



Sheepmeat Council of Australia held a General Meeting at the Agforce office, Brisbane, QLD, on Thursday 11th and Friday 12th August 2011.

President's Report

The President outlined meetings and issues since the last Council meeting in May. Live exports had occupied significant time. Council has taken an active role to ensure the sheep industry was not adversely affected by the protocols developed, as it was recognised that the standards being put in place for cattle would form the basis of protocols for all export markets. The President also reported on recent RMAC and SAFEMEAT Partners meetings and the VFF Conference.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The CEO also commented on input to live export issues, especially on traceability. Kat Ferme has commenced as the Senior Policy Officer- Animal Health and Welfare. Heidi Dennis finished as the Media and Communications officer with Sheepmeat Council on Friday 5th August 2011. Applications to replace Heidi closed on Friday the 12th August. The CEO also commented on the likely negatives associated with any early harvest package for the Doha Round.

Live Trade

Kate Joseph and Ron Cullen gave Council an update on the developments after the *Four Corners* program on Live Exports. A Sheep Industry Government working group was formed in July to develop the regulatory framework around the supply chains. Submissions from SCA were made to both the Senate Inquiry and the Bill Farmer review. The Senate hearing into Live Exports has been conducted over recent weeks. The two private member bills will be presented to the House on the 18th August. The council was informed of upcoming campaigns and rallies from animal activist groups over the next week leading up to the vote of the bills. Kate Joseph gave a presentation on her trip to the Middle East for the MENA awards and to meet with importers.

Sheep Standards and Guidelines

The resolutions put forward from a meeting in March between Australia Animal Welfare Strategy advisory group, Industry and Government regarding Industry concerns with the Standards and Guidelines has been signed off by PISC. A teleconference was held on 9th August to inform stakeholders of the PISC endorsement and to ask respective councils to seek reengagement in the process. Council is waiting for a final copy of the resolutions before confirming their approach.

A Guide to Best Husbandry in Sheep

The final draft has been circulated to stakeholders and Council agreed to the completion of the document.

Australia Health Australia (AHA) Industry Reserves

AHA asked for confirmation of the level of reserves to be held by AHA on behalf of industry. Council resolved that 90-110% of yearly expenditure be held in reserves.

Trilamb

Trilamb continues to be a valuable partnership between NZ, USA and Australia. The next meeting is scheduled for NZ in November 2011. The President, Vice President and Chief Executive Officer will attend.

SFO Resolutions

Tasmania Farmers' and Graziers' Association put forward a resolution regarding the availability of Footrot vaccine. Coopers Footvax® importation into Australia ceased last year under instruction from the Chief

Veterinary Officer, as it contains USA bovine bone material. Two projects are currently investigating potential vaccine avenues. Further information regarding the two projects, their technical creditability, and control program options will be investigated and presented to Council for discussion about future direction.

Information Nucleus

Rob Banks, MLA, presented to Council on the Sheep Information Nucleus which has been funded through the Sheep CRC. Given the success of the nucleus and the future benefits from continuing the project Council supported the continuation of the project and will review funding needs in February 2012.

Livestock Production Assurance (LPA)

The LPA Advisory Committee is working on increased commitment to LPA by producers. There is a move towards electronic National Vendor Declarations and the committee is also looking at whether to allow the continued use of 'old' NVD forms.

National Arbovirus Monitoring Scheme (NAMP)

Council expressed concern over the budget for 2012/13 as government's seek to reduce their share of funding;. Discussion was held regarding the options for future funding of this project.

Bluetongue

Information from a Bluetongue *Culicoides* workshop held in Geelong in February has previously been provided to Council. Advice had been sought as to the process for dealing with the recommendations from the workshop. The recommendations are to go to the Animal Health Committee (AHC) for consideration.

Southern Australia Meat Research Council (SAMRC)

SAMRC has been established as part of the structures that supports the RD&E strategies. A representative from SCA will be determined on a meeting by meeting basis according to the host state for each meeting.

Climate Change

Information was provided to Council regarding the carbon tax. SCA will remain opposed to the carbon tax based on the additional costs to sheepmeat production which will erode competitiveness in international markets. At present agricultural fuel is exempt from the carbon tax but there is concern that the situation could change and add significant additional costs to farm business.

National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS)/National Vendor Declaration (NVD)

The alpaca association has expressed their interest in becoming a part of the sheep and goats NLIS scheme. Discussion was held regarding trials testing accredited tags for longevity.

National Farm Biosecurity Reference Manual - Grazing Livestock Production

The development of an extensive industries biosecurity document has been in progress for 2 years. The final reference manual draft has been endorsed by council for circulation to the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement members. This document will be a reference for industry use only and a second less detailed document for circulation to producers will be developed.

Pilot Sheep Handling Training Course

Ian McColl provided feedback on the sheep handling training course managed by AHA. Some issues exist with the detail and delivery but it will be a valuable resource for industry.

OJD Management Plan Review

Evan Sargeant provided councilors with confidential information regarding the OJD Review and future recommendations for the program. Council discussed options for the future of the OJD management program. SCA will work with WPA to provide information and recommendations for public consultation by the beginning

of September. A discussion regarding the value of the abattoir monitoring program and e-surveillance was held in conjunction with the OJD conversation, with SCA supporting the program but noting the need to increase the feedback available to producers. Council also noted that in February 2012, Australia will be hosting the International Colloquium of Paratuberculosis (ICP).

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)

Scott Hansen, Managing Director, MLA, addressed Council about the future objectives of MLA. He identified a need to review the breadth of issues that MLA has been involved in with a view to “getting back to core business” and clarifying roles and responsibilities, especially with peak councils. He reinforced the need for MLA to concentrate on the two priority areas of increasing demand and market access and to invest in R & D for tools to increase profitability.

Livestock Biosecurity Network

A Network of staff to assist peak councils in implementation of biosecurity, animal health and animal welfare programs and to be an information source to producers has been put forward to all peak Councils. Extension has been noted consistently as an issue in the Industry. Councilors were in agreement that we need further work in this area but were not in agreement that the proposal represented best value for money or most effective way of achieving the outcome. Further discussion with CCA and WPA is needed.

National Management Group (NMG) and the Consultative Committee of Emergency Animal Disease (CCEAD) Training

Training is required to ensure all appropriate staff are trained to fill the positions required for emergency animal disease response obligations. Ian McColl will attend the upcoming NMG training and Kat Ferme will attend CCEAD training in September.

Sheepmeat Industry Strategic Plan

The strategic plan has been circulated to producers at MLA forums and is available to the public. Planning has commenced to undertake a review of the SISF early in 2012.

Lambex

SCA supports LambEx to be held in Bendigo on the 28th and 29th June 2011.

Future meetings

The next SCA Council meeting will be held in Longreach, Qld on the 15th, 16th, and 17th of November in conjunction with the MLA AGM.