

Riverina Sheep Biosecurity Group

Introduction

The aim of the Riverina Biosecurity Group is for the sheep industry to work together to maintain a low prevalence of OJD, footrot and ovine Brucellosis (OB) so that sheep from the area will be productive with a good reputation for health and access to markets in all other parts of Australia.

There is no OJD that we know of in the western Riverina. This is due to the relatively few movements of sheep from areas where OJD is common because the sheep from those areas do not really suit the Riverina. As well as OJD there is very little footrot or OB in the area.

Other sheep biosecurity groups have been formed with similar aims and there has been mutual recognition between the Riverina group and groups in all of South Australia and all of Queensland as well as the Western Division of NSW, New England and central western NSW and the Victorian Mallee.

Sheep from each of those groups will be eligible to enter any other group.

How was it established?

The group was established following discussions with the sheep industry and a vote by sheep producers.

A committee of concerned sheep producers has been formed to oversee the group

What is involved?

The key components of the group are those of biosecurity:

- Control or eradication of diseases present in sheep flocks.

- Care with sheep movements to reduce the risk of spread of infection.
- Monitoring and surveillance to detect new infections.

The main tool to reduce the risk of disease moving into the area is the national Sheep Health Statement (SHS) and it is a requirement of the group that no sheep are bought, agisted or accepted as a gift unless they are accompanied by a completed SHS.

The SHS can be printed from a file which is available on the national OJD information website (www.ojd.com.au).

The SHS must state that the sheep are:

- From a flock free from virulent footrot
- Any rams are from an OB accredited free flock (or a flock tested negative for OB within the past 30 days)
- From another, equivalent, sheep biosecurity group, OR
- Terminal lambs (no more than 50% merino and which will be slaughtered before they cut any permanent incisors, OR
- From a SheepMAP (MN1, MN2, MN3 or MNV) flock, OR
- From a flock tested negative for OJD (PFC 350 Abattoir 500) within the past 2 years Gudair vaccination alone will not make sheep eligible to enter the area.

Sheep from eligible flocks are still eligible to come into the biosecurity area if they have moved:

- To a show or sale outside a biosecurity area where appropriate precautions have been taken against the spread of OJD OR
- To a saleyard outside a biosecurity area where they do not have access to any feed on the ground and are there for less than 72 hours.

How will it be monitored?

Murray Local Land Services will monitor movements by checking the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) mob based movement database and by checking the NLIS eartags of sheep at sales.

The prevalence of OJD will be monitored by abattoir surveillance and disease investigations.

The prevalence of OB will be monitored by disease investigations and flock testing.

The prevalence of footrot will be monitored in saleyards, by disease investigations and reports of lame sheep.

What about enforcement?

The Riverina Sheep Biosecurity Group does not have any regulatory backing so that if enough producers ignore the rules it will not continue.

If the biosecurity group fails anyone who wants to sell sheep to another biosecurity group will have to have their flock tested.

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