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## Breakthrough on Wool Boycotts

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Australian Wool Growers Association (AWGA) Chair Chick Olsson announced today that talks with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which began in New York in June, have resulted in a heads of agreement acceptable to both parties.

Chick Olsson says, "I believe the talks have produced a sound plan that allows some confidence to be introduced back into the depressed Australian wool market".

PETA's chief negotiator, Dr. Steven Gross, describes the breakthrough as: "A triumph for sheep and those who care about them, both from a commercial and a welfare point of view."

As a result of this significant development, the agreement negotiated between AWGA and PETA, means PETA's campaign is now at an end, starting today with an immediate moratorium on international boycotts for a period of 45 days and another further 45 days if other industry groups and bodies who have so far refused to talk to the group decide to consider the plan.

If ratified by industry at large, PETA has agreed that it would not campaign against Australian wool for ten years from the date the agreement is ratified by industry. "This is a significant breakthrough for Australian woolgrowers" says Mr Olsson.

"To see an immediate lifting of boycotts of Australian wool will instil some much needed confidence in the market place and will relieve our international customers of unnecessary pressure" says Mr Olsson.

It became apparent to the Australian Wool Growers Association that a definite leadership role was necessary to bring about a sensible resolution to this debilitating crisis.

"That pathway has now been made very clear with very workable criteria, that will ultimately benefit all, woolgrowers, retailers and consumers as well as animal welfare concerns" says Mr Olsson. "To have negotiated an immediate lifting of international boycotts is a major step forward; now is the time for other industry bodies to come on board, forget political gains and ambitions, and work for the best interests of woolgrowers" says Mr Olsson.

Key areas negotiated include

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Confirmation of the industry taskforce commitment to end surgical mulesing by the year 2010.

Recognition of the AWI funded developments in non surgical alternatives including the recent public announcement of a possible 2007 commercial release of a "collagenase" mulesing alternative.

Adoption of analgesic treatments as they become available.

Live exports will not face opposition provided the trade is conducted according to Australian domestic animal welfare standards for transport, handling and slaughter and that the sheep



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involved in this live export trade do not experience conditions or treatment any more harmful to their welfare than those they would experience in Australia.

The Australian Wool Growers Association has demonstrated clearly that these issues of animal welfare and importantly consumer confidence can be addressed in a non confrontational manner to the benefit of all concerned.

The efforts of AWGA have been applauded by many of the wool industry's overseas customers who have welcomed this positive announcement.

"Over the next few weeks, it is the intention of AWGA to fully brief other interested industry organisations and invite them to become part of this monumental breakthrough" concludes Mr Olsson.

Full details of the Heads of Agreement are available by request

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