

Submission to Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines Sheep Public Consultation:

Background - I am a Veterinarian working in mixed animal Practice, and a beef cattle owner/producer in Victoria. My Father was a drover, and I have some experience with sheep on small scale enterprises. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these drafts, and for attempting to improve & align farmed animal practices.

Castration:

- should be rubber ring castration from 24hrs to 6 months of age, with LA (made available to farmer/person in charge, for this purpose).
- lambs/sheep older than 6 months should be castrated surgically by a Veterinarian.

Mulesing:

- is a mutilation on very sensitive skin creating intense short & longer term pain, and complications.
- if more monitoring & active management controls against flystrike, such as crutching & more stringent parasite and feeding practices were used, would not be necessary. This would mean more labor input & costs: perhaps industry/government could subsidize here, if producer margins do not allow.
- we should accept that some breeds are not suitable for some parts of Australia under extensive farming regimes.
- when welfare concerns became public & put enough pressure on the wool industry approximately 8 years ago, a commitment was made to cease it by now: this hasn't happened. I believe it can, will and should come back onto the public arena, and would be far better for the wool industry and other farmer friendly groups to abolish the practice, rather than it seen to be enforced by an outside party.

Tail Docking:

- this should only be done with a hot knife or rubber rings up to 6 months of age, with the use of LA (made available to farmer/person in charge, for this purpose).
- should ONLY be allowed at the specific length of 3 palpable free joints.

General:

- it is a welfare issue of it's own that there are currently no NSAID's registered for use in sheep. Veterinarians currently must use this class of drugs registered for other animals off label. I have personally used a number of these common NSAID's on pet sheep with success, and it would seem feasible and easy to complete trials & registration with money available, for an expected demand via legislation.