



JD News



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SheepMAP changes

Until now, SheepMAP flocks have been able to maintain an MN1 or MN2 status for a maximum of two years on the basis of a negative Maintenance Test, complying with the flock management plan and undergoing satisfactory annual veterinary audits. If, at the end of the two year period the flock wanted to retain its status, a negative Sample Test needed to be completed.

To maintain MN3 flock status, the maintenance testing had to be completed every three years.

These conditions still apply to flocks maintaining status by testing. However, with the support of stud sheep breeder's organisations, Animal Health Committee has now agreed to an alternative method of maintaining status. Flocks that have had either:

- at least one Sample Test to the current standard (ie by 350 PFC or 875 serology); or one initial Sample Test to the original standard (Option A, 450-500 serology; or Option B, biased testing of sheep in low body condition) followed by a Maintenance Test; and
- which have a current valid status;

may opt to maintain that MN level by undertaking vaccination of the whole flock initially, annual veterinary audits and annual vaccination of all lambs under 16 weeks of age.

All vaccinated sheep must be identified with an NLIS (Sheep) tag that contains the Property Identification Code or number and the letter "V". The flock status will also include a V to indicate that it is vaccinating (eg MN2-V).

These significant alterations have been made to the SheepMAP manual and all current SheepMAP producers and approved veterinarians were mailed a letter of notification accompanied by the revised pages in August. As the manual is a "controlled document", it is essential to have an up-to-date version to help remain current with program requirements and to assist preparation for audit.

The SheepMAP manual is currently undergoing a major revision that will formally incorporate the above changes and simplify the standing document.

For the latest information on SheepMAP and downloadable manual updates visit <http://www.aahc.com.au/jd/maps/index.htm>.



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OJD and vaccination

Trials of the killed Gudair® vaccine have shown that vaccination for ovine Johne's disease (OJD) can be a very useful tool for controlling spread in infected flocks and regions. It can also help to protect flocks in case they are inadvertently exposed to infection.

The Gudair® vaccine was registered in Australia in April 2002 for the control of Johne's disease and reduction of faecal shedding in sheep. It is also registered as an aid in the control of Johne's disease in goats. Use of the vaccine is under the control of the Chief Veterinary Officer in each State and is distributed through veterinarians and local animal health authorities.

Vaccination of all lambs less than 16 weeks of age should significantly reduce both the number of animals that become infected and the number of animals that develop clinical signs, as well as reducing shedding rates. Vaccination should also help protect adults that have not been exposed to infection.

However, vaccination does not provide complete immunity to OJD and a small proportion of vaccinated animals may still become infected and shed the Johne's bacterium, potentially spreading it to any unvaccinated stock. Also once an animal has been vaccinated, its immune system produces antibodies that can interfere with blood testing by causing a false positive result. False positives do not occur in the faecal culture test.

Sheep that classify as "approved vaccinates" qualify for credits in the Assurance Based Credit Scheme (ABC Scheme) depending on the level of coverage in the flock. Approved vaccinates are sheep vaccinated by 16 weeks of age or sheep vaccinated after 16 weeks of age where, in the written opinion of a SheepMAP approved veterinarian, vaccination occurred prior to exposure.

Vaccinated animals must be permanently identified with an approved vaccination tag.

The vaccine is oil based and vaccination usually causes a firm swelling at the site of the injection. At 2 months post vaccination most swellings have decreased in size and continue to decrease over time. In a small proportion (5%) of animals the swelling may develop into an abscess. For these reasons Gudair® vaccine must only be given under the skin high on the neck behind the ear. Do not inject at any other site.

In humans, accidental self-injection with Gudair® vaccine may result in a severe, intense and persistent granulomatous reaction at the site of the injury. This reaction may be mild or severe and it may last for a prolonged time. (Some reports have been 6 to 24 months). There may also be general ill-health during this time. Allergic reaction may occur from repeated or prolonged exposure to the vaccine. Information on the treatment of accidental self-injection is available from the Poisons Information Centre 13 11 26 or Pfizer Animal Health Veterinary Services 1800 814 883.

The vaccine should be used with caution to avoid accidental self-injection. Users should ensure proper animal restraint when vaccinating and that the vaccine gun is appropriately controlled and not allowed to hang freely when handling sheep. Because of this risk, Gudair® vaccine is distributed through State Departments of Agriculture/DPI and approved veterinarians.

