



SHEEPMEAT COMMITTEE

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CRACKDOWN ON NLIS COMPLIANCE

The Department of Primary Industries announced on 11 April the launch of 'Operation Shepherd' - a joint program between DPI, NSW Police and the LHPAs. The Sheepmeat Committee has been actively advocating for improved enforcement of the NLIS and welcomes this announcement.

Operation Shepherd will be targeting compliance with NLIS requirements in saleyards across NSW. This means producers should ensure, as always, that they are completing their National Vendor Declarations carefully.

The Association adopted policy at the 2009 Annual Conference seeking better enforcement of NLIS regulations. The conference acknowledged the various audits (including *Sheepcatcher* in 2007) which isolated NVD completion as the primary source of performance issues. Another audit has been scheduled for later this year and unless the industry can demonstrate improved compliance it will be difficult to argue against a move to electronic identification.

Members who are unsure of their obligations when moving stock should contact the Association or their local LHPA office. DPI also has resources available online at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/nlis>.

While the Association sees this operation as necessary to uphold the current system, we are keen to hear from any members who feel they are being treated unfairly by enforcement officers.

OVINE JOHNES DISEASE REVIEW

The current control program for Ovine Johnes Disease will end after 2012.

To assist industry in making a decision on control actions after that date a comprehensive study of the program has been commissioned. The study will look at how effective the program has been and what control measures should be deployed after 2012.

Representatives from the Sheepmeat and Wool Committees will be meeting with the consultants to give a background on the Association's current OJD policies and past involvement.

Following the release of the discussion paper in June, there will be an extensive public consultation process with members.

LIVE EXPORT

Opposition by animal rights groups to the live export industry continues to be an issue for the Association. Given sheep live export doesn't take place in NSW, the Association generally tries to maintain a low profile on the issue – dealing instead through the peak councils and LiveCorp.

The Association's policy is to defend the live export trade. In March the Federal Member for Page, Janelle Saffin, put forward a motion in Federal Parliament seeking a ban on live exports. The Association took an active role in briefing other MPs on the issue and has received assurances that official Labor Party policy remains unchanged.

The Association was refused a meeting with Ms Saffin prior to the motion being moved and is continuing to seek a meeting to discuss this issue.

SHEEPMEAT COMMITTEE MEETING

The Sheepmeat Committee met in Goulburn on 7 April 2011. The meeting received a presentation on Meat Standards Australia, with Meat and Livestock Australia indicating that it plans to expand the program to sheepmeats. MLA has been conducting workshops with growers to train them for the program and has 6 abattoirs on board for sheepmeat processing.

MLA was also able to provide information on trial marketing programs for hogget – undertaken following pressure from the Association. While results from the trial were positive, MLA still holds concerns about consistency of supply.

The Committee discussed the development of the Southern Australian Meat Research Council – the body which will bring together research providers, funders and stakeholders relating to beef and sheepmeat research in southern Australia. The Association has managed to ensure producers will be represented in the group through peak councils and will continue to monitor its development to ensure the final structure works in our members' interest.

ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The Association's involvement, through the Peak Councils, in the Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (AWS&Gs) continues to be on hold while issues of competency and national consistency are resolved. A meeting was held in March to discuss industry's concerns and an agreement was drafted, which will go to the Primary Industries Standing Committee for approval in coming weeks.

The latest draft supports the removal of the 'competency' requirement, the inclusion of which has been of great concern to the Association. Having this clause removed means producers will not be put at risk of mandatory training to prove competency under the incoming regime.

BIOSECURITY

At its most recent meeting the Sheepmeat Committee also discussed the need to improve biosecurity practices on AuctionsPlus, which currently does not cater for the Sheep Health Statement. It's important that the industry maintains continued vigilance in this area. The Committee will be taking this up to try and get changes made to the website.