The Review, which is being coordinated by Animal Health Australia (AHA), includes a series of public consultation opportunities for the general public and, specifically those in the cattle industries, to help steer the future of BJD management in Australia. On 16 February, more than 100 people attended the initial public forum. The forum participants identified key concerns and opportunities. These included freeing up trade related issues, managing the disease on farm and discussing suggestions for future research and development to provide producers with better tools to deal with JBD in their stock.

Following the forum, a discussion paper was released in April which summarised the ideas and discussions that came out of the event. The public were again given an opportunity to provide feedback, with more than 20 submissions received on the discussion paper.

The National BJD Review’s reference panel met on 15 May to review the submissions and progress the development of a new way forward for managing BJD in Australia. Once a suggested approach to managing BJD has been developed it will also go out for public comment again, in readiness for the implementation of a new, nationally agreed system in February 2016.

The National BJD Strategic Plan is a cooperative program involving Australian livestock industries, government and the veterinary profession to help cattle industries reduce the spread and impact of BJD in Australia. The current key goals are to help minimise the contamination of farms and farm products, support the protection of non-infected herds while minimising disruption to trade and to help reduce the social, economic and trade impact of BJD at herd, regional and national levels.

AHA is not involved in the development of policy on BJD management. AHA’s role is to manage the BJD review by coordinating meetings between industry, government and key stakeholders, manage public consultation and facilitate key policy discussions and document development.

Further information on the National BJD Review can be found on the AHA website at www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au

Enquiries into the Review can be sent to bjreview@animalhealthaustralia.com.au

Goodbye print – hello electronic

Like all good things, the print version of Stock Health Monitor (SHM) has come to an end. This Autumn/Winter 2015 edition is the final one you will see as a hard copy. However, fear not, because we will still bring you SHM twice-yearly, with the same, up-to-date and relevant information on production conditions for alpacas, cattle, goats and sheep via email.

To ensure you do not miss out on future editions of SHM, email your contact details including your name, email and phone number to shm@animalhealthaustralia.com.au

If you would like to know about the move to electronic-only editions of SHM, contact AHA’s Project Officer Livestock Welfare & Endemic Disease, Kelly Wall on (02) 6203 3948.
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Cattle producers’ help wanted

Cattle producers across Australia are wanted to support the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) which monitors the distribution of insect-borne viruses of ruminant livestock, and their insect vectors, in Australia.

Known as NAMP ‘co-operators’, participating cattle producers are required to provide between 10-30 cattle for blood sampling by government officers at agreed intervals throughout the year. Sampling frequency is often as little as once or twice per year.

Co-operators are also required to hang an insect trap during agreed months throughout the year. The traps are automatic, will run for several nights and co-operators are asked to send the bottle of collected insects to the relevant government officer.

Only a small amount of time is required each year and allowances are provided to contribute toward the cost of mustering cattle for NAMP and handling insect traps.

NAMP co-operators help all cattle, sheep and goat producers in Australia, who benefit economically (either directly or indirectly) from export opportunities for live animals and their genetic material.

The NAMP is entirely dependent upon the cooperation of cattle producers and new co-operators are always wanted. If you would like more information about the NAMP or are a cattle producer who would like to be a NAMP co-operator, please contact the relevant officers listed below:

Deborah Finlaison (NSW) 02 4640 6335 deborah.finlaison@dpi.nsw.gov.au
Lorna Melville (NT) 08 8999 2251 Lorna.Melville@nt.gov.au
Bruce Hill (QLD) 07 3276 6059 Bruce.Hill@daf.qld.gov.au
Trent Scholz (SA) 08 8648 5166 Trent.Scholz@sa.gov.au
Rowena Bell (TAS) 03 6777 2135 Rowena.Bell@dpipwe.tas.gov.au
Berwyn Squire (VIC) 03 5036 4839 Berwyn.Squire@ecodev.vic.gov.au
Marion Seymour (WA) 08 9651 0555 marion.seymour@agric.wa.gov.au

Visiting namp.animalhealthaustralia.com.au to learn more about the program and the role it plays in helping to maintain Australia’s market access.

OJD vaccination still important in endemic areas

Vaccinating sheep with Gudair® is a key tool in the fight to control the spread of ovine Johne’s disease (OJD) in Australia. Trial work has shown that when this vaccine is administered to animals prior to exposure to the bacteria that cause OJD, it reduces shedding of the bacteria, delays the onset of clinical disease (severe wasting) and reduces flock mortalities.

