

Sheep saving spray

A chance conversation some six years ago between a Victorian fine wool producer and a Sydney industrial chemist has resulted in the development of an environmentally friendly, lanolin-based spray that forms a film to prevent hypothermia in sheep and goats.

Bill Crawford, Sierra Park stud, Victoria Valley had been chatting with Henry King from the Sydney suburb, Lugarno, when he asked if it would be possible to develop a product that would protect sheep from the harsh effect of cold weather and reduce the mortality of shorn sheep.

Over the following four years Mr King developed just such a product and the result was the commercial release in 2008 of Thermoskin® following extensive on-property trials throughout highland and tableland areas of NSW as well as in Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand.

The spray takes but 1 to 2 seconds to apply to shorn sheep and dries in two minutes. "You can expose your sheep to wind, rain, snow or sleet within 10 to 15 minutes after application without affecting the efficacy of the product," Mr King said.

Central eastern slopes Merino stud breeder, Kim Henderson, Grogansworth, Bowning, participated in one of the early trials and when the temperature dropped to minus 5 degrees overnight after shearing, Mr Henderson said he had been a little concerned about the younger sheep although they had been sprayed with Thermoskin®. "On the way we saw 4-year-olds desperate for shelter in the early morning, but when we got to the paddock where the young sheep were, we found them grazing over 450 acres of country in one paddock – that was good enough for me."

The product also assists the maintenance of body weight and condition post-shearing with trial results further showing a greater increase in body weight for treated animals due to reduced stress.

Mr King said sheep generally lose weight after shearing. "They're putting their energy into keeping warm – they're not eating, so they lose weight, they lose condition and could die."

The experience of woolgrowers who have used Thermoskin® shows that an average weight gain of over 3kg within fifteen days is achievable.

At the Grogansworth trial, the treated sheep put on 2.38kg in the 15 days post-shearing in day-time temperatures between 7 and 11 degrees.

"The untreated didn't gain any weight and yet the sheep were run together on an oat crop," said Mr Henderson. "That convinced me that it was a very good product."

Other treatments, such as solvent-based backlines can be used straight after application of Thermoskin® while the animal must be totally dry before the application of water-based treatments. The product is physiologically harmless and any residual on the fleece is removed with normal scouring practices.

Two New Blocks from Olsson's

Stubble Muncher provides the ideal solution to a number of practical problems, making the most resistant plant materials available for reincorporating into soil carbon and at the same time providing the most valuable components as animal feed – a win win situation – a healthier soil and increased animal production.

Olsson's Lambli Supplement Block gives lambs a head start towards an earlier finish and weaning time by supplying **EXTRA CALCIUM, EXTRA PROTEIN LEADING TO EXTRA WEIGHT GAIN.**

Available from all Olsson Resellers.