

Issue summary

The current National OJD (NOJD) program is coming to an end and there is consequently a need for the Association to decide on a policy platform that outlines the principles of a new NOJD program.

Background

- The current *National Approach to the Management of OJD (NAOJD)* is coming to an end and consequently there is currently considerable discussion in regards to the aims and framework of any future national OJD program.
- This is culminating in a stakeholder meeting being held this Wednesday (22 March 2006) to discuss possible future arrangements.
- As a basis for our lobbying on this issue the Wool and Sheepmeats Committees have developed the attached policy platform. This policy platform outlines the principles of what the Association will be seeking from any new program.
- The focus of this position is on the core areas of: research; surveillance; risk based trading; communications and funding.
- The Animal Health Committee has signalled, on behalf of state and federal governments, that there will be no government funding for a new NOJD program.
- The Wool and Sheepmeats Committees would like you to consider and support the recommendation below as an act of endorsing the proposed policy platform as a pathway forward on this issue.

Recommendation

That the Wool and Sheepmeats Committees support a new 2 year National OJD program which includes the following elements:

- 1. Research to be primarily focused on an improved vaccine**
- 2. Cheaper surveillance methods to be examined and surveillance activities to continue dependent upon equitable funding by Government.**
- 3. Risk based trading to underpin sheep movement with the elements of science based ABC scores; voluntary health statements; and prevalence areas, within flock testing and vaccination.**
- 4. A basic communication program.**
- 5. Total industry funding of \$1.6 million per annum (or \$1.1 million without surveillance activities).**

Relevant policy

AC 04 That the Association seek the continuation of and funding for OJD abattoir surveillance to enable risk based trading to operate effectively and for results from such surveillance, both positive and negative, to be forwarded to the farm of origin.

03 Apr EC

Reaffirmed AC03 That the Association seek the adoption of a new direction for the management of OJD within NSW with the core management elements being:

- (a) the implementation and widespread promotion of a simple risk assessment scale for OJD,
- (b) sheep trading being based on declarations provided by vendors, allowing purchasers to assess risk, thus facilitating the market based trading of sheep,
- (c) the opportunity for perceived OJD free regions to form "OJD Exclusion Areas" with autonomous trading restrictions, provided that the participants of any exclusion zone meet the full cost of their operation and maintenance,
- (d) that NSW producers have unrestricted access to Gudair vaccine and any future improved vaccines,
- (e) that OJD continue to be listed as a notifiable disease but that there be no requirement for regulatory action to follow any notification,
- (f) appropriate discussions are held with other states to minimise any disruption of interstate trade

AC 02 That the Association investigate all avenues to reduce the cost of Gudair vaccine.

Objective of the New NOJD program

The objective of the new national OJD Program approach is that:

- Areas currently disease free should remain free
- Prevalence to be maintained or reduced for areas where there is a low prevalence of disease
- Prevalence to be reduced in high prevalence areas.

Research

The Association's priority for OJD research is:

- To develop an OJD vaccine that is:
 - Cheaper
 - Safer to administer
 - More effective at disease control at both the individual sheep and the flock level.
- Further develop the diagnostic capacity to distinguish between more timely and accurate diagnostic test to and detect subclinical infection, including:
 - A clinically insignificant residual level of bacteria
 - A level of bacteria that indicates either the onset of commercially significant clinical disease or a high probability of the onset of commercially significant clinical disease.
- Quantification of the accuracy of abattoir surveillance, particularly in low prevalence flocks.
- Identification and evaluation risk factors relevant to the onset or otherwise of clinical disease in order to clarify on farm management options that are relevant to different environments.
- Aiming at a total industry contribution of no more than \$1 million per annum.

Surveillance

In the event that Government equitably fund surveillance, industry would:

- Support a nationally consistent surveillance program.
- Support a cheaper a cost effective surveillance method that underpins the accuracy of prevalence areas.
- Implement user pays provision of negative abattoir surveillance.
- Aiming at a total industry contribution of no more than \$500,000.

If Government do not fund surveillance, industry:

- Does not support abattoir surveillance over the next two years of the approach, given current prevalence scores will remain valid for this period of time.
- Believes it is important to re-examine undertaking socialised surveillance activities in 2 years.
- Realises that after this 2 year period if testing does not recommence, some areas may move to a reduced prevalence score.

Risk based trading

Support the basis of risk based trading being:

- Science based ABC scores
- Voluntary Sheep Health Statement
- Prevalence areas, flock testing and vaccination.

Communication

- Extension to remain a State based and State funded activity (funded by the State Government).
- New National OJD Program to provide stakeholders with extension material about the program.
- Total value of \$100,000 per annum.

Funding

- Support a 2 year program, to be evaluated after 2 years.
- Support industry funding up to a total of \$1.6 million per annum.