



JD News



Autumn 2004 Official Newsletter of the National Johne's Disease Control Program

New Approach to OJD Management in Australia

From July 1 2004, the Assurance Based Credit (ABC) Scheme may be used when trading sheep in Australia. Sheep to be moved or sold should be covered by a national OJD Animal Health Statement that will include the ABC score — the higher the score the more assurance you will have to protect your ovine Johne's disease status.

The Assurance Based Credit (ABC) Scheme is a nationally agreed method of assessing the risk that a consignment of sheep may have OJD. It builds on knowledge and hard-gained experience from the National Ovine Johne's Disease Control and Evaluation Program to help sheep producers reduce the risk of their flocks becoming infected. It also provides a pathway for owners of infected flocks to improve their trading position via on-farm management of OJD. On-farm management will also lower the risk of OJD spreading in their flocks should the infection be present or be inadvertently introduced. The combination of on-farm management and risk-based trading is the best strategy identified by industry to minimise the impact of OJD.

Under the ABC Scheme, a sheep producer can claim credit points for his or her sheep under four categories. These are:

- Regional Prevalence — the known OJD status of the flock or the estimated prevalence of OJD among flocks in the region from which the sheep were sourced.
- Flock testing — testing undertaken in the flock (for instance for SheepMAP or negative abattoir surveillance).
- Approved vaccination.
- The identification of low risk groups within infected flocks (as certified by approved veterinarians).

The numbers of credits assigned under each category is based on scientific risk assessment. So, by buying sheep with a high ABC score you can greatly reduce the risk that you will buy in OJD.

For further information about the ABC Scheme and the Animal Health Statement, please see the brochure included with your *JD News*, the higher the score: the lower the risk.



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Maintaining SheepMAP Status by Approved Vaccination

“Flocks in the SheepMAP should be able to retain their MAP status by vaccinating all of their sheep and thence lambs; that is, flocks could opt to replace further testing by ongoing approved vaccination.”

Mr Graham Gilmore, stud sheep breeder and nominated representative of the Australian Association of Stud Merino Breeders (AASMB), the Australian Poll Dorset Association (APDA) and the Australian Wool Growers Association, presented the above proposal to the Johne’s Disease Market Assurance Program (MAP) Reference Group on 25 May 2004. The proposal was brought forward after recent meetings of the AASMB and APDA had recommended that members undertake no further testing in SheepMAP.

At its recent meeting, the MAP Reference Group considered a review, undertaken by Evan Sergeant, Technical Adviser to Animal Health Australia, of a paper from 2002 that assessed the comparative risk posed by sheep managed in this way compared to sheep tested in the MAP. In light of this review, the MAP Reference Group supported the proposal which is now being considered by the Animal Health Committee’s Ovine Johne’s Disease Technical Advisory Group. The proposal is yet to be considered by Animal Health Committee. If endorsed, the changes will be incorporated as part of the current technical review of SheepMAP.

OJD Research Round-up

Meat and Livestock Australia hosted a seminar in March to present and review the outcomes and application of much of the research undertaken during the past six years of the National OJD Control and Evaluation Program.

The workshop was planned as part of Meat and Livestock Australia’s OJD “Harvest Year” and was attended by researchers, advisors, veterinarians and sheep producers from around the country. The concept of an OJD “Harvest Year” was developed by Meat and Livestock Australia to begin a process of “harvesting” and collating the results and outcomes from the extensive research program, which has been conducted in Australia over the last five to eight years.

The extension of the research to date has largely been through research updates and *Tips and Tools* advisory bulletins. Future activities proposed as part of the “Harvest Year” include regional seminars to present research findings to sheep producers and advisors, a scientific conference for presentation and review of research outcomes and the compilation of many of the research results and publications into a single resource compendium.

Effects and Control of OJD

One of the research presentations at the recent OJD Harvest Year seminar reported average death rates due to OJD of 8.6% and ranging from of 2.1 to 17.5% in 12 monitored flocks during 2002. Overall, OJD accounted for 70% of the deaths in these flocks. The good news was that pasture management and vaccination can help control these losses. Vaccination of lambs with Gudair® vaccine significantly delays the onset of bacterial shedding and reduces the numbers of bacteria excreted onto pastures.

Pilot Workshop Targets On-farm Biosecurity

Animal Health Australia has commenced the development of a workshop to assist producers to manage the risks associated with ovine Johne’s disease. “Protect your flock” is a one day workshop, which will enable producers to develop their own property disease risk management plan. The first pilot workshop was held in southern NSW in late June. After it is evaluated the workshop format and material will be made available to producer groups and the departments of agriculture and primary industries nationally.

Risk Assessment for Johne's Disease in Goats

Both ovine and bovine Johne's disease infect goat herds in Australia and official disease control measures such as zoning for both infections have significant effects on goat movements, necessitating a risk-based trading system for goats.

Animal Health Australia established a working group with goat industry representatives and Meat and Livestock Australia also provided funding towards the development of a simple scoring system based

on the qualitative risk assessment completed for the goat industry. The proposed standard aims to simplify movement restrictions on goats while complementing risk assessment schemes for cattle and sheep.

