

## Biosecurity focus – the future for cattle producers

From AHA's Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services team

The voluntary Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS) has been developed to assist beef cattle producers in identifying the risk of Johne's disease (JD) occurring in a herd.

Transitional arrangements for J-BAS ended on 1 July 2017 and cattle producers across Australia are urged to implement an onfarm biosecurity plan in order to maintain their current J-BAS. J-BAS is managed by Animal Health Australia (AHA) on behalf of the Cattle Council of Australia (CCA), who represent the industry.

In an important update for producers, herds with a transition score of J-BAS 7 or 8 will revert to a J-BAS 6 rather than J-BAS 0, if no on-farm biosecurity plan is in place by 1 July 2017.

"CCA have taken on-board feedback and altered the J-BAS score to alleviate producer concerns regarding loss of domestic market sales. This doesn't change the focus of the new direction – cattle producers are still encouraged to treat JD as one of the many diseases they must manage within their business," says Dr Rob Barwell, Acting Executive Manager Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services at AHA.

"We'd like to acknowledge all livestock stakeholders, including agents, for their excellent work in spreading the on-farm biosecurity message to Australian cattle producers – a message we're keen for all invested parties to continue sharing.

"It's important to remember that key to this new framework is the implementation of robust biosecurity practices; practices which will safeguard the profitability of the cattle producer," says Dr Barwell. To assist producers with developing their biosecurity plans, AHA has updated its Farm Biosecurity Plan page (http:// bit.ly/2rCX5ng) to include a range of biosecurity planning resources. The same on-farm planning template can be used for the Livestock Production Assurance program and J-BAS, with producers who have a JD focus required to complete the optional JD questions.

As the Australian cattle industry finalises the transition to a new framework for managing JD, producers are encouraged to implement their on-farm biosecurity plans.



Johne's disease new national framework focuses more on managing biosecurity on-farm rather than through disease regulation.

Stock Health Monitor (SHM) provides Australia's alpaca, cattle, goat and sheep producer communities with the latest information on avoiding, managing and controlling livestock production conditions, implementing best practice on-farm biosecurity measures and updates on the latest research and development. It is a partnership initiative between AHA and livestock industries in recognition that livestock production conditions and controlling livestock process and updates on the latest research and development. It is a partnership initiative between AHA and livestock industries in recognition that livestock production conditions are compared by the set of the set of

SHM is published twice a year. Contributions are encouraged. If you have a piece you would like considered for SHM, please email <a href="mailto:shm@animalhealthaustralia.com.au">shm@animalhealthaustralia.com.au</a>

#### **IN THIS ISSUE**



## Don't get caught out when moving cattle

From AHA's Corporate and Member Services team

Stock and station agent, Peter Dowling, from Cloncurry in Queensland thought he had all the right checks and balances. In 2014, Peter purchased and transported a herd of stud bulls from Queensland and commercial cows from the Northern Territory to Western Australia on behalf of a client. However, upon arrival at the border to Western Australia, approximately 150 commercial cows were turned away because they were originally bred in Queensland and had not originated from a bovine Johne's disease (BJD) tested free herd.

Whilst Peter's experience happened a few years ago, he wanted to highlight that, despite the new national approach to JD in cattle – the BJD Framework – there are still strict requirements around JD when exporting cattle to Western Australia and the Northern Territory (see cover story).

"When I organised the movement of cattle to WA in 2014, I ensured that all the animals met the requirements for importing cattle from the Northern Territory. However, it did not occur to me that 150 of the commercial cows would be rejected because they had been bred in Queensland and came from a herd that had not been tested for Johne's disease. Thankfully, I was able to negotiate a sale of the rejected livestock to a property back in the Northern territory, but there were still significant associated labour and freight costs," said Mr Dowling.

"I urge anyone looking to move cattle to the Northern Territory or Western Australia to familiarise themselves with those jurisdictions' relevant JD entry requirements," Mr Dowling said.



QLD Stock and station agent, Peter Dowling thought he had all the right checks and balances in place for JD. Make sure you meet the entry requirements of Johne's disease for WA and NT.