However, like most vaccines, Gudair® is not a ‘silver bullet’. To control OJD on-farm, vaccination must be used in conjunction with effective farm biosecurity, grazing management, ongoing abattoir or on-farm monitoring, and purchasing sheep that producers consider are ‘low risk’ based on the National Sheep Health Statement. Anecdotal reports of producers stopping vaccination in OJD endemic areas, because they are not seeing any cases, are concerning. Similar to use of the clostridial vaccines, producers should keep vaccinating for OJD or a disaster may be waiting to happen.

Long term vaccination studies carried out at the University of Sydney have shown that, although sheep losses and shedding of bacteria are markedly reduced, some flocks continue to have low levels of shedding after many years of vaccination. Vaccination is effective at reducing symptoms, but ongoing vaccination of all lambs is essential to ensure that shedding is minimised.

It is recommended that lambs are vaccinated before 16 weeks of age (usually given at marking) and booster doses are not required. Safe vaccinating equipment and the correct vaccination technique should be used when administering it.

See www.ojd.com.au for more information on vaccination and management of OJD.
Managing an ‘enhanced risk review’ for sheep diseases

As part of the Meat & Livestock Australia funded ‘Producer Demonstration Site Project: Esperance Self-Managed Biosecurity Group’, the Association for Sheep Husbandry, Excellence, Evaluation and Production (ASHEEP) ran a day dedicated to looking at how to manage enhanced risk using simple biosecurity measures. Jan Clawson from ASHEEP provides a valuable insight into this successful event.

The day started with a group of farmers and industry traveling to Bob Reed’s farm, Condignup. Bob is an OJD-tested negative property and is facing enhanced risk with a tested positive neighbour.

Following morning tea where Bob introduced our key note speaker for the day, Peter Altschwager, Chairman of the South Australian OJD Committee, we travelled out to the boundary fence of the adjoining positive properties. Bob explained that following notification by his neighbour he decided to double fence the common boundary fence-line and also fenced out the adjacent swamps as a way of increasing security on his property. At the same time his neighbour kept these paddocks unstocked until the fencing was complete and then stocked it with weaner sheep. Following discussion it was agreed that the weaner sheep posed no risk to Bob because of their age.

Peter Harkness from the North Mallee Declared Species Group then provided an update on the extension to the State Barrier Fence, he gave us a good understanding of the need for the fence and the amount of red tape that had been worked through and still has to be worked through for it. This is a very time consuming process that cannot be rushed.

The first speaker for the afternoon session was Simon Fowler. He spoke on their farming system and the circumstances surrounding their positive OJD detection and the steps they have taken and will take in the future to work their way out of having this disease.

Peter Altschwager provided an overview of the South Australian scheme, how it was established and how it is maintained and funded. He spoke on the role of vaccination and how it can be used to reduce the affect and prevalence on an infected property.

Tom Murray facilitated a step-by-step view of the Sheep Health Statement (SHS) and how it would be completed depending on circumstances. We also have SHS duplicate books available to anyone in the Biosecurity Group.

Lee Chester, Department of Agriculture and Food WA, presented information on the other diseases listed on the SHS, including Brucellosis, Footrot and Lice. She explained how they are identified and the treatment for each disease.

The use of the SHS and the extra assurance of being part of a biosecurity group are important factors in accessing the SA market.

We concluded the day with an open forum of all speakers. This drew out some interesting discussion and scenarios on how different OJD risks may be best handled. The classic was the ram breeder that refused to complete a SHS, it was recommended to vaccinate these sheep as they entered the property. Finally congratulations Phil Cleghorn on winning the dinner voucher donated by the Livestock Biosecurity Network. This voucher was raffled to a farmer that attended the day.

We would like to thank Peter and his wife Karen for travelling to Western Australia for our event, the information they provided and your opinions were very much appreciated.

For more information about ASHEEP contact Jan Clawson at eo@asheep.org.au

Cheesy gland still source of wastage in abattoirs

Cheesy Gland or Caseous lymphadenitis (CLA) still affects more than half the mutton lines in every state except South Australia, costing the industry $18 million a year (MLA priority list of endemic diseases report), however there are some measures producers can take to prevent and control the disease.

Most sheep are infected with CLA at the first and second adult shearing, so lamb lines consequently do not often have the disease, while the older sheep in the mutton lines have the greatest opportunity to acquire the infection.

