



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

Livestock

the Stock Standard

Newsletter of the Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group

November 2018

An Update from VFF Land Management Team

The last few months have been a busy space in land management, and issues will continue throughout the caretaker period and over summer.

EPA – new legislation

After 30 years in operation the Environment Protection Act has been overhauled to move away from pollution response to prevention, and including human health impacts.

On 1 July 2019 all Victorians will be subject to a general duty to protect the environment. The VFF is working with EPA to ensure that there is clear guidance to industry as what meeting that duty will look like. We have advocated that not all agriculture is the same and existing industry standards and other regulatory systems, for example chemical handling, should be recognised as compliance with the general duty.

As agriculture is not a high risk sector we believe recognition of existing practices by the EPA is required so minimise opportunity for third party appeals.

Deer Management Strategy

The Victorian Government has released a draft Deer Management Strategy. While we are happy that there is now an attempt to

recognise the impact of deer and co-ordinate action, we believe that the strategy should not aim to “maintain” deer numbers and geographic extent but actively seek to reduce the number of deer and the impact of deer on agriculture. Properly funding Pest Plant and Animal programs is a key element of our election platform.

Strategic Bushfire Engagement / Emergency Preparedness

The VFF submitted on opportunities to improve regional strategic bushfire engagement. There should be a better understanding of agricultural industries and values and a more consistent approach to discussing issues under the State Emergency Management Act and Priorities.

For the past two years VFF has been advocating for greater understanding of agriculture in preparedness, response and recovery.

The President, CEO and Land Management Advisor recently met with the new Emergency Management Commissioner ahead of the summer fire season.

Our election platform includes seeking resolution over ‘property’ amongst emergency managers.

Sustainable Animal Industries

With the changes to planning definitions being implemented we are working with Agriculture Victoria to ensure that Councils fully understand the changes. This is critical in the face of a dry year as stock containment areas are clearly seen as part of a grazing operation. Guidance is being prepared to assist farmers and avoid confusion at Council.

Delivering ‘right to farm’ through the planning system is a key element of our election platform.

Solar / Renewable Energy

The Draft Solar Energy Facilities Guidelines have been placed on consultation. The

President and Land Management Advisor recently met with senior officers from Planning and Agriculture to identify opportunities to open dialogue on how to improve the planning guidelines.

The Land Management Committee is working on preparing a policy statement for consideration by Policy Council. This includes the need for a whole of government approach to renewable energy – planning, transmission lines / land access, agricultural values, infrastructure requirements / location, advice to applicants and advice to community as well as research on potential impacts and design to allow co-existence with productive agriculture.

Lisa Gervasoni

Senior Stakeholder Policy and Advocacy Advisor - Land Management and Planning

Livestock Councillors

President – Leonard Vallance

Vice – President – James Kirkpatrick

Wimmera – Michale Craig

Glenelg – Kate Dorahy

North Central – Ben Duxson

