



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

Livestock

the Stock Standard

Newsletter of the Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group

June 2018

Faster turnaround times coming for sheep DNA testing

Turnaround times for sheep DNA test processing continue to improve following upgrades to Neogen Australasia's processing facility at the University of Queensland, Gatton.

Over the last six months there has been a significant reduction in turnaround times, which were as high as 12 weeks last year when blood samples were being sent to the United States for processing.

Chief executive of the Cooperative Research Centre for Sheep Industry Innovation (Sheep CRC), Professor James Rowe, said access to a state-of-the-art genomics laboratory within Australia had overcome one of the biggest problems that industry had faced in developing commercial scale use of DNA technologies.

"While sending samples to the US for processing provided a high quality result at the right price, there were always unpredictable issues with postal, courier and customs services," Prof. Rowe said.

"Fast turnaround time is particularly important in sheep breeding operations, with increasing use of young rams and narrow windows for important selection decisions. Having certainty in turnaround times therefore represents a game changer for many breeders."

The Sheep CRC board yesterday toured Neogen's new laboratories, where they heard that producers who provide DNA samples using Tissue Sampling Units (TSUs), rather than the traditional blood cards, would be the immediate beneficiaries of the improved turnaround times.

"During the laboratory tour and our meetings afterwards, it was very clear that TSUs are the best method for delivering processing efficiencies for DNA testing," Sheep CRC chief executive James Rowe said.

"The automated laboratory robotics used to handle the TSUs contribute to greater precision and faster processing – contributing to consistently superior data quality and success rate when compared to blood cards."

New data from Sheep Genetics shows the impact that introduction of genomic technologies has had on the rate of genetic gain within the Australian flock, and the associated improvement in flock productivity.

For a number of Merino flocks that started using genomic information when it was first introduced in 2011, the rate of genetic gain based on the Merino Plus index has increased by 39% and for Terminal flocks the increase has been between 11% for the Carcase Plus index and 47% when including eating quality traits.

Increased rates of gain equate to as much as an additional 35c/ewe/year over and

Inside this issue

- Animal welfare and biosecurity now part of LPA audits
- VFF Livestock Group Nominees
- VFF hold elections for President and Vice-President
- How much is calf scours costing you?
- New Class O Vehicle and Field Bin Gazettes
- Rural Crime – Livestock, Property Theft
- NAB Rising Champions Initiative 2018
- Livestock Manager - Farewell

above the rates of gain being achieved in the pre-DNA era.

"Use of the new DNA technologies is increasing rapidly with the numbers of both parentage and genomic tests more than doubling over the last year. Seeing the CRC's blue sky research transformed into standard practice for leading Australian sheep producers is a great outcome and a result of our productive relationship with Neogen," Prof. Rowe said.

Source: sheepcrc.org.au



Neogen Australasia general manager Russell Lyons discusses the advantages of processing DNA taken from Tissue Sampling Units during a laboratory tour by the Sheep CRC board.

Animal welfare and biosecurity now part of LPA audits

On-farm animal welfare and biosecurity management practices are now part of the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program's random audits.

These two requirements were added to the five existing requirements – property risk assessment, safe and responsible animal treatments, safe livestock feed, preparation for dispatch, and livestock transactions and movements – in October 2017, and are now being included in the 2000 audits carried out nationally each year.

AUS-MEAT auditor Brendan Ryan conducts LPA audits from Werribee in south western Victoria to Naracoorte in South Australia, and up to the NSW border. Since February, he has been covering animal welfare and biosecurity as part of the audits.

"It's not hard to meet the requirements and most farmers are on the right track," said Brendan.

"They just need to spend some more time demonstrating what they are doing.

"When they are notified about an audit, my advice to producers is 'Don't panic – just

read the information pack carefully and you'll know what to do."

To meet the biosecurity requirements, every LPA accredited producer needs to have a Farm Biosecurity Plan in place and implement this on their farm.

"The Biosecurity Plan doesn't need to be a massive document. Producers just need to think about the things they do with regards to biosecurity on their own farm, and document it using a template"

"Farmers just need to think about the things they do with regards to biosecurity on their own farm, and put this in the template. Its things farmers do every day - managing and recording the introduction and movement of livestock; controlling people, equipment and vehicles entering the property - where that's practical; and monitoring and managing the health of their livestock."

LPA accredited producers must also be able to demonstrate that their on-farm handling of livestock is consistent with the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines. Those responsible for livestock management need to have a copy of the Standards and Guidelines, be familiar with its content, complete the LPA Learning

module, and advise and oversee others handling livestock.

"Producers must be able to show they have completed appropriate training in animal welfare. They need to take a look at the LPA Learning module which asks practical questions about animal care. Complete the module, print out the completion certificate, and they'll make their auditor happy," said Brendan.

