

Bioclip®

A new innovation in the area of wool harvesting has been the commercial release of the Bioclip® Wool Harvesting System.

The technology underpinning Bioclip® was licensed to the Biological Wool Harvesting Company (BWHC) in 1997 and is a registered trademark of that Company. Until very recently, the Bioclip® wool harvesting technology has been in a pre-commercial development phase.

Bioclip is marketed by Merial Pty Ltd. For more information on Bioclip® Wool Harvesting System, visit <http://bioclip.merial.com.au>

The process used to biologically harvest wool involves:

- Injecting a liquid formulation of Epidermal Growth Factor (EGF) into a sheep, which then causes a rapid but short term “break” in the wool;
- A net is fitted to the sheep at the time of inoculation to prevent the wool from falling off in the paddock and to provide the animal with protection until an amount of wool has grown back; and
- After approximately 4 weeks (although this varies), the net and wool are removed.

Bioclip Pty Ltd is registered for use in Merino based sheep (including 1st Cross sheep). Its current target is sheep less than 50 kg liveweight. Pregnant or lactating ewes are excluded as are rams within 70 days of mating. Sheep in poor condition (score 2 or less) are also excluded.

The Merial website provides more information in relation to the process and costs and benefits.

The process of injecting a sheep, fitting a net to retain the fleece is a manual task that requires specific sheep handling equipment and is usually completed in sheep yards.

Removal of the net and the wool (28 days later) can be completed with/without specific sheep handling equipment and is usually completed at the wool shed.

The BIOCLIP® sheep handling equipment can net/harvest approximately 2000 sheep/day and is costed at approximately \$3 - 4,000. A BIOCLIP® shed can be as simple as a machinery shed or as complex as a traditional shearing shed.

The Merial website notes that specifically designed BIOCLIP® sheep handling cradles are required for fitting the fleece retention nets. They come in a range of sizes to match individual net sizes. The cradles can either be attached to a fence panel or used with a specially developed BIOCLIP handler. Using the cradle attached to a fence panel is only suitable where small numbers of sheep can be manually lifted into it. When large numbers of sheep are treated, the use of the specifically designed BIOCLIP® handler is essential. See picture on next page:



Source: www.merial.com.au

The Merial website has details in relation to fitting and removal of nets and fleeces. See next page for example pictures:

The BIOCLIP® fleece-harvesting process



Source: www.merial.com.au

A pamphlet for Bioclip can be found by clicking on the link below
http://au.merial.com/pdf/bioclip_mer0160_sales_brochure.pdf