



Department of Primary Industries

THE NATIONAL OVINE JOHNE'S DISEASE PROGRAM

NSW DPI - POSITION STATEMENT

Wednesday 12 November, 2012

The new National OJD Program is being developed by WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia. NSW Farmers have also been involved.

NSW Farmers, the Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) and WoolProducers have been advised of the DPI position on the new National OJD Program.

Key elements of the Program and the DPI position is outlined below.

Sheep Health Statements and assessing OJD risk

Sheep Health Statements (SHS) have been mandatory (at the request of industry) in NSW since 2004. If industry still supports the SHS remaining mandatory, then DPI will support this continuation. The SHS provides information on a number of diseases, and if they continue to be mandatory throughout the state, all producers are treated equally. In addition, all producers benefit as SHS provide health information required to make decisions regarding disease risks when trading sheep.

A major change under the new Program is the method used to assess risk. The industry intention is to remove the ABC points system that has been used in the last few years. ABC points will no longer be accrued for sheep from Medium or Low Prevalence Areas or from vaccination status. The sheep industry intends to determine the level of risk qualitatively by using questions on the flock's history with regards to testing, abattoir monitoring, Market Assurance Program (MAP) status and sheep introductions. The new SHS is not yet finalised.

OJD Areas

There are currently three prevalence areas (High Prevalence, Medium Prevalence and Low Prevalence) in NSW. Parts of the Low Prevalence Area within NSW have also been declared as protected areas for OJD and are known as OJD Exclusion Areas.

Under the revised Plan the current Exclusion Areas and the Low, Medium and High Prevalence Areas will be replaced with Control Areas and Protected Areas.

DPI will no longer approve and/or revoke the new Protected Areas as it did for Exclusion Areas, and they will no longer be gazetted. The approval and revocation process will be managed nationally by the sheep industry.

Proposed new movement requirements

The sheep industry has developed the movement requirements for trading sheep into Protected Areas (see below). The DPI position is that any movement requirements into the Protected Area will not be backed by regulation. This also means that the regulatory burden on people moving or trading sheep will not increase.

Importantly, it has been agreed that all MAP flocks, including those that vaccinate (MN-V), will be accepted as low risk for Protected areas.

A review of the MAP is planned by industry for later in 2013.

Establishing Protected Area status

For a region to be eligible to become a Protected Area the prevalence of OJD infected flocks must not exceed 1%. Industry has developed entry requirements and guidelines for development of a Regional Biosecurity Plan for Protected Areas. Further information can be found on the Animal Health Australia web site at: www.ojd.com.au.

Each Protected Area will need to develop a Regional Biosecurity Plan outlining how the area will deal with all matters relating to OJD. This plan will be independently assessed and approved by industry. All plans, including those from other states, will be assessed and approved in a similar manner to ensure consistency. Annual audits of the plan will also be undertaken by industry.

The existing NSW OJD Exclusion Areas will be submitting Regional Biosecurity Plans requesting that they be recognised as Protected Areas.

LHPAs are undertaking survey's in many of the Low Prevalence Areas to determine if the majority of local producers wish to be in a Protected Area. Sheep producers have been encouraged to vote. Where the surveys indicate support, the LHPAs will assist producers prepare and submit a Regional Biosecurity Plan.

Producers are being advised of the commitments required to be a Protected Area. Producers are also being advised that regulatory powers will not be available.

Producers within Protected Areas will be able to use the mandatory Sheep Health Statements and National Livestock Identification System movement notifications to support the integrity of their Area.

In the event there is evidence that landholders within the Protected Areas are not meeting the obligations of the Regional Biosecurity Plan, this will be evident in the industry audit and it will be recommended that the Protected Area is dissolved.

In addition to this, if the prevalence of the disease exceeds 1% it will also be recommend that the Protected Area is dissolved.

Costs of establishing and maintaining a Protected Area

Where producers have requested an LHPA assisted Protected Area be established, LHPAs are funding the survey of local producers. LHPAs will also need to allocate resources to implement OJD risk mitigation and control measures in their districts.

All testing of sheep for entry to Protected Areas, or to establish the prevalence of OJD infection in local flocks, will be paid for by industry. This will be direct if an individual flock test is required or possibly via Animal Health Australia (using industry funds) if testing is done via abattoir monitoring.

OJD surveys

The old Warialda, Walgett, Narrabri, Nyngan, Moree and Coonamble RLPBs plus part of Riverina LHPA are presently surveying landholders to gauge interest in forming a Protected Area. Survey forms were due for return by 12 November 2012 with the intention that new Protected Areas will be in place by 1 January 2013.

The Lachlan LHPA and the old Dubbo RLPB will hold surveys in part of their area in February 2013.

The Queensland and South Australian positions

Both Queensland and South Australia have indicated they intend to apply for Protected Area status. Under this status, Queensland and South Australia can impose movement restrictions on sheep from NSW Control Areas.

The national industry has indicated that the new Program will commence in January 2013. If there are delays to implementing the new Program in NSW beyond January 2013, then Queensland and South Australia may impose movement restrictions on the whole of NSW.

These situations are a matter for industry to consider.

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