

ABC Rural

Thermoskin: spray-on sheep protective coat

By Keva Gocher

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Livestock producers are looking to a new invention to reduce productivity losses from hypothermia and sunburn.

A city scientist with farmer friends has privately developed a new protective skin to coat sheep after shearing.

After a four-year development phase, Thermoskin's first commercial use has tripled the weight gain in three-weeks for a Snowy region sheep meat producer.

Thermoskin developer Henry King says wool growers are impressed that just 50 mls coats a sheep from eight jets in one second, giving a less labour intensive and more thorough cover than the sheep coats that producers have used for two decades.

"We set up a portable spray unit and it forms a fine mist and the sheep run through it and it takes about a second an animal. I did offer it to AWI but they didn't understand what I was trying to achieve (but) the Australian president of the Studbreeders Association, Will Roberts, reckons it's the best thing since sliced bread for the industry."

High country sheep producer, Andrea Mitchell, has just trucked 700 Thermoskin sheep to the biggest regional saleyards in southern NSW. "We had excellent results [after using this product]. The average weight gain was just over three kilos and generally they would have struggled to make a kilo."

In this report: Henry King, inventor, Thermoskin; Andrea Mitchell, sheep producer, Southern Monaro, NSW.