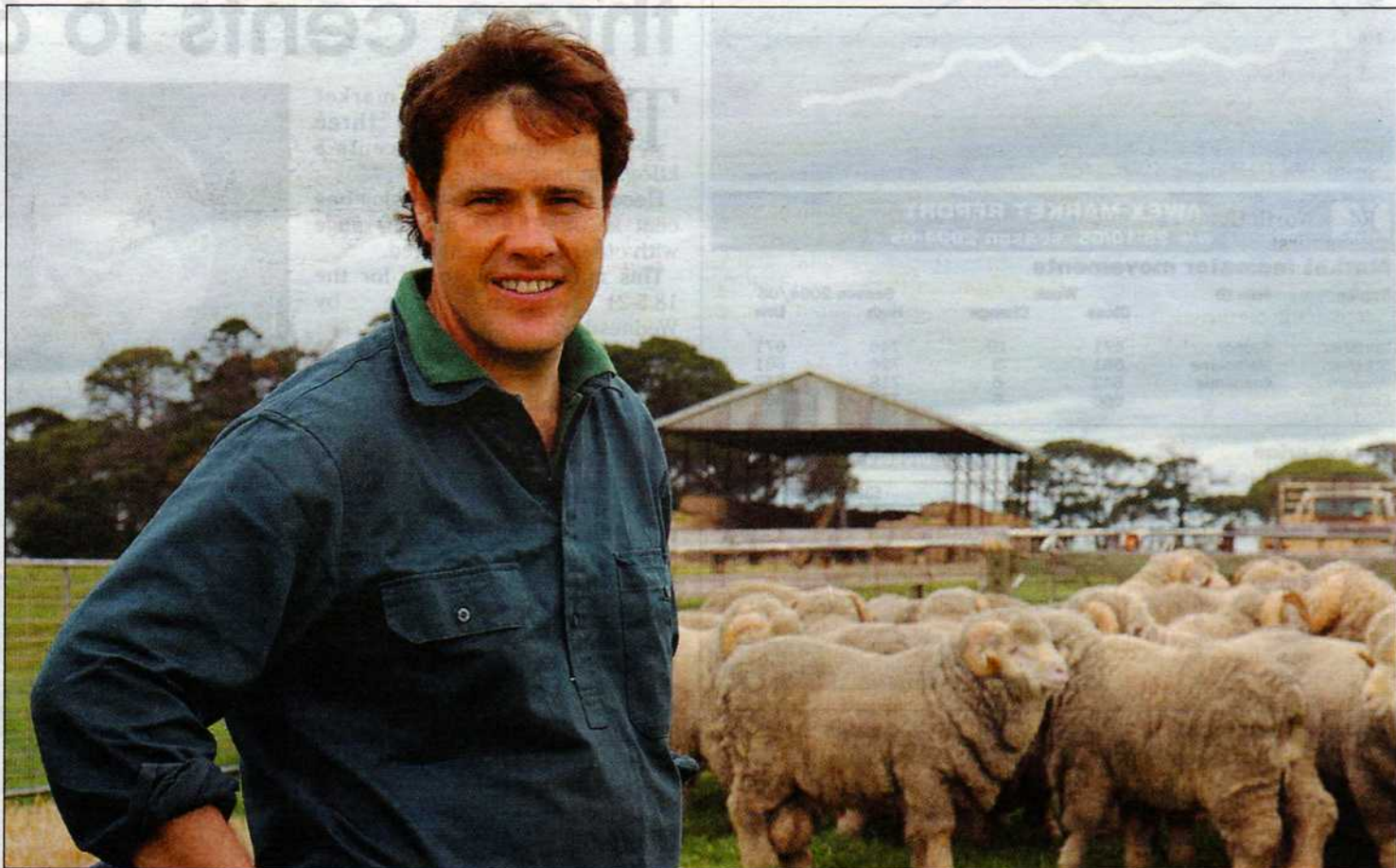


# Thumbs up for mulesing spray



**A** NEW anaesthetic spray for mulesing sheep has received a tick of approval from Rokewood farmer Paul Walton (pictured).

Mr Walton said he had heard about the product, Tri-Solfen, during autumn and had been keen to track it down for use on his spring lambs.

"I thought it might help our lambs put on weight quicker so we could wean them before summer came in."

He kept in contact with local veterinarian David Hucker during winter waiting for the product's release, which occurred at the end of August, just five days before Mr Walton was due to start mulesing.

About 8500 of Mr Walton's lambs have now been mulesed and had the spray applied to positive results.

"We were delighted with it. It's easy to apply, easy to use. We believe we can see the benefits of using it."

Mr Walton said the lambs were less affected by the procedure than they normally would be. "The day after they were walking very freely. They were mothered up as if they had never been handled and they were full; they had round tummies."

"Two and a half weeks after mulesing the wounds are as good as healed."

Mr Walton said while he had not yet worked out the figures, he was confident the spray was a cost-effective option for his business.

"Because we mules as young as we can and make the operation as small as we

can, we didn't use as much product as some people would have to use."

He recommended the spray for any spring lambing operation. "It would be the cheapest way to put weight on the lambs and to have them ready to wean."

"Every year it's a race against the season to get them heavy enough to wean. Even with this year being drier, the lambs have put on weight quicker."

Mr Walton spoke at the launch of Tri-Solfen in Melbourne on Wednesday last week. Also speaking on the night was Australian Veterinary Association president Matt Makin.

Dr Makin said views on pain relief in animals had changed dramatically during the past 20 years.

The primary reason why animal pain had not been addressed was that it was very hard to measure, he said.

But now community has developed expectations in relation to animals and pain which need to be considered.

"The perception of society is that it would hurt, so we have to do something about it."

Mr Makin welcomed the launch of the spray, remarking that although there were pain relief products for dogs and cats, farm animals had previously missed out.

Dr Hucker, who is also the Australian Sheep Veterinarians president, addressed the gathering, observing that although alternatives to mulesing had

been tried before, all had had problems. He was impressed with the results of Tri-Solfen, however.

He said there were fewer lambs that showed signs of shock and there seemed to be sizeable production benefits.

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