

OBSERVED BENEFITS OF USING BUCCALGESIC WITH TRI-SOLFEN

South Australian woolgrower Richard Halliday has been using Tri-Solfen® on his lambs for many years for mulesing and marking, and he has now started using Buccalgesic® in combination with Tri-Solfen®. He is reporting his lambs appear to recover faster with less negative behavioural effects – and the costs of treatment are more reasonable than he expected.

“My motto is happy, healthy sheep lead to a positive outcome for animal and owner.”

So says Richard Halliday who runs Callowie Poll Merino stud and commercial sheep flock with his wife Jacquie and their children Sarah, Angus and Thomas. They run 1,300 ewes with 19.5 to 21 micron wool on their 'Mallee Downs' property near Bordertown in the south-east of South Australia.

The Hallidays have been using the post-operative Tri-Solfen® pain relief product ever since it was released about a decade ago, to help with wound recovery of their lambs following mulesing and marking using rings. They have also recently started using the pre-operative Buccalgesic® product in combination with Tri-Solfen.

The Meloxicam product Buccalgesic was initially released in August 2016 for the alleviation of pain associated with the routine husbandry procedures of castration and tail docking in lambs, but in October 2017, the APVMA also approved Buccalgesic for mulesing.

“We have now started using Buccalgesic in addition to Tri-Solfen,” Richard said. “Because we have been successfully using Tri-Solfen for many years, I was not comfortable to stop using Tri-Solfen and use Buccalgesic on its own.”

“We used Buccalgesic and Tri-Solfen for mulesing as well as marking. It is part of our constant aim for improvement in animal husbandry on our property.”

By receiving both pain relief products, Richard says the lambs appear to recover faster.

“Although only through observation, the positive behavioural response to the combined use of Buccalgesic and Tri-Solfen was clearly visible to me, with the lambs heading straight off to their mothers sooner than they seemed to when I only used Tri-Solfen,” he said.

“Part of our management is we mark in portable yards in the paddock so seeing the lambs' response is very easy. Normally after marking some lambs hang around the yards looking for their mothers; while this still happened, this time when the ewes were



By applying pain relief products to his lambs in portable yards in the paddock, it has been very easy for woolgrower **Richard Halliday** (right) to witness his lambs' positive response to the products.

drafted the stragglers followed the ewes away and started grazing the pasture straight away.

“We had one mob that had to be moved after marking for management and the lambs travelled off with the mothers with very few lambs hanging at the rear of the mob.

“On inspection of the animals a few days after marking, there was an improvement in the mobility of the lambs and their grazing behaviour.”

Richard said the cost of treatment was more reasonable than he expected.

“The cost of the products for the combined treatment was \$1.50 per lamb which we thought was reasonable when taking into consideration the current return for wool at around 1750c/kg clean and returns for sheep – wether lambs from \$100 per head and surplus ewes from \$140 per head.

“These strong returns give us the challenge to make sure that the lambs thrive as much as possible.

“There was probably only a small reduction in lamb losses which was expected because our

losses are traditionally low on our property as the environment in which we farm doesn't generally have adverse weather and the ewes are managed in line with the principles of the Lifetime Ewe Management program.”

There are many variables and factors to take into account when considering pain relief options for marking and mulesing: availability of products, throughput required per day, time and method of treatment, ability of lambs to mother up, practicality and cost. So there are no black and white answers applicable across Australia, and woolgrowers are encouraged to seek advice from a veterinarian.

However, on-farm adoption of Tri-Solfen for mulesing was rapid, and the availability of Buccalgesic, along with Metacam20® which was registered in 2016, now gives woolgrowers further options to consider.

“With the aim of continued improvement in animal husbandry and positive outcomes for our animals, our move at 'Mallee Downs' to using Buccalgesic in combination with Tri-Solfen has been an important transition for our business,” Richard added.