

## MEDIA RELEASE

15 February 2016

### **Producer interest front and centre in the new national approach to managing BJD**

The interests of Australian cattle producers have driven the development of the new Bovine Johne's Disease (BJD) Framework document. The Framework, released today, outlines a fresh approach to the management of the endemic disease and is the result of 12 months of consultation and evaluation of existing practices, led by Animal Health Australia (AHA) on behalf of industry.

The Framework clearly outlines how Australia will manage BJD into the future and shifts the focus of BJD management to the wider biosecurity practice of reduction and management of all diseases, said AHA's Executive Manager of Biosecurity, Duncan Rowland.

"Throughout the consultation period, time and time again, producers talked about the significant emotional and financial stress they faced when dealing with existing BJD management regulations. So while this new approach introduces a substantial shift in thinking, better biosecurity awareness and practices will provide a safer environment for producers to operate in," said Mr Rowland.

"The new Framework recognises the key role producers have in the management of diseases on their property and for that reason producers are the very cornerstone of the new approach.

"This doesn't mean that producers now have to carry the responsibility on their own. The management of BJD will continue to be a shared responsibility between government, the industry and producers. In fact, the deregulation and removal of zoning will be led by the state and territory governments, with the time frame for implementation resting with them," said Mr Rowland.

The successful introduction of this new approach will require substantial communication efforts to assist producers (and interested stakeholders) in understanding the new approach, its operation and its effects.

"A national communications plan is currently being developed to ensure all affected parties are informed, engaged and kept up-to-date about the changes.

"A key component of this communications plan will be a public forum, held in the coming months. This forum will provide the ideal opportunity to talk first-hand with producers and address any questions they may have about the new way forward," said Mr Rowland.

AHA will continue to work with industry and government to ensure the Framework is implemented as smoothly and quickly as possible to enhance the biosecurity credentials of Australia's cattle industry.

**ENDS**

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## BJD FRAMEWORK SUMMARY

### Background

JD in cattle is endemic in some cattle production areas of Australia but in other areas the disease is not known to exist (or exists at a low to very low level). A review of the *National BJD Strategic Plan 2012-20*, undertaken during 2015, included a thorough consultation process to evaluate the plan and make a decision on future national management arrangements.

### The need for a different approach

The review identified there was a groundswell of support for JD to be dealt with differently from the way in which it has been over the past 12 years. There was general support for JD to be addressed under a common biosecurity approach for endemic diseases, with less emphasis placed on an individual disease. It was not appropriate for the existing strategic plan to continue in its current state. Through an extensive consultative process a revised plan has been developed for implementation in early 2016. This has been a collaborative effort of industry and governments.

### Participation

The plan has been prepared by the Australian cattle industries (Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Live Exporters' Council, Australian Lot Feeders' Association, the Australian Registered Cattle Breeders' Association and Cattle Council of Australia) in conjunction with the Australian Veterinary Association, Meat & Livestock Australia, Dairy Australia and the Australian, State & Territory Governments after extensive consultation with Australian cattle producers and interested stakeholders.

### Fundamental objectives

The objectives of the recast Management Strategy for JD in cattle are to:

- manage and reduce the impact of clinical Johne's disease
- provide tools to allow individual producers to manage the spread of *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis* infection in accordance with their business requirements.

### Major changes

- Removal of zoning.
- Reliance on producers to protect themselves from disease (a biosecurity approach).
- A market driven approach where producers undertake practices dependant on market requirements.
- An evaluation of the CattleMAP.
- Development of tools and education material (e.g. Cattle Health Declaration, use of vaccination material).

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## The review process

In early 2015, at the request of the BJD Steering Committee<sup>1</sup> and the Animal Health Committee, AHA commenced the coordination of the BJD Review process. The review process allowed for all parties (including industry, government and community) to provide input into how Australia was going to manage BJD into the future. The process allowed for a wide range of views to be considered and broad consultation to take place.

- AHA engaged an independent facilitator to manage the consultation process.
- National Forum held in February 2015 – open to all interested parties.
- Think Tank held in February 2015 and attended by industry and government personnel (the Reference Panel<sup>2</sup>) to consider feedback from the National Forum and finalise the review process.
- First public consultation period - submissions from community, industry and government on proposed way forward.
- Review of submissions undertaken.
- Second public consultation period - submissions from community, industry and government on second draft of way forward.
- The Framework noted by Animal Health Committee and endorsed by the National BJD Review Steering Committee.
- The Framework made public.
- Implementation.

<sup>1</sup> BJD Steering Committee: The Australian cattle industries (Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Lot Feeders' Association, and Cattle Council of Australia) in conjunction with the Goat Industry Council of Australia, Meat & Livestock Australia, Dairy Australia and Animal Health Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Reference Panel participants: The Australian cattle industries (Australian Dairy Farmers, Australian Live Exporters' Council, Australian Lot Feeders' Association, the Australian Registered Cattle Breeders' Association and Cattle Council of Australia) in conjunction with the Australian Veterinary Association, Meat & Livestock Australia, Dairy Australia and the Australian, State & Territory Governments.

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### About 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.

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