

AUTUMN/WINTER 2010

# SHEEP HEALTH AND WELFARE UPDATE

WOOLPRODUCERS  
AUSTRALIA

## INTEGRATED SOLUTION TO MULESING

FOR NEW ENGLAND WOOLGROWER, SCOTT MACANSH, PHASING OUT MULESING HAS TURNED OUT WELL.

"In one way it was a difficult decision to make — we'd been using mulesing to help control breech flystrike for a long time and we were not sure of what would happen when we stopped. But in another way, it was not hard a decision, the writing was on the wall with animal rights activists increasingly lobbying overseas retailers not to accept mulesed wool. The end result was that we just ceased mulesing during 2004."

Scott says in looking back, there was not one single determining factor — there were several triggers to stop mulesing. "We were having a tough autumn and we did not want to stress the lambs by mulesing them during winter."

"During 2000, we changed our ram genetics to select for far more plain-bodied sheep, and as a result the 2004 drop bore significantly fewer sheep with wrinkly skin. We had also switched to an intensive rotational grazing system, and as the sheep had less access to short green feed, scouring became less of an issue, and in turn, so did flies."

"A key factor to reducing fly pressure really is to stop scouring. And so weighing up our position and the changes we had made to our enterprise the call was made to simply cease mulesing."

Without mulesing Scott had to build a new package of flystrike control strategies. We moved to crutching twice a year. It was something we wanted to do anyway to reduce the chance of stain in the clip. Worms are also a factor in attracting flies and another



Welcome to the autumn winter edition of the WoolProducers Australia (WPA) sheep health and welfare update. As usual, the WPA Executive and staff have been very busy keeping up with the raft of national sheep health and welfare issues we contribute to.

We hope you enjoy receiving our publication and please feel free to contact the WPA office if you have any questions on any of the stories in this edition of the newsletter.

WPA is the peak national body for the wool producing industry in Australia. We are the national voice on behalf of producers, advocating their interests to the Commonwealth and industry stakeholders in Australia and abroad.

WPA develops and advocates policy, and represents the industry on issues as diverse as trade, animal health and welfare, research and development, marketing, accountability of grower funds, taxation and compulsory levies, climate change and industrial relations.

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cause of scouring. We carry out worm egg counts regularly to ensure the drench we are using is effective and that we're not creating a resistance problem."

"And while rotational grazing helps control worm numbers and infection, it also means we can monitor the sheep even more closely."

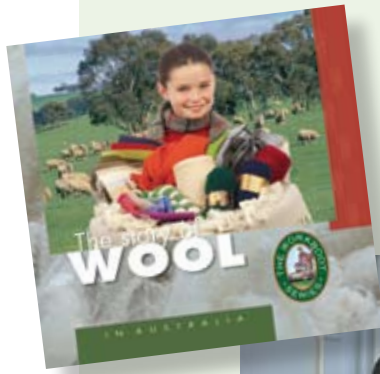
The Macanshs' also use CLICK® to help the lambs through the first summer without fly problems, and if the seasonal conditions are shaping up as problematic, the hoggets are treated as well.

Scott says they have not had an exceptionally wet, humid New England summer to test the new system's limits but the sheep have come through several wet periods of two months or so without any troubles. "We get occasional enquiries about how it's going, people are interested. This will be the fifth year since we stopped, and we'll have a completely mules-free flock during 2011. We're happy we made the change."

The Macanshs' have also moved to the direct marketing of their wool through the e-wool™ company to access orders for wool from non-mulesed sheep, as at this stage there are no premiums in the auction room for this wool.

The Macansh family runs a self replacing Merino flock in the New England region of NSW. The property is 1600ha and the average rainfall is 700mm.

## WOOL'S COOL IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS



Top: *The Story of Wool*  
Below: WPA President Don Hamblin  
launching *The Story of Wool*

WoolProducers Australia (WPA), in partnership with Kondinin Information Services, has combined to relaunch the Kondinin Workbook Series title, *The Story of Wool*. This popular educational resource was last published (for wool) in 1993 and is again available for use in Australian schools or to the general public.

*The Story of Wool* was officially launched at Old Parliament House in Canberra, by Senator Ursula Stephens on behalf of the Australian Government, which was a major supporter of the initiative.