## Workshop shines more light on footrot

From AHA's Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services team

According to Meat & Livestock Australia's (MLA) March 2015 Report: Priority list of endemic diseases for the red meat industries, footrot is the ninth most economically important disease for the sheep industry. Thankfully however, there are a number of animal health professionals, academics and livestock pharmaceutical companies working behind the scenes to help producers get on top of this disease. In February this year, 64 representatives from these groups converged on Camden NSW to discuss the latest research advances in footroot management and control techniques at the National Footrot Diagnosis and Research Workshop at Sydney University.

AHA's Biosecurity Project Officer, Bree Beattie attended the event which has taken place four times since its inception in 1981, highlighting that the workshop is the preeminent forum for discussing the latest ideas in footrot research.

"The National Footrot Diagnosis and Research Workshop brings together the very best minds in footrot research, together with animal health experts who are helping producers avoid and control the disease," said Bree.

"This year's workshop focused on the current testing regimes for each state, a new commercialised vaccine as well as dealing with technical challenges, hopes for future vaccines, and the realities of the registration of new biological products".

"Importantly, what this workshop also highlighted is that there are still some inconsistencies in the way the disease is identified and diagnosed and even after all these years and there is still some confusion between benign and virulent footrot diagnosis."

Bree highlighted however, that there is some significant progress being made in the ways we treat, diagnose and manage footrot outbreaks and producers can be confident that undertaking the right onfarm biosecurity measures is still the best way to avoid the disease coming on to your property.

"The take-home message from the workshop is that there is certainly some light at the end of the tunnel for the longer term. However, good biosecurity is still the best way to avoid the disease. This means quarantining new stock, monitoring your animals, maintaining good fencing and always asking for a National Sheep Health Declaration (previously Statement) when purchasing new stock," said Bree.



AHA's Biosecurity Project Officer, Bree Beattie (pictured with her sheep dog – Frankie) attended the National Footrot Diagnosis and Research Workshop as part of her role working with the sheep industries to develop on-farm biosecurity policies and tools.



#### ISSUE 6 WINTER 2017

## Australian Biosecurity Awards: the winner is ... us!

From AHA's Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services team

The Farm Biosecurity Program, Australia's only national on-farm biosecurity awareness program, was recognised by winning the Australian Government's prestigious government biosecurity award on Tuesday 7 March.

This award celebrates not only a significant biosecurity initiative but highlights the strong collaborative partnership between AHA and Plant Health Australia (PHA).

The annual Australian Biosecurity Awards recognises organisations and individuals who have made notable and outstanding contributions to protect the health of Australia's plants and animals.

#### AHA CEO, Kathleen Plowman said:

"The award acknowledged the eightyear partnership between AHA and PHA that has generated multiple innovative and useful resources to improve on-farm biosecurity amongst Australian producers."

"The Farm Biosecurity partnership began in 2009 and since then it has generated a raft of tools and resources, including risk planners, gate signs and phone apps, all of which are accessible from the website and relevant to every Australian farmer and the sustainability of their business," Ms Plowman said.

PHA's Executive Director and CEO, Greg Fraser, also welcomed the accolade, saying that the partnership between PHA and AHA is the strength of this program, which is funded by subscriptions from government and industry members of the two companies. "This award acknowledges what we have known for a number of years. We can achieve more by working together to maintain the health of crops and livestock at the farm level."

Producers play a key role in protecting Australian plant and livestock industries from pests and diseases by implementing sound biosecurity measures on-farm.

"The Farm Biosecurity Program is about helping producers to secure their farm and secure their future. I encourage all of our industry and government members to use the resources provided by the program," said Mr Fraser.

Both companies look forward to continuing to work together to help producers reduce the risks posed to their livelihoods by diseases, pests and weeds.



Celebrating a great night and a fantastic award. (L-R) PHA Chairman, Darral Ashton; Deputy Secretary for the Department of Agriculture Water and Resources, Lyn O'Connell; PHA Executive Director and CEO, Greg Fraser; AHA Communications Coordinator, Harley McNamara; PHA Communications Officer, Sharon Abrahams, Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator Anne Ruston; AHA CEO, Kathleen Plowman; AHA Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services Executive Manager, Duncan Rowland, PHA National Manager Horticultural Cropping, Alison Saunders and AHA Chairman, Peter Milne.

