

For Immediate Release

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FORUM KICKSTARTS NEW WAY FORWARD FOR BJD

More than 100 people from around Australia participated in a forum on Monday to discuss the future of Bovine Johne's disease (BJD) management in Australia, as part of the National BJD Review, which is being coordinated by Animal Health Australia (AHA).

The forum is just the beginning of the consultation process which is integral to the development of the National BJD Strategic Plan, due to be implemented by January 2016.

AHA's Executive Manager, Duncan Rowland said participants in the forum identified some key themes and concerns that will greatly contribute to developing fresh ideas for the management of BJD at the herd, state and federal levels.

"Throughout the course of the day, certain themes and concerns were identified that the participants believed needed to be addressed. This is great, because this is the useful information we need to start the ball rolling with this process," Mr Rowland said.

"The key issues identified included: freeing up trade related issues, managing the disease on farm including developing pathways for those affected, and suggestions for future research and development to provide producers with better tools to deal with JD in their stock," he said.

The one-day forum was hosted in Sydney and was the first of four opportunities stakeholders, at all levels in the livestock production industry, will have to contribute to the development of the Strategic Plan.

AHA's Chair, Peter Milne, praised the participants for their constructive and invaluable input on the day, highlighting that as BJD is a contentious and difficult subject, productive and meaningful debate was vital to the ongoing success of Australia's beef and dairy industries.

"I would like to thank the participants for their contributions on the day and to those people who provided written submissions in the lead up to the event. Thanks to the information we have received we can start putting the bones around a plan for the way forward. The next step is for the Reference Panel, which comprises industry, government, and veterinary representatives, to collate the information and feed it into the next stage of development," said Mr Milne.

The National BJD Strategic Plan is a cooperative program involving Australian livestock industries, government and the veterinary profession that helps the beef and dairy industries reduce the spread and impact of bovine Johne's disease in Australia. Currently it's 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 a not-for-profit member-funded company which works to protect and improve animal health within Australia. It does this through its partnerships with industries and governments, which help keep Australia disease free, builds the sustainability of our livestock industries and promotes the humane use of animals for food, companionship, recreation and sport.

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