

Improving lamb wellbeing

Societal and customer expectations for better animal wellbeing is driving increased use of pain relief for tailing and castration in lambs. There are now pain relief options registered for use in sheep in NZ that can help mitigate the pain associated with these husbandry procedures.

Recently, NZ Merino's brand ZQ has aligned to the Responsible Wool Standard, with one of the requirements being that all sheep receive pain relief for tailing, castration and shearing wounds. For ZQ growers, implementation of this is being phased in over the next 3 years, starting from June 2023.

The pain associated with tailing and castration is most obvious in the first four hours, but behavioural changes can persist for days post procedure. The behavioural signs may include tail twitching, lying down, panting, vocalising and restlessness.

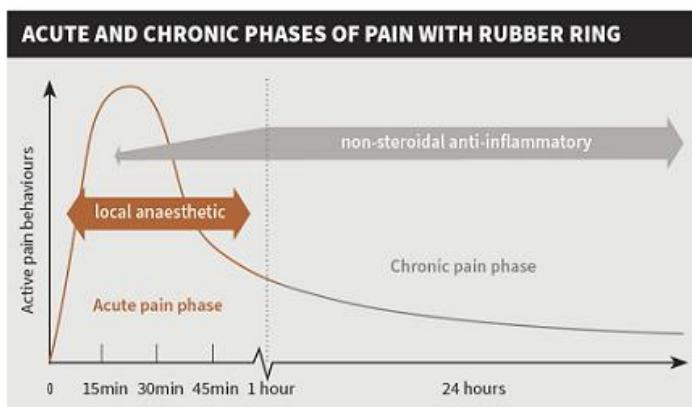


Figure 1. Acute and chronic phases of pain associated with rubber ring application (with no pain relief), and duration of pain relief effect of local anaesthetic and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.⁸

Local anaesthetics and meloxicam, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) are the most practical and effective for use on-farm:

- Local anaesthetic - covers acute pain, up to 1 hour. Requires multiple injections
- Meloxicam (NSAID) - such as Melovem 30, longer-lasting, covering chronic pain for up to 24 hours. Single injection covers both castration and tailing

Using both a local anaesthetic and a NSAID together will provide even better pain relief, but may not be practical in NZ farming systems.

Melovem 30 is a convenient low volume injection and comes with an applicator for easy administration. With most NZ lambs undergoing hot iron cautery for tailing and rubber ring application for castration (for male lambs), a single injection of Melovem 30 will mitigate the pain from both procedures.

Now registered for use in lambs

Melovem 30

A potent long-acting pain relief



AgriHealth Resources include:

Melovem 30 is for the treatment of pain, fever and inflammation in cattle, sheep, pigs and horses. A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antipyretic injection, containing meloxicam, 30mg/mL.

- Technical Bulletin N8: [Click here](#)
- Fact Sheet: [Click here](#)
- Flyer: [Click here](#)
- Website page on lamb tailing and castration: [Click here](#)

View a summary video from our recent webinar

