

Sheepmeat Council of Australia met in Canberra on 3 & 4 May for their second Council meeting of the year 2010.

Major Issues discussed included:

### **Animal Health Australia**

Mike Bond from AHA discussed budgets for 2010-2011 financial year and the implications of the impending threat of significant funding shortfalls in 2011-2012.

There was discussion regarding the success of the FMD Symposium held in Melbourne. The Symposium highlighted the implications of an FMD outbreak and that more work needs to be done in some aspects of EAD preparedness, particularly the FMD vaccination policy

SCA agreed that it is important to always remind Government that Australia's investment in biosecurity is of the highest priority.

### **Animal Health and Welfare Issues**

- Ovine Johnes Disease (OJD)

A discussion paper on technical options (previously circulated to SFO's) regarding possible OJD Prevalence Area Reclassifications was discussed. SCA agreed with an amended Option 1. This was to review the areas which have exceeded their Prevalence Area cut off for two consecutive years. This includes the NSW and Vic Medium Prevalence Areas and the NSW, VIC and WA Low Prevalence Areas.

- Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Sheep

There is still some time before these will be ready for public consultation but it is important that engagement with state regulators commences as soon as possible regarding the implementation of the standards within their jurisdiction. This is important in working towards the harmonization of the Standards across the states and territories. SCA will offer to work with SFO's to assist this process.

### **Tri-Lamb**

Australia will host the next Tri-Lamb meeting on 22 October 2010. The meeting will follow the Sheep CRC conference in Adelaide on 20/21 October. It will include a short industry field trip following the meeting.

### **Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL)**

SCA will develop a position on CoOL in consultation with SFO's, other peak bodies and the NFF.

## **Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) Annual Operating Plan (AOP) 2010-11**

MLA presented an overview of the AOP seeking SCA agreement on priorities, expenditure and evaluation. In general, expenditure in the lamb program will increase in both marketing and R & D programs.

### **Climate Change Policy**

Charlie McElhone (NFF) provided an update on the delay to the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS). The Government has announced that it will now not be brought back to Parliament until 2013 which will align it with Kyoto agreement timelines. SCA and NFF welcome the delay as it will allow time to address the inequity of the current plan where indirect costs to producers greatly outweigh the potential benefits. SCA will continue to work with NFF on shaping policy in this area, especially in the lead up to the election.

### **Lamb definition**

SCA strongly support a uniform national definition of lamb. SCA will lobby PISC (Primary Industry Standing Committee) for the AUS-MEAT definition of lamb to be accepted as the national definition of lamb. Currently, in the absence of a State legislated lamb brand, this definition only applies to animals killed in an AUS-MEAT accredited abattoir.

### **National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS)**

NLIS draft business rules were presented and discussion is ongoing. SCA supports the ongoing development of the national business rules based on mob-based movement recording underpinned by visual tags and a correctly completed NVD. The program should not be delayed pending further developments from the NLIS (Sheep & Goats) Business Plan process.

### **Sheepmeat Industry Strategic Plan (SISP)**

SCA is currently developing the SISP 2010 -2015. A questionnaire was sent out widely, seeking input in preparation for a cross sectoral workshop to be held on 24/25 May in Sydney. The SISP will be launched at LambEx in Perth in August 2010.

### **Research Development and Extension**

Angus Hobson & Ian Johnsson MLA discussed the changes in extension practice where 'industry good' extension will continue to be offered as a service but provision of information to individual businesses will be on a user pays basis. They are currently working with State DPI's to develop methods of getting maximum efficiency in extension with the limited resources available.

### **Productivity Commission Review**

The Council was briefed on plans to develop a SCA submission to the Productivity Commission's call for input into the Review of Rural Development Corporation's. SCA will be working with a consortium of peak councils as well as NFF and MLA in the development of the submission.

### **Risk Management for sheepmeat producers**

Peter Weeks (MLA) & Rob Herrmann (Ag Concepts) discussed with council an initiative to develop risk management strategies for lamb producers. SCA is supportive of further development of the risk management program in the form of trade rules and workshop programs but only on the proviso that there is strong commitment from processors.

### **Australian Renderers Association (ARA)**

The ARA gave a presentation to council on issues affecting their business. Rendering of ovine products is estimated to be worth \$190m annually. Coloured tags and animal health products such as mineral bullets and drench capsules are adding costs to their business as they are considered contaminants in meal and other products targeting the high-end pet food export market.

### **Livestock Production Assurance**

Council had preliminary discussions on how to fund the LPA program into the future following a request from the LPA Advisory Committee to consider the matter. This will need further discussion with other affected peak councils such as CCA, ALFA & GICA.

There was some confusion as to how Agrisure, LPA & Flockcare fit together and it was agreed that this needs to be discussed with MLA.

NSW Farmers' put forward a suggestion on improved communication of the biosecurity message. It was agreed that the concept was sound and that mechanisms should be explored to determine the most appropriate way to reinforce the on-farm biosecurity message.

Further detail/clarification is available from your SCA Councillor, or the SCA Office, see [www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au](http://www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au)