The proposed risk assessment system will be considered by the goat industry for the development of national goat Johne's disease policies.

disease statistics

DEER

Table 1. Number of known infected deer herds

	Mar 04	Jun 03	June 02
NSW	1	1	0
VIC	7	8	7
TAS	0	0	0
SA	2	2	1
QLD	0	0	1
Total	10	11	9

CATTLE

Table 2. Number of known infected cattle herds

	Mar 04	Jun 03	June 02
NSW	138	136	146
VIC	1129	1124	1154
TAS	23	20	16
SA	52	50	44
NT	0	0	2
QLD	0	0	1
Total	1342	1330	1363

Table 3. Number of CattleMAP Assured herds at March 2004

	MN1	MN2	MN3
NSW	197	291	311
VIC	132	114	22
SA	122	140	24
TAS	52	56	4
QLD	0	0	0
Total	503	601	361
		1465	

Staff Changes

Animal Health Australia recently appointed Jack England as the new Johne's Disease Project Officer. Jack is responsible for developing communication strategies and providing program support related to the National Ovine Johne's Disease Control and Evaluation Program and the National Johne's Disease Control Program, including the National Approach to Bovine Johne's Disease.

SHEEP

Table 4. Number of known infected sheep flocks

	Mar 04	Jun 03	June 02
ACT	0	0	1
NSW	352*	1150	840
VIC	184	98	45
TAS	45	40	30
SA	58	55	15
WA	8	0	0
QLD	0	0	0
Total	647*	1343	931

*The reported number of infected flocks in NSW now excludes flocks in the NSW Residual Zone/Management Area.

Table 5. Number of SheepMAP Assured flocks at March 2004

	MN1	MN2	MN3
NSW	82	115	138
VIC	12	29	37
SA	54	92	103
TAS	11	13	11
QLD	0	3	1
Total	159	252	290
		701	

New Quality Assurance Alpaca Proposal to be Linked to MAP

The Australian Alpaca Association has developed a new level of assurance for Johne's disease, Q-Alpaca. It proposes investigation of all deaths in alpaca herds by certified veterinarians rather than the more expensive faecal culture testing. Most aspects of the scheme have been supported by the Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program Reference Group and a final version is currently being considered by the Australian Alpaca Association. The proposal is yet to be considered by Animal Health Committee.



The absence of any new cases of Johne's disease in the alpaca industry for the past seven years, and the high costs of testing larger numbers in a MAP herd have led to this program proposal. A key element of the proposed Q-Alpaca program is on-farm biosecurity which delivers a comparable level of quality assurance to the existing MAP.

It is anticipated that Alpaca producers entering the Q-Alpaca program would be required to:

- Maintain a herd property management plan
- Keep records showing identity and origin of new animals of the herd and the destination and identity of animals leaving the herd
- Conduct post-mortem examination of any alpaca over the age of 12 months, or any less than 12 months showing emaciation or scouring that dies or is euthanased.

It is planned that Q-Alpaca herds can also enter the AlpacaMAP by sample testing. For more information please contact Richard Dixon, Australian Alpaca Association, 02 6456 3676.

GOATS

Table 6. Number of known infected goat herds

	Mar 04	Jun 03	June 02
NSW	9	10	12
VIC	7	6	8
TAS	6	6	5
SA	6	6	0
WA	0	0	0
Total	28	28	25

Table 7. Number of GoatMAP Assured herds at March 2004

	MN1	MN2	MN3
NSW	16	18	2
VIC	1	0	1
SA	12	5	0
TAS	1	0	0
QLD	0	0	0
Total	30	23	3
		56	

ALPACA

Table 8. Number of known infected alpaca herds

	Mar 04	Jun 03	June 02
NSW	0	0	1
VIC	2	2	4
TAS	0	0	0
SA	0	0	0
Total	2	2	5

Table 9. Number of AlpacaMAP Assured herds at March 2004

	MN1	MN2	MN3
NSW	9	21	32
VIC	5	8	13
SA	3	6	27
TAS	0	0	0
QLD	0	0	0
Total	17	35	73
		125	

Saleyards Risk Management Guidelines

Guidelines have now been developed in consultation with the National Livestock Saleyards Association to manage and reduce the risk of BJD being spread at saleyards. The guidelines are based on reducing direct and indirect contact between susceptible young cattle and other types of cattle that have a relatively higher risk of being infected.

The Guidelines have been circulated to saleyards operators associations and can be downloaded from Animal Health Australia's Johne's disease website <http://www.aahc.com.au/bjd/guidelines.htm>.

BJD Financial and Non-financial Assistance Measures

A new package has been announced that will help beef cattle producers whose herds are already known or are found to be infected with bovine Johne's disease (BJD). The scheme, to be known as the BJD Financial and Non-financial Assistance Package, commenced on 1 July 2004 and is an initiative of the Cattle Council of Australia.

The scheme is available to all beef producers whose beef herds have been confirmed as infected with BJD. There are two components to the scheme:

1. A non-financial component that includes access to a BJD counsellor to assist the producer consider management and trading options, to develop a business plan and to liaise with the supervising veterinarian.
2. The financial component is available to producers who meet specific criteria and who are willing to implement an Enhanced Management Plan with the long term goals of considerably reducing the incidence of BJD from their herd. The financial support is not compensation but will assist producers identify and remove high-risk animals from the herd.

For further information please contact your State BJD Coordinator.

New Dairy ManaJD Program to be Launched in South Australia

The SA Bovine Johne's Disease Committee has agreed to proceed with the launch of its Dairy ManaJD program in mid 2004 subject to the required amendments to SA legislation being successfully completed and the program endorsed by national dairy industry and by Animal Health Committee. The Dairy ManaJD on-farm Quality Assurance manual has been completed and the Ministerial Cattle Advisory Group has approved a \$2.55 million package of levy funds for a three-year program to voluntarily test all dairy herds and assist with control in infected herds. It is planned to enrol 40 herds in Dairy ManaJD in the first year.

For further information contact Jack Van Wijk, Primary Industries and Resources, South Australia 08 8391 7100.



Johnne's Disease

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