

Woolnews.net spoke with Paolo Zegna in South Africa at the International Mohair Summit held last month. Mr Zegna is the Chairman of Ermenegildo Zegna, sponsor of the Ermenegildo Zegna Mohair Trophy. The company started in 1910 and today employs over 6000 people worldwide and is a leading multinational company with products from spinning and weaving and to retailing luxury clothing. The company supplies its products to 525 mono-brand stores of which 253 are directly operated under the Ermenegildo Zegna name in over 80 countries worldwide.

### **Mulesing**

'I still believe that mulesing has been the best solution to flystrike to date. Millions of sheep would have died a horrible death if it was not for mulesing. But it is time to move on - I believe that pain relief is the best method at present. We use medication on humans for pain relief during medical procedures and it should be fully implemented in Australia during mulesing as soon as possible'. Mr Zegna said

Mr Zegna believes that Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) made a mistake when it promised to cease mulesing by 2010. It built expectations with customers that it could not fulfill, he said.

Zegna Group has calculated the number of lambs that are represented in the wool the company buys and will contribute toward pain relief to each of these lambs.

'At Zegna Group we take this issue seriously and we are prepared to pay for pain relief. It is very important to us that we do the right thing', says Mr Zegna.

'However, we need to be logical about this. Australia cannot just stop producing the finest world wool because of the mulesing issue. We all need wool, particularly fine Australia wool'. Mr Zegna believes that a genetic solution is probably the best solution to eradicate mulesing but it is a long term solution. At this stage pain relief is the best short term solution', he says.

### **Wool promotion**

**Mr Zegna believes that the customer needs "to be excited" about wool. The green image and environmental credentials that wool has is all good and well but what is really needed and what will really sell wool is if buyers are excited about wool and the products made from it.**

**He believes that re-igniting sales of Australia wool worldwide is a priority.**

**'In promoting wool we need to create excitement as well as value', he says. 'AWI needs to have a promotional plan and it must not take too long for this plan to be worked out and to be discussed with the industry'.**

### **China**

China is a rewarding market for Zegna Group. For the first time China will be the number one selling market for Zegna in 2010, out selling both Europe and the USA. The company continues to invest in China in updating its shops and showrooms and investing in personnel training.

Today Zegna has 73 stores across the Greater China region, with stores in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. 'We will be putting a lot of resources into places like China and India and other emerging markets, because we believe that they help to overcome the reduction that everybody is facing in the so called 'mature markets''

'We are looking to the young market where products must be both exciting and provide value. I am optimistic about the future of natural fibres as long as we do work to excite future buyers about wool'.