For further information contact your State Primary Industry Department or Rural Lands Protection Board.

Protect Your Flock—Disease risk management workshop

As a component of the communication and training programs for both OJD and emergency animal disease management, Animal Health Australia has developed and trialed a workshop on disease risk management and biosecurity for sheep producers. Two pilot workshops have been held, the first in Young in June and another more recently in Mildura. Both were well received by the producers and departmental veterinarians that attended. Pending changes to the workshop layout, manual and the risk management template designed for both manual and electronic use, the format will then be packaged so interested groups can run local workshops.

Interest and demand for the package has been very positive to date. It is anticipated that it will be completed and available by mid November 2004.

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Assistance at hand for Beef herds infected with BJD

Owners of known infected beef herds now have the opportunity to re-evaluate options for control and elimination of bovine Johne's disease (BJD).

Two BJD Counsellors were recruited to work with Animal Health Australia under the new scheme to assist owners of infected beef cattle herds. The BJD Financial and Non-financial Assistance Scheme is a new initiative that is funded by the Cattle Council of Australia with a goal of "Reducing the social, economic and trade impact of BJD at herd, regional and national levels." This goal is to be addressed through a series of measures that will:

1. Provide financial assistance to affected producers;
2. Reduce BJD prevalence; and
3. Remove the stigma associated with BJD infection and reduce emotional stress.

Owners of known infected beef herds have been or are in the process of being notified of the new assistance package and invited to apply. Once a producer has registered their interest, a BJD Counsellor will then work with the supervising veterinarian and producer to evaluate

future options. If a herd is eligible for further assistance, the owner can elect to develop an Enhanced Property Disease Management Plan with the primary objective of significantly reducing the prevalence of BJD.

Herds will be eligible for financial assistance for herd testing, identification and for removing high-risk cattle from the herd under the Enhanced Plan.

For more information on the new scheme, visit the Animal Health Australia website <http://www.aahc.com.au/bjd>



disease statistics

CATTLE

Table 1. Number of known infected cattle herds June 04 (NAHIS).

	June 04	June 03	June 02
NSW	132	136	146
VIC	1119	1124	1154
TAS	24	20	16
SA	53	50	44
NT	0	0	2
QLD	0	0	1
Total	1328	1330	1363

Table 2. Numbers of assessed herds in CattleMAP, June 2004.

	MN1	MN2	MN3	
NSW	189	282	309	780
VIC	155	143	26	324
SA	116	145	28	289
TAS	55	48	10	113
QLD	0	0	0	0
Total	515	618	373	1506

SHEEP

Table 3. Number of known infected sheep flocks June 2004 (NAHIS).

	June 04	June 03	June 02
NSW	335*	1150	840
ACT	-	-	1
VIC	204	98	45
TAS	45	40	30
SA	57	55	15
WA	18	0	0
Total	659*	1343	931

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

DEER

Table 5. Number of known infected deer herds, June 2004 (NAHIS).

	June 04	June 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

Sheep show guidelines revision

The Federal Council of Agricultural Societies has updated its guidelines for managing the risk of OJD spreading at shows following the launch of the Assurance Based Credit (ABC) scheme for sheep.

At the shows, segregation of sheep will take into account their ABC scores and SheepMAP status. The recommended minimum standards are to segregate sheep into groups as follows:

1. Medium-High Assurance: sheep from SheepMAP flocks or with ABC score of 3 or more.
2. Low Assurance: sheep with ABC score of 1 and 2 from flocks that are not in the SheepMAP.
3. ABC 0: sheep with ABC score of zero where a high standard of risk management can be applied at the show to protect higher assurance sheep.

Where shows accept score 0 sheep, the application should also include a certificate from an approved veterinarian that the flock is being managed under a Property Disease Management Plan. An acknowledgement that the sheep to be exhibited have been tested with negative results by individual or pooled faecal culture within the past 6 months or by serology within the past 3 months should also be displayed on the certificate.

Under the new arrangements, States are still entitled to restrict entry of show sheep to their jurisdiction but may consider more liberal entry requirements for exhibition only at shows that have a high standard of biosecurity.