Most spread of CLA occurs at shearing, when infected animals with lung lesions, cough bacteria on to the skin of freshly shorn sheep, with bacteria entering the body through cuts or intact skin. Confining sheep together after shearing for off shears lice treatment or other reasons increases the chance of infection. Infection can also occur through the rupture of superficial or skin abscesses.

CLA causes production losses on farm due to a four to seven per cent decrease in wool growth when the sheep is first infected. It causes losses at the abattoir due to trimming and carcass condemnation.

Continued page 4
Annual snapshot provides valuable insight into the health of our national sheep flock

The latest annual National Sheep Health Monitoring Project report, produced earlier this year, has once again shown some interesting results with some promising signs amongst most states with reductions in disease prevalence of some monitored conditions.

In the 2013-14 financial year the Project inspected over three million sheep at 18 different abattoirs across the country. Highlights of the results include:

- Western Australian sheep flocks are still showing a decline in the number of animals detected with sheep measles.
- South Australian sheep have a very low prevalence of liver fluke and Western Australian sheep continue to have an absence of liver fluke lesions altogether.
- The percentage of sheep lines with at least one animal infected with Cheesy Gland remains high, despite extension activities to promote disease control. However, Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland sheep lines are showing an overall reduction in the percentage of animals infected with Cheesy Gland in the lines inspected.
- The percentage of animals with hydatid-like lesions remains low throughout all state jurisdictions.

Animal Health Australia’s (AHA) Manager Endemic Diseases, Dr Lorna Citer said the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project, which is managed by AHA in partnership with the Sheepmeat Council of Australia and Wool Producers Australia, is a valuable tool in helping identify hot spots that need attention in disease prevention and control.

“The Project monitors sheep slaughtered in domestic and export abattoirs located in all states for a number of endemic diseases that cause loss of production either on-farm or within the sheep meat value chain,” Dr Citer said.

“The Project’s annual report provides the detail we need to help us identify trends in key endemic diseases. Importantly however, one of the primary purposes of the Project is to provide feedback to producers whose sheep have been inspected. They can then take action to control and prevent diseases that could be endemic on their properties,” Dr Citer said.

The key objectives of the Project are to:

- monitor adult sheep for a range of significant diseases and conditions which reduce productivity in the sheep value chain or can impact market access.
- facilitate feedback to producers through state departments, the Livestock Biosecurity Network and the Livestock Data Link about the conditions occurring in their flock.
- explore options for a comprehensive and cost-effective animal disease monitoring/surveillance system and post-mortem inspection service.
- provide accurate and timely animal health information as a driver for:
  - further improvements in Australia’s animal health status, and the management of human health risks,
  - maximise market access,
  - improve profitability,
  - inform future investment into R&D using producer levies, and
  - enhance biosecurity.
- enhance productivity within the sheep value chain by improving the quality of product entering the chain.

For more information about the National Sheep Health Monitoring Program, or to obtain a copy of the 2013/14 report, contact Dr Lorna Citer at lciter@animalhealthaustralia.com.au.
New biosecurity tool for alpaca producers to protect their animals from disease

With an estimated 150,000 animals across the country, Australia’s alpaca industry plays an important role in Australia’s livestock value chain, which is why preventing and controlling diseases in Australia’s South American camelid population is critical.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) and the Australian Alpaca Association have developed a new tool in the fight against disease, with the introduction of the National South American Camelid Declaration and Waybill.

AHA’s Biosecurity Officer, Rob Barwell says alpaca owners will be able to use this new document in the same way as the existing National Animal Health Statements are already helping to protect thousands of cattle, goat and sheep producers across the country.

“Anyone who owns alpacas, whether they manage large commercial herds or have just a few, is encouraged to use this Declaration whenever they are selling, moving or showing their animals.

“Equally, it is just as important for owners/producers looking to purchase a new animal, as they should ask for a signed and completed Declaration and Waybill before accepting the animals.

“The document requires the owner of the animals to accurately and honestly detail a herds’ disease and movement history and list the animals they are selling or moving. By doing this they are giving the person accepting the animals a better chance of measuring their own risks of introducing a new disease onto their property,” Dr Barwell said.

“Whilst the Declaration and Waybill adds another level of protection to owners/producers, it is important that it be used in conjunction with effective on-farm biosecurity measures to give them the best chance of avoiding diseases, pests and weeds coming on to their property,” Dr Barwell said.

“Whenever animals are brought onto a property, even if they are returning from agistment or a show, they should ideally be quarantined for a period of 21 days before joining the existing herd.

“Producers should also monitor their new or returning stock for signs of disease and ensure that the vehicles they have travelled on are clean. When animals are leaving the property they should be checked to see that they are in good health.

