

Victorian
Farmers
Federation

Livestock

the Stock Standard

Newsletter of the Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group

October 2017

Victorian farmers uphold animal welfare standards not more bureaucracy

The Victorian Farmers Federation is the key stakeholder representing agricultural animal industries and is disappointed with the lack of consultation on the establishment of Animal Welfare Victoria.

The VFF supports a farming community that upholds the highest level of animal welfare and continues to advocate for good animal health and welfare outcomes.

"Farm animal industries already adhere to QA programs. These programs involve extension, education and include monitoring and enforcement through commercial incentives and supplier obligations", said David Jochinke, VFF President.

"These industry activities are complementary to the regulatory controls and meet community and international expectations".

"We reflect Australia's position as a leader in modern, sustainable and scientifically based welfare practices".

The State Government announcement yesterday to establish Animal Welfare Victoria will simply add more cost and more bureaucracy to a system that is already working.

Agricultural animal industries are already engaged with Agriculture Victoria and the State Government on animal welfare through the Livestock Industry Consultative Committee (LICC).

The LICC consists of representatives from all farm animal industries, processors, transporters, saleyards, agents and regulators including Agriculture Victoria, PrimeSafe and Dairy Food Safe Victoria and is chaired by the Chief Veterinarian Officer of Victoria.

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"Unfortunately the RSPCA walked away from this committee some time ago", said Mr Jochinke.

"And now it appears the State Government is bowing to an activist agenda by establishing an entity that places all animals under the one umbrella".

"Animal industries need to remain separated in order to achieve the best welfare outcomes".

"We look forward to meeting Minister Pulford to discuss the future of animal welfare in Victoria".

The VFF is calling for further investment into LICC to generate scientific research that underpins legislation and protects access to overseas markets and reinforces Australia's international leadership in farm animal welfare.

Lamb Definition Public Consultation

The Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) is consulting with producers and supply chain stakeholders to determine whether the current definition of lamb requires changing. SCA has released the SCA Lamb Definition Consultation Paper 2017 for more information.

To read more visit: www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au/lamb-definition



Q FEVER

**IT'S SERIOUS.
IT'S SPREADING.
AND EVERY
LIVESTOCK WORKER
IS AT RISK.**

There has been a major surge in cases of Q Fever right across Australia, putting anyone who works with livestock at risk. The disease is carried by animals like cattle, sheep and goats and can result in serious illness when passed onto humans. This can range from extreme flu-like symptoms that last from two to six weeks, to chronic conditions that require hospitalisation and can lead to long-term complications.

TALK TO YOUR GP ABOUT A Q FEVER VACCINATION.

The only certain way to avoid becoming infected is to be vaccinated. If you are a farmer, work in an abattoir, transport animals or have any other employment associated with livestock, talk to your GP or contact the Australian Q Fever Register to find an accredited vaccinator.



JUST CALL **1300 882 833** OR VISIT www.qfever.org

What's going on with LPA?



STAND BY WHAT YOU SELL

Feeling confused by all the discussion about the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program and biosecurity? You're not alone! Let's sort through the changes being implemented by industry through MLAs Integrity Systems Company.

Am I even part of LPA?

LPA is the Australian red meat industry's Livestock Production Assurance program.

If you use NVDs you are accredited under the LPA program. Your NVD book displays the LPA logo.

Being accredited means you agree to abide by the seven rules and standards, a commitment to undertake specific practices that mean Australian red meat is safely and ethically produced.

What do I need to do and when?

From 1 October two new modules have been introduced to the LPA program: animal welfare and biosecurity. Familiarise yourself with the requirements for these modules as outlined in the information pack sent to you from the Integrity Systems Company.

In short:

- For the new animal welfare requirements know where to find the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines, and make sure your livestock handling is consistent with the standards and guidelines.

- For the new biosecurity requirements you need to have a farm biosecurity plan in place to minimise the risk of introducing and spreading infectious diseases, pests and weeds.

You also have to renew your accreditation to the program every three years by completing a short assessment and paying a fee. You will be notified two months before your reaccreditation is due.

You can still sell stock between now and when you're accreditation is due for renewal.

What else is available with the changes?

- Electrical National Vendor Decelerations (eNVDs) are freely available online, with NVD books remaining available for purchase.
- Optional LPA Learning is available to help you understand the practices required to meet LPA requirements and prepare for the assessment.

So what does a biosecurity plan look like?

Biosecurity plan templates are a starting point and designed to help you feel comfortable meeting the new biosecurity requirements.

You can simply complete the template sent to you, or you might be able to tweak your existing record keeping methods such as diary notes, spreadsheets, software or apps to capture the relevant information.

