

AUSTRALIAN JOHNE'S DISEASE MARKET ASSURANCE PROGRAM

GUIDELINES FOR VETERINARIANS

FINAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
1. Purpose	3
2. Structure	3
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING	4
1. Flock or herd status	4
2. Test results	5
3. Record keeping	5
RISK ASSESSMENTS AND PLANNING	6
1. Initial flock or herd and property risk assessment	6
2. Introduced livestock (including strays)	6
3. Moving assessed animals	6
4. Flock or herd management plan	7
TESTING	8
1. Sample Testing	8
2. Maintenance Testing	8
3. Disease investigation and the Annual Veterinary Review	8
4. Extensions of time for testing	8
REVIEWS AND AUDITS	10
1. Terminology	10
2. Reviews	11
3. External (third party) audits	11
STATE MAP CONTACTS	12

INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE

These guidelines aim to assist you in undertaking your role as an Approved Veterinarian working with flock or herd managers who have enrolled their flock or herds in the Australian Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program (MAPs). In particular they will:

- provide further information on your role in relation to establishing and maintaining the MN status of flock or herds, especially the reviews that need to be undertaken
- offer suggestions on effective ways to assist flock or herd managers to meet their obligations under MAP
- provide detail on your obligations to flock or herd managers and to the regulatory authorities at state/territory and national levels.

The MAP manual has been written to address the flock or herd manager as its primary audience. As a result, it makes reference to aspects of your role (generally *what* needs to be done and *when*) but only provides the level of detail in information that the flock or herd manager needs. This document (Guidelines for Veterinarians) provides you with the detailed information required to undertake your role as a MAP approved veterinarian. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the current MAP manual for each species.

2. STRUCTURE

The Guidelines are arranged in four broad sections:

- regulatory compliance and reporting
- risk assessments and planning
- testing
- reviews and audits.

Each focuses on the activities you need to undertake to discharge your obligations and references the relevant sections of the appropriate MAP manual.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING

1. FLOCK OR HERD STATUS

INITIAL FLOCK OR HERD STATUS

The factors which determine the initial status of a MAP flock or herd are outlined in Element 1 of the MAP manual. As indicated in the manual, the majority of new flocks or herds will enter with a Nil Assurance (NA) status. Flocks or herds assembled from other MAP flocks or herds and those re-entering the MAP can be allocated other statuses.

The initial status of a flock or herd will be formally advised by the Approved Veterinarian to the manager in consultation with the state department. The details of the process may vary depending upon which jurisdiction you are in, so you need to check with the relevant state/territory contact.

Once the initial MAP status has been determined by testing the flock or herd, the manager is issued with a Flock or Herd Status Certificate that is current for 12 months. A MAP certificate is only valid from the date of issue to the next annual expiry date. In subsequent years, if a certificate is issued after the recorded expiry date, then it is valid for less than 12 months.

The anniversary of the date on which a flock or herd was first assigned a MAP status is the expiry date for the duration of its enrolment in the MAP. The expiry date remains fixed, irrespective of any buffer period, approved extension, late notification or lapsed status. The expiry date does not change unless specifically requested by the Approved Veterinarian and agreed by the relevant state or territory department.

Each certificate issued in a state or territory has a unique number. Your state or territory department will advise you of the number to use on each occasion.

When you issue the certificate to the flock or herd manager it is advisable to remind them of the expiry date and what they need to do to maintain or progress the MAP status of the flock or herd. You should also consider arranging the property visit for the Annual Veterinary Review or testing up to two months before the expiry date on the certificate to ensure it is completed in time.

NOTIFYING THE DEPARTMENT

Each jurisdiction has specific ways in which they expect Approved Veterinarians to notify flock or herd status and undertake the issuing of status certificates. Most will require a form to be completed and emailed or posted back. Please contact your state or territory department for specific details. Their contact details are at: <https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/endemic-disease/maps/map-contacts/>

It is vital that you keep the department MAP Coordinator up to date on where the herd/flock is up to. Failure to do so may lead in the down grade of your client's flock/herd status.

MAINTENANCE OF STATUS

Flock or herd managers may choose to maintain (rather than progress) their MAP status for a number of reasons.

The requirements for maintaining MAP status are outlined in Element 1 of the MAP manual. As you will note, the Annual Veterinary Review which you conduct is critical to maintenance of status. The Review is dealt with in more detail in Section 4 of these guidelines.

PROGRESSING FLOCK OR HERD STATUS

Progression of flock or herd status requires satisfactory outcomes from the Annual Veterinary Review and a Sample Test returning negative results 22-26 months after the last negative Sample or Maintenance Test.

When a flock or herd has met the conditions required to progress, a new Flock or Herd Status Certificate is issued, and the department notified as indicated above.

RESOLVING REACTOR STATUS

When a reactor occurs the status of the animal should be resolved quickly. A failure to resolve status within 5 months may result in the herd/flock being suspended from the MAP.

