



20 July 2009

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Dear Sir,

Let's celebrate our advances

Despite the headlines, the Australian wool industry has made real advances in animal welfare during the past 5 years. If we look at the facts, traditional mulesing is being replaced very quickly with advanced practices.

- 24% of merino lambs will not be mulesed in 2009 (up from 2% in 2005)
- 31% of producers will not mules any lambs in 2009 (up from 23% in 2008)
- 52% of producers have a breeding strategy to source less wrinkled genetics
- At least 55% of lambs considered susceptible to breech blowfly strike are treated with commercially available pain relief

On-going research continues to be supported by woolgrowers to find animal welfare advances to traditional mulesing, with major achievements already in genetics, integrated pest management and pain management.

Genetics is accepted by most as the long term, natural solution. Geneticists confirm that selection for three sheep generations, that is approximately seven to ten years, will be required for most sheep to be resistant to breech blowfly strike.

Some sheep are already suitable for non-mulesing, but many are not, yet. One concern is that woolgrowers with blowfly susceptible sheep are panicked into stopping mulesing because of adverse publicity and a threat to trade.

We will only have a viable sheep industry if animal welfare is our first consideration.

Let's celebrate our advances.

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