Quick reminder on requirements for selling cattle, goats and sheep – NLIS is here to stay!

Regional Veterinarian Eliz Braddon

With the new year now in play, it is a timely reminder on the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) rules for sheep, goat and cattle producers. In NSW the NLIS is underpinned by the Biosecurity Act 2015 and penalties apply for failing to meet the NLIS requirements for stock movements.

This system is in place to protect our livestock industry by providing the ability to trace animal movements between properties in the event of disease or residue issue. It is commonly used by NSW inspectors for checking movements of stock in relation to virulent footrot, Johne’s Disease, Anthrax or lead residues as part of NSW day to day livestock industry management and becomes absolutely critical in the event of an emergency disease outbreak.

If you are a producer of livestock for sale, then NLIS is an important aspect of your business and needs to be done correctly.

If you are selling cattle to an abattoir or saleyard:
- All consignments must be accompanied by a NVD (national vendor declaration) that is registered to the property of loading (eg PIC on the NVD must match the PIC for the property where stock are loaded from).
- All information on the NVD must be complete (eg ensure the address, town, state and post code are filled in and all questions answered).
- All properties where stock are loaded must have a registered Property Identification Code - the PIC is registered to the land and not the owner of the stock necessarily.
- All animals in the consignment must be tagged with an NLIS device - electronic for cattle.
- As you are selling via a saleyard or abattoir, they will perform the NLIS transfer of tags for you on the NLIS database.

Selling to a private buyer or agistment movements:
- NVD or Transported Stock Statement (TSS) is the required documentation for private movements under the NLIS.
This document describes the movement between the properties, the PIC for each property and a description of the stock. These records must be kept for seven years.

All animals in the consignment must be tagged with an NLIS device regardless of age.

The movement must be recorded on the NLIS database by the owner of the stock. This is done by electronically scanning the cattle and then submitting the transfer to the NLIS database (www.nlis.com.au). The requirement for this to be done is now three days from the date of the transfer.

It is advisable also to request a health declaration relevant to the species (national sheep health statement, national cattle health statement) to obtain more information about the health status of the stock you are accepting onto your property. This will allow you to assess the biosecurity risks of those animals to your property and backs up your on-farm biosecurity plan. Property Biosecurity Plans have been a requirement since October 2017 for Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) National Vendor Declaration registered properties.

If you are selling sheep or goats to an abattoir or saleyard

All consignments must be accompanied by an NVD registered to the property of loading - also now available as electronic NVDs (eDecs) that can be emailed direct to your agent or saleyard. These are free to use via your LPA account and administered by Integrity Systems.

All information on the NVD must be completed (full address, all questions answered, signed and contact information for manager of the stock).

All animals in the consignment must be tagged with the correct NLIS tag - visual tag in sheep and goats - breeder colour tags used on properties where the animal was bred; post breeder pink tags for stock that has lost its tag and the property of origin is unknown or traded stock.

Remember is it illegal to remove any NLIS devices so if re-tagging with a pink post-breeder tag, just put the pink tag in and do not remove the original breeder device. Then record the pink tag PIC on the NVD and tick the box that says "these animals were consigned with post-breeder tags". Use of post breeder tags is recommended particularly for traded stock as a way to reduce likelihood of errors on the NVD when recording additional PICs.

The abattoir or saleyard will perform the mob based movement (MBM) transfer for you on the NLIS database.

Selling sheep or goats to a private buyer or agistment movements

NVD or TSS is the required documentation for private movements under the NLIS legislation. This document describes the movement between the properties, the PIC for each property and a description of the stock. These records must be kept for seven years.

All animals in the consignment must be tagged with an NLIS device regardless of age.
The movement must be recorded on the NLIS database by the owner of the stock. This is done by performing a mob based movement transfer on the NLIS database (www.nlis.com.au). The requirement for this to be done is now three days from the date of the transfer. The movement requires input of the ‘to’ and ‘from’ PICs, the number of head, any additional PIC tags in the mob, the date and the NVD /TSS document number. This information is entered and submitted on the NLIS database.

It is advisable also to request a health declaration relevant to the species (national sheep health statement, national cattle health statement) to obtain more information about the health status of the stock you are accepting onto your property. This will allow you to assess the biosecurity risks of those animals to your property and backs up your on-farm biosecurity plan. Property Biosecurity Plans have been a requirement since October 2017 LPA NVD registered properties.

Remember too that in NSW we have livestock transport standards so it is critically important to ensure stock are fit to load before sending them to sale.

As a livestock producer, your reputation is on the line if your stock do not arrive at their destination fit and well and totally NLIS compliant!

For more information about NLIS requirements and stock movements, don’t hesitate to talk to your local biosecurity officer or district veterinarian.

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**A hairy situation**

*District Veterinarian Tim Biffin*

A producer contacted our office with regard to a four month history of losses in maiden sheep. At the time, they had unfortunately lost approximately 30% of the mob! This particular property had a high stocking density and deaths in this mob had progressed significantly since the mob was moved onto a good quality lucerne stubble a week ago.

At the time of inspection I noticed six of the sheep in the mob had very generalised symptoms: dull, ‘doughy’ behaviour, heads held down with droopy ear and lighter body conditions. three of these had mild yellow discolouration of the gums and eyelids.

Post mortem examination of two of these animals identified liver damage, of which laboratory reports confirmed the damage had been present for some time.

