

MEDIA RELEASE

29 May 2018

New cattle surveillance project to support producers limit their losses from endemic disease

By the end of 2019 beef cattle producers will be receiving tailored information and resources for tackling disease priorities, which decrease profitability and threaten market access.

The Grazing Beef Cattle Industry Structured Surveillance Study - a new project managed by Animal Health Australia (AHA) and supported by Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) – will be trialling a new approach to collecting data on animal health, to support trade and production in the grass-fed beef sector.

This information will be used to guide producers to improve their on-farm biosecurity management strategies according to Cattle Council's CEO, Margo Andrae.

“By drawing the link between strong farm biosecurity practices and production impacts of endemic disease, we can demonstrate the value of implementing a biosecurity plan at the farm level,” said Ms Andrae.

“Data will be collected to identify which diseases are having the greatest impact in a given region, informing delivery of tailored biosecurity information and resources and empowering producers to focus their biosecurity plan on their greatest risks.”

Funded by an Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper investment, the study involves inspecting cattle processed at participating abattoirs for evidence of endemic disease. Data received will help show that Australia is free from animal diseases of importance to international trade and determine the impact of diseases on production.

The surveillance data collected is of critical importance to maintain and improve access to international trade and is expected to help producers reduce the impacts of disease on their enterprises, said Kathleen Plowman, AHA's CEO.

“This data will complement existing surveillance programs, which underpin our claims of freedom. So if you're a cattle producer and are contacted to participate, we strongly encourage you to take part,” Ms Plowman said.

The study will run until the end of 2019, when it will be assessed for its suitability as an ongoing program.

– Ends –

Media enquiries: Jackie Poyser, AHA Communications & Training Executive Manager 0410 994 410, jpoyser@animalhealthaustralia.com.au

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.

About Cattle Council of Australia

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