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Welcome to the October issue of the Cattle Update. The Committee has been working on a number of issues and recently held their first meeting since Annual Conference in Sydney. Please find below a summary of the issues the Committee has been working on.

### BJD Review

Industry & Investment NSW (formerly NSW Department of Primary Industries) released the Terms of Reference for the Review of Bovine Johne's Disease ('BJD') management in NSW in late August 2009. The terms of reference can be accessed at:  
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/health/specific/cattle/bjd/new/tor>

The Review will identify the next steps for the BJD program and determine whether BJD zones in NSW can be removed.

The review will address a number of issues including the impact of the regulatory changes on producers and trade, changes to the level of BJD surveillance as a result of the new approach, changes in the number of BJD incidences, compliance with regulatory requirements, and the risk of spread of BJD among many others.

The Association will be putting in a submission to this review, and we are encouraging all of our Beef (and Dairy) Members to get involved in this process. **If you have a comment, an issue or an area that you would like to discuss, contact us today. It is essential that all concerned Beef (and Dairy) producers, and indeed all Association Members, have the opportunity to have their views represented.**

### NLIS

The Association has written to Industry and Investment NSW to confirm the previous advice given to the Association, that the National Livestock Identification System ('NLIS') Cattle Consultative Committee is to be reinstated. The Committee has nominated Bob Barwell to represent the Cattle industry and Terry Toohey will be representing the Dairy industry. The Committee will meet in October to discuss issues with NLIS. **If you have any issues with the current NLIS, please forward them to the Association.**



### Akabane

The Association has been working with a pharmaceutical company and Industry and Investment NSW to make a commercial vaccine available for producers. The Association is in the process of securing the balance of the funds needed to research the development of the vaccine. The Committee hopes that the vaccine will be available to producers in 2011.

### Cattle Ticks

The Committee has written to the Far North Coast District Council informing them of how we will progress their concerns in regards to Cattle Ticks. The District Council would like to see the Government commit to tick control and eradication, research into the development of vaccines and chemicals to prevent ticks. The Committee is in the process of writing to the Cattle Tick Advisory Committee, Industry and Investment NSW and Meat and Livestock Australia outlining the District Council's concerns.

### **Beef Levy review**

The beef levy review was conducted earlier this year to evaluate the effectiveness of the increased marketing component of the cattle transaction levy since 2006. It also made a recommendation on the appropriate level of funding for beef marketing and trade development to ensure Australia's beef industry is competitively positioned. An independent committee was established to oversee the review. The key findings of the review include:

- The additional marketing levy has delivered five times the investment back to producers.
- The major impacts on livestock prices since 2006 have been high exchange rates and high grain prices until late 2008, and now credit restrictions on global trade and the collapse in demand for co-products. Without these impacts, livestock prices would be near record levels.

The Review Committee recommended that the current \$5 per head cattle transaction levy rate be retained.

At the Association's Annual Conference in 2009, the Members passed a motion that the Association support the current \$5 per head transaction levy being retained.

### **Cattle Committee meeting**

The Cattle Committee met in late August to discuss a range of issues including the implementation of the 2009 Annual Conference motions, NLIS, BJD, Beef levy Review and the development of an Akabane vaccine. David Palmer, Managing Director of MLA attended the meeting and provided the Committee with an update of the beef markets and the Beef Levy Review.

### **Cattle Council Australia Meeting Representatives**

The Cattle Council Australia Executive meeting was held in Canberra in August. The Association was represented at the meeting by Bob Barwell. At the meeting, Cattle Council celebrated their 30 year anniversary. The Council discussed a number of issues including Animal Health and Welfare issues, Climate Change, Beef Levy and the EU Cattle Accreditation Scheme. The Council will next meet in Darwin, coinciding with MLA's AGM.

### **Pestivirus**

Richard Chamen attended a Pestivirus meeting hosted by the Royal Agricultural Society at Sydney Olympic Park on Wednesday 1 July 2009. Also in attendance were representatives from the Dairy and Beef Breeds Societies and NSW Department of Industry and Investment.

Pestivirus or Bovine Viral Diarrhoea Virus ('BVDV') is a disease that has existed in Australia for as long as there have been significant cattle populations. It can cause significant losses in herds where a Persistently Infected ('PI') animal is exposed to susceptible animals during joining and early gestation.

The purpose of the meeting was to educate industry stakeholders about the disease and develop an awareness campaign for beef and dairy producers. It was also discussed that breed societies and show societies would introduce mandatory testing to ensure breeding stock and show entrants are not PI. This would significantly reduce the risk of spreading the disease throughout industry. It was also noted that the disease was easy to test for and only requires one test for the life of the animal and is relatively inexpensive. Good management practices and vaccination were also ways of preventing infection. An important fact to note is that quarantining of a herd is not required where an animal is found to be PI.

### **Meat Grading Bill**

The *Food Amendment (Meat Grading) Bill 2008* was introduced to NSW Parliament as a Private Members Bill by the Member for the Northern Tablelands, the Hon Richard Torbay MP, on 4 December 2008. The aim of the Bill is to amend the *Food Act 2003* with respect to the advertising, packaging and labelling of meat for the domestic market in NSW. The Bill prescribes to make it an offence to falsely describe meat (including beef sheep, goat and pig) to which the industry standard AUSMEAT language applies.

The Association supports the 'in-principle' concept of the Bill, to ensure national consistency. However, the Committee believes that there are some implications with the wording and scope of the Bill as it currently exists and is working hard to ensure that it achieves the best outcome for the industry. The Committee continues to have discussions with stakeholders at the State and Federal level.