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Insecticide works better than mulesing

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201301/s3674132.htm>



Mulesed merino sheep at the saleyards in Hay, south-west New South Wales (file) (Laurissa Smith)

A three-year study comparing the controversial practice of mulesing sheep with two alternatives has found a more effective treatment to prevent flystrike.

Mulesing is where excess skin on a lambs breech is cut off, to avoid the presence of dirty wool into which flies can lay their eggs. If left untreated, the hatched maggots will eat into the sheep's flesh and eventually kill the animal.

Australian Wool Innovation funded a study of 6,000 merino sheep at three locations in Victoria, comparing the flystrike rate in mulesed sheep, against unmulesed sheep which either had plastic clips to pull the skin tight until it drops off, or which had been treated with a long-term insectide spray.

University of Melbourne's Dr John Larsen ran the study and said the clear winner was the insecticide.

"In the unmulesed group, that did receive the early treatment insectide, we had strike rates that were either zero or very low prevalence, less than 2 to 2.5 per cent. That was similar to or better than the sheep that were mulesed."