



LIVESTOCK WELFARE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Established 1978

Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee
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POSITION STATEMENT

TEETH GRINDING IN RUMINANTS

Research done in Australia over 20 years ago has shown that grinding of the front (incisor) teeth has no benefit at all in terms of better feeding or improved productivity, in fact it slightly lowers production. Not only does teeth grinding serve no useful purpose, it also poses a decided risk to the welfare of the sheep. Grinding too far can cause exposure of sensitive layers, resulting in severe and long term pain and suffering. The grinder can also slip and cause damage to other parts of the body, no matter how much protection it is given.

The unanimous conclusion of the Livestock Welfare Coordinating Committee is that teeth grinding in ruminants is unnecessary and potentially harmful, and its use cannot be supported. Accordingly we reject its use and support action to make it an illegal procedure in South Africa, as is the position regarding Mulesing. Use of unacceptable practices like teeth grinding will place the sale of South African wool in jeopardy and we appeal to all farmers to avoid this cruel procedure completely.

Accepted: November 2012