Producers can download the National South American Camelid Declaration Waybill and find out many more biosecurity tips by visiting www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/industry/alpaca

AND LLAMAS TOO!
The National South American and Camelid Declaration and Waybill can also be used for Australia’s llama population as llamas are also a species of South American camelid.
Symptoms of CAE or ‘big knee’ can vary markedly between animals. Adults with visible signs of CAE often have over-sized knobby knees that are swollen in appearance. In well managed herds with low carrier numbers, goats have few or only mild signs. However when the viral load builds up with additional carriers, then many more goats show a range of clinical signs from arthritis, pneumonia, swollen udders and nervous signs.

Diagnosis is normally by the testing of blood samples performed by a vet who sends the samples for testing to a veterinary laboratory. Because there is no successful treatment or vaccine for animals infected with CAE, a key way of controlling the disease is through annual blood testing and removal of infected animals.

TESTING FOR CAE – WHAT HAPPENS?

Dr Sandra Baxendell, Director, Goat Veterinary Consultancies (goatvetoz) demystifies the CAE-testing process and gives a personal and detailed account of what happens when she tests goats for the disease in Queensland.

“Animals presented for testing should not be within one month either side of kidding, be in good health and should not have been vaccinated within the last month for any disease. All goats over the age of six months must be tested.

All goats must have ear tags or be tattooed to ensure they are permanently identified. I tattoo pet goats with a number if they aren’t tagged. This ensures that if a positive result comes back, there is no debate about which one it was. I send a reminder out via email a few days before about this and I take a strong torch so that I can read the tattoos. The rules of the Queensland CAE accreditation scheme also require all goats to be permanently identified.

The owners are asked beforehand to have their goats restrained. Chasing the goats around for long periods, especially bucks, was associated with false positives in a couple of herds that I know about. Transportation can also stress goats and lead to false positives and so for this reason I go to the farm, rather than having the goats brought to me.

Before arriving on a property, I have all the vacu-container bottles numbered and labelled and the forms filled out with a list supplied by the owner, to ensure records are accurately maintained and no time is lost.

I bring an experienced goat handler with me (usually my husband) and we work slowly and steadily through the list as the owner brings the goat into a separate area.

I keep a spray bottle of diluted chlorhexidine to spray the jugular vein before inserting the needle. I have another spray bottle of a bleach solution to spray any blood that drips out onto the floor or the goat’s hair in order to prevent the spread of CAE or other disease due to the presence of blood on the goat’s hair or in the environment.

Each filled vacu-container is then placed into a sheet of coolite with holes in it, so the container is held upright and placed in an esky (but only to keep it safe from being spilled as there is no freezer brick used at this stage).

Once all the goats have been bled then I check to see if the blood samples have all clotted and there is no haemolysis (breakdown of blood cells). If any sample is not a good one e.g. pink instead of clear with a blood clot, I would then take another. Once clotted I then add the freezer brick and chill the samples.

CAE tests in Queensland are conducted at the Cooper’s Plain Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory located in Brisbane. The Laboratory uses the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test, which is a common laboratory technique, used to measure the concentration of antibodies in the goat’s blood.

I generally take the samples myself to the veterinary laboratory to ensure they are handled carefully, although there are specialized transport firms e.g. “LabCab” that would also be suitable. Results usually arrive within a week.

Goat owners who are part of the CAE accreditation scheme in Queensland pay significantly reduced testing fees. Goat owners wishing to join an accreditation scheme should contact their state goat animal health officer or veterinarian to find out the likely costs.”
TOP TIPS TO AVOID CAE

• Kids should be removed at birth from infected does, washed and dried to remove birth secretions, kept in isolation and reared on bovine colostrum and milk, milk substitutes or milk from known CAE-free does (or cow or sheep colostrum from Johne’s disease Market Assurance herds or flocks).

• Dairy goats should only be introduced from CAE-free herds or if from an untested dairy herd, then blood tested twice, six months apart while in quarantine before joining the herd. Goats of any breed that have been in contact with dairy goats from unaccredited herds must be regarded as being the same risk as dairy goats.

• Keep CAE virus negative goats permanently separated from other goats so that no physical contact occurs either directly between the goats or by fomite (e.g. feed and water buckets, grooming equipment and clothing).

• Anyone involved in the management of the goats should wash their hands and change clothes before handling goats of different statuses. If CAE-positive goats have nibbled, sneezed etc on your clothing change your clothing before handling non-infected goats.

