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AWGA AHA Sheep Welfare Submission.
29 April 2013.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Our organisation comprises of independent woolgrowers at a national level, having been successful in influencing the direction of the wool industry for 20 years. In the last 5 years, our board has been successful in having preferred candidates elected to the board of AWI, the nations peak research and marketing body.

Also, to declare our interests further, our board and members have been indirectly and directly responsible for supporting and developing independently funded and developed pain relief products for farm animals.

AWGA has concerns with the current make-up of the writing group on the AHA. AWGA and many others in the industry do not recognise WoolProducers (WP) nor Sheepmeats Council (SC) as being representative of any majority of the sheep industry.

Also, AWGA questions the legitimacy of the current AHA Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines writing group, based mainly on little consultation with the sheep industry at large.

However, we will make comment on the AHA paper for the record.

AWGA believes that this paper must be re engineered , this time, to be fully inclusive of such groups as AWGA and the ICC (Industry Consulting Group funded by AWI) , as well as see the conducting of national road shows asking sheep farmers their opinions before any paper is produced as a national standard.



Commentary on Proposed AHA Standards and Guidelines, 21 Feb 2013.

1. AWGA does not recognise WP and SMC as “PEAK “industry representatives. These 2 bodies do not represent the majority of the sheep industry, as has been shown on many recent occasions.
2. As such, it is misleading for AHA to state that in the Preface that “An extensive consultation process was undertaken.” This has not happened to our knowledge, not one series of general farmer meetings have occurred in any town or central area to ask for any input. AWGA has NOT been consulted at any stage.
3. Sections 1 – 4, virtually paraphrase what our farming community does at large so as to remain productive and profitable. So why teach farmers how to suck eggs? Also, we are worried that new accreditation courses will have to be in place before farmers are allowed to farm under standards proposed. Natural “rights to farm “will be replaced by “certified to farm.”
4. Section 5 “Handling and Husbandry”, is unworkable for farmers. References to muzzling working dogs is nonsense, as is how one can no longer drag sheep by any part of the wool. This suggested standard means that shearers can no longer shear sheep by conventional handling methods.
5. Section 7, Mulesing, is totally unworkable, and a sure sign that little consultation has been had with industry on any real level. The suggested Standards on page 21 are unrealistic and would damage industry credibility. The fact that AHA recognises mulesing clips as an alternative to mulesing shows the lack of knowledge in making such suggestions for standards. Mulesing clips have shown to increase the risk of flystrike by 7 times in lambs.

Also, why mandate pain relief on lambs over 6 months of age, when common industry knowledge shows that younger lambs suffer the most from mulesing, experiencing higher mortality and stress than older lambs. Also, by such a proposal of only treating lambs over 6 months with PR, could further damage the reputation of Australian Wool in international markets. Such a suggestion to only treat 6 months and older lambs is nonsensical and poorly supported by any scientific or practical basis.

6. Section 10. Humane Killing. The standards suggested are unworkable.

AWGA board of Directors

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