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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

MULESING

South African woolgrowers are, and have been committed for many years, to managing their flocks in terms of systems which are underpinned by modern animal health and animal welfare requirements. For example, mulesing is not practiced, and all veterinary products used to care for animals are used on the basis of minimum dosage/efficacy strategies to protect animals against internal and external parasites.

South African wool fibre is produced by sheep that are healthy and not subjected to procedures which harm them, in an environment that is sustainable and unpolluted, to allow processors, spinners and weavers to comply with international requirements in terms of these issues.

The situation in South Africa specifically regarding the Mules operation is as follows:

- Over time, the South African Merino has been bred for less skinfolds (i.e. a "smoother" body conformation), so that there is less wool growth in the animal's breech area. Surgical removal of skinfolds is therefore not required.
- The average flock size in South Africa is relatively small and therefore more manageable. Consequently, the South African woolgrower can give much more individual attention to his flock, and take preventative steps to avoid flystrike.
- It is common practice amongst South African woolgrowers to shear the breech area of the sheep approximately halfway through the growth cycle to the fleece. This is called "crutching" and helps to prevent a moist, woolly environment in the breech area where blowfly can flourish.
- Should it become apparent that there is evidence of flystrike in a flock, a quick, localised application of pesticide to the breech area to kill the blowfly is standard practice. These products are all registered in terms of appropriate legislation (Act 36 of 1947).
- A large proportion of the South African wool clip is from harsh, low-rainfall areas (e.g. the Karoo), where blowfly is not as prevalent as in higher rainfall areas such as the coastal belt and the highveld.

Yours sincerely

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