

Underneath the arches

By Ashley Lucas

My much-cherished Land Rover 90 is 26 years old this month, and a little later this year I will have owned (and abused) it for 20 years. We have had some wonderful adventures together, and one of the reasons it has lasted so well is the TLC it receives from time to time. Sometimes there have been some big gaps between the "times", but it serves me well.

One of the reasons it is lasting so well is that it is cleaned underneath well to ensure it doesn't start rusting away, and that means applying protective coatings to the chassis and underside. In the past I have sprayed used engine oil, among other things, inside the chassis rails and underneath, but now thanks to Lawrie Abel I have a much better and environmentally friendly product which is proving to be very good, and that is Prolan Lanolin.

Raw lanolin (wool grease) is a natural substance secreted by sheep to provide a coating on their fleece for protection in harsh conditions. Once shorn the fleece undergoes a scouring and refining process to extract the lanolin, and to clean the fleece.

Sheep farmers and shearers have known about the qualities of wool grease for years, and now Prolan NZ uses a specialised process to convert the raw wool grease into a range of natural non-toxic lubricants that are safe and easy to apply. The lanolin is blended with non-regulated paraffin carriers to assist with penetration and ease of application, and this evaporates, leaving a non-sticky shiny surface.

These products have a multiple range of applications, from industrial lubrication and preservation, to protection of metals and electronics, from corrosion and wear. This also makes them ideal for protecting our prized vehicles.



Prolan lanolin is available in varying grades but for chassis protection Enduro Medium grade is recommended and sprayed on it gets into all those hard to reach areas. It leaves a shiny finish and is not sticky or greasy to touch after it has dried.

Its best applied to warm surfaces, although not essential, and the nice hot summer days we have been experiencing make it ideal for applying. It is best if left to penetrate into the surface and for the 'carrier' to evaporate before using.

Once dried it is a long-lasting protector that prevents moisture and oxygen from contacting metal surfaces and therefore preventing rusting. You can wipe it on with a rag and is a very good treatment for winch ropes, as once dried it doesn't attract dirt etc.

Advantages of Prolan, apart from being a New Zealand-made product, is that it is non-toxic, non-carcinogenic, biodegradable, and is safe to use on rubber and other synthetic materials, providing a natural barrier that will not cause perishing. It resists water blasting, but can be cleaned off with a citrus-based cleaner or hot steam cleaner should you need to do so.

It has many uses around the workshop, and in fact several well-known 4WD speciality

workshops are now using Prolan lubricants and grease. It is a good penetrating lubricant for those seized parts and also for tools, locks, door hinges. I find it so much better than some of the more usual spray can so-called lubricants that are used. It doesn't have that "watered down" effect where the product runs everywhere, leaving a surface for dust and dirt to become trapped.

Electrolysis is the curse when you own a vehicle such as my Land Rover which is constructed with dissimilar metals, but once again lanolin is an excellent barrier.

The Prolan grease has replaced the normal anti-seize coating in the workshop, too.

It is an extremely good anti-seize to use in assembly/disassembly of components, but is not suitable for high temperature applications such as wheel bearings. It is cleaner and easier to use, and seems to last longer, and doesn't wash away during all those river crossings, as well as being better for the environment.

Actually Prolan Lanolin is so good for the environment that the cranes and rigging used to remove the containers off the cargo ship Rena that ran aground on Astrolabe reef at Tauranga have been protected

from being exposed to the harsh salt water conditions and corrosion with Prolan.

There's one aspect of Prolan lanolin that I haven't put to the test yet, and that is its uses with electrical components, as it has ability to provide prevention and protection from crystallisation, electrolysis and corrosion on radios antennas, alternators and even starter motors. It should also provide good protection for petrol engines when wading as it is non-conductive up to 70kV and displaces water.

If you want to know more about Prolan visit the website www.prolan.co.nz where you can purchase online and look up one of its many distributors such as Lawrie Abel. Something new - they now have is the Airboy Undersealer spray gun direct from Denmark. These guns are excellent quality and are a great way to apply Prolan especially to the chassis of 4WDs etc. The sprayer comes with a 1m hose which is excellent for reaching those small areas where corrosion is a problem.

I plan to keep my Land Rover for a good many years yet, and Prolan is now helping ensure there will be many more adventures to be had over the next 20 years.