forever and when mulesing is conducted we believe it should be carried out with pain relief."



AWGA - News Update

Ms Tensen did not believe the advent of pre-operative pain relief would change the RSPCA's attitude to mulesing.

"It's invasive, it's bloody, it's painful and you can still see the animal reacting to the cuts.

"Don't forget too that mulesing, particularly if you are a ram lamb, comes on top of surgical castration and tail-docking."

Ms Tensen said it was clear in the blind-testing trial at Goulburn last week that some of the lambs had the sedative and they didn't look to be in any pain "at that time", but when the effects of the post-operative Tri-Solfen treatment wore off some behavioural changes could be seen.

"You could tell that there is definitely some pain because the mulesing takes some time to heal.

"Wherever pain relief is available for an operation that needs to be carried out, we believe producers should be using that pain relief."

Use of pain-relief for surgical castration and tail-docking of sheep should be more widely researched and adopted in the Australian industry, she said.

"In the future, we would like to see these invasive procedures just not happening at all and alternative sought."

Ms Tensen said producers and mulesing contractors should be deciding on a lamb-by-lamb basis whether they should be mulesed or not, based on the animal's breech wrinkle score, rather than mulesing the entire lamb mob regardless.

Related Links

<http://australianwoolgrowers.com.au/>

Source: <http://sl.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/livestock/sheep/a-mulesing-miracle/2234102.aspx>