• Cull or permanently isolate CAE positive goats.

• Do not share drenching, injecting (vaccinating guns or needles), dehorning, tattooing or foot paring equipment between CAE infected and non-infected goats, or other equipment where there is the risk of blood, milk or secretion transfer.

For information about State CAE accreditation programs please contact your State department of primary industries, local veterinarian or goat breed society.

For more information about this article contact Dr Sandra Baxendell at goatvetoz@gmail.com or visit the website: www.goatvetoz.com.au
Work under way for better testing and diagnosis for major goat disease

Caprine arthritis encephalitis (CAE) is an incurable disease, unique to goats and causes arthritis, encephalitis or pneumonia. Thankfully, new research being undertaken at the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) will help producers identify and diagnose the disease, which will give them a better chance of controlling the disease and eradicating it from property.

Goats generally contract CAE at a young age and carry the virus for life, with clinical signs often developing many months or even years later, in a similar way to Johne’s diseases presenting in animals. The signs of disease vary according to the age of the animal. The disease mainly spreads from doe to kid through colostrum or milk.

In June 2014, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), commissioned researchers; Dr Deborah Finlaison, and Sydney University student, Saibharathi Ganeshan, to undertake research on better diagnostic protocols for the detection of CAE. The project is being undertaken at the EMAI and is headed by Dr Peter Kirkland.

The objectives of this project are:

1. for the detection of antibodies to CAE virus:
   - to evaluate the analytical sensitivity of a range of existing enzyme linked immunosorbent assays (ELISAs) used for the detection of antibodies to the CAE virus that will determine the levels of antibodies that can be detected
   - to investigate the potential to increase the sensitivity of ELISAs for the detection of antibodies
   - to compare the ability to detect antibodies to CAE virus in milk and serum from goats of different ages and stages of lactation
   - to determine the limits of detection of a single infected sample in pools of individual samples of serum or milk
   - to determine the limit for the detection of CAE infected animals based on testing of tank milk

2. for the detection of DNA and Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) from CAE virus:
   - develop a real time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) assay for the detection of Australian strains of CAE virus
   - to compare the ability to detect nucleic acids of CAE virus in milk and serum from goats of different ages and stages of lactation
   - to determine the limits of detection of an infected animal in pools of individual samples of serum or milk
   - to determine the limit for the detection of CAE infected animals based on testing of tank milk
   - to compare testing for nucleic acid and antibodies in newly infected animals

3. to investigate the practical application of a suite of new diagnostic assays in a pilot CAE control program.

RIRDC has invested $232,000 in the project, along with significant direct and in-kind contributions from the NSW Department of Primary Industries, the Dairy Goat Society of Australia and Meredith Dairy.

This project will be completed in May 2019, with outputs expected to be delivered during its duration, to help industry to deal with this important issue. For more information about the project contact Dr Deborah Finlaison at deborah.finlaison@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Clear evidence of changes confirms extension still important

Key findings of a report for Sheep Connect Tasmania 2012–2015 found eight out of 10 Tasmanian sheep producers have made changes to their enterprise as a result of knowledge and/or skills gained from Sheep Connect Tasmania events and information products.

The findings are a reminder about the important role extension and education programs play in helping to spread important animal health and production conditions information.

To learn more about Sheep Connect Tasmania visit www.sheepconnecttas.com.au
Report shows top disease and production condition priorities for red meat sector

A Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) report, published on 20 March, has defined the most economically-damaging diseases and production conditions for cattle, goats and sheep in Australia and there are some interesting results.

The top three economically damaging diseases for cattle, according to the report, are cattle tick, Pestivirus and Buffalo fly. For sheep producers, neo-natal mortalities, internal parasites and dystocia are the most economically damaging production conditions and diseases they are facing. For goat producers, internal parasites, Enterotoxaemia and lice have been identified as the top three concerns they have to deal with.

The priority list of endemic diseases for the red meat industries’ report was developed from a variety of surveys conducted across key stakeholders affected by livestock diseases within the red meat industries. Those surveyed included:

- animal health companies
- Chief Veterinary Officers
- livestock producers
- veterinarians
- processors

To achieve the agreed priority lists of the disease and production conditions, a project team reviewed the surveys by matching the results of the producer surveys against the remaining surveys from the other key stakeholders to establish an agreed list.

The priority lists were also reviewed by external consultants where economic analyses were undertaken and the report was peer reviewed.

Animal Health Australia’s Executive Manager of Biosecurity, Duncan Rowland said the MLA report is an excellent resource in helping to educate producers about biosecurity and plan better awareness and extension campaigns.

