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## New OJD plan takes effect



THE NSW government's decision to make the new sheep health statement (SHS) a voluntary requirement for movements of restocker sheep has met with mixed reaction from industry.

The new SHS is part of the new Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) national management plan, which came into effect on Monday.

Last week NSW Primary Industries Minister Katrina Hodgkinson announced that the SHS would no longer be mandatory in that State.

That was the last remaining piece of regulation governing OJD in NSW.

As of Monday, producers can now establish voluntary regional biosecurity plans if they are in low-prevalent OJD areas.

There are no longer prevalence areas or zones for OJD.

Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) chief executive Andy Madigan said ALPA did not believe the SHS should be mandatory.

However, he said producers that wanted to obtain maximum competition for their livestock should use an SHS.

Mr Madigan said anybody buying livestock should ask for an SHS prior to purchase so they knew the biosecurity issues they could be taking onto their property.

The new SHS is not limited to OJD but also covers other biosecurity risks foot rot, brucellosis and lice.

Mr Madigan said the decision to use the health statement should be left to the individual producer.

"Given that a lot of sheep in NSW go to slaughter there is no need to have to an SHS and it would create a lot of double handling of paperwork for no reason," Mr Madigan said.

"In saleyards and for on farm sales a producer has to put out a national vendor declaration (NVD) which is a food safety issue, so then to fill out another form about animal health issues for some would be a daunting task," he said.

Ultimately he said for producers to have maximum competition for their livestock they should have a fully completed NVD form, livestock should be National Livestock Identification compliant and should offer an SHS.

He said while entry requirements of all States were not completely clear at this stage, producers who did not offer an SHS at sale could be limited as to where their stock could be sold interstate.

NSW Farmers sheepmeat committee chairman James Jackson said he was disappointed the NSW government would no longer mandate the SHS.

"Mandating it gives it gravity," he said.



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"It doesn't prevent the spread of disease, but it helps develop a culture of considering the risks of a transaction.

"It should be mandated and it should be a part of the animal welfare strategy because all these diseases are welfare concerns and biosecurity is one way to avoid welfare issues.

"You develop a culture where people actually do a risk assessment on the introduction of animals and that document was pretty valuable in that space."

Meanwhile in Victoria, Elders Wycheproof agent Jim Coffey said it would be business as usual at Friday's store sale, following the start of the new OJD plan.

"There's really no change under the new rules in terms of us being able to get sheep into South Australia," he said.

"That's the big challenge for us in western Victoria, to try and get sheep into south-eastern South Australia, which would be a big market for sheep like ours."

<http://www.theland.com.au/news/agriculture/livestock/sheep-general/new-ojd-plan-takes-effect/2662924.aspx?storypage=0>