



02 August 2011

Mulesing relief 'brilliant'

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GLOBAL wool processor and trader Laurence Modiano believes a pre-operative pain relief treatment for sheep surgical procedures being trialled in New South Wales is "just what the industry has been calling for".

"I am really delighted that the team behind Tri-Solfen (Animal Ethics) has managed to develop a pre-procedure analgesic to ensure the absolute minimisation of pain by the sheep.

"It is absolutely brilliant," he said. Mr Modiano said it would take decades to breed sheep with plain wrinkle-free breech sheep.

"In the meantime, we have to do what is morally right by the animal, to minimise suffering. "Ultimately what matters is that people in the industry do what is right, and not what is economically or politically expedient."

Mr Modiano said he could not see why "anybody in their right mind" would object to humane treatment of sheep. "It is obvious that the goal is to avoid mulesing in due course, but we just have to accept the reality that many sheep require mulesing.

"This (pain relief) development is a quantum leap, and Australia must now be at the forefront in terms of animal welfare," he said. "I don't know of any other country that uses pre- and post-operative analgesics to deal with all the different surgical procedures animals undergo in the agricultural world."

Mr Modiano said he was very impressed with the adoption rate of the post-operative pain relief spray Tri-Solfen (about 70 per cent of mulesing flock owners), even though there was no market imperative to do so. "The vast majority of retailers who have expressed any opinion said they don't want wool from mulesed animals, but there is just not enough wool from unmulesed sheep to go around.

"Growers know that, and they have resorted to what is best for them, which is to use Tri-Solfen."

Mr Modiano said the Tri-Solfen's uptake "said everything about the humaneness of the Australian wool grower". "Having seen the large adoption rate of Tri-Solfen in this country, I have no doubt that they are going to adopt a pre-mulesing analgesia in similar numbers."

He said the pre-operative Xylazine treatment being trialled at Goulburn made it easier to mules lambs because they moved and kicked less in the cradle.

"It is much more efficient," he said.

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