

OJD plan will hurt

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A NEW management plan for Ovine Johne's Disease will have a disastrous impact on interstate sheep trading.

So says Ouyen wool grower Kevin Crook, organiser of Victoria's first OJD protected zone bio-security plan.

Delaying the January 1 start date for the new management regime was ruled out last month, despite doubts producers would be ready.

But Mr Crook said interstate trading from Victoria into South Australia and NSW would be "totally out of control" if the date wasn't extended.

"It is going to be a disaster," he said. "The majority of people didn't know about this until August."

Mr Crook organised meetings of sheep producers across north-west Victoria for the Victorian Farmers Federation in the past week that voted almost unanimously to set up the state's first OJD protected zone bio-security plan.

But he said there was "no hope" it would be finalised and approved by January 1, adding: "I think most of NSW is the same."

Mr Crook and VFF livestock president Ian Feldtmann want to see the OJD national plan start date extended by up to six months.

Department of Primary Industries senior vet Dr Robert Suter said it was unclear how much detail needed to go into these bio-security plans, and their approval processes.

"The timeline is very tight and there (are) a couple of significant hurdles - what is really required is a plan to be approved so we have some benchmarks to work off, but I'm not aware of any," he said.

Animal Health Australia endemic disease manager Lorna Citer said it was decided last month the January start date was achievable.

The new OJD rules will end assurance-based credit points for OJD vaccination and the current high, medium and low-prevalence zones.

Instead, areas where OJD is rare or not known to occur will be recognised as protected areas, while control areas will be declared where the disease is well-established, spreading and there is no regional prevention or control plan.

It is expected that all of South Australia would be a protected area and all of Victoria, apart from the north-west, would be a control area.



http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2012/10/17/545812_sheep.html