



# Vetcommuniqué

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## Animal Health Committee Meeting 05, 15-20 May 2005

Welcome to the second edition for 2005 of the Animal Health Committee's (AHC) newsletter for food animal production industry bodies. The aim of Vetcommuniqué is to improve communication links between AHC and client industry bodies.

The next face-to-face meeting, AHC06, will be held in Melbourne in November 2005. Face-to-face meetings are held twice each year, with the venue rotating around the States, Territories and New Zealand. The meetings are attended by the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the Commonwealth, States, Territories and New Zealand with representatives from Biosecurity Australia, CSIRO and Animal Health Australia (AHA) to discuss animal health issues of national importance. We look forward to some innovative discussions with invited industry groups.

## AHC05 KEY OUTCOMES

### Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI)

AHC discussed and endorsed the proposed national policy for handling LPAI. Development of the policy has included consideration of issues arising from the recent outbreak of avian influenza in Asia.

The proposed policy will include:

- Following the diagnosis of LPAI (H5 and H7) being made, a short period of time should be allowed for intense surveillance to be carried out using rapid diagnostic methods to determine the extent of infection.
- Once this surveillance information is available, the option of stamping-out remains a valuable measure to control outbreaks where infection is limited in area or to a number of premises where it is the most economic control option. This could be achieved by either on-farm slaughter and disposal or by controlled process slaughter in a commercial processing plant.



### National Surveillance Issues

A presentation was given to AHC05 on the web-based trial to obtain surveillance information from veterinary practices. Members discussed the data which was being generated and the balance between the capacity/willingness of veterinary practices to record additional data and the use and value of the data.

As a result of the trial, data collection is being refined before further testing of the model. Veterinary practices involved in the trial met to discuss the model at the AVA conference in May 2005.



### TFAP2 post 2006

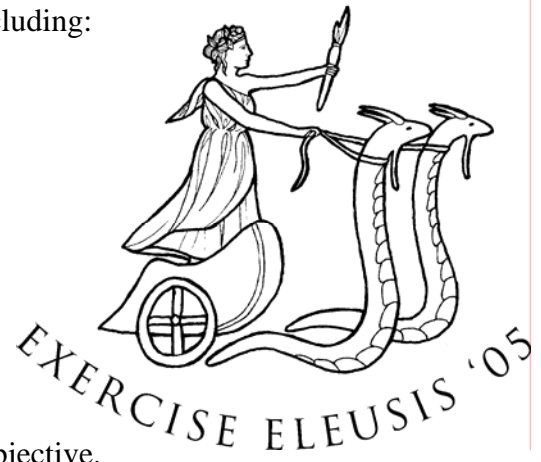
AHC discussed and endorsed the proposed principles for the maintenance of Australian freedom from bovine TB after the conclusion of the TFAP2. The Tuberculosis Freedom Assurance Program 2 Coordination Committee (TFAP2CC) is developing the policy for management of bovine TB post 2006.

## Exercise Eleusis '05

An exercise to assess national preparedness for zoonotic animal disease will be held 29 November 2005 to 1 December 2005. This exercise will test the national Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) response management framework.

The aim of this exercise is to evaluate and enhance national capability to manage emergency animal disease outbreaks, particularly zoonoses. The objectives of the exercise are to test:

- the effective integration of national arrangements including:
  - government-industry,
  - all three levels of government,
  - agriculture/health integration;
- communication;
- disease control strategies; and,
- trade management arrangements.



Specific performance criteria will be developed for each objective.

## Ovine Johne's Disease

A three day training workshop for abattoir surveillance inspectors was hosted by NSW Department of Primary Industries. The workshop was aimed at ensuring the availability of an adequate skilled and trained workforce in each state to undertake abattoir surveillance and sampling for OJD. Representatives from Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and NSW attended the workshop

The National Animal Health Australia database is now operational. After a lengthy development phase this information system is now being used by the State OJD Coordinators to submit abattoir surveillance data.



## Bovine Johne's Disease

AHC considered a report from the Steering Committee for BJD on the National Bovine Johne's Disease Strategic Plan. Activities in the second year of the plan include:

- Completion of the Milk Survey Trial conducted by Dairy Australia with results released in February 2005.
- Development of a National Dairy BJD Assurance Score, endorsed by Animal Health Committee in September 2004
- Progress in development of a brochure to introduce assurance scoring concept to producers
- Implementation of the National BJD Financial and Non Financial Assistance Package from 1 July 2004.
- Continuation of the *Beef Only* classification at sales within the Control Zone for BJD.
- Progression of research activities within the Early Diagnosis and Immunogenesis project managed by MLA.
- Further research activity on the pooled faecal culture test for BJD.