Resources are available to help producers meet LPA requirements for biosecurity and animal welfare:

- LPA Learning
- LPA audit check list
- LPA requirement #6: Biosecurity (fact sheet)
- LPA requirement #6: Biosecurity (video)
- LPA On-farm Biosecurity Plan (template)
- LPA requirement #7: Animal welfare (fact sheet)
- LPA requirement #7: Animal welfare (video)
- Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for sheep, cattle and goats

Source: mla.com.au

VFF Livestock Group Nominees

The VFF Livestock Group has 2 regions and additional councillor up for elections.

- Corangamite
- Wimmera
- Additional Councillor

The following nominees are:

VFF Livestock Election Nominations 2018	
Region/Position	Name
Additional Councillor	1. James Tehan
	2. Steve Harrison
	3. Peter Tischler
Corangamite	1. Chris Draffin
	2. Scott Young
Wimmera	1. Michael Craig
	2. Peter Tischler

Nominee Bio's are available at vff.org.au to view.

Voting

Ballot papers will be sent in the mail, please keep an eye out for these.

Postal voting period is open from 9 July – 13 July

Electronic voting period is open from 9 July – 18 July

The results will be announced at the VFF Conference on Thursday 19 July, Mercure Ballarat Hotel and Convention Centre.

Reminder: make sure you are a financial member by 29th June so you can vote for your new councillor.

2018 Victorian Farmers Federation Annual Conference



Date:

Thursday 19 & Friday 20 July

Location:

Mercure Ballarat Hotel & Convention Centre,

613 Main Rd, Golden Point VIC 3350

Know your vehicle load restraint obligations

Safely restraining your loads will be especially important under the new Chain of Responsibility laws.

The National Transport Commission has released some detailed guides on load restraints.

Heavy Vehicles

[https://www.ntc.gov.au/Media/Reports/\(9E12B22A-6156-41B0-F382-136A34520AF8\).pdf](https://www.ntc.gov.au/Media/Reports/(9E12B22A-6156-41B0-F382-136A34520AF8).pdf)

Please note: There is specific information on loading requirements for wool bales on **p.75 and livestock on p.133**

Light Vehicles

[https://www.ntc.gov.au/Media/Reports/\(EF72371E-CAE4-D691-C502-076DDEF53C0\).pdf](https://www.ntc.gov.au/Media/Reports/(EF72371E-CAE4-D691-C502-076DDEF53C0).pdf)



How much is calf scours costing you?



A recent MLA report has highlighted the cost of calf scours at \$23 million across southern Australia placing it in the top 10 economic diseases of beef cattle just behind grass tetany. It is thought around 80 per cent of farms have at least one case per year with 20 per cent of farms experiencing 15-30 per cent of calves affected. The perception is that the problem is getting worse as stocking rates increase.

Scours in young calves is caused by a number of viruses, bacteria and protozoa. Calf scours develop from an interaction between the age and immunity of the calf, and contamination of the environment.

Prevention is better than cure aims for healthy vigorous calves with good immunity in a low contamination environment.

Boost immunity

Vigorous calves with good immunity are achieved with good calf weights, low dystocia and good colostrum quality. All of these factors can be managed or improved by having females in condition score 2.5-3.5 on good pasture and managing heifer joining weights. If dystocia levels in heifers is greater than five per cent you need to do something.

Calves that need assistance, or who haven't sucked in the first six hours, can be tube fed 1L/20kg of colostrum. If you don't know how to do this, get instructions from someone who does.

There are also a number of multivalent vaccines that cover some, but not all, the common causes of calf scours. So if you have an outbreak, get your vet to diagnose what bug(s) are causing the problem on your farm and how to treat and prevent the disease.

Calves can be protected by colostrum, so heifers need to be fully vaccinated in the last third of pregnancy and boosted every year.

Reduce contamination

Calving paddocks can get heavily contaminated especially with sick calves in the nurse paddock, long calving periods or use of the same paddock year-after-year.

To reduce contamination, put stock into the calving paddock no later than two weeks before calving. A compact calving period, of 6 weeks for heifers and 9 weeks for cows, helps limit manure build-up. Consider drifting cows and calves off every few week to further reduce contamination.

Treatment

If you can catch an affected calf, it needs treatment. Clinical signs are associated with dehydration so rehydrating with fluids is essential. Antibiotics may help overcome bacterial scours so consult your vet and get a diagnosis before treating.

Take home messages:

- Scours is an important disease causing economic loss through calf deaths and reduced production.
- Get a diagnosis from your vet to identify the specific pathogens on your farm.
- Prevention is aimed at reducing contamination and having healthy calves.
- Vaccination in combination with management changes may help reduce the impact.
- Simple steps to decrease the impact of the disease have other production benefits as well.

For more information visit www.lhbv.org.au or contact at lhbv@vff.org.au or 1300 020 163.