“The data from this report can be used to help us plan for future biosecurity research extension and awareness programs by allowing us to tailor our strategies to address the diseases that matter most to producers,” Mr Rowland said.

For more information about this or other R&D reports, email reports@mla.com.au or visit the website at www.mla.com.au

Neonatal mortalities are the most economically damaging production conditions sheep producers are facing.

Buy a Farm Biosecurity farm gate sign today

If it can move, it can carry diseases, pests and weeds. Signs can be used to indicate to visitors the importance of following biosecurity procedures on your property.

This 900 x 600 mm Farm Biosecurity gate sign is available for just $40, including postage and handling to anywhere in Australia. Printed on 5 mm thick corflute they include four eyelet holes to attach the sign to a gate or fence.

To buy your sign today, visit www.farmbiosecurity.com.au
### Number of known infected herds and flocks, December 2014

#### CATTLE

**Number of known infected cattle herds**

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**Number of known infected goat herds**

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### Number of assessed herds and flocks in MAPS, December 2014

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Contacts

For further information on any of the items in this newsletter please contact Lorna Citer, Manager Endemic Diseases, Animal Health Australia at shm@animalhealthaustralia.com.au on (02) 6203 3922 or visit the Animal Health Australia website at www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au

OJD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<th>COMPANY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Sam Allan</td>
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<td>(02) 6763 1103</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sam.allan@dpi.nsw.gov.au">sam.allan@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><a href="mailto:lawrence.gavey@daf.qld.gov.au">lawrence.gavey@daf.qld.gov.au</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:anna.erickson@agric.wa.gov.au">anna.erickson@agric.wa.gov.au</a></td>
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<td>Dr Graham Bailey</td>
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<td>Primary Industries, Biosecurity, Industry &amp; Investment NSW</td>
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<td>Dr Jeremy Rogers</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:thomas.deridder@agric.wa.gov.au">thomas.deridder@agric.wa.gov.au</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td><a href="mailto:susanne.fitzpatrick@nt.gov.au">susanne.fitzpatrick@nt.gov.au</a></td>
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News roundup

FEEDLOT ACCLIMATION STUDY

Acclimation is a term loosely applied to a range of measures designed to reduce the stresses associated with cattle settling into life in a feedlot, enhancing animal welfare and reducing the animal health and disease risks associated with compromised immune systems.

Whilst the measures employed vary between feedlot operations they are built on the principles of low-stress stock handling and aim to familiarise animals with their pen and working areas so they are comfortable in the new environment.

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence to support that it works, however, to date there has been little scientific and economic assessment of the process to quantify the effects on animal performance, health and welfare. Meat & Livestock Australia is currently funding an acclimation study involving a trial undertaken by industry vets on five feedlots with the objective to:

- scientifically and economically assess the benefits of various acclimation measures on performance, animal health and animal welfare
- develop objective, repeatable measures of acclimation
- produce resources and tools to enable the adoption of acclimation measures on all feedlots

It is anticipated that the research trial will be completed by mid-2015 and resources available for feedlots by mid-2016.

For further information on the Acclimation Study contact MLA Feedlot R&D Project Manager Des Rinehart at drinehart@mla.com.au

FREE BIOSECURITY HELP FOR AUSTRALIAN FEEDLOTS

All feedlots now have free access to a Technical Services Officer to assist them in avoiding, managing and controlling livestock production diseases and implementing best practice feedlot biosecurity measures.

Jeff House was employed in May 2014 under a jointly-funded project by Australian Lot Feeders Association (ALFA) and Meat & Livestock Australia to provide practical, on-the-ground assistance regarding a range of feedlot technical matters including, but not limited to, animal health and welfare and biosecurity.

Jeff is also involved in the development and delivery of education and training material and R&D extension whilst providing a conduit for feedback from lot feeders on potential RD&E suggestions for investment as well as general feedlot related issues.

Jeff was formerly employed as a beef industry livestock officer for the NSW DPI. During this time he was the key Departmental person for feedlot matters and represented the NSW Government on the Feedlot Industry Accreditation Committee.

As of March 2015 Jeff had visited 116 feedlots and provided information and assistance over the phone to numerous others on a range of matters including the preparation and management of cattle before they enter the feedlot to minimise stress and risk of disease.

For more information and to learn how you can get in contact with Jeff, contact ALFA’s Manager, Policy and Projects, Bridget Peachey at bridget.peachey@feedlots.com.au