

MEDIA RELEASE 10_10

Changes in the New Year to OJD prevalence areas

Sheepmeat Council of Australia and Woolproducers Australia are reminding producers that the revised Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) prevalence areas come into effect from 1 January 2011.

In Victoria, the current medium prevalence area will be reclassified as high and allocated zero Assurance Based Credit (ABC) points. The current low prevalence area will be reclassified as a medium and allocated two ABC points.

All of Western Australia will be reclassified from a low prevalence area (four ABC points) to medium prevalence area (two ABC points).

In New South Wales, boundaries to low, medium and high prevalence areas will also change (refer map for details or visit www.ojd.com.au).

Kate Joseph, President of Sheepmeat Council of Australia said that prevalence area changes will change producers' OJD trading status under the ABC scheme.

"Put simply, ABC scores will be affected by changes to prevalence areas. However, there are a number of ways producers can increase their ABC score and hence benefit from a favorable OJD trading status," Ms Joseph said.

The ABC scheme is an important tool for producers when it comes to trading sheep and minimising the spread of OJD; a higher ABC score represents a lower OJD risk.

"We recommend producers consider the status of their own flock and purchase sheep with a higher score than their current flock. A Sheep Health Statement (SHS) is the best way to confirm the level of assurance provided by vendors and also offers a means of minimising the risk of purchasing in footrot and lice," Ms Joseph said.

"If you provide an agent with a SHS pre-sale, producers can ensure maximum competition on the lines offered for sale," Ms Joseph said.

Don Hamblin, President of Woolproducers Australia said that producers wishing to sell sheep into low prevalence areas should be aware of movement requirements, and if they don't know, speak to their agent or local animal health officer.

"If producers need additional ABC points to trade into these areas they can obtain extra points under abattoir monitoring, commence a vaccination program or become part of the Sheep Market Assurance Program (see your local veterinarian) to improve the level of assurance they can provide to prospective purchasers," Mr Hamblin said.

Animal Health Australia advises that clinical losses are still being recorded on some southern state farms, which could indicate that producers are taking a substantial loss in productivity that could be avoided through vaccination and careful stock selection.

Producers can visit www.ojd.com.au for information on preventing and managing OJD.

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