*The Story of Wool* will teach a new generation of Australian children about the many advantages of wool over other fibres. The choice of fibre in apparel is not as important as it once was for consumers and it is hoped that this will be one of the areas addressed by the book.

Don Hamblin, WPA President also saw many benefits from the positive messages that the book taught children about the role of farming in modern society.

"Technology has given today's children access to so much more information and ideas, however, not all the messages being put out there about farming are necessarily positive or factual. This is particularly the case in respect to animal health and welfare. Publications such as the Workbook Series can go a long way to correcting this, and giving our children a better perspective on the realities of modern farming."

"From a historical perspective, it is also positive for children to learn about the unique place that wool has in Australia's history. It is unlikely that any other industry could claim the contribution to our nation's economic or social growth as wool can, and this is something we should be proud of and teaching the next generation," Don Hamblin added.

Other contributors to *The Story of Wool* include Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), the Australian Wool Education Trust (AWET) and Animal Health Australia (AHA).

To purchase a copy of *The Story of Wool* contact Kondinin on 1800 677 761.

## SA SHEEP PRODUCERS PREPARE FOR EXOTIC DISEASE OUTBREAK

The South Australian wool and sheep industry is on the front foot when it comes to emergency animal disease preparedness. On June 17 and 18 this year, 25 producers will attend an Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) training course in Adelaide organised by WoolProducers and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia in conjunction with Primary Industry's and Resources SA and the South Australian Farmers' Federation.

ILOs play a vital role in the response by government and industry to an outbreak of an emergency animal disease such as foot and mouth disease. Responsibilities of an ILO during an outbreak include:

- providing advice on the nature of the local industry to assist with disease risk assessment,
- assist with developing and implementing plans for disease eradication/control,
- provide advice on the economic and other consequences of proposed actions, and
- act as a focus for consultation and advice to the local industry.

WoolProducers and Sheepmeat Council will be looking to organise similar training days in other states later in the year. For further information contact Alex MacLennan on [amacLennan@nff.org.au](mailto:amacLennan@nff.org.au)

## NATIONAL WOOL DECLARATION AUDITS

WoolProducers Australia has welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Hon Tony Burke, that the government will provide funding to AWEX to support the auditing of the National Wool Declaration (NWD). Up to \$164,750 of public funds will be used by Australian Wool Exchange to develop and implement an education, training and auditing program for the NWD.

The NWD is an important tool for the international wool market, allowing prospective customers to make informed decisions about their purchases. The NWD has evolved to meet the needs of the market and it is important that the information it provides has a sound verification process.

WoolProducers President Don Hamblin said, "Since the issue of mulesing was first raised the industry has come a long way - in 2004 customers did not have the access to information at the level they do in 2010 through the NWD."

"Over the past decade the focus of the industry with respect to mulesing has been R&D, training and extension. While this work still goes on, we are entering a phase that will be primarily market driven, where the NWD will be at the forefront."

For further information go to [www.awex.com.au](http://www.awex.com.au)



## INTERNATIONAL FMD CONFERENCE

The Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) International Symposium and Workshop was held in Melbourne from 12-14 April. The conference was attended by representatives from across the globe including South Africa, USA, South America, Japan and of course Australia. Delegates came from a variety of fields ranging from FMD researchers through to producers including WoolProducers President Don Hamblin.

The first two days of the conference saw presentations from international experts in FMD vaccines and their applications, epidemiology and surveillance, diagnostics and understanding the virus/host interaction. Australian representatives from the beef cattle and pork sector also spoke about their industry's preparedness for an exotic animal disease incident such as FMD.

On the third day of the conference four scenario-based interactive workshops were held looking at the use of vaccination to eradicate FMD, proof of freedom, diagnostics and managing endemic FMD. The workshops sparked enthusiastic discussion and debate on the different control measures and all attendants were able to draw on their own experiences as well as what they had learnt over the previous two days of the conference.

Australia has not suffered an outbreak of FMD since 1871. However, like many FMD free countries, Australia is highly vulnerable to an outbreak of FMD, which would have massive socio-economic impacts, estimated in the worst case scenario to be in excess of \$13 billion. Australian livestock industries and state and federal government invest significantly in biosecurity measures and preparedness to protect industry from a disease incursion.

For further information go to [www.fmd2010.com.au](http://www.fmd2010.com.au)