

## Statement for release with the SheepMAP Technical Review

### Introduction

The Australian Johne's Disease Market Assurance Programs (MAPs) are a key strategy in the control of Johne's disease in Australia. The SheepMAP is a voluntary program designed to provide a pool of low-risk replacement animals for flock owners. The SheepMAP provides a mechanism to minimise the risk of introducing infection, to allow individual flocks in endemic areas to demonstrate their low-risk status, and to facilitate the movement of low-risk animals between endemic and non-endemic regions.

The current SheepMAP is now recognised as operating in a very different disease environment than when it was introduced in 1997. This has been caused, in part, by changes that have been made to the SheepMAP in an attempt to maintain consistency with national policies and technological developments (for instance, tests and vaccination) as the National OJD Management Plan has evolved.

In October 2010, the Australian Johne's disease Market Assurance Program Reference Group (MAP RG) considered the outcomes of the desktop review of other Quality Assurance programs as part of a broader MAP review and subsequently appointed a small working group, the SheepMAP Steering Committee (Committee) to identify and make recommendations on a range of issues relating to the structure and performance of the SheepMAP program.

In late 2012 the Committee determined it was necessary to confirm the technical integrity and robustness of the SheepMAP and requested Animal Health Australia (AHA) to conduct a tender to identify a consultant to undertake a technical review of the SheepMAP.

AHA contracted GHD Consulting to carry out this work and the final report was received in January 2014 and accepted by the Committee. Committee members identified a number of key points from the report.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE – TECHNICAL REVIEW

- Review the SheepMAP (Dec 2005 version as amended) for relevance, and currency and identify areas for improvement e.g. format and technical content.
- Determine whether the current method for providing assurance through biosecurity, flock testing and vaccination provides the levels of assurance that are appropriate for an audited MAP.
- Determine the role that alternative negative testing methods could play in providing assurance.
- Recommend how a revised SheepMAP would complement other means of assurance for OJD in the sheep industry
- Determine the feasibility of broadening the scope of the SheepMAP to include other diseases
- Determine how the SheepMAP could be aligned with other industry programs or business practices and identify the drivers for the uptake of the program.
- Evaluate the feasibility of group SheepMAP programs on both a technical and practical basis.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Committee will further consider the key points of the Technical Review as it undertakes the additional work on the SheepMAP. In addition to overseeing the technical review the Committee is required to provide advice on any changes to the format and presentation of the SheepMAP that may improve its useability for producers.

The Committee will develop a draft position paper and will seek input from stakeholders. Once this input is received, the position paper will be finalised. The need for further consultation will then be determined by the committee.

Ultimately the MAP Reference Group will receive a set of recommendations for potential MAP revision.

END