Animal Health Update

Production Alert Reminders

Bloat
There continues to be significant risk for bloat in cattle across the Riverina. As many producers would be aware, even moderate percentages of legume (e.g. >40%) in pasture and other lush feeds can present a high risk for cattle. There are many different ways producers can help to prevent the incidence of bloat in cattle. These should be discussed with your veterinarian or professional animal health advisor.

Grass tetany
There is a significant and increasing risk for grass tetany (low blood magnesium levels) in cattle across the Riverina. Fresh, lush, rapidly growing pastures that have been heavily fertilized with nitrogen, and or potassium, and contains low dry matter % present the greatest risk. There are short and long term management solutions that should be discussed with your veterinarian or professional animal health advisor.

Other metabolic diseases
Of particular relevance to sheep, there have been several cases of lambing sickness (pregnancy toxaemia) across the Riverina. This disease is essentially a negative energy balance in pregnant or lactating ewes/cows. Reduced rainfall this winter and lack of supplementation has been the common source of shortages. Essentially, affected mobs need more good quality, energy dense food (usually cereal grains +/- lupins).

It is expected that the incidence of milk fever (low blood calcium levels) in late autumn and spring lambing mobs, will increase in the in the months to come. Relative availability of calcium and magnesium in cereal grass crops over this period will have a strong influence in this regard. There are many different ways producers can help to prevent the incidence of milk fever, and these should be discussed with your veterinarian or professional animal health advisor.

Graham Centre Beef Forum
The Graham Centre Beef Forum has become a key event in the diary of beef producers across the Riverina and surrounding regions. The forum showcases the latest research from the Graham Centre and industry. For more information: https://www.csu.edu.au/research/grahamcentre/events/beef-forum.

J-BAS, LPA NVD’s, Biosecurity Plans - confused?
Confused by the recent cattle Johne’s Disease and regulations changes? You are not the only one, but hopefully this will clear it up a little. This article will explain the two changes featured in the media recently.
J-BAS - change occurred 30th June 2017

LPA NVD - change occurring 1st October 2017

J-BAS (Johne’s Beef Assurance Score)
This is an industry based, fully voluntary program allowing producers to assess the risk of beef cattle being infected with Johnes Disease.

The change: For those producers wanting to maintain their transitional J-BAS of 7 or 8 they needed to have had a Farm Biosecurity Plan in place, in consultation with their private veterinarian, by 30 June 2017. If no Farm Biosecurity Plan was in place on 1 July 2017, they have automatically reverted to a J-BAS of 6 (previous advice that producers would revert to a J-BAS of 0 without the Farm Biosecurity Plan are now incorrect due to a recent revision by Animal Health Australia).

If you are unsure of your J-BAS score, or don’t know if you have one, refer to section titled ‘J-BAS Explained’.

For further information on J-BAS, https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au

For further information on the Farm Biosecurity Plan

LPA NVD (Livestock Production Assurance National Vendor Declaration):

THE CHANGE: ALL producers wanting to trade livestock will need a 'Farm Biosecurity Plan' in place by 1st October 2017 to continue to use the LPA NVDs (needed to sell sheep, cattle or goats). If you already have a J-BAS biosecurity plan, this will suffice. If not, the easiest solution is to use the Farm Biosecurity Plan on the Animal Health Australia Website.

It is ‘relatively’ simple to complete, you DO NOT need to have it signed by anyone, just put it in your top drawer and produce it if you are audited. If you need assistance filling it out, Riverina Local Land Services staff will be running quick sessions during other field days to provide guidance in completing them, or contact any of the animal health staff at Riverina Local Land Services.

In addition, as of 1st October 2017 there will be changes to the accreditation process (which includes a change from yearly renewals to every three years with a fee payable at the time of renewal, and the current online assessment will be expanded to include biosecurity and animal welfare modules).

Producers will be notified by email or post two months before it is time to renew their accreditation.

Participation in the LPA program is ‘voluntary’. However, you can’t get an LPA NVD without being accredited, and in NSW an LPA NVD is required for any movement of stock that are to be sold – to processors, saleyards or private sales.

LPA NVD’s can be used for property to property movements with a different Property Identification Code (PIC), to agistment, where no sale is involved, but you could alternatively use a Transported Stock Statement (TSS) for these movements.

For more information on the LPA, or to become accredited, click here

The Biosecurity Plan: The same Farm Biosecurity Plan can be used for the LPA NVD and J-BAS. If using this Animal Health Australia template, section 7 relates to the J-BAS program. This section does not need to be filled out if are only trying to meet LPA requirements and are not concerned with trying to maintain a J-BAS 6. Click here for a link to the AHA Farm Biosecurity Plan

J-BAS explained

J-BAS (Johne’s Beef Assurance Scheme) is a voluntary risk profiling tool that provides buyers the ability to assess the level of risk of Johne’s Disease (JD) infection in a herd. Buyers across the country may request a J-BAS score before purchasing cattle. The J-BAS is a number between 0 and 8, with the higher the number the more assurance that the cattle may not be JD infected.