VACCINATION IN SHEEPMAP FLOCKS

As well as being a mechanism for maintaining SheepMAP status, you may consider encouraging flock managers to vaccinate their SheepMAP flock(s) depending on the flocks' risk of being exposed to infection. It offers protection from the lateral spread of Johne's disease on their own land and provides their clients with additional protection in the event that the purchaser's flock is infected. You should note that a SheepMAP flock is unable to progress a MAP status through vaccination alone but must undergo additional Sample Testing.

2. TEST RESULTS

It is your responsibility to provide information on test results. You need to provide the flock or herd manager with details of all test results. If the results are positive you must also notify the CVO or delegate and take any follow up action which the Department requires.

You must retain copies of all test results and provide copies to the flock or herd manager and also advise that these must be retained for audit purposes by the flock or herd manager.

3. RECORD KEEPING

Both you and the flock or herd manager have significant record keeping responsibilities in MAP. Record keeping by the flock or herd manager is something you will review at the Annual Veterinary Review and your record keeping will be an element of any external audit.

Accuracy (particularly of identifying information like property addresses, postal addresses, PICs, livestock identifiers) and completeness of records (for example, that forms are fully completed, particularly where signatures are required) both require careful attention.

RISK ASSESSMENTS AND PLANNING

As a quality assurance program, the MAP places considerable emphasis on planning, and assessing and managing risks. Assisting the flock or herd manager to undertake these tasks is a key way in which you support them and their continued participation in the program.

1. INITIAL FLOCK OR HERD AND PROPERTY RISK ASSESSMENT

This activity is your first opportunity to establish a risk management approach with the flock or herd manager. Remember that the program assumes that you have worked with the flock or herd manager to assess and propose a way to manage the risks. Ideally it will be a collaborative activity rather than one where you simply sign off on the flock or herd manager's findings, or you tell them what must be done. Realistic assessment of risks and achievable management strategies should be your aim.

Both you and the flock or herd manager **must** keep signed copies of the assessment. You should also both be actively working to update the assessment as circumstances change.

2. INTRODUCED LIVESTOCK (INCLUDING STRAYS)

Because of the risk of disease introduction, the MAP sets out stringent conditions for the intentional introduction of animals to a MAP flock or herd (in Element 2 of the MAP manual). The flock or herd manager is expected to seek your advice on the risks associated with introducing animals. You need to ensure that these animals are tested in addition to the selected samples from the rest of the flock or herd at the next Annual Veterinary Review or Sample or Maintenance Test which falls 12 months or more after their introduction.

The flock or herd manager is also expected to notify you of straying animals. This includes both those within the flock or herd that stray off the land and eligible species that stray on. You need to work with the flock or herd manager to assess the impact or potential impact of the stray on the flock or herd status and recommend appropriate action.

3. MOVING ASSESSED ANIMALS

Managers may wish to move all or part of their MAP flock or herd for example to shows or for agistment. Element 3 of the MAP manual covers the procedures that need to be followed. In some cases your approval will be required (for example, attendance at a sale or show where the organisers do not have a Certificate of Compliance with the Venue Audit); in others the flock or herd manager may ask for your assistance in assessing the risks. It is in your client's interests to understand that they should obtain your advice **before** embarking on high risk movements rather than potentially compromising their herd or flock MAP status, for example, agistment or movement along public roads.

4. FLOCK OR HERD MANAGEMENT PLAN

A documented Flock or Herd Management Plan, which you and the flock or herd manager have prepared together, is a key requirement of all MAPs. The MAP manual outlines the information required for a management plan. It is a summary of the management practices that you and the manager will implement to minimise the risk of infection. It is important that you encourage the manager to **use** the plan as a management tool, and that it is reviewed and amended as circumstances change.

You and the manager **must** both sign the plan, and each keep a copy.

TESTING

Conducting tests, reporting the results to the flock or herd manager and relevant authorities, and taking follow up action if required, are critical to the integrity of MAP as a quality assurance program. Failure to follow the testing procedures is regarded as major or critical defects in the program and may have significant consequences for you and the MAP flock or herds with which you work.

Testing procedures are detailed in Element 6 and Appendix 1 of the MAP manual. Appendix 1 of the manual is specifically written for your information. It contains details about procedures for sample collection for the follow up of reactors and tissue sampling. The information below should be considered with reference to the appropriate section of the MAP manual.

1. SAMPLE TESTING

Sample Testing is done when the flock or herd is enrolled in MAP and to determine eligibility for progression to a higher MN status.

For SheepMAP Sheep are to be selected for testing (PFC) using the method outlined on the relevant form in Appendix 3 (*Sheep selected for PFC testing*).

2. MAINTENANCE TESTING

Maintenance Testing monitors the ongoing disease status of a flock or herd. The procedure to select sheep for testing is detailed in Element 6.

3. DISEASE INVESTIGATION AND THE ANNUAL VETERINARY REVIEW

Suspected cases of Johne's disease must be investigated as they occur. Specimens will need to be collected from these animals for laboratory examination in line with the tissue sampling requirements in Appendix 1. If there are no suspected cases this must be recorded as part of the Annual Veterinary Review.

