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Mulesing motion wins wide support in NSW Parliament



NSW MLC Mark Pearson

NEW South Wales' parliament has unanimously passed a motion urging the state's wool producers to provide pain relief when mulesing sheep and to breed for fly strike resistance.

The motion put by MLC Mark Pearson from the Animal Justice Party, was passed unanimously on March 24, with government, opposition and crossbench support.

The motion commended "the 80 percent of Australian wool growers" who are breeding sheep to be resistant to fly-strike by breeding out skin wrinkles or using pain relief when mulesing sheep. It also encouraged further research and development into additional pain relief products.

WoolProducers chief executive officer Jo Hall said the 80pc figure quoted in the motion was a success story for the Australian wool industry.

"It shows that producers are taking this issue extremely seriously."

Mr Pearson was not available for comment today, but the motion comes as wool growers, processors and retailers become increasingly concerned about consumer and market perceptions of mulesing and current pain relief use levels.

The NSW motion was approved as the US-based Textile Exchange seeks feedback (before April 15) on its draft Responsible Wool Standard, which states that measures should be taken to prevent or control fly strike, yet mulesing is prohibited and farms with ceased mulesing status are accepted.



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The draft RWS also required pain relief to be used on shearing injuries when available and a shearer should cease shearing immediately if a sheep suffers a severe cut or injury. Records of injuries must be kept and all shearers and contractors must sign a RWS declaration.

Animal welfare and mulesing research, the draft RWS and the IWTO's Wool Sheep Welfare Guidelines are also expected to be discussed at the IWTO Congress in Sydney from April 4-6.

In its January 2016 Market Intelligence Report Australian Wool Innovation said 53.6 percent of all Australian wool lots are currently declared (Non Mulesed, Ceased Mulesing, Pain Relief, or Declared Mulesed), and the level of declaration continued to grow.

"Effectively, the National Wool Declaration category growth areas are NM and PR.

"CM is steady at 2pc, whereas Declared Mulesed is declining by 1.2pc pa, and non-declared is declining at 1.29pc pa (mirrors the rate of gain in total declared)," the report said.

"At present rates, 12.2pc of the clip is NM or CM, and this is projected to rise to about 14pc by 2018/19.

"While the rate of PR declaration is increasing (+2.1pc pa), the overall rate of PR declaration (21pc) remains short of the usage level indicated from grower surveys and product sales (55-70pc) and may reflect a lack of significant price premiums for declaration of PR status evident in the market to-date."

A comparison of AWI breech surgery statistics for the 2013/2014 year and Tri-Solfen sales data for the 2014 Australian lamb marking season, released by Animal Ethics Pty Ltd last year, indicate that the percentage of Merino lambs on which the pain relief product was used during mulesing varied from as 16.26-81.89 percent. The state-by-state figures were: South Australia 81.89pc, Victoria/Tasmania 71.83pc, New South Wales 65.32pc, Western Australia 55.5pc and Queensland 16.26pc.



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The full NSW Parliament mulesing motion read:

(1) That this House commends the 80 percent of Australian wool growers who are:

- (a) breeding sheep to be resistant to fly-strike by breeding out skin wrinkles; or
- (b) using pain relief when mulesing sheep.

(2) That this House encourages all woolgrowers to breed sheep to be resistant to flystrike and, in the interim, they should provide pain relief to sheep when mulesing.

(3) This House congratulates:

- (a) industry for investing in the development and promotion of pain relief solutions for mulesing and encourages further research and development into additional pain relief products
- (b) world renowned fashion designers who are encouraging wool growers to breed sheep that are less susceptible to flystrike and to adopt best practice animal welfare outcomes.

http://www.sheepcentral.com/mulesing-motion-wins-wide-support-in-nsw-parliament/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Sheep%20Central%20news%20headlines%20March%2029%202016&utm_content=Sheep%20Central%20news%20headlines%20March%2029%202016+CID_b4dfa2daae1f58d72ed73cfb87f79770&utm_source=eGenerator&utm_term=Click%20here%20for%20full%20story