

Submission
No 19

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

Organisation: FOUR PAWS Australia

Date Received: 1 August 2020



31 July 2020

The Director
Portfolio Committee No.4
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: PortfolioCommittee4@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Madam or Sir,

**Re: Inquiry into the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment
(Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019**

FOUR PAWS Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the - *Inquiry into the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures) Bill 2019*.

Established in 1988, we are one of the largest international animal protection organisations, with policy offices, animal sanctuaries and veterinary clinics throughout Europe, North America, Southeast Asia, Africa and Australia, supported by hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

While working broadly to improve animal welfare globally, we also focus on key issues causing unnecessary animal suffering on a national level, of those – mulesing is a key concern to our organisation. Though mulesing is carried out to help mitigate a painful condition known as flystrike, there are viable alternatives available, rendering the practice outdated and unnecessary. We have further outlined our concerns and the solution to this problem within our submission.

In relation to the mandatory use of pain relief for procedures listed in section 24 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*, including castration, dehorning, branding, earmarking, and tail docking, we strongly encourage this inclusion, and support this important bill.

The pain, stress and fear caused by mulesing is severe.

It is estimated that over 10 million lambs continue to be mulesed annually across Australia, and with New South Wales - the biggest wool producing state, it is especially important that this issue is properly addressed by New South Wales government. Mulesing causes lambs intense pain for up to three days post procedure, while their wounds can take weeks to heal.¹ They experience fear and stress, and even avoid the person who mulesed them for up to five weeks,² many experiencing declines in weight gain at a time when they should be growing.³

¹ Edwards L, 2012. 'Lamb mulesing: impact on welfare and alternatives.' *CAB Reviews: Perspectives in Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Nutrition and Natural Resources*, 7(061), Accessed 13 June 2018

² Fell L & Shutt D 1989, 'Behavioural and hormonal responses to acute surgical stress', *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, vol 22, pp 283-294, accessed 22 June 2018

³ Edwards L, 2012. 'Lamb mulesing: impact on welfare and alternatives.' *CAB Reviews: Perspectives in Agriculture, Veterinary Science, Nutrition and Natural Resources*, 7(061), Accessed 13 June 2018

Due to the suffering caused by this procedure, mulesing has been phased out and banned in Argentina, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay, and we encourage Australia to follow suit.

An industry wide transition to the use of flystrike-resistant sheep instead of mulesing, stacks up for animals and producers.

Both flystrike, and mulesing gravely impact the welfare of Australian sheep, with flystrike mitigation efforts also a major cost to the industry annually. However, the risk of flystrike is exacerbated by the industry's breeding choices – the widespread use of sheep types carrying excess skin, known as 'wrinkled' sheep, done so to maximise the amount of wool cut.

New independent report *"Towards a non-mulesed future"* by BG Economics, recently commissioned by FOUR PAWS and Humane Society International, shows that good breeding choices - genetics, can in turn enable the industry to end its reliance on mulesing, without compromising the industry's bottom line. The report surveyed 97 producers from across the country, in diverse climates and scale of enterprise. The report includes several informative statistics, including that 84.1% noted increased financial benefits since making the transition, and almost all said that the welfare of their animals had also improved.

Other important findings of this research include that 77.5% completed the transition to plain-bodied Merinos (flystrike-resistant sheep) within five years, and 42.7% within two years. In addition, 83.5% claimed that transitioning to plain-bodied Merinos was not costly. The results demonstrate that an end to mulesing in the imminent future is certainly possible, and that leadership is needed to curtail the rhetoric that transitioning sheep flocks to become flystrike resistant, is a lengthy and costly process.

Collectively, hundreds of thousands of people around the world have voiced their concern about mulesing, with almost 130,000 people via a [FOUR PAWS international petition](#). It is clear consumer and public concern for mulesing is only going to grow, as people are increasingly interested in animal welfare, and ethical fashion.

Over the past 12 months, FOUR PAWS has been contacted frequently by fashion brands across the globe in relation to this issue, with most wanting to understand why there is a lack of progress, or asking for advice on how to improve animal welfare within their supply chains. At a more local level, household Australian brands such as Target, Kmart, David Jones, Country Road, and most recently Myer have committed to end the use of mulesed wool. There is strong demand for non-mulesed wool.

FOUR PAWS hopes the proposed bill will receive the attention it needs to be thoroughly considered, and is implemented in a conscientious manner for the betterment of animal welfare in New South Wales. Please forward any correspondence in relation to this submission by email to

, I would be happy to discuss this matter further as required.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica Medcalf
Head of Programmes
FOUR PAWS Australia