#### ISSUE 6 WINTER 2017

## **STOCK HEALTH MONITOR**

## Big news for the Sheep Health Project

From AHA's Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services team

The National Sheep Health Monitoring Project (NSHMP) commenced in 2007 to monitor lines of adult sheep in abattoirs for animal health conditions that reduce farm profit through productivity losses or increase meat processing wastage.

The objectives of the project are to:

- monitor sheep for a range of significant animal health diseases and conditions which reduce productivity in the sheep value chain or can impact on market access
- provide feedback to producers about the conditions occurring in their flock
- enhance productivity within the sheep value chain by improving the quality of product entering the chain
- explore options for a comprehensive and cost-effective animal disease monitoring/surveillance system and post-mortem inspection service that will provide accurate and timely animal health information.

Reports from NSHMP monitoring have been mailed to producers by some state Departments of Agriculture/Primary Industry at varying intervals. South Australia has value-added to the national project through their Enhanced Abattoir Surveillance Program and feedback has been mailed out twice weekly for many years.



Technological reforms now allow sheep producers to acquire all their information from one visit to the myMLA website.

AHA has been working with MLA towards the goal of releasing NSHMP data within the Livestock Data Link (LDL) for a number of years and the system is now complete and going live. LDL is an online feedback system which enables supply chain participants to analyse carcass performance with their results linked to a library of solutions on how to address non-compliant issues on farm.

AHA has also been working with MLA on incorporating the National Sheep Health Declaration (SHD), previously known as the National Sheep Health Statement, into the same platform where producers will access their NSHMP data. MyMLA will be a 'one stop shop' for all the key integrity and information systems – National Livestock Identification System (NLIS), Livestock Production Assurance (LPA), National Vendor Declarations (NVD), as well as LDL.

Having the SHD fit seamlessly with the new fully electronic NVD will make it easier for producers to fill in both documents helping minimise duplication. For more information on myMLA go to: www.mla.com.au/about-mla/mymla/.

Copies of the Sheep Health Declaration will continue to be maintained on the Farm Biosecurity website (www. farmbiosecurity.com.au).



Image credit: Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

#### ISSUE 6 WINTER 2017

## Don't buck the trend: Welfare guide gets thumbs up from goat producers

From AHA's Corporate and Member Services team

Since being launched in July last year, the Australian Industry Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Goats have been assisting goat producers across the country improve their welfare practices and now those same producers are encouraging everyone in the industry to grab a copy.

Funded by the Goat Industry Council of Australia (GICA) and developed by AHA the voluntary Guidelines provide advice on welfare topics from housing facilities and equipment to breeding and dairy management.

Victorian dairy goat producer Chris Lamin, said the Guidelines are a valuable resource, particularly for those new to the industry and she is encouraging all goat owners to get a copy. "The Guidelines are a really good base from which you can build your individual goat husbandry and biosecurity program from. It's an excellent place to start for anyone new into goats, regardless of the size of their enterprise or the type of goats being run," Ms Lamin said.

AHA's Project Manager for Welfare, Kelly Wall said the document was proving popular amongst a range of goat producers.

"Since July we have mailed out numerous copies of the Guidelines, with countless more downloaded from our website.

"The strong take up of this important document speaks volumes about Australia's goat producer community and we certainly encourage everyone to get a copy by downloading it from the Animal Welfare Standards website or emailing publications@ animalhealthaustralia.com.au for a hard copy," said Ms Wall.

The Guidelines involved targeted consultation with goat producers at various levels of the supply chain

## On-farm biosecurity – there's an app for that

From AHA's Corporate and Member Services team

It might not be as entertaining or addictive as some apps, but the new FarmBiosecurity smartphone app will help take your biosecurity planning to the next level.

Available for both Apple and Android devices, the FarmBiosecurity app is a free tool that allows livestock and crop producers to create their own personalised biosecurity plan.

Alison Saunders, National Manager Horticulture at PHA, says the app is framed around the six biosecurity essentials.

"If you are wondering how to implement biosecurity measures on-farm, the six essentials are a good place to start. The app is based on the Farm Biosecurity Action Planner, so no matter how you prefer to do business, you will be able to create a plan and get started," said Ms Saunders.

