

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mixed livestock producers should be biosecurity aware

The recent changes to the management of Johne's disease (JD) reinforce the importance of having robust farm biosecurity protocols and practices in place, regardless of the species of livestock you run on your property.

A farm biosecurity plan is the first line of defence for all livestock producers in ensuring their livestock are protected against endemic and exotic diseases and pests, said Howard Smith, Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) President.

"With the recent changes to the management of JD in cattle and the integration of on-farm biosecurity requirements into the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program, all livestock producers are encouraged to have their biosecurity plan in place by 1 October 2017," said Mr Smith.

"For mixed livestock producers (cattle, sheep, goats, alpacas), if you choose to use the Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) it's only applicable to your cattle. However, as JD affects other susceptible species, a confirmed clinical case of JD in other ruminants has to be considered when determining a J-BAS score for cattle from the same property," said Mr Smith.

Key biosecurity, JD and J-BAS information for mixed livestock producers:

- You only need to complete one [Farm Biosecurity Plan](#) to cover all your livestock.
- Producers who have developed a farm biosecurity plan as part of their approach to JD management, will not need to complete another under the LPA program requirements.
- JD can be difficult to eradicate from an infected herd or flock; therefore, sound biosecurity practices are essential in ensuring the disease, if already in the livestock, remains under control.
- The national sheep industries have recognised the importance of on farm biosecurity through the National Ovine Johne's Disease Management Plan.
- In relation to JD management in sheep, it is recommended that any sound management system must include vaccination if the flock is declared infected.
- Cattle are at minimal risk of contracting JD from sheep on the same property if these sheep are covered by a JD vaccination program.
- When buying any livestock, producers should request a health declaration relevant to the particular species.
- Although J-BAS is a voluntary tool, cattle producers should consider the benefits of a J-BAS for managing their JD risk and for access to certain markets that depend on live exports (Western Australia and the Northern Territory).
- When buying cattle, producers should ask the vendor further questions if worried about JD, and not just focus on the score alone.
- J-BAS is managed by Animal Health Australia on behalf of the CCA, who represent the beef cattle industry.

For more about the recent changes to the management of JD in cattle and the J-BAS system and mixed farming, go to AHA's ['Everything you need to know about JD in Cattle'](#) webpage. For more information about managing Johne's disease in sheep go to ojd.com.au.

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QUOTES

SHEEPMEAT COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA'S CEO, KAT GILES:

"Sheepmeat Council of Australia is echoing the call for all livestock producers to manage their biosecurity risks for all diseases, including JD."

WOOLPRODUCERS AUSTRALIA CEO, JO HALL:

"Poor on-farm biosecurity practices can bring severe financial loss to farms, stalled production and export restrictions, therefore it is vital that producers implement good biosecurity practices to avoid losses across all species."

ABOUT

Cattle Council of Australia

Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) is the peak producer organisation representing Australia's beef cattle producers. CCA was established in July 1979, bringing together for the first time all farmer organisations whose members had beef cattle enterprises.

Sheepmeat Council of Australia

Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) is the national peak industry body representing and promoting the interests of lamb and sheepmeat producers in Australia. The SCA aims to enhance the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the Australian sheepmeat industry by representing all producers to industry decision-makers and stakeholders.

WoolProducers Australia

WoolProducers Australia is the national peak industry body representing farmers whose primary business is growing wool. WPA is the only national organisation that can speak on behalf of the mainstream wool industry and advocate on behalf of all of wool growers.

Animal Health Australia

Animal Health Australia works in partnership with our Members and other stakeholders to keep Australia free of new and emerging diseases and to improve animal health, enhance market access and foster resilience and integrity of the Australian animal health system.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

MIXED LIVESTOCK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does vaccination have a role to play in the management of JD on my property? Will vaccinating affect the J-BAS for my cattle?

Vaccination does have a role to play, particularly with sheep and goats. Gudair is available for widespread use in the sheep industry and Silirum is useful in some circumstances within the cattle (particularly dairy) sector. Please note the use of Silirum vaccine in cattle is not permitted in Western Australia at present. Both forms of vaccine have been shown to reduce 'shedding' (bacteria being spread through the faeces of infected livestock) and mortalities from JD. While vaccination doesn't kill the bacteria, it does reduce their impact, particularly with sheep. Vaccine is the most effective tool available for managing the disease in sheep. Sheep flocks being all 'approved vaccinates' would mean that the risk of having JD in cattle on the property is low.

What if I'm a mixed livestock producer with cattle? Do I have to have a J-BAS?

Having a J-BAS is voluntary; however, to avoid potential domestic and/or overseas live-trade impacts from JD, producers should consider the benefits of a J-BAS as a tool for managing JD risk and apply it according to the needs of their operation.

If you choose to have a J-BAS, it would only be for your cattle. This said, it's important all susceptible species on your property are managed for JD (and other important diseases) because JD can spread from species to species.

What if I have had a clinical case in my sheep but not my cattle? What J-BAS can I give my cattle?

As JD affects all susceptible species, a clinical case in sheep has to be considered when deciding a J-BAS for cattle from the same property. Please refer to the [J-BAS chart](#) for information on how the J-BAS is decided when taking into account recent clinical cases across species.

As an example, if you had a sheep diagnosed with clinical JD three years ago but nothing since, and you have commenced a Gudair vaccination program in your sheep, you can give your cattle a J-BAS of 4 provided you have an on-farm biosecurity plan in place and meet all other requirements (like identifying and removing all high-risk animals).

As another example, if a clinical case has occurred in any species on the property in the last two years, a J-BAS of 2 can be used provided there is an on-farm biosecurity plan in place and all clinical cases have been removed. If producers wish, they can implement strategies to manage their cattle herds up to a higher J-BAS by following the guide set out in the J-BAS chart.

JOHNE'S DISEASE AND LPA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Johne's disease - <https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/johnes-disease-frequently-asked-questions/>
- LPA program - <https://www.mla.com.au/meat-safety-and-traceability/red-meat-integrity-system/lpa-changes/>

COMPLETE AN ON-FARM BIOSECURITY PLAN IN SIX EASY STEPS

Animal Health Australia has created a short video outlining *6 easy steps to fill out your on-farm biosecurity plan*. It can be viewed here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU8opPumXxg>

BIOSECURITY WORKSHOPS

Workshops are continuing to be held across the country. Visit [Livestock Biosecurity Network](#) for upcoming dates.