4. EXTENSIONS OF TIME FOR TESTING

Seasonal conditions or other extenuating circumstances may mean that a flock or herd manager wishes to delay the Maintenance Test.

You need to advise the flock or herd manager that:

- the extension of time should be applied for *before* the due date for testing, but in exceptional circumstances such as lost or contaminated samples or the presence of a reactor, the veterinarian may apply for an extension after the due date
- you will need to explain the case for the extension to the state department (so it is in the flock or herd manager's interest to inform you well ahead of time that he/she may wish to ask for an extension)

- extensions should *not* be automatically granted, if the reason given is not considered to be justified
- the new Flock or Herd Status Certificate renewal date is calculated from the anniversary of the **allocation of the initial MAP status** rather than the 22 -26 months from the **test result date**.

REVIEWS AND AUDITS

1. TERMINOLOGY

REVIEW AND AUDIT

MAP uses the terms 'review' and 'audit' to describe processes that ensure the integrity of the program as a quality assurance program.

'Review' is used to refer to processes that check compliance with program requirements that are conducted by you and the flock or herd manager. They focus on internal processes within the flock or herd.

The term 'audit' applies to examinations of compliance that are conducted by external parties – state or territory departments or external property auditors for example. The focus is on the MAP system as a whole, not only on the flock or herd. You may be subject to audit of your compliance with a range of procedures including testing and record keeping.

More detail is included in Element 8 of the MAP manual.

DEFECTS

When a review or audit is conducted, four results are possible. The first is that the systems, practices and procedures are found to **conform** to the requirements of MAP. The other three indicate varying levels of non-conformance through the presence of **defects** characterised as critical, major or minor. These terms are explained briefly below and in more detail in Element 8 of the MAP manual.

CRITICAL DEFECTS

Critical defects are those which will prevent the effective maintenance of the MAP quality assurance system. They include deliberate omissions and fraudulent activity.

Example of critical defects includes:

- not having a current MAP manual
- no flock or herd management plan
- no flock or herd and property risk assessment
- falsification of records
- refusing to be audited.

Flock or herds where a critical defect is found are automatically suspended from MAP until corrective action is completed.

As indicated in the MAP manual, some critical defects may lead to your exclusion from the MAP program or the matter being referred to the State Veterinary Surgeons' Board.

MAJOR DEFECTS

Major defects are events, actions or omissions which in your view or in the view of a third-party auditor will significantly impact on the operation of the MAP quality assurance system.

Example of major defects includes:

- incomplete records
- no records relating to a particular activity (agistment, introductions etc.).

MINOR DEFECTS

Minor defects are those identifiable omissions and inaccuracies which have minimal impact on the system, but when rectified will enhance its operation. Forms incorrectly filed or failing to update the contact details of a neighbour after a management change are examples of minor defects.

CORRECTIVE ACTION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

As a quality assurance program, the MAPs are focussed on two things – conformance with procedures and continuous improvement. Some flock or herd managers may be unfamiliar with the terminology and your assistance will be invaluable to them in implementing improvement procedures that make their operations more effective and efficient as well as more compliant with the particular MAP.

2. REVIEWS

INTERNAL REVIEWS

The flock or herd manager or a member of their staff is expected to conduct an internal review of procedures and records every six months. The aims of the review are to identify any areas where systems or practices are not compliant with the MAP, propose corrective action and look for opportunities for improvement.

The compulsory checklist and report format is provided in the resources and forms section of the MAP manual.

ANNUAL VETERINARY REVIEW

As the approved veterinarian you must conduct an Annual Veterinary Review every year which must be completed within 2 months of the expiry date of the current certificate. This review **always** includes a review of systems and procedures using the checklist referred to above.

The purpose of this review is essentially the same as the flock or herd manager's own internal review – to identify defects and propose corrective action and improvements.

You are expected to cover *all* the areas listed on the review checklist. However, you may wish to cover some areas in more detail. You may decide to concentrate on areas where there have previously been defects or those where the risk of defects is higher because of activity during the year, for example permanent identification of introduced animals, if animals from lower status flock or herds have been introduced.

3. EXTERNAL (THIRD PARTY) AUDITS

These audits focus on the compliance of flock or herd managers and veterinarians with the requirements of the program. They were put on hold in 2015 but may be reinstated in future if peak

industry bodies decide they should recommence. In any one year only a third of the flock or herds in the MAP will be selected for audit and each flock or herd should be audited every three years.

As an approved veterinarian, your compliance with the requirements of the MAPs is also subject to audit. This will usually be as a result of a flock or herd you are working with being audited. The aspects of compliance audited are listed in Element 8 of the MAP manual.

STATE MAP CONTACTS

States MAP coordinators are appointed by the state or territory Department of Primary Industry or Agriculture to provide technical advice to veterinarians.

Contact details for the coordinators are available from the AHA website:

www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/endemic-disease/maps/map-contacts/