Creating a biosecurity plan on the app is easy. Simply select the actions that apply to you or type in your own actions. Your selections then become a to-do list that you can share with others or email to yourself and print out.

Duncan Rowland, AHA Executive Manager Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services, said that FarmBiosecurity was a great resource for producers on the go.

"The app is easy to use and allows producers to take their biosecurity plan with them wherever they go, even if there is no internet access. Users can also create as many plans as they like, which is helpful for those who have multiple properties or production areas.

"Photos can also be attached as reminders for later actions or to let others know what activities need to be and from different product sectors, state representatives, animal welfare organisations and veterinarians.

Although the document is a voluntary guide, it still has the ability to inform a nationally uniform approach to ensuring goat welfare is adhered to.



The Australian Industry Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Goats is a must-read for all goat producers within Australia

done. If you happen to spot anything unusual while you're out and about, the emergency hotline numbers for both plant and livestock producers are just a tap away," Mr Rowland said.

To download the FarmBiosecurity app, simply search for 'FarmBiosecurity' in the App store or Google Play. Those with a Windows-based smartphone will also be catered for, with a Windows-ready version of the app coming soon. For more information and instructions on how to use the app, go to the FarmBiosecurity app page (www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/ farmbiosecurity-app)



Farm biosecurity made easy by following the simple steps within the app to create a biosecurity plan personalised to your farm.

#### ISSUE 6 WINTER 2017

# **STOCK HEALTH MONITOR**

## Recording and mapping introduced pest animals to improve management outcomes

From the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre

The *FeralScan* program (available at www.feralscan.org.au) is a free purposebuilt web and App-based mapping program that provides landholders and communities with an easy way of documenting pest animal problems in their local area. Information recorded by farmers and community groups is being used to assist with local-scale pest control programs, as well as regionalscale management planning.

FeralScan was developed by the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre with support from government, industry and landholder groups Australia-wide in response to growing concern about pest animal problems. It is a free resource that has been developed over many years with landholders to make sure it is farmer-friendly and a valuable tool for monitoring and reporting pest problems.

Landholders using this free resource are reporting that they are seeing benefits by mapping pest animal problems on their properties for prioritising control actions and working with their immediate neighbours. Over 170 landholder groups are also using the program to coordinate control across numerous properties, with the aim of maximising the outcomes from their control efforts.

New alert notification technology is also being developed within *FeralScan*. Wild dog alert notifications are currently being trialled by farmers to quickly notify their immediate neighbours, landholder group(s), and local authorities regarding wild dog attacks on livestock. The service is being rolled out across NSW, southern Queensland, south-east Victoria, and South Australia.

FeralScan can be used to map and record sightings and evidence of pest animals, as well as the damage caused by pests, and control activities. It can be used to record and view information for 11 of Australia's worst pest animal species, including feral cats, rabbits, wild dogs, carp and other pest fish species, foxes, plague mice, feral camels, feral pigs, Indian myna birds, feral goats, and European starlings. Feral deer will be included in the program very soon. More than 70,000 new pest animal records have been recorded by community users, making it the single largest community pest animal database in Australia. The program has been used by over 25,000 Australians, and was recently used by over 600 landholders involved in the national release of the Korean strain of rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD) to monitor the benefits of the virus release and track the spread of the virus Australia-wide.

The *FeralScan* App can be used without mobile reception to record and save information, for uploading when back in mobile range. Farmers and wild dog controllers are also using *FeralScan* and the App to record and share photos of wild dogs with their landholder group.

In late 2016, *FeralScan* was awarded a prestigious Banksia Award in the field of research and science excellence, for bringing innovation to pest animal management. The Program is set to continue during 2017 and 2018, with farmers continuously helping to shape the program. The *FeralScan* App can be downloaded free-of-charge from Apple and Google play stores. For further information, please contact the *FeralScan* Project Coordinator, Peter West via E-mail at *peter.west@invasiveanimals.com*.



Utilising the largest community pest database in Australia will allow you to track and record sightings of pest animals on your property.