## **BSE-TSE**

AHC Working Groups presented recommendations at AHC05, concerning issues arising from Australia's TSE policy.

The tallow definition working group are seeking advice from the Australian Renderers Association prior to finalisation of the definition. AHC agreed that finalisation of this issue was a matter of priority.

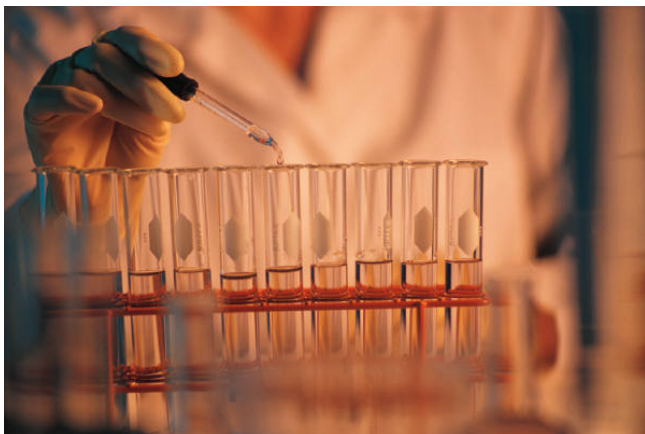
AHC agreed on the definition feedstuff for progress of legislation for the labelling of stock feed that does not contain Restricted Animal Material (RAM). Negative and positive labelling of feed will assist users and streamline auditing of the Australian Ruminant Feed Ban in the future.



## **Sub-Committee on Animal Health Laboratory Standards (SCAHLs)**

AHC discussed problems arising with the progressive introduction of the agreed syndrome reporting process in animal health laboratories in Australia. Laboratories have agreed that syndrome reporting is important and are making efforts to rectify the problems. AHC has requested SCAHLs to report to the next AHC face-to-face meeting, in November, where committee members will further consider syndrome reporting.

The next meeting of SCAHLs will be held in conjunction with the first meeting of the proposed Australian Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AusAVLD) at Atwood in Victoria, 12 -16 September 2005.



## **AUSVETPLAN**

AHC considered priorities for the development of new AUSVETPLAN manuals and for future revisions of some. The AUSVETPLAN TRG currently has 21 manual under review. AHC also discussed management of animal disease emergencies where the diseases may not be eradicable or included under the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA).

AHC discussed the policy where *S. enteritidis* is detected in poultry. Outcomes from a workshop held earlier on *S. enteritidis* will usefully inform the development of a nationally consistent policy for this disease.

## **New Zealand Report**

The Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) of New Zealand provided AHC with an update of current animal health topics there. These included: the investigation of any effect of the parasite *L. Douglassii* on kiwi's and New Zealand's three pest management strategies covering tuberculosis, American foulbrood and varroa



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[WWW.DAFF.GOV.AU/AHC](http://WWW.DAFF.GOV.AU/AHC)**

## *Animal Welfare Issues*

### *- Mulesing*

AHC discussed the updated draft of the Mulesing guidelines in the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Sheep. The consultation process for the guidelines is continuing. AHC will maintain involvement with further amendments and continue to monitor the PETA campaign against Mulesing.



### *- Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AWWS)*

AHC discussed the proposed approach to implementation of the AWWS including the expertise and commitment required by governments to progress the 25 areas of agreed activity.

### *- Livestock Export Standards*

AHC noted that the Livestock Export Standards are dynamic and subject to review. A new Livestock Export Standards Advisory Committee (LESAC) is being formed and AHC will continue to be involved. AHC provided comment on legislative proposals for the Standards.

### *- ANZSDP's*

The Australian & New Zealand Standard Diagnostic Procedures (ANZSDP) for porcine circovirus was endorsed by AHC.

### *-Codes of Practice*

The Australian Code of practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes was noted by AHC and will now go to Primary Industries Standing Committee (PISC) and the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC).

The Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Killing or Capture, Handling and Marketing of Feral Livestock Animals was endorsed by AHC and will also go to Primary Industries Health Committee (PIHC) for consideration.

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