



Swedish Trade Federation



WOOL WORKING GROUP

POSITION PAPER OF EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN TEXTILE AND APPAREL MANUFACTURERS, RETAILERS, AND BRANDS ON THE PRACTICE OF MULESING IN THE AUSTRALIAN WOOL INDUSTRY

- As the world's largest supplier of wool, and an essential supplier of finer-gauge wool, the Australian wool industry is a valued partner for North American and European wool apparel retailers and brands.
- An important issue affecting this relationship is the continued use by many in the Australian wool industry of surgical mulesing of sheep as a preventative measure against blow fly strike, an animal-husbandry technique that is uniformly opposed by animal-welfare organizations.
- Wool apparel retailers and brands in North America and Europe reaffirm their goal that the Australian wool industry expeditiously identify and adopt viable alternatives to surgical mulesing.
- In addition, we call upon the representative organisations of the Australian wool industry to develop a strategy with measureable milestones to achieve this goal.
- As part of this effort, we strongly support ongoing research by the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and other organisations and individuals in Australia.
- This research has identified breech wrinkle, breech cover, dung-coated wool ("dags"), and urine stain as four primary risk factors for fly-strike among Merino sheep, with the establishment of a scoring system to assist wool growers in identifying higher-risk animals.

- We agree that the genetics/breeding programs hold promise as the best alternative to surgical mulesing, particularly with respect to the highest risk factor – breech wrinkle.
- We also support the efforts by a growing number of merino stud breeders in Australia to produce plainer-bodied rams, with progeny that will be more resistant to fly-strike, yet have good fleece weight and lower wool micron size that growers need.
- In order to ensure their success, it is vital that the Australian wool industry actively support genetics and breeding research programs, and the Australian federal and state governments through Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) provide adequate funding and other support.
- With respect to breech cover, another high-risk factor for fly-strike, we urge accelerated research and testing on (depilating) intradermals that have shown promising trial results on efficacy, ease of use, and cost-containment, so that they can be made available on the market as expeditiously as possible.
- We encourage the Australian wool industry and the Australian federal and state governments to devote to these efforts a portion of any additional financial resources derived from the current high price of wool.
- We also call upon the Australian Wool Exchange (AWEX), with support from the Australian Government, to require all growers selling their wool through AWEX to report on the National Wool Declaration (NWD) their mulesing status - *i.e.*, “mulesed,” “mulesed with pain relief,” “clips,” “ceased-mulesed,” and “non-mulesed.”
- We expect all growers who continue to mules their sheep, while mulesing alternatives are being developed, to employ effective analgesics in the interim, and report on the NWD their use of pain relief on mulesed animals.
- Broader participation by wool growers in the NWD will provide better and more accurate market information and supply-chain traceability, which will assist retailers and brands in making informed sourcing decisions, and give wool growers the pricing signals they need.
- In addition to groups representing the Australian wool industry, we also seek to collaborate with animal welfare NGOs, including those in Australia, the Australian federal and state governments, and other stakeholders in assisting the Australian wool industry to identify solutions to the mulesing issue.

American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
 The Association of European Fashion Retailers (AEDT)
 British Retail Consortium (BRC)
 Canadian Apparel Federation (CAF)
 Foreign Trade Association (FTA)
 National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO)
 National Retail Federation (NRF)
 Nordic Initiative Clean and Ethical (NICE)
 Norwegian Fashion Institute
 Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)

Retail Council of Canada (RCC)
 Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)
 Svensk Handel (Swedish Trade Association)
 Textilimportörerna (Textile Importers' Association in Sweden)
 United States Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel (USA-ITA)
 Virke (Federation of Norwegian Enterprises)
 Wool Working Group