# **Biosecurity info and tips**

## Biosecurity threats can follow you everywhere

From AHA's Corporate and Member Services team

WA champion show jump rider Stef Tucker is no stranger to biosecurity when taking animals to the show. Stef trucked two horses and a pony from Perth to Sydney where she competed in the Sydney Royal Easter Show, in April. Before she returned home however, Stef had to drench her animals for liver fluke at Port Augusta and stop in at Kalgoorlie for health checks.

AHA's Executive Manager Biosecurity and Product Integrity Services, Duncan Rowland, said Stef's journey is a timely reminder about the importance of maintaining biosecurity when taking animals to the show – no matter how far you have to travel.

"There is a biosecurity risk whenever animals from different properties are brought together in common locations



WA champion show jump rider Stef Tucker demonstrates why biosecurity is important when taking your animals to the show.

such as shows, saleyards and other events, but there are a number of measures producers can take to limit the risk," Mr Rowland said.

"Diseases may be directly transmitted among animals and carried back to other properties. For example, transporting animals for others, or allowing direct contact, greatly increases the chance of transmitting a disease.

"Diseases and pests can also be transmitted on contaminated boots and clothing, feeding and grooming equipment, tack, pens, feed and other common objects that come into contact with livestock at shows.

"To avoid disease spread, it is recommended that producers do not allow their livestock to use communal water troughs, graze on the event grounds or consume hay on the ground," Mr Rowland said.

Mr Rowland highlighted that biosecurity doesn't stop when producers leave the show either.

"Transport vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned before returning home and immediately upon return.

"As the signs of many diseases emerge days later, keeping returned stock quarantined for a period of 21 days is one of the simplest ways producers can protect both their livestock and their livelihood.

"Similar precautions should be taken with any fodder brought back with you. Inspecting fodder for pests and weeds when purchasing, and isolating new fodder when it comes on to your property to check for the germination of any weeds, will help prevent the spread of weeds or pests that may contaminate your property," Mr Rowland said.

## Buying livestock on Facebook or Gumtree? Be aware of risks

From Rachel Gordon, LBN Biosecurity & Extension Manager

The internet, and in particular social media, has brought with it a new method of buying and selling livestock. Buy, swap, and sell groups on sites such as Facebook, or ads on sites such as Gumtree are now a popular way to trade goods, including livestock.

People are easily able to offload livestock that is surplus to requirements, whether it be a mob of sheep or a single poddy calf. It's quick, efficient and simple.

This ease in trading does come with certain risks though, and it can increase the opportunity for unwanted pests, diseases, and weeds to be inadvertently spread around the country.

In some cases, vendors and buyers are simply unaware of their responsibilities, particularly if they are not used to trading livestock. Perhaps they just want to have a few 'grass eaters' in the backyard.

When buying or selling animals in this way, it is important to keep biosecurity at the forefront of your mind. It is also important to be aware of your legal obligations when keeping livestock.

If you are buying any livestock at all, do you have a Property Identification Code (PIC) for where they will be kept? This is a legal requirement even if you only have one animal, such as a horse.

If you are buying cattle, sheep or goats, are they correctly tagged with NLIS tags? Is the vendor providing you with accurate NLIS paperwork to ensure you can correctly transfer the animals from their property to yours? Do the NLIS numbers on the paperwork match the numbers on the eartags in the animals' ears?

# **Biosecurity info and tips**

## Victorian vet a shining light in good biosecurity practice

From AHA's Biosecurity and Product Integrity services team

For Sarah Matthews, a mixed-practice vet working in Warrnambool, Victoria, biosecurity is an important part of her daily work routine and her diligent efforts in preventing the spread of diseases is a reminder for producers to check their own vets are taking biosecurity seriously.

A typical day for Sarah may involve visits to a number of properties located in different parts of the Warrnambool region and could include a range of different tasks, from calvings, to investigations of sick goats. As a vet servicing so many properties, a good biosecurity routine is paramount to Sarah's practice.

