

**Major Changes to OJD Program: view at [www.ojd.com.au](http://www.ojd.com.au)**

Important changes to the management of ovine Johne's disease (OJD) come into place from 31 March 2008.

The Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) and WoolProducers Australia (WPA) have developed a five-year program for the management and control of ovine Johne's disease (OJD). The OJD Management Plan (OJDMP) will continue many of the arrangements put in place during the previous national plan.

Surveillance information from the last two years has enabled the number of Prevalence Areas to be reduced, and the Assurance Based Credit (ABC) points have also been reviewed to more closely reflect risk.

The ABC point system will continue to underpin the trade of sheep, and provide the basis for assessing the risk of OJD in lines of sheep.

As part of the implementation of the new changes that will begin from 31 March, SCA and WPA recently held three successful stakeholder briefings in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, attended by a wide range of key Australian sheep industry representatives.

Some of the organisations that were represented at the briefings included; State Farming Organisations, Stud Merino Breeders Associations, State Industry Advisory Committees', Australian sheep veterinarians, OJD communication and extension officers, DPI staff, the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association, sheepmeat breeders, sheepmeat processors, AQIS, and university researchers.

A detailed outline of the new OJD Management plan, what the new changes mean for producers and how the program will be implemented were some of the topics that were discussed at the briefings.

Don Hamblin, President of Wool Producers Australia spoke at the briefings about the range of tools available to assist producers to manage the disease. "On farm biosecurity is becoming increasingly important for all producers who are serious about managing the health of their flock and that includes OJD."

Sheepmeat Council President, Chris Groves, encouraged stakeholders to utilise and become familiar with the OJD website [www.ojd.com.au](http://www.ojd.com.au). "The website is easy to remember, outlines the changes to the new OJD program and is a valuable resource for information."

Communication materials explaining the new changes, which include maps of Prevalence Areas, along with a sheep health flyer have now been developed and are available to download and order from [www.ojd.com.au](http://www.ojd.com.au)

The new OJD website also provides further information on the disease, facts sheets on managing the disease, what the ABC Scheme is and other useful resources about OJD. The website is updated frequently and external organisations are encouraged to link to this site.

OJD is a chronic wasting disease that affects mainly sheep and goats.

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