

WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia are in the final stages of finalising a revised National Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) Plan which will commence with a 6 month transition period on 1 July 2012 before full implementation commences on 1 January 2013. The current arrangements will continue until 1 January 2013.

All sheep producers in NSW will notice changes to the national OJD Plan, which will encourage producers to be active in controlling OJD. Those producers who are currently managing their OJD risk will not see a significant change to their trading or on-farm practices, and for others there will be opportunities to increase trading through modified management practices. Further information will be provided to Members either through NSW Farmers', or by going to www.ojd.com.au

NSW Farmers Sheepmeat and Wool Committees have been working in conjunction with WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia in ensuring that the revised Plan will best meet the needs of sheep producers in NSW, whilst also achieving the objective of minimising the economic impact of the disease in the endemic areas and minimising the spread of the disease to the non-affected areas.

Both Committees believe that the new Plan will achieve this objective.

The features of the revised OJD Plan have been derived through extensive public consultation including interviews, a national on-line survey for all interested parties, and submissions from State Farming Organisations and other relevant groups.

NSW Farmers put forward a submission which incorporated results from a 'Member Feedback Form' as well as discussions from all Sheepmeat and Wool Committee members. This was also passed unanimously by the Association's Executive Council meeting in October.

The following table provides a checklist outlining what NSW Farmers asked for in the Revised OJD Plan compared with what the final review details. A more detailed outline of the review has not yet been released but will be available shortly.

National OJD Program checklist

What NSW Farmers' asked for in the Revised OJD Program	What the Revised OJD Program will include	
A Nationally co-ordinated OJD plan	✓	All States supported the need for a nationally co-ordinated program
Moving away from high, medium and low areas to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Protected Area (which would proactively minimise the incidence of OJD) • a Management Area 	✓	The National program will have; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Protected Area; and • a Control Area
A review of the current Sheep Health Statement (SHS)- making it simpler and easy to use	✓	The national sheep industry and state departments are undertaking a review into the SHS, to make the document more user friendly

A mandatory national Sheep Health Statement	✓	Upon completion of the review of the SHS it is the intention of the national sheep industry to mandate the SHS.
Abattoir surveillance in all processing facilities – in order to track the management of the disease in an area	x	Although the industry cannot make this mandatory. The peak councils acknowledge the need for abattoir surveillance to be increased in processing plants across Australia, and are committed to working towards this goal.
Encourage producers to undertake vaccination of flocks as a management tool including lobbying/working for a cheaper and safer vaccine.	✓	Will include better education to farmers on how to vaccinate effectively and safely. While conducting research and development into finding a safer vaccine.
Encourage producers to use SheepMAP and undertake flock testing such as Pooled Faecal Culture tests.	✓	The sheepMAP is an effective tool for providing property risk assessment, and the sheep industry is committed to ensuring this program continues to be used and undertake a review of the sheepMAP in the near future.
Encourage producers to have on-farm and regional biosecurity plans	✓	Key features of the revised Plan are regional and on-farm biosecurity plans.
Required notification to relevant authorities of sheep movements into protected areas		Not yet known
Review of the current ABC Scheme	✓	The ABC Scheme will be simplified and better communicated to producers
Research into the link between soil type, nutrient deficiency and the clinical expression of OJD		This has been raised at both WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia Executive meetings, and will continue to be pursued at a national level throughout the implementation of the national plan.

For further information on the revised program please contact Rebecca Johnson, Policy Advisor – Livestock on 1300 794 000 or go to www.ojd.com.au