



Victorian  
Farmers  
Federation

Livestock

# the Stock Standard

Newsletter of the Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group

June 2017

## Rural Rates – Fight for Fair

### Ararat Council decision and Meeting

During the Rating Strategy process for 2017 Ararat Council put two proposals for public consideration at its May 16 meeting. One suggested the farm differential rate remain at 55 per cent and the other recommending a rate rise to 75 per cent. Instead, the Council accepted a fresh and unanticipated motion to abolish differential rates altogether.

On 22 May more than 150 local farmers attended a Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) hosted event to discuss the abolition of the rural rate differential. Since then, a dedicated Ararat rates campaign has commenced, proudly supported by the VFF.

We have put up a new rates page on our website [vff.org.au](http://vff.org.au), with resources for farmers.

### Take action locally

1. Phone your local Councillor
2. Write to the Council – see supporting material on website for suggested wording
3. Support others in the community who are preparing formal submissions
4. Write to your local State Government MP
5. Attend local public meetings that address the issue of rates
6. Keep in touch with us – contact us at [members@vff.org.au](mailto:members@vff.org.au) and let us know if there are any rate related issues in your area
7. Sign the Farmers.org petition and share with your community.

### Important dates to remember

- 2 June** Submissions close
- 6 June** Council meeting – have your say in person
- 27 June** Final vote on differential rates

### What's new since the meeting?

#### VFF action

- ▶ We have sent a submission to the Ararat Council
- ▶ Our social media has reached more than 16,000 people and counting with our VFF text messages have been sent to local members, with supporting resources
- ▶ We have sought a meeting with Local Government Minister Natalie Hutchins
- ▶ We have partnered with Australian Farmers to run a campaign to overturn the rates decision - any farmer in Australia can make a submission opposing the rate hike by visiting [www.farmers.org/raterort](http://www.farmers.org/raterort) and following the prompts

#### Ararat local action

- ▶ An local group has set up a Facebook group
- ▶ Local meetings have been held with farmers groups and engagement with council
- ▶ Council has held consultation meetings
- ▶ A number of local submissions are underway
- ▶ A local group has drafted a submission to attach your name to, if you can't submit your own



### Inside this issue

- ▶ Q Fever survey Uni of Sydney
  - ▶ Peak livestock body opens Council election process
  - ▶ End of the JBAS transition period
  - ▶ Activist RSPCA needs to stay off farms, says VFF
  - ▶ LHBV Workshops - Meredith and Yea
  - ▶ \$10 million approved for DEXA installations
  - ▶ Upcoming Livestock Policy Forums
- ▶ Newspaper coverage - see VFF media release on website and attached coverage in The Ararat Advertiser
  - ▶ A number of local residents have phoned and written to their councillors.

### Gannawarra Shire

The Gannawarra Shire has also proposed changes to the dryland rates differential, which will mean a 7.6% increase on rates for farmers.

We have written to the Council to support farmers and oppose the proposal. One of the concerns is that we see a 'domino effect' from the redistribution of the rates burden onto farmers.

Visit [vff.org.au](http://vff.org.au) for further information on Rural Rates

# Q Fever survey Uni of Sydney

You are invited to take part in a research study about the awareness amongst Australian dairy and beef cattle farmers about the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Australian dairy and beef cattle farmers regarding Q fever.



The findings from this study will help identify areas for further research and assist in developing supplementary material for dairy and beef cattle producers.

Participation will involve completing an anonymous online questionnaire which should take no longer than 20 minutes.

This study is confidential and you cannot be identified from your responses.

A Participant Information Sheet containing further information on the study is provided at the start of the questionnaire.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this research. The survey closes on the 30th of June, 2017.

Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VicBeefQF>

Regards

Principal Investigators on behalf of the research team

**Dr Katrina Bosward**

Email: [katrina.bosward@sydney.edu.au](mailto:katrina.bosward@sydney.edu.au)  
Ph: 02 9351 1756

**Dr Guy Weerasinghe**

Email: [gwee3442@uni.sydney.edu.au](mailto:gwee3442@uni.sydney.edu.au)

## Peak livestock body opens Council election process

Farmers with passion and vision are being encouraged to put their hands up for a chance to lead the livestock industry.

The Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group has called for nominations to stand for election to its policy council – in the Goulburn Broken, West Gippsland, Glenelg, North Central and Mallee regions.

“Representing the VFF is a big responsibility but it’s also an opportunity for people who are passionate about promoting a fair deal for agriculture to step up, lead the way and make a real difference,” Livestock Group President Leonard Vallance said.

The VFF Livestock Group has had an outstanding record of success, being involved in frontline negotiations with industry and government bodies to improve animal welfare, livestock traceability and market access.

The Group also won praise for its biosecurity extension program, which educates livestock producers on adopting animal health and production practices that improve farm profitability and animal welfare.

“The current council is filled with proactive and dedicated livestock producers who have all played a role in the Livestock Group’s success,” Mr Vallance said.

“We’re encouraging anyone to apply who feels they have what it takes to join the team and represent the views of their region.”

Nominations must be lodged with VFF CEO and addressed to Farrer House, Level 3, 24-28 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000, or [returningofficer@vff.org.au](mailto:returningofficer@vff.org.au) no later than 5:00pm, Tuesday July 4 2017.

## Livestock Health and Biosecurity Events

### Stock up: a practical guide to what's next

Where: Werrimull

When: Tuesday 25 July, 2017

### Stock up: a practical guide to what's next

Where: Newlyn

When: Wednesday 6 September, 2017

### Stock up: a practical guide to what's next

Where: Wilaura

When: Tuesday 22 August, 2017



# End of the JBAS transition period

July 1st 2017 will see the end of John’s Beef Assurance Score (JBAS) transition period.

What this mean for producers with ‘beef only’ herds:

- ▶ A property with no biosecurity plan in place by the end of June 2017 will revert to a J-BAS 0, potentially locking them out of markets reliant on the J-BAS scoring system.
- ▶ A property wishing to retain a JBAS 6 must have a biosecurity plan in place by the end of June 2017, otherwise they will drop to a J-BAS 0. For many producers this will give them the flexibility to increase their score for future trading options.

- ▶ A property wishing to retain a J-BAS 7 must have a biosecurity plan in place that is reviewed by a registered veterinarian and undertake a herd check test every 3 years.

Animal health Australia have developed a number of tools which help producers develop a biosecurity plan that will be accepted Australia-wide. Visit [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au) for details.

Livestock Biosecurity Network, in partnership with Livestock Health & Biosecurity, has also developed a webinar outlining John’s disease and the ins and outs of the new JBAS system. This can be found on the LBN website at [www.lbn.org.au](http://www.lbn.org.au).

For more info contact Patrick Kluver, LBN on 0499 077 213 or Catherine James or Kimberley Henman, VFF on 1300 882 833 or email [lhbv@vff.org.au](mailto:lhbv@vff.org.au)

## Activist RSPCA needs to stay off farms, says VFF

The RSPCA cannot regulate the farm sector while it continues to lobby against the very industries it wants to police, a parliamentary inquiry into the animal welfare group heard yesterday.

The Victorian Farmers Federation told the inquiry the undisputed authority to regulate commercial farming zones needed to stay with the State Government through Agriculture Victoria, while the RSPCA should stick to watching over household pets.

Appearing before the committee, VFF Egg Group Vice President Brian Ahmed said the Victorian agriculture sector applied voluntary quality assurance programs, but farmers weren’t being given due credit for maintaining an outstanding level of animal welfare.

“It is in a farmer’s best interest to ensure we have strict animal welfare practices

in place, because we’re trying to run businesses and our livelihoods depend on it,” Mr Ahmed said.

“We get a lot of pleasure out of producing food and feeding people, but our jobs are complicated when the RSPCA is constantly walking onto our farms, judging our processes and accusing us of being cruel when we’re following certified animal welfare guidelines.”

Mr Ahmed said the strained relationship between farmers and the RSPCA stemmed from campaigns the animal welfare group ran against several agricultural industries, including the live export and caged egg industries.