Upcoming Events

Stock up: a practical guide to biosecurity

📍 Colac
📅 Wednesday 11 July
🕒 9.30am – 1.00pm

Stock up: a practical guide to biosecurity

📍 Dookie
📅 Tuesday 24 July
🕒 9.30am – 1.00pm

Stock up: a practical guide to biosecurity

📍 Edenhope
📅 Thursday 2 August
🕒 9.30am – 1.00pm

Stock up: a guide for small farm owners

📍 Lancefield
📅 Sunday 5 August
🕒 10.00am – 1.30pm

VFF hold elections for President and Vice-President

Victorian Farmers Federation CEO and Returning Officer, Stephen Sheridan, has announced elections for VFF President and Vice-President.

Voting will occur throughout July 2018 and in-person at the Victorian Farmers Federation Annual Conference. The results will be announced on the second day of the VFF Annual Conference on the 19th–20th July at the Mercure Ballarat Hotel & Convention Centre.

Nominations were received for President and Vice-President.

The nominees for VFF President are Mr Craig Ash and Mr David Jochinke.

The nominees for VFF Vice-President are Mr Craig Ash, Ms Emma Germano, and Mr Brett Hosking.

Candidate biographies will be available on the Victorian Farmers Federation website on the 25th June. The Victorian Farmers Federation intends to publish candidate videos and make them available to members on the VFF website.

Voting will be conducted electronically and via postal ballot for members without email contacts. The ballots will be posted from 2nd of July and must be posted back to the Returning Officer by 13th of July.

Electronic voting will begin on 9th of July and will close 18th of July. Members will also be able to vote in person on the first day of the VFF Annual Conference on the 19th of July.

New Class O Vehicle and Field Bin Gazettes

Moving augers, conveyors or field bins?

VicRoads has just released new Class O and Field Bin Exemption Notices which bring permissible light vehicle dimensions in line with the Class 1 Gazette.

For the new Class O Exemption Notice go to:
<http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2018/GG2018S236.pdf>

For the new Field Bin Exemption Notice go to:
<http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2018/GG2018S235.pdf>

Rural Crime – Livestock, Property Theft

An issue Aussie farmers across the state unfortunately deal with daily.

\$1.5 Million worth of Livestock is stolen across Victoria every year.

According to Vic Crime Statistics Agency, Livestock theft has nearly jumped 40 percent.

These statistics are alarming, there are also many cases not reported.

It is not only Livestock, we are also talking about, machinery, wool, hay, firearms, even \$40,000 worth of Bees has been reported stolen this year.

Where does this lead our farmers? Mental Health, Stress, changes in production and

management, community livelihoods. The VFF are working closely with the Vic Police - Agriculture Livestock Officer's (AGLO's). We are asking at the upcoming election for 50 dedicated, fully funded, rural based AGLO's, whose priority schedule has agricultural crime at the top and other forms of crime lower as well as any police procedure policy to be workshopped.

Always please make sure your farming communities look out for each other, neighbours and friends.

LOCK UP YOUR FARM ASSETS

- Check all machinery, firearms, vehicles, tools are secured
- Lock your house, cars, trucks
- Do not leave tools lying around the property that could be used as a break-in mechanism
- Have your property regularly checked
- Keep a watchful eye on suspicious vehicles
- Be mindful of your social media use when away
- Be observant and aware

Turn your information into intelligence, report to your local police station.

NAB Rising Champions Initiative 2018

The 2018 NAB Agribusiness Rising Champion Initiative applications are now open.

The NAB Agribusiness Rising Champion Initiative provides participants with the opportunity to network with some of Australia's key beef industry leaders and provide contacts that will contribute to participant's career progression within the beef industry.

Through the professional development workshop and attendance at the National Gala Dinner participants are given an insight into the Australian beef industry, Cattle Council of Australia operations, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) operations and network with industry representatives, sponsors, state farming

organisations and parliamentary figures. The opportunity to broaden their interpersonal skills throughout the workshop allows participants to market themselves and learn how to represent themselves in a professional and clear manner.

Forms can be downloaded at cattlecouncil.com.au or by contacting applications@cattlecouncil.com.au or (02) 6269 5600. Applications close on 29 June 2018.

For more information visit: <http://www.cattlecouncil.com.au/rising-champions>.



Sustainable Farm Families™

Better health, better understanding, better business

What is this?

An opportunity for all farm men, women, agricultural workers and their families over 18 years of age to attend the Sustainable Farm Families program.

The program provides FREE and thorough health checks to farmers, and encourages everyone to share information and experiences about looking after the health of themselves and their families, as well as of their animals and equipment.

20 & 21
August 2018

Community Care
Ray Sweeney Centre
45 Coster Street, Benalla

For more information contact:
Hannah Dolling (03) 5823 3281
Deb Smith (03) 5761 4500



Livestock Manager - Farewell

As this newsletter is sent out our Livestock Manager, David Picker, will be packing his last few boxes, to greener pastures in country Victoria.

The Livestock Group wish them well, and thank Dave for all the great work he has achieved for our members over the past 3 years.

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 | 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

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