

Animal Welfare League NSW

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019 - Post-hearing responses

QUESTION 1

The CHAIR: Mr Slater, in your submission, you point to the use of insecticides and topical ointments to prevent the flystrike. Do you know of any research that has been done that compares the effectiveness of that to mulesing in terms of cost effectiveness and labour?

ANSWER 1

AWL is aware that there is generous research available on the subjects of mulesing, as well as the use of insecticides to prevent flystrike, and whilst there are studies to show the cost effectiveness of each, there are insufficient studies to correlate that information in comparison to each other. We believe that mulesing is not a sole preventative of flystrike as this can occur on various parts of a sheep's body, not only on the breach area. It is likely that even sheep that have been mulesed could then also require further monitoring and treatment with topical insecticides to ensure flystrike is completely prevented, therefore even when mulesing is performed, it does not completely eliminate other costs involved with prevention. Whilst topical insecticide use can require multiple treatments, incurring further costs, it is a method of control that is more beneficial for the welfare of the animal and its use is more commonly accepted by society than the procedure of mulesing, providing better opportunity for the farmer who can access higher sale prices for the wool of non-mulesed sheep. If pain relief was to be mandated when mulesing is performed, then the procedure itself would cost more to perform, and would likely be similar to the cost of using topical insecticide treatments, many of which are long-acting and do not need to be applied throughout the entire year, but only in the warmer months.

QUESTION 2

The CHAIR: One final question from me. We are going to hear from a doctor who is proposing an alternative procedure. I just want to gauge your group's opinions on that procedure and, I guess, assess where that opinion comes from. The procedure is from Dr John Steinfort. You might be familiar with this, he proposes a cryogenic freezing of the area as an alternative to, I guess, an incision. I was wanting to hear your thoughts on that proposal as an alternative and if you have seen it in practice, and if you do oppose it what is that opposition based on if you have not seen it?

ANSWER 2

AWL's position on this procedure is the same as with mulesing, any procedure that causes pain will require adequate pain relief to be administered to ensure that no unnecessary pain or suffering is inflicted upon the animal. We do not believe that this is a replacement to mulesing but that it is a similar procedure that also inflicts pain upon the animal receiving it, therefore it is much the same. We believe focus should be on better breeding practices to eliminate skin folds on the breach area, as well as the use of insecticides and better monitoring practices for farmers.