



Photo by Caitlin Flood

SkinTraction, an alternative to Mulesing

SkinTraction was developed by Cobbett Technologies and the Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) as an alternate to mulesing.

SkinTraction is a needleless applicator that deliver a measured dose of the SLS intradermal one millimetre into the skin - not through the skin, or into the muscle. This is designed to cause skin contraction without an open wound. SkinTraction involves the intradermal injection of a 70gm/litre sodium lauryl sulphate solution as a sclerosing or skin-thickening agent to reduce skin wrinkle and create more bare area around a sheep's breech, helping to protect it from flystrike. SLS is currently used on humans for varicose vein treatment and is a common ingredient in other domestic products. After the skin is injected with SLS the damaged skin forms a hard scab after 6 days, after 14 days the sheep's body starts to dislodge the scab and after 7 weeks the scab is fully healed.



On May 27th 2015 the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) registered SkinTraction as a one off treatment for sheep kept for fibre production that are one year old or older and with a live weight of 30Kg- plus.

The registration of SkinTraction follows more than eight years of research from Cobbett Technologies and the Australian Wool Innovation. The Cobbett Directors are in discussion about the best way to proceed and further R&D is required to reduce the label restrictions before commercialisation can take place. This will involve

resolving issues on how, when and where SkinTraction should be used. Currently the APVMA's SkinTraction label suggests it only be used on sheep:

- That have been shorn or crutched to have wool less than 8mm long
- After spraying the breech area with antiseptic and
- With the Plus needle-free injection system

The APVMA's label also lists several contraindications, indicating it should not be used on sheep:

- That weigh less than 30Kg
- With a condition score of less than 2.5
- That have had water withheld or are drought affected
- With cuts to the breech from crutching or shearing
- With macerated or inflamed skin due to moisture from urine or shearing
- That have not been vaccinated for tetanus
- Selected for soft rolling skins (SRS)
- During the black fly season

The contraindications on the label are consistent with the findings from the Cobbett-AWI technologies research. The APVMA has not registered SkinTraction for use on wet or daggy sheep. All sheep must be first vaccinated for tetanus and the breech area sprayed with antiseptic prior to treatment.

More information on SkinTraction can be found at: <http://www.wool.com/on-farm-research-and-development/sheep-health-welfare-and-productivity/sheep-health/breech-flystrike/>

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