

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **National program for ovine Johne's disease supported and set to continue**

Sheepmeat Council of Australia and WoolProducers Australia will continue a national program for the control and prevention of ovine Johne's disease after June 2012.

President of the Sheepmeat Council, Ian McColl, said that there was extensive support for maintaining a national program.

"We have conducted an extensive review of all aspects of the program, including a number of consultation processes to tap into the different sheep industry sectors," Mr McColl said.

"The results of the public survey and submissions from sheep industry organisations demonstrated support for the national management of OJD, but clearly identified weaknesses with the current program that require change."

"It is possible to control and prevent OJD, but to do so will require effort at a local, regional and national level. The revised program is designed to do just that."

The main feature of the new approach is a greater focus on risk management, with the onus on individual buyers and sellers understanding and managing their risk.

WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia consider finalising the arrangements a high priority. The national program was a key agenda item at both Councils' November meetings where they agreed to the following key points for a new OJD management program:

- Existing High, Medium and Low Prevalence Areas will be streamlined to either Control Areas or Protected Areas. Control Areas will encompass regions where the disease is well established or continues to spread. Protected Areas will be located where the disease is rare and regional activities are controlling any incursions.
- A review of the Sheep Health Statement and Assurance Based Credit scheme will be undertaken.
- Abattoir surveillance will continue.
- Promotion of grazing management, vaccination and on-farm biosecurity planning to manage and control OJD will continue.

Geoff Power, President of WoolProducers Australia said that the revised program was developed with much debate and discussion and detailed information will be available shortly.

"The details are currently being finalised and we are working with Animal Health Australia to expedite the process," Mr Power said.

"A transition period for the revised program will commence in 1 July 2012 with full implementation from 1 January 2013," Mr Power added.

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