

## SHEEPMEAT COMMITTEE

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## Sheep Chlamydia

Following a motion passed at the 2008 Annual Conference, the Association has written to Dr Bruce Christie, NSW DPI Chief Veterinary Officer seeking that the DPI investigate the incidence of sheep Chlamydia and the potential to develop or introduce a vaccine into Australia. At the Sheepmeat Committee Meeting in March, a representative from DPI provided the Committee with an overview of the infection. Following these discussions the Committee has undertaken further correspondence to Dr Christie requesting a collation of information on sheep Chlamydia including an indication of the current level of incidence within the industry.

## Intensive lamb finishing code

Following the conclusion of the first consultation period for the Code of Practice for the Intensive Lamb Finishing sector (the 'Code'), the suggestions and ideas received have been used to plan a re-write of the Code. The Major changes will include:

- additional information for emergency and biosecurity plans
- the definition of Intensive Finishing systems to include containment areas which are used regularly or outside of drought
- pasture-based finishing systems to be excluded
- a change in the document title to "The National Code of Practice for Sheep and Lamb Finishing Systems" which will more closely reflect the contents of the Code; and
- incorporation of animal welfare requirements throughout the document, rather than in a separate section

The re-write of the Code will be completed by 30 June 2009. Stakeholders will be invited to attend meetings during August and September 2009 where information about the Code will be provided and open for discussion.

## NLIS update

National Livestock Identification System ('NLIS') has been a hot topic in the press for the last few months, with the possible introduction of pink transaction tags for non-vendor bred sheep and goats. The proposed 1 July 2009 introduction of transaction tags has been deferred with a decision on the potential introduction pending the outcome of trials that are currently being undertaken. The Association will inform members as soon as possible on any outcomes. The Association does not support the introduction of compulsory transaction tags and has been encouraging producers to correctly fill out their National Vendor Declaration ('NVD'). The Association does not support the compulsory use of electronic tags ('RFIDs'). The Committee has been actively representing the Association's policies at a State and National level.

The Current requirements for NLIS are:

**All** sheep must be ear tagged before they are moved from any property to a saleyard, abattoir or another property. The tag must be printed with the Property Identification Code ('PIC') of the property the sheep are moving from **unless** the sheep are bought in sheep and have already been tagged. A movement document ('NVD' or 'transported stock statement') must be fully

completed and accompany the sheep. If the mob is non-vendor bred or mixed and contains tags with different PICs, **all** PICs must be written on the movement document **or** a pink post breeder tag must be used with the current property's PIC printed on it for those sheep which have been bought in.

### **Restructure of AQIS**

Australian Quarantine Inspection Service ('AQIS') will undergo a major restructure. The restructure comes as a result of a recommendation in the Beale Review to remove the 40% cost recovery for export certification. The Government has indicated that as part of the AQIS restructure any price increase in export certification will be offset by increased efficiencies in AQIS. In the interim, there will be protocols in place to ease industry into the new cost structure. The Association has been working with Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) and other peak bodies to ensure that producers and industry are not disadvantaged by extra cost. The Association is continuing to work with SCA on this issue.

### **Closure of Veterinary Laboratories**

The Association, together with the NSW Division of the Australian Veterinary Association, the District Veterinarians Association and the Australian Society of Veterinary Pathologists met with the Minister for Primary Industries in March to discuss the closure of the Veterinary Laboratories at Orange and Wollongbar. The Association expressed concerns regarding the problem with animal health diagnosis, including available resources and response times, that may flow from the consolidation of veterinary diagnostic centres. The Association will continue to review the impact of the changes on the availability of appropriate services to members and we welcomes any feedback from members who have been affected by the change in diagnostic facilities.

### **Sheepmeat Council of Australia**

The Sheepmeat Council of Australia ('SCA') represents and promotes the national interests of Australian sheepmeat producers. SCA comprises representatives from State Member Organisations, representing the states of NSW, VIC, QLD, SA, TAS and WA. The Council's operations are funded by member organisations and income disbursements from the Red Meat Advisory Council Trust ('RMAC'). The SCA consists of nine Councillors with two from NSW, two from Victoria, one from WA, one from SA and one from Tasmania and one from Queensland. SCA's key role is scrutinising the performance of and settling the strategic imperatives to be pursued by levy funded bodies, Meat & Livestock Australia ('MLA'), Animal Health Australia and the National Residue Survey. In addition to these responsibilities, the SCA is responsible for the implementation of policy and is accountable to Member Organisations. The Association is represented on the SCA by Ian McColl and Rodney Watt. For further information visit [www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au](http://www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au)

### **The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Sheep**

The *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Sheep*, initiated by the Federal Government, is a set of new standards (legislated and enforceable) and guidelines (non-legislative) supporting sheep welfare at the farm level in Australia. NSW Farmers' Association have input into the development of the standards and guidelines through its peak council members, the SCA and the WoolProducers of Australia who are ensuring sheep producers' views are represented throughout the process at the national level. Standards will apply to all those responsible for the care and management of sheep, and industry is involved to achieve sustainable and practical standards for all sheep producers.

The standards and guidelines are in their early phases of development. The formal consultation process with individual sheep producers and the general public will occur during the public consultation phase in late 2009 or early 2010. Visit [animalwelfarestandards.net.au](http://animalwelfarestandards.net.au) to stay updated on the development progress of the animal welfare standards and guidelines for sheep.