



Vetcommuniqué

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Animal Health Committee Meeting 04, 26-28 October 2004

Welcome to the fourth edition for 2004 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, AHC05, will be held in Tasmania in May 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.

AHC04 KEY OUTCOMES



NLIS Sheep and Goats

The NLIS Sheep and Goat Implementation Group in South Australia has finalised a system of phased implementation. In Victoria, proposals are under consideration for enhancing sheep identification and tracing arrangements as part of the NLIS (Sheep).

The NT will operate a similar system for buffalo as well as cattle.

Whilst debate is still ongoing in the sheep industry, jurisdictions agreed to support implementation in their areas.

Industry presentations

AHC invited industry representatives to address the meeting.

- ◇ Mr Greg Ludvigsen presented on the unique features of his pig production enterprise in SA and delegates enjoyed a tour of his premises (see pictured above and right).
- ◇ Mr John Crosby, Chair, NLIS Cattle Implementation Group in SA spoke on the implementation of NLIS; (see opposite re NLIS) and
- ◇ Dr Kevin McGrath, Chair, SA Cattle Advisory Group discussed liaison issues between animal health agencies and key industry.



Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness

Australian Ruminant Feed Ban National Uniform Guidelines

The final Guidelines will require a reference that assessment of the risk basis of categories of enterprises influence the numbers selected for audit within each jurisdiction in each category. The guidelines will require harmonised response to defects.

AHC discussed 'negative' labelling of feed and the issue of uniform wording for legislation. A draft definition of feed will be pursued out of session to provide the basis for progress of 'negative' labelling legislation in all jurisdictions.

FMD Vaccine National Operating Procedures (NOPs)

AHC endorsed the Working Group's draft 'National Operating Procedures for the Use of FMD Vaccine in Australia' as a 'work in progress' with several factors still to be agreed including consideration of sample sizes required for monitoring efficacy of vaccination in vaccinated herds and flocks. Advice is being sought of the FMD Surveillance Working Group on the optimum serological monitoring procedure.

AHC agreed that when the NOPs are finalised, jurisdictions should develop complementary SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) and undertake preparedness activities appropriate for the jurisdiction.

A simulation exercise on use of vaccine will be held when these NOPs are finalised.

An APVMA permit has been issued to allow emergency use of the Merial FMD vaccine, recently contracted for supply to Australia.

Rapid Response Team

AHA asked members to note the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Rapid Response Team have been amended to allow for increased numbers and likely patterns of key deployment during an emergency. Induction of new members will commence shortly.

Guidelines for ruminants who have consumed restricted animal material (RAM)

Non-cattle ruminants remain an issue. AQIS are required to certify that exported live animals have not consumed RAM and that meat does not come from animals that have consumed RAM. Identification with NLIS devices is considered the most appropriate option for meeting trade requirements. In the interim jurisdictions will liaise with AQIS on a case by case basis.

AHC agreed that the 'RAMmed Animal Working Group' reconvene to progress non-cattle ruminant issues. Members agreed to consider legislative implications for managing ruminants that have consumed RAM.

Avian Influenza

DAFF is to fund a consultant to develop a policy paper on LPAI for consideration by AHC. OCVO will have a further meeting with industry and AHC to discuss:

- ◇ reporting framework;
- ◇ surveillance;
- ◇ vaccination;
- ◇ industry biosecurity plans;
- ◇ human health agencies; and
- ◇ occupational health and safety.

Industries that are not signatories to EADRA, for example, the ratite industry will be invited.

AI AUSVETPLAN review

The AI AUSVETPLAN review is nearing finalisation. The HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza) section has been reviewed, while work on LPAI continues.



Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness (cont)

Dead bird surveillance

AHC agreed that investigations of mass mortality events involving birds will include routine testing for West Nile virus, avian influenza virus and Newcastle disease virus.

A retrospective study to look at mass mortality events in wild birds is being scoped and conducted through the Australian Wildlife Health Network.

Imported test kits for exotic disease

SAFEMEAT has sought assurances from jurisdictions about current legislative power to control the use of imported exotic disease test kits. An AHC working group will develop policy on regulation for testing for exotic disease and AHC will report to SAFEMEAT on current jurisdictional mechanisms to control the use of test kits for exotic diseases.

EAD training framework

Animal Health Australia (AHA) presented a paper on the transition of the EAD training program to the National Training Framework.

The inclusion of EAD Competency Standards in the National Training Framework provides a nationally consistent benchmark for personnel working in an emergency animal disease management environment.

AHC undertook to develop a discussion paper on the implications of the ANTA EAD training framework for circulation out of session.



Feral animal issues

AHC and Vertebrate Pests (VPC) Coordinating Group will meet in November. Members will be asked to provide reports of their jurisdiction's progress in feral animal strategy development and implementation to AHC05 for consolidation into an annual report to PISC (Primary Industries Standing Committee). The reports will highlight collaborative work with feral animal control agencies and work plans will be initiated at an early date.



National Animal Health Strategy

Roly Nieper and Ralph Hood (AHA) provided an overview of the Draft National Animal Health Strategic Framework, from development through to implementation.

AHA intends to present the document to industry groups and to PIHC early next year presenting the National Animal Health Strategic Framework to PIMC for endorsement.

In discussion with AHA, AHC reaffirmed the importance of TSEFAP; expressed concerns regarding the possible costs of EAD competency training; requested AHA to consider the AHA advisory committee structure; requested AHA consider updating the EAD business plan to remove completed tasks and to allow the addition of new tasks; and requested updates on their emerging diseases vaccine and screwworm projects.

AHC provided comment on the draft National Animal Health Strategic framework and agreed to provide further comment direct to AHA.

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ON THE WEB AT
WWW.DAFF.GOV.AU/AHC**

Endemic Animal Disease

National approaches to Johne's disease (JD)

The dairy industry has agreed to manage the spread and impacts of bovine Johne's disease (BJD) by engaging most producers in controlling the spread of infection in a less regulated environment.

After extensive discussion between the States and Territories over the last 18 months, the Dairy BJD Assurance Scoring Scheme was been endorsed. Bilateral discussions have progressed for movement between states and are ongoing.

The dairy, beef and sheep industries are working with governments under new national approaches to develop complementary methods of herd and flock classification so that every herd will have a classification that will reflect the risk of infection with JD.

The National Approach to the Management of Ovine Johne's disease (OJD) moves away from a regulatory control by state jurisdictions to one where individual producers assume responsibility for managing the risk of OJD within their own flock and incorporates abattoir surveillance as a means by which area prevalence is determined. A copy of the National Approach document can be downloaded on the DAFF webpage www.daff.gov.au and search for 'National guidelines for OJD'.



Other Issues—

National Notifiable Disease List

AHC agreed to update the national list of reportable diseases every two years. The list is currently under review for finalisation in the near future. The amended list will be available on the AHC web page, when finalised.

An AHC Working Group was formed in August 2004 to consider the implications of new OIE reporting requirements. The task was to define the circumstances of reporting, including reporting to State/Territory and Commonwealth Ministers, and Australia's obligations under the new requirements. A framework for reporting newly identified diseases was discussed. The working group will report further to AHC05 in May 2005

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