

MEDIA RELEASE _{6_10}

Ovine Johne's disease Prevalence Area changes from 1 January 2011

As of 1 January 2011 there will be changes to ovine Johne's disease (OJD) Prevalence Areas in Western Australia, Victoria and some regions of NSW.

Changes are the consequence of an increasing prevalence of OJD over the past two years in some regions, which has pushed these areas above their allocated prevalence area cut-off under the OJD Management Plan 2007 – 2012.

Amendments will be made to the following OJD Prevalence Areas:

- New South Wales: changes to all Medium Prevalence Area boundaries and Low Prevalence Area boundaries (refer to the Prevalence Area Map);
- Victoria: the Medium Prevalence Area will become a High Prevalence Area, and the Low Prevalence Area will change to a Medium Prevalence Area; and
- Western Australia: the Low Prevalence Area will become a Medium Prevalence Area.

There will be no changes to prevalence areas in Queensland, South Australia or Tasmania. However, Sheepmeat Council and WoolProducers Australia caution producers in these states not to be complacent.

Don Hamblin, President of WoolProducers Australia said to help protect flocks from OJD, producers are urged to adopt preventative measures and management tools.

"When purchasing or bringing new sheep onto your property, insist they are accompanied by a signed Sheep Health Statement. In the Medium and High Prevalence areas you should buy sheep with a higher 'Assurance Based Credit' (ABC) score than your own flock," Mr Hamblin said.

The ABC scheme is an important tool for producers to help prevent the spread of OJD when trading sheep. The higher the ABC score, the lower the OJD risk status of the sheep.

"Good grazing management is one of the keys to minimising infection rates within flocks as prolonged exposure to OJD-contaminated pastures appears to be a major factor leading to high infection rates," Mr Hamblin said.

Producers wishing to increase market opportunities and the level of assurance of their flock can gain ABC points through vaccination, testing and abattoir monitoring under the ABC Scheme.

Kate Joseph, President of Sheepmeat Council of Australia said that vaccination is necessary for those producers now classified in medium and high prevalence areas.

"We recommend that all sheep producers in the medium and high prevalence areas vaccinate all intended replacement sheep before they are 16 weeks of age after which they are more likely to be exposed to bacteria on contaminated pasture and the vaccination is less effective. Lambs intended for slaughter are not required to be vaccinated," Ms Joseph said.

Visit www.ojd.com.au for further information.

Media contact: Heidi Dennis, Media and Communications Officer, 0409 654 015 or 02 6273 3688
WoolProducers Australia: Alex McLennan, 02 892 4458, 0402918285

Table 1. OJD Prevalence Area points

State	Current Status	Current points	New status from 1 January 2011	New Points from 1 January 2011
Victoria	Medium Prevalence Area	2	High Prevalence Area	0
	Low Prevalence Area	4	Medium Prevalence Area	2
Western Australia	Low Prevalence Area	4	Medium Prevalence Area	2
NSW	High Prevalence Area	0	Boundaries to the Medium and High prevalence areas have changed	0
	Medium Prevalence Area	2		2
	Low Prevalence	4		4
South Australia	Medium Prevalence Area (Kangaroo Island)	2	Does not change	2
	Low Prevalence	4		4
Tasmania	Medium prevalence	2	Does not change	2
Queensland	Low Prevalence area	4	Does not change	4