

**Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures**

Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

In Australia, sheep raised for wool are commonly subjected to a painful procedure called mulesing, risk of flystrike. Mulesing has never been practised in the UK. The practice is used mainly in the Merino breed, and breeding to reduce the need for mulesing is a long-term aim. Merinos are crossed with other breeds for meat production, so the welfare concerns are not limited only to wool production. RSPCA Australia<sup>6</sup> is opposed to mulesing and some clothing brands have ceased using Australian wool due to welfare concerns. However, there is still opposition to a complete ban.

The use of analgesia (pain relief) during the mulesing procedure is inconsistent. Rules differ between states. There are best practice guidelines produced by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) which include advice on use of analgesia and accreditation of contractors undertaking the procedure.<sup>7</sup> However, there is no data on adoption of the guidelines.

In 2008, the Australian Wool Exchange (through which around 90% of Australian wool is sold) introduced the National Wool Declaration (NWD).<sup>8</sup> This declaration allows wool growers to voluntarily communicate the mulesing status of their sheep to wool buyers at auction. In July 2021 national percentage of bales with mulesing status declared was 7

that pain relief was used was 41%.<sup>9</sup>

The use of some Hormonal growth promoters (HGP) in beef is approved in Australia. In the UK, the use of growth promoters is banned, and pharmacological hormones are restricted for clinical use only.

Within the UK, Australian products would become indistinguishable from UK produce, jeopardising the ability of exporters to trade using the good reputation of the UK as a high animal health and welfare producer.

## Conclusion

Ongoing consultation with the veterinary profession on all relevant aspects of trade will be essential. BVA, as the representative body for the profession, looks forward to engaging with the Trade and Agriculture Commission as this FTA and others progress.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-is-the-rspcas-view-on-mulesing-and-flystrike-prevention-in-sheep/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www30360x0n10\(wrpb6\(vch-hna\)38v\(ell3fmm\)nt0\(d\)h15\(la\)2\(l\)h10\(e\)2\(a\)2n1ku51cR0\(ty\)26\(s\)ba2\(sy\)5\(a\)23\(c\)1i0\(-and\)1\(r\)nd\)33\(t\)JTJETQq0.000008](https://www30360x0n10(wrpb6(vch-hna)38v(ell3fmm)nt0(d)h15(la)2(l)h10(e)2(a)2n1ku51cR0(ty)26(s)ba2(sy)5(a)23(c)1i0(-and)1(r)nd)33(t)JTJETQq0.000008)

<sup>8</sup> Australian Wool Exchange AWEX (2017) National Wool Declaration Frequently Asked Questions. Australian Wool Exchange Limited, June 2017.