*"I see a lot of cases of calf scours and it is vitally important that I stick to* 

my biosecurity regime every time to prevent disease transmission between properties. I add extra biosecurity precautions onto my usual regime if I am aware of, or if I have high suspicion that a farm has a nasty bug such as multi-drug resistant salmonella," Sarah says

"Every visit I will wash my hands and arms with iodine prior to applying gloves. I wear gloves at all times on site and where possible I dispose of my rubbish on site. Before leaving the property I will wash and disinfect my gumboots with iodine and hot water, clean and disinfect my stethoscope, thermometer, lameness ropes and halters. Once a fortnight I will also re-wash my ropes and halters in the washing machine. I always change my overalls between farms and if I suspect high levels of contamination, for example calvings, a down cow or calf shed cases, I wear waterproofs as they are easier to clean," Sarah says.

These practices may sound thorough enough but in some instances, Sarah takes additional biosecurity measures. When there is suspicion or knowledge of a nasty disease such as multi-drug resistant Salmonella additional precautions used include:

- not driving my vehicle off the main driveway to avoid contamination
- wherever possible, using disposable equipment or borrowing the farmer's own non-disposable equipment that can be left on the property
- I will use Virkon disinfectant to spray down all my equipment and car tyres on suspect farms before leaving.

For more help on biosecurity practices to help prevent the introduction or spread of diseases on your property, visit the Farm Biosecurity Website (www. farmbiosecurity.com.au)



Warrnambool vet Sarah Matthews takes a range of biosecurity precautions when travelling between properties.

# Number of herds or flocks with a Market Assurance Program as of June 2017

Jurisdiction	Alpaca	Goat	Sheep	TOTAL
NSW	7	7	147	168
QLD	0	6	2	8
SA	7	8	161	289
TAS	0	1	13	48
VIC	1	2	48	72
WA	0	0	4	4
TOTAL	15	24	375	589



### **Contacts**

For further information on any of the items in this newsletter please email: <a href="mailto:shm@animalhealthaustralia.com.au">shm@animalhealthaustralia.com.au</a> or visit the AHA website: <a href="mailto:www.animalhealthaustralia.com">www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au</a>

#### JD in sheep

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#### JD in cattle

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**Biosecurity Gate Sign** 

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indicate to visitors the importance

of following biosecurity procedures

on your farm and help prevent the

introduction of diseases or pests on

For more information or to order

a sign visit the Farm Biosecurity

website (www.farmbiosecurity.com.

PLEASE RESPECT FARM BIOSECURITY Please contact the manager before entering.

Do not enter property without prior approval. Keep to roadways and laneways.

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How does the NAMP report work?

Plant Health

biosecurity a boost is by using a

property. For just \$40 you can

#### **Snippets**

# Are you looking for a meeting space?

AHA is offering modern event spaces filled with natural light located in the centre of Canberra. Our 'delegate' packages include room hire, delicious catering, standard AV and Wi-Fi as well as a dedicated event manager – what more could you ask for? Call the AHA Events Officer, Wed – Friday, on 02 6203 3919.



#### National Sheep Health Declaration now available

The new National Sheep Health Declaration is now available, replacing the outgoing National Sheep Health Statement. This vital document will help secure your farm and your future and demonstrates to your clients and neighbours that you take biosecurity seriously. For more go to Farm Biosecurity website (www. farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/ declarations-and-statements).

NATIONAL SHEEP HEALTH DECLARATION is voluntary in other states (Version 5, N ID is suspected or known to occur is Yes No 6+\_\_\_\_\_ 7 with a 12-----1- 5 Rams Only lan 🗌 Yes No Other (20) LICE/OVINE BRUCELLOSIS are from a flock that is free of VIRULENT Yes No Yes No d sheep are from a flock in an OVINE BRUCELI

#### Don't buy a lemon

Drive the profitability of your goats by ensuring you always introduce healthy animals onto your property. The best way you can do this is by always asking for a National Goat Health Declaration before any animal steps foot on your property. This applies whenever you are introducing new goats onto the farm, whether you're simply agisting for a neighbour, purchasing a new herd, or leasing a buck for breeding. http://ow.ly/r7ny3099Qke



#### Help support Australia's market access

Cattle producers are needed to support the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP); a program that monitors the distribution of insectborne viruses of ruminant livestock, and their insect vectors, in Australia.

Only a small amount of time is required from producers each year and incentives are provided to contribute toward the cost of mustering cattle and handling insect traps. Check out what's involved below!

For more information about the NAMP visit http://ow.ly/hfFO30aDV2q

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