

12 July 2013

RFID defeat welcomed



THE defeat of a resolution supporting the introduction of mandatory Electronic Identification (EID) of sheep at last month's Victorian Farmers' Federation conference has been welcomed by NSW Farmers.

In a statement, NSW Farmers' Goat Committee chair Katie Davies said it was clear that producers around the country still questioned the value of electronic tags for sheep and goats.

Ms Davies said producers in NSW had consistently made their opposition to mandatory tags clear and the defeated resolution in Victoria demonstrated that producers were not behind the push for mandatory electronic tags in that state.

She said the Victorian Government had been one of the few advocates for electronic National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) when state farming bodies and other ministers were not.

"It is now apparent that Peter Walsh, the Victorian Minister for Agriculture, is driving this on his own without any grassroots producer support," she said.

"He is out of touch with the needs of producers and has ignored the fact that the current mob based system achieves excellent traceability requirements."

Exercise Tuckerbox, a traceability study conducted by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities (LHPA) last year, demonstrated the current mob-based National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) for sheep and goats meets national traceability standards.

It traced 181,000 cattle and 240,000 sheep to 2050 properties, 47 saleyards and abattoirs in less than 12 hours – well within the 24 hours required by national tracing standards.

The tracing was completed using the NLIS database using the equivalent of seven people.

When the results of the study were released in August 2012, NSW Primary Industries Minister Katrina Hodgkinson said it demonstrated the speed and effectiveness of current livestock traceability systems to respond to a disease emergency.

"The success of the exercise suggests there is no need to move to a radio frequency identification (RFID) system for sheep traded on the domestic market as long as producers ensure all sheep are tagged and accompanied by the appropriate National Vendor Declaration (NVD) forms," she said.

Ms Davies said she applauded Ms Hodgkinson for her consistent support for producers on this issue.

"Minister Hodgkinson has listened to the concerns of producers and provided a voice of sanity in calling for the retention of the mob-based NLIS," Ms Davies said.



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“She understands that mandatory electronic tags are unnecessary, expensive and would be a logistical nightmare.
“As long as all sheep and goats are tagged appropriately and producers remain compliant with the NLIS rules, there is no requirement for the system to change.”

At a recent Standing Council on Primary Industries (SCOPI) meeting a decision on a proposal for the phased implementation of an electronic NLIS for sheep and goats from January 1, 2014, was delayed until its next meeting in September.

This was done in order to review the data, information and assumptions in the accompanying Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (CRIS).