

Submission
No 15

**INQUIRY INTO PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
AMENDMENT (RESTRICTIONS ON STOCK ANIMAL
PROCEDURES) BILL 2019**

Organisation: Australian Veterinary Association (AVA)

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Australian Veterinary Association

Submission on the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment
(Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019*



The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) is the only national association representing veterinarians in Australia. Founded in 1921, the AVA today represents 9500 members working in all areas of animal science, health and welfare.

Veterinary roles extend far beyond caring for the health and welfare of our pets and production animals. Veterinarians are the pathologists, field officers and inspectors that secure the safety of our food, ensure market access for our exports, and help to safeguard the human population from zoonotic diseases.

Background

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Restriction on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019* is currently being considered by the NSW Parliament Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Industry. The Bill, if passed, would ban mulesing and mandate analgesic or other pain relief for a number of husbandry procedures.

Discussion

All states should harmonise their legislation by adhering to The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for production animals that were agreed by State and Territory Governments. Government and industry have agreed that national standards and guidelines are needed and are working cooperatively to develop the standards and guidelines. In instances where changes are needed to animal welfare standards and guidelines within Australia it should be undertaken through this mechanism to ensure consistency across all jurisdictions.

Mulesing

Blowfly strike is a serious animal welfare concern. Principles of integrated pest management for fly strike and blowfly control should be used and further developed. Until mulesing is ceased, all lambs being mulesed should be treated with approved analgesics to minimise the pain associated with the procedure and operators carrying out the mulesing procedure should be appropriately trained.

While the AVA is strongly supportive of the industry phasing out mulesing as alternatives are further developed, it does not support a legislative ban on mulesing until the alternatives are in place. To do so would leave animals at risk of flystrike. Mulesing is performed to improve long term animal welfare outcomes.

The AVA supports breeding programs to ensure that sheep which are less susceptible to flystrike. Without a genetic alteration to the current breech structure of the Australian Merino, there will be too heavy a reliance on chemical solutions in sheep if mulesing is banned before other non-surgical solutions are in place.

Pain relief

Appropriate and effective analgesia during potentially painful livestock husbandry procedures must be used and promoted. Protocols should be available for operators to appropriately and safely use analgesics during painful husbandry procedures.



Veterinarians should be consulted regarding the use of analgesics, including for routine husbandry purposes. When prescribing an analgesic for animals under his or her care, a veterinarian must provide adequate directions for use and these directions should be available to all those administering the analgesics.

With respect to the Bill, the AVA supports a requirement for mandating the use of analgesics in animal husbandry procedures such as castration, tail docking, dehorning and branding. However, the Bill applies the requirement for analgesics too broadly. Most ear tagging is conducted in conjunction with marking, tail docking and mulesing. In these cases, some form of pain relief is used. Where systemic pain relief is provided, this will also cover ear tagging and marking. However, ear tagging occasionally occurs in isolation. When it is undertaken in isolation, the use of pain relief is not always practical and better outcomes can be achieved with training operators to ensure that ear tagging is undertaken quickly, correctly and proficiently. Therefore, AVA does not support a legislated requirement for pain relief for ear tagging.

AVA recommendation

- The AVA is strongly supportive of the industry phasing out mulesing as alternatives are further developed, it does not support this legislative ban on mulesing until the alternatives are in place.
- Until mulesing is ceased, all lambs being mulesed should be treated with approved analgesics to minimise the pain associated with the procedure.
- The AVA supports mandatory pain relief for castration, tail docking, branding and dehorning. If the Bill can be amended to remove the other provisions, then it could be supported. However, in the absence of those changes, the Bill should not proceed.

For further information please contact:

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