The J-BAS replaces previously used classification schemes for JD risk including Johnes Management
areas, such as beef protected area, ‘Beef only’ classification and the Market Assurance Program for cattle (cattleMAP). 1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017 was a 'Transitional' period for the J-BAS system.

It is important to note there is no longer a differentiation between JD strain types (sheep strain, cattle strain, bison strain etc). Infection of any strain in any species is classed as Johne’s Disease infection.

NOTE: the J-BAS system is reasonably complex and this is intended to provide a quick overview - mainly for producers asking “do I have a J-BAS score?” For further detail, please refer to the AHA website by clicking here or contact your local veterinarian.

What is my J-BAS Score?

'Most' beef producers in the Riverina LLS were previously eligible to be classified as 'Beef Only'. Remembering the recent change that 'herds that were J-BAS 7 or 8 in the transitional period (1st July 2016 to 30th June 2017) automatically drop to a 6 without further action', most Riverina Local Land Services beef herds would now have a J-BAS of 6. To ascertain if you would have met the 'Beef Only' classification (and therefore had a transitional J-BAS of 7, and therefore now have a J-BAS score of 6), read the 'Beef Only' definition below. NOTE: Under this definition 'Beef Only' does NOT relate to sheep on the property.

Herds previously in the Market Assurance Program for cattle (Cattle MAP) had a transitional score of 8 until 30 June 2017. To maintain these scores producers had to have a private vet oversee a biosecurity plan and commit to testing, the first testing needing to have taken place by 30th June 2018. Anyone who was a transitional score of 7 or 8, who have not had a private vet oversee a biosecurity plan, has now dropped to a score 6.

Producers who were not eligible to have a transitional score of 7 or 8 but have had no previous infection with JD and have implemented a Biosecurity Plan will be given a J-BAS score of 4. Once these herds have not had a clinical case of JD for at least five years and have maintained a Biosecurity Plan for at least five years they can advance to score 6.

If your herd would not have met the 'Beef Only' guidelines in the 'Beef Only' period (prior to June 302016), your J-BAS score may be affected by known JD and any risk mitigation strategies which you have put in place which may give you a score of 0, 2 or 4. J-BAS is a self-regulated industry program but if you are in this situation, your local veterinarian may be able to help you correctly ascertain your J-BAS score.

Returning to J-BAS 7 or 8 after 1 July?

Producers who have dropped to a score 6 will have an opportunity to return to J-BAS 7 or 8 by implementing a Farm Biosecurity Plan, having the plan overseen by a private vet and undertaking testing.

Do I need a J-BAS?

You may not need a J-BAS score, especially if you only send cattle direct to abattoirs or fat sales. Individual producers buying cattle may ask for your J-BAS, especially if you’re selling breeders.

There are no state based movement requirements based on J-BAS unless cattle are being sold to the Northern Territory or Western Australia and in these cases producers should consult their private veterinarian.

The Biosecurity Plan: The same Farm Biosecurity Plan can be used for J-BAS and the LPA NVD. If using this Animal Health Australia template, section seven relates to, and needs to be filled out for the J-BAS program. Click here for a link to the AHA Farm Biosecurity Plan

PREVIOUS ‘BEEF ONLY’ definition (to help determine your current J-BAS score):

Johne’s Disease Beef cattle - Beef Only Herds

Beef cattle are all cattle except those born on a dairy farm. For a herd to be eligible as Beef Only, it must meet ALL the following criteria:

• The cattle are from a beef herd that has not grazed with dairy cattle, or first generation
dairy-cross cattle, at any time during the past five years, unless those cattle were from a herd enrolled in the CattleMAP.

- The cattle are from a beef herd that has not, at any time in the past, grazed on land that had been grazed by adult dairy cattle (two years or older) during the 12 months before the arrival of the beef herd, unless those dairy cattle were part of a CattleMAP herd.

- If introduced into the herd or onto the property(s) in the past five (5) years, the cattle are from herds of the same Beef Only or higher status. This must be supported by a completed National Cattle Health Statement or a signed BJD Vendor Declaration. Without these declarations, you cannot claim Beef Only status for any cattle sold from the herd.

- The cattle do not include animals that have been part of a herd classified as Infected (IN), Suspect (SU) or Restricted (RD), according to the National Johne’s Disease Standard Definitions and Rules and Guidelines for Johne's Disease in Cattle.

Anyone not meeting this criteria did not have a transitional score of 7 and therefore will not automatically now have a J-BAS of 6.