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Electronic tag opponents unite ahead of ABARES report



Farmer groups and stock agents across Australia today restated their opposition to mandatory electronic tagging of sheep and goats, reiterating support for mob-based visual tag identification.

WoolProducers Australia (WPA) has coordinated a collective letter on behalf of 10 organisations to the Federal, State and Shadow Agricultural Ministers calling for the

retention of the current paper-based system.

The letter comes as an ABARES decision Regulation Impact Statement for the implementation of improvements to the National Livestock Identification System for sheep and goats is finalised.

A Department of Agriculture spokesperson said today the decision Regulation Impact Statement (decision RIS) for the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) for sheep and goats prepared by ABARES will be considered by the Australian, state and territory governments in coming weeks.

A consultation regulation impact statement prepared by ABARES last year at the request of the former Standing Council on Primary Industries (SCoPI) analysed three options: an enhanced mob-based system; an electronic Identification (EID) system with exemptions for sheep and goats sold directly from their property of birth to abattoirs or export depots, and; an EID system without exemptions.

The consultation RIS did not identify a preferred option for improving the NLIS for sheep and goats, but ABARES used industry submissions to refine recommendations in the decision RIS.

The other signatories to the letter were the SheepMeat Council of Australia (SCA), the Goat Industry Council of Australia (GICA), Australian Livestock and Property Agents (ALPA), Australian Livestock Marketers of Australia (ALMA), AgForce Qld, NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA), Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA), Livestock SA and Western Australian Farmers Federation (WAFarmers).



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WPA NLIS spokesman Steve Harrison said the recent public consultation on the issue industry sent a clear message that mandatory electronic identification was not an option.

“Over 90 percent of respondents stated that they did not want EID imposed on the sheep and goat industries.” Mr Harrison said.

WoolProducers Australia said current NLIS system for sheep and goats is simple, cost-effective, well-accepted by industry and has demonstrated increased producer compliance with the assistance of continued extension and compliance activities.

“Traceability can, and in some jurisdictions, is being achieved through the visual mob-based system.

“As long as sheep and goats are tagged and accompanied by the appropriate NVD forms then biosecurity and traceability requirements are being met,” Mr Harrison said.

“While we support the right of individual producers to use electronic identification devices voluntarily, we believe the impracticalities of implementing such a system would far outweigh any perceived benefits for our members and producers.”

WoolProducers Australia said it had co-ordinated unified sheep and goat supply-chain lobbying against the implementation of mandatory EID over recent months.

<http://www.sheepcentral.com/news/electronic-tag-opponents-unite-ahead-of-abares-report/>