“The situation we have at the moment is that the RSPCA is confused about the role they want to play – do they want to be regulators or do they want to be activists? They can’t be both,” he said.

“It is absolute hypocrisy to attack legal industries and actively campaign to shut

down industries that aren’t cruel by the RSPCA’s own standards.”

VFF Livestock President Leonard Vallance, appearing alongside Mr Ahmed before the inquiry, said the livestock industries paid \$7 million through the research body Meat and Livestock Australia to investigate the best animal health and welfare practices.

“Australia is the only country where producers pay directly to an industry funded body to get animal welfare outcomes and it’s something that makes our farmers proud,” he said.

“But animals that are reared for productive purposes will always have different lives to animals that sit on a couch and watch television with you.

“Too many RSPCA inspectors don’t understand the difference between domestic and productive animals and it leads to unfair and inaccurate allegations against farmers who are doing the right thing.”

## LHBV Workshops - Meredith and Yea



# \$10 million approved for DEXA installations



Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) will invest up to \$10 million to co-fund the installation of DEXA objective measurement systems in red meat processing plants following multiple requests to accelerate the adoption of the technology.

Under the project, MLA will work with willing partners to develop a single scientific measurement of lean meat yield – and systems to collect and use data across supply chains for future research and development in genetics, animal health and husbandry, processing automation and other productivity improvements on and off farm.

MLA Managing Director Richard Norton said the DEXA installations would be funded via matching contributions from participating processors and MLA Donor Company (MDC).

Mr Norton said MLA had already received project submissions from Gundagai Meat Processors, Frewstal Pty Ltd, Wagstaff Cranbourne Pty Ltd and Teys Australia, but also invited expressions of interest from other beef and sheepmeat processors.

“This project is an important part of MLA’s investment in the research and development of objective measurement systems that our red meat and livestock industry can use to make precise assessments and better commercial decisions,” Mr Norton said.

“It will enable supply chains and the businesses within them to drive new efficiencies, generate more value and better meet market demands, which ultimately improves our industry’s international competitiveness.”

Mr Norton said MLA was still working with the industry’s peak councils on its proposal to install stage one of the DEXA technology into all those AUS-MEAT registered slaughter facilities in Australia who wanted it.

“This \$10 million project that we’ve announced today is funded through the MDC and simply allows MLA and those companies who want to get on with implementing DEXA to do so,” Mr Norton said.

“While the DEXA technology is ready for commercial application, its adoption does herald a transformation in the way our industry has done business for many decades and it’s not surprising that industry representatives are carefully considering the options.

“If the industry’s peak councils and processors do decide to accelerate the adoption of objective carcass measurement across the industry through an investment of producer levies, we can do so.”

**Processors wishing to submit an expression of interest for co-funding the installation of a DEXA system should contact [ssarling@mla.com.au](mailto:ssarling@mla.com.au).**

## Upcoming Livestock Policy Forums

### Bairnsdale

When: 20 June

Where: Bairnsdale RSL Club

### Omeo

When: 21 June

Where: Golden Age Motel

### RSVP essential

Phone: 1300 882 833

Email: [members@vff.org.au](mailto:members@vff.org.au)



**Disclaimer:** This publication is provided in good faith and as a guide only. It may be of assistance to you, but the VFF Livestock Group does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or consequence that may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

### VFF Livestock Group

Farrer House 24-28 Collins Street Melbourne 3000 | ABN 67 079 980 304  
Ph. 1300 882 833 | Fax. 03 9207 5500 | E-mail. [vff@vff.org.au](mailto:vff@vff.org.au) | [www.vff.org.au](http://www.vff.org.au)

**Key Contacts:** David Picker 9207 5547 or 0455 075 010

Kate Phillips 03 9207 5606, Livestock Health and Biosecurity 5444 9777

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, & Twitter:



[@vfflivestockgroup](https://www.instagram.com/vfflivestockgroup)



[@vff\\_livestock](https://twitter.com/vff_livestock)



Victorian  
Farmers  
Federation

Livestock