



20 November 2012

National Ovine Johne's Disease Forum

By a motion passed at last week's National OJD Forum in Sydney a committee of eight representatives has been appointed to progress recommendations and the three further motions resolved at that forum.

Convened by Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), the forum was attended by a broad representation of the sheep industry including representatives from the Sheepmeat Council, WoolProducers Australia, NSW Farmers, Victorian Farmers Federation, Animal Health Australia, Government and private veterinarians and stock agents as well as a large number of sheep producers.

Two dozen speakers participated in the forum covering the history of OJD management, current research directions and priorities, and the efficacy of the Gudair vaccine.

After Wool Producers and the Sheepmeat Council presented the proposed new OJD program, presentations followed on the practicalities of implementation for sheep trading and implications for the supply chain, stud sheep breeders and the commercial sheep industry.

The meeting rejected the proposed new program on the grounds that it is not providing incentive for vaccination; OJD spreads despite good biosecurity; and specific guidelines for protected areas such as testing and auditing requirements are still not defined and are likely to be onerous. The majority present also believe that the program's reliance on abattoir surveillance will lead to false complacency.

Further discussion about the way forward then took place after AWI representatives had left the forum and the following four motions were carried;

- "That the National OJD Forum calls for the current National OJD program to be retained and that the proposed New National OJD program be rejected". (Moved by Kate Spry, NSW sheep producer. Carried 47:7)
- "That the new proposed OJD program be shelved indefinitely and while the current status quo is in place the industry move towards deregulation of OJD management as per the West Australian model." (Moved by Jim McDonald, NSW veterinarian. Carried 49:6)

This motion was further clarified by Tony Gooch, a wool producer from Western Australia as a system supporting individual producer responsibility. In this model there are still management tools but no regulatory imposition.

- "A resolution to communicate the motions to Federal and State Agriculture ministers, State farming organisations, Sheepmeats Council and WoolProducers Australia." (Moved by Susan Ainge, NSW Women in Agriculture. Carried unanimously)

- "That a committee of eight people be formed to progress the recommendations and the motions from the meeting." (Moved by Ross Wells, stud Merino breeder, NSW. Carried 47:2)

Elected to that committee were Frank Tobin, Victoria (chairman); Adrian Vietch, WA; Drew Chapman, NSW; Graham Gilmore, NSW; David Rendell, Victoria; Kate Spry, NSW; Richard Halliday, SA; Tom Ashby, SA; and Ross Wells, NSW.

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