

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Committee has drawn various conclusions in this report and has made a number of pronouncements, some in the form of recommendations and others as statements of policy. In many cases, the Committee did not make recommendations because it was inappropriate to do so. Where the Committee makes a statement rather than a recommendation, it is often not meant to be of less importance.

10.2 A number of issues were raised in the inquiry which were regarded by some people as being inimical to good husbandry practice or resulted in sheep undergoing undue stress. The Committee discussed these issues, taking into account both ethical and scientific factors, and examined possible alternatives. The Committee does not, however, provide a panacea for all the unpleasant husbandry procedures and practices in the sheep industry. In many cases, there are no satisfactory alternatives to current procedures and practices. If there were, some of those procedures would not have been condoned.

10.3 The Committee noted the research being done in many areas of sheep husbandry, particularly research examining alternatives to some of the more stressful procedures or problems. The Committee supported this research and recommended additional research in some areas. Once alternatives have been found and proven, it will be incumbent on the industry to ensure quick and widespread use of them.

10.4 There are some practices which sheep producers can undertake now to improve welfare. These are identified and discussed in the report.

10.5 The recommendations made by the Committee in the body of the report are listed below.

10.6 The Committee recommends that the industry, together with the State departments of agriculture, develop lamb loss parameters for the common breeds in each district as a minimum target at which producers should aim. (Paragraph 3.31)

10.7 The Committee further recommends that research continue into the comparative efficacy of the various forms of shelter on a regional basis and that the results be promptly disseminated through all appropriate media outlets. (Paragraph 3.32)

10.8 The Committee recommends that more research into the cost-benefits of using ultrasound imaging on ewes in early pregnancy be conducted. (Paragraph 3.3)

10.9 The Committee recommends that research be continued into the mothering ability of Merino ewes in particular, so that multiple birth lambs, whether the result of fecundity treatment or not, may enjoy a better chance of survival. (Paragraph 3.36)

10.10 The Committee further recommends that funding for the development and improvement of existing fecundity vaccines be tied to a requirement also to investigate methods of enhancing lamb survival. (Paragraph 3.36)

10.11 The Committee recommends that no sheep have its tail completely removed. (Paragraph 3.46)

10.12 The Committee recommends continued research into immunocastration. (Paragraph 3.63)

10.13 The Committee recommends continued research into flystrike resistance characteristics, as one of a range of methods designed to reduce the suffering caused by flystrike. (Paragraph 4.45)

10.14 The Committee recommends continued research into all means of preventing blowfly strike, so that the need for mulesing is removed. (Paragraph 4.66)

10.15 In line with its "broad brush" approach to flystrike prevention, the Committee recommends the continuation of research into immunological approaches to flystrike prevention. (Paragraph 4.83)

10.16 The Committee recommends that research be continued into alternatives to conventional shearing, and particularly into the sheep welfare aspects of all alternative methods of wool harvesting. As an interim measure, pending the likely future introduction of alternative methods of wool harvesting, the Committee recommends that research be continued into improvements to manual shearing. (Paragraph 6.42)

10.17 The Committee recommends that more specific guidelines on acceptable parameters for the transport of burnt stock be devised and incorporated in the codes of practice on road transport of livestock. (Paragraph 8.8)

10.18 The Committee recommends that guidelines be established by the State departments of agriculture concerning the bodyweight and/or condition score below which the different breeds of sheep should not be permitted to be sold in saleyards. (Paragraph 8.26)

10.19 The Committee recommends that joint guidelines be devised by the Australian Soil Conservation Council, the State departments of agriculture and forestry and the National Farmers Federation on conservation farming techniques which would benefit both sheep and the environment. (Paragraph 8.44)

10.20 The Committee recommends that State and Territory governments increase the number of RSPCA inspectors authorised under the relevant State prevention of cruelty to animals legislation and provide additional funding to support them. (Paragraph 9.26)

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Chairman