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## National wool declarations give market confidence

**By Geoff Power**

President, Livestock SA

Together with WoolProducers Australia, Livestock SA is encouraging growers to take time and fill out the AWEX National Wool Declaration.

This is an initiative of the industry to consolidate critical information about the Australian wool clip for the use of and promotion to buyers of Australian wool. It provides confidence to buyers, processors and retailers.

The NWD was introduced in 2008 and is a declaration from the woolgrower about information related to Merino dark and medullated fibre risk, mulesing status and records of chemical use. It is the standardised declaration method for Australia and is applicable to all breeds of sheep.

A single NWD gathers this information, it is easy for woolgrowers to complete and ensure there is no duplication of paperwork.

Livestock SA believes NWDs are important to complete because overseas buyers are starting to take note of lambs that are mulesed and treated with pain relief.

Earlier in the year, wool processor Modiano claimed that Australian wool was losing its market edge to South African wool because of welfare concerns from consumers and that it has a petition of 34 signatures from 70 woollen mills from around the world calling on the Australian wool industry to make pain relief a legal requirement.

It's my belief that up to 70 per cent of wool growers use pain relief and we personally use it on our property. In our own case, we have noticed improved animal welfare where lambs mother up immediately when they leave the cradle. They also heal faster, which means stress is reduced. This highlights the improvement in productivity too and that this is not separate from what is best for animal welfare.

A recent request to the Australian wool industry to mandate pain relief is unworkable. This is because there would be a huge cost in policing and auditing such a move and secondly, there is only one manufacturer of pain relief at this stage.

If there was wide use of the NWD, which included a declaration of mulesing status, then that would negate any need to mandate pain relief. If everyone filled out the NWD, then it would tell the story of the Australian wool clip.

**Details:** Visit the AWEX website at [www.awex.com.au/publication/national-wool-declaration-nwd/](http://www.awex.com.au/publication/national-wool-declaration-nwd/)