It doesn't need to be difficult or time consuming. Our tip is to make sure it's practical and relevant to your farm.

But I don't have access to a computer or the internet...

You can purchase a hard copy of the optional LPA Learning, and when you're due to complete reaccreditation you can do the assessment and pay the fee over the phone.

For more information head to VFF's Livestock Health & Biosecurity VICTORIA's www.lhbv.org.au or contact Catherine James or Kimberley Henman on 1300 020 163 or lhbv@vff.org.au

Land use planning systems need land use tools

The Victorian Farmers Federation applauds the State Government's approach to new planning reforms that largely moves away from feed based definitions.

The VFF supports the new grazing definition that allows producers to build infrastructure needed to manage animal welfare in emergencies without a planning permit. The clear land use definitions relating to piggeries and poultry farms are also encouraging.

"However a planner needs clear definitions on what requires a permit and what farming situation doesn't", said David Jochinke, VFF President.

"Planning is about land use and development not land management and production systems".

Some of the proposed planning changes are confusing and counter intuitive.

Reducing bushfire risk in the Green Wedge A Zone is important. The role of grazing

in these areas is a valuable contribution to community safety – the VFF does not support the requirement for a grazing planning permit in these areas as it increases the red tape unnecessarily.

Mr Jochinke said, "We do not support the planning permit exemption for some piggeries and poultry farms for a number of reasons. Thirty three pigs is a large number of pigs even on five hectares. We feel these are the questions to be asked of all pig and poultry farms given these aren't grazing animals and will always need additional feed".

The State Government is hosting a series of workshops for farmers, community representatives and planners – Planning for sustainable animal industries – in October.

"We encourage all farmers to attend one of the workshops that are currently being held across Victoria to understand the impact of the proposed changes and we are keen to hear from farmers how these planning reforms will work for them", said Mr Jochinke.

Further information including dates and locations of the planning reform workshops can be found online Planning for sustainable animal industries.

The VFF will be providing a formal response to the State Government proposed planning reforms in November. Any feedback about how the proposed changes affect you should be sent to policyteam@vff.org.au



Essential steps before the fire season

Vehicles, equipment and hay

Double check that spark arrestors on machinery are working and efficient. Make sure chainsaws are free from faults.

Have water fire extinguishers or knapsack spray pumps (minimum 9 litres) available that can be carried by any person using farm equipment or machinery.

Have a safety strategy in place for storing and monitoring hay - purchase a moisture metre if necessary.

Make sure hay is fully cured before bailing.

If you have private firefighting equipment, conduct a 'refresher' session with family and employees to make sure everyone can use it.

Make sure that there are no gaps between the cladding and the ground or slab of your sheds to prevent embers getting inside.



Fuel loads and stock

Reduce fuel loads around assets (house blocks, sheds and fences) and create strategic fuel breaks.

Apply to the relevant authority if you need to remove native vegetation or manage fuel on roadsides.

Create a heavily grazed area where stock can be moved during a bushfire situation.

Conduct a stocktake of feed, animals and fencing before the fire season and keep a copy of records off your property.

Permits and laws

Make a list of legal restrictions (Fire Danger Period and Total Fire Ban) relevant to your property. Display it or keep it handy so everyone on your property can refer to it often and easily.

Check with your council if local laws are in place for lighting fires, burning off or using incinerators.

Apply for a Schedule 13 permit from your local council if you intend to burn off weeds, stubble or vegetation during the FDP, or a schedule 14 permit if you intend to use fire for other purposes (e.g. machinery).

Access for firefighters

Make sure your property name or number is clearly visible so emergency services can identify it easily when approaching the entrance.

Check access tracks around your property. Consider if access for fire trucks can be improved by clearing vegetation, signposting dead ends or creating turning circles.

Make sure water supplies around your property are clearly marked in case emergency services need to access them.

Planning

Have a plan for horses and livestock. A large well-grazed area where they can move freely, with a supply of water, is the safest. Remove all gear from horses and always keep them contained on your property, they are at serious risk on roads where visibility will be poor.

Have a routine in place for fire risk days (moving stock and limiting or postponing machinery use, switching off electric fences). Make sure everyone on your property is aware of it.

Fire Danger Ratings are a good way to decide when to leave. They are not a weather forecast – they tell you how dangerous a fire would be if one started. As the ratings increase, so does the risk of a fast moving and uncontrollable fire.

If you plan to stay and defend a building during a bushfire, take steps to establish a water supply of at least 10,000 litres (independent of the mains supply)

Download a farm fire safety check list
cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare

Source: cfa.vic.gov.au

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