

Issue

The Tick Fever Inquiry report by Gary West was released in October 2005. Comments on the recommendations were requested by December 2005 and Association staff met with the minister in June 2006 seeking their response to the Gary West Tick Fever Inquiry.

Background

- In March and April 2005 there were 2 reported cases of tick fever in Northern NSW, one in Old Koreelah and the other at Carool involving 2 adjoining properties. In total about 20 head of cattle died from the disease on the three properties.
- In 2006 there have been a number of further infestations and there are currently over 73 properties in the Casino area in quarantine. One outbreak even occurred in Glen Innes
- Reported infestations have dropped from 109 in 1996/97 to 37 infestations in 2003/04.
- Following the concern over the current tick control program and the number of infestations in 2005 the Minister for Primary Industries announced an Inquiry into cattle tick fever.

Gary West Tick Fever Inquiry

- Gary West provided a report in October 2005 and put forward a number of recommendations including a technical review of the risk associated with the use of tick fever vaccine, endorsing the current arrangements for movement of cattle between QLD and NSW, abolish the Board of Tick Control, and set up a Cattle Tick Industry Fund for the Disease Control Program for Cattle Tick to collect contributions and other payments which can be made to the fund by the designated livestock producers and other persons.
- The Association's recommendations included the development of a Voluntary Cattle Tick Health Statement to accompany Queensland livestock moving into NSW and improve the level of electronic surveillance at the NSW Queensland border; and the current regulation of the use of tick fever vaccine be maintained pending the results from the technical assessment on tick fever and any other future developments in cattle ticks and tick fever.
- A technical review was conducted by Dr Matt Playford assessing the risk associated with the vaccine. The Government has received these results, however they have not been made public.

Association action to date

- Association staff met with representatives from the Minister for Primary Industries office on Wednesday 14 June to discuss cattle ticks and the response to the Gary West Tick Fever Inquiry. The Government's comments included;
 - The Government will continue to support cattle tick control and eradication programs. Cattle tick and tick fever will continue to be notifiable diseases
 - A voluntary animal health statement will be introduced from 1 January 2007 for producers to use when exporting cattle from tick infested Queensland
 - The current trading restrictions and movement restrictions between tick infested Queensland and NSW will remain as they currently exist.
 - The current restrictions on the use of tick fever vaccine will remain in place. Access will be extended to allow dairy farmers exposed to cattle ticks to access the vaccine following approval by the Chief Veterinary Officer
 - NSW Farmers Association lobbied the NSW Government for an additional \$500 000 financial commitment to tick cam surveillance