The paddock the sheep were grazing prior to the lucerne contained moderate amounts hairy panic (*Panicum effusum*) and common heliotrope (*Heliotropium europaeum*), with few other species contributing to ground cover. The producer had expected the sheep to naturally feed on the hay provided in
preference to these weed species. Inspection of the hay identified contamination with various grass spp. including hairy panic.

The take home messages from this case:

- Be aware that sheep will preferentially graze hairy panic when it is green and shooting. If not managed well, it is not uncommon to see some evidence of hairy panic toxicity in sheep grazing stubble at this time of year.
- Remember the importance of good quality hay. Not only do weeds in hay cause animal health issues, they will also inoculate your farm with weed species you didn’t want.
- Once animals have liver disease do not feed them a high protein diet for at least a few weeks (examples being: lupins, lucerne or clover). The liver processes many of the byproducts from protein digestion. Without this function, a build up of these byproducts is very harmful. This is the reason the producer in this case noticed an increased incidence of disease when the mob was moved onto the lucerne pasture.
- Be mindful of stock numbers, particularly as pasture feed on offer is starting to reduce.

Has rice stubble got the goods?

District Veterinarian Sophie Hemley

Australian rice may feed tens of millions of people globally every day, but what is the real nutrient value of the stubble for your sheep?

Prior to grazing sheep on rice stubble, there are a number of points you should consider:

Is there sufficient nutrient value in the stubble to maintain the class of animal that is grazing on that stubble? The following table outlines the average nutrient value required from a range of sheep classes.
Table 1: Nutrient requirements of sheep to maintain body weight. Values have been extracted from Animal Nutrition, P. McDonald et al

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pregnant 75kg ewe mid gestation</th>
<th>Dry ewe/ wether</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single lamb</td>
<td>Twin lambs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMI (kg)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME (MJ)</td>
<td>8.8-9.9</td>
<td>10.2-12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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On average rice stubble has a dry matter intake (DMI) of 0.7-1.89 kg/day and energy content of 5.7 (MJ). When you compare this to the nutritional requirements of dry and pregnant animals, there are some major disparities – highlighting the necessity for feed supplementation.

Rice stubble is high in silica. Silica provides structural support to the plant and reduces the plants susceptibility to insects. A number of studies have shown that rice is unique in that, there is twice as much silica in the leaf of a rice plant compared to the stem. High silica content in grazing ruminant’s diets can lead to:

- Reduced digestibility of roughage. It is theorised that the chemical properties of silica make the plant harder to break down by rumen microbes.

- An increased risk of urinary calculi (uroliths) when water intake is low. As rice has an average DM of 90%, water content in the plant is low.

- Grain poisoning (acidosis) is a prominent risk with any high starch grain. Ensure that all grain spills are cleaned up prior to allowing sheep to graze rice stubbles.

The NSW DPI and Western Australian DPI & RD have published some helpful and practical information about grazing stubbles and supplement feeding. You can find these resources at:


Feed quality testing

*District Veterinarian Emily Stearman*

Spring 2017 generated a large volume of stored fodder; and as harvest finishes for another year it may be time to consider the options of feed quality testing. Previous articles have focused on testing for specific risk factors, such as nitrate in canola silages and hay, but we have not yet covered the benefits of feed testing for nutritive value.

There are multiple labs in NSW and interstate that will take feed samples for testing. One of our closest labs in the Riverina is Feed Quality Service at the DPI in Wagga Wagga. Samples take between 1-2 weeks to return depending on the level of nutritive analysis. Feed sample bags can be collected from and returned to the DPI office; inside these bags area specific instructions on how to collect samples for various types of feeds. False and non-useful data is obtained when the sample is not collected properly.

All types of feeds can be tested: fresh pasture or lucerne, hays and silages, individual grains or mixed rations. Basic analysis outlining the dry matter content, energy and protein are highly useful for feed delivery, enabling better feed provision to match animal requirements. Nitrate and
prussic acid levels can be analysed in high risk haylage/silages such as sorghum and canola. While mineral and ash content of feed may be important with stored grains and total mixed rations.

If you need assistance knowing whether to test feed, how to sample or with interpreting you feed analysis please contact your local District Veterinarian. Alternatively support officers are available through the Feed Quality Service DPI Wagga Wagga to discuss test results performed there.

During the process Dr James, who is Australia’s most experienced lice research scientist, will be able to answer your lice management questions.

If you have obviously lousy sheep contact Dr James directly to see whether your situation meets the criteria for a collection. If your sheep don’t have lice, but your neighbour’s do, please pass on this notice.

Dr Peter James
p.james1@uq.edu.au
0408 148 511

Announcements

URGENTLY WANTED: SHEEP LICE

Dr Peter James, University of Queensland, is conducting new research that requires lice from various locations.

What’s involved?
Dr James will come to your property and will use a small vacuum to suck lice from a number of sheep. No sheep need to be taken away. Collection likely in January 2018.

Riverina Local Land Services
District Veterinarians

Wagga Wagga
Tim Biffin and Emily Stearman
6923 6300
Young
Elizabeth Braddon and Rahul Shankar
6381 4700

Hay
Courtney Simkin
0427 418 006

Narrandera
Sophie Hemley
6958 1800
Gundagai
Kristy Stone
6940 6900