Depending on the local need and risk situation, show organisers may segregate further within a group (eg within the Medium-High group) and/or pen sheep according to their ABC score or MAP status within segregated groups.

ABC update

Arrangements were finalised for the start of the new National Approach to OJD and Assurance Based Trading nationally on 1 July 2004. The AHA website has been revised to reflect the changed arrangements and contains a number of new items. The site is regularly updated and can be accessed at www.aahc.com.au

GOATS

Table 5. Number of known infected goat herds June 2004 (NAHIS).

	June 04	June 03	June 02
NSW	10	10	12
VIC	7	6	8
TAS	6	6	5
SA	3	6	0
WA	0	0	0
Total	26	28	25

Table 6. Numbers of assessed herds in GoatMAP, March 2004.

	MN1	MN2	MN3	
NSW	39	21	3	63
VIC	1	0	1	2
SA	10	7	0	17
TAS	1	0	0	1
QLD	0	0	0	0
Total	51	28	4	83

ALPACAS

Table 7. Number of known infected alpaca herds, March 2004 (NAHIS).

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

Table 8. Numbers of assessed herds in AlpacaMAP, June 2004.

	MN1	MN2	MN3	
NSW	10	30	57	97
VIC	4	10	15	29
SA	3	5	29	37
TAS	0	0	1	1
QLD	0	0	0	0
Total	17	45	102	164

SA Dairy ManaJD

The South Australian dairy industry and government is in the final stages of developing Dairy ManaJD. This program has been developed by the SA Minister's Cattle Advisory Group with dairy producers, processors and regulators. Using an on-farm quality assurance approach, Dairy ManaJD aims to reduce the risk of spread within and between South Australian dairy herds.

All dairy herds will have a score under the national Dairy BJD Assurance Score system and Dairy ManaJD herds will be tested and rear their calves under the nationally agreed 3-Step Calf Rearing Plan:

- 1 Calves should be taken off the cow within 12 hours of birth.
- 2 Management of the calf rearing area should ensure that no effluent from animals of susceptible species comes into contact with the calf.
- 3 Calves up to 12 months should not be reared on pastures that have had adult stock or stock that are known to have carried BJD during the last 12 months.

Incentives for infected herds to control Johne's disease through Dairy ManaJD's QA approach are that they will not be quarantined and will receive assistance for herd testing and calf rearing with milk replacer.

Several owners of infected and other herds are already interested in enrolling in this voluntary scheme to take advantage of the herd test subsidies and improve their herd score.

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Q Alpaca program

The Australian Alpaca Association is working with Animal Health Australia and governments on a new assurance scheme to improve management of disease risks in all alpaca herds. Based on a herd risk management plan and post-mortem examination of deceased animals, *Q-Alpaca* will also complement the existing market assurance program, AlpacaMAP. Details of *Q-Alpaca* will be finalised this year.



Dairy assurance scores

Australian Dairy Farmers, the National Dairy Farmers' Association, and the National Dairy Steering Committee for Johne's disease supported the proposed national Dairy BJD Score as the principal tool for assuring dairy cattle for Johne's disease. Australian Dairy Farmers agreed that untested herds in the Protected Zones would have a score of 8 (on a 0 to 10 scale) to maintain their current equivalence to MN1 herds in the CattleMAP but that Protected Zones would have to undertake surveillance by mid-2006 to justify that score.

The Dairy BJD Assurance scores are primarily a risk-ranking system and steps between scores do not represent equal changes in risk (as is the case in the OJD Assurance Based Credit scheme).

The Score was formally submitted to Animal Health Committee in September and a response is anticipated shortly.

Prevalence Areas

The States or parts of them are classified according to the four types of Prevalence Areas (Very Low, Low, Medium and High) as follows:

	VLPA	LPA	MPA	HPA
QLD	*			
NSW	*	*	*	*
VIC		*		
TAS		*		*(FI)
SA	*		*(KI)	
WA	*			

KI = Kangaroo Island FI = Flinders Island

In NSW, most Rural Lands Protection Board districts in the VLPA are now Exclusion Areas, which gives these Boards some regulatory powers to investigate and manage flocks that are infected or that introduce high risk sheep. Maps of the boundaries of the PAs in NSW can be found on the NSW Primary Industries' website: <http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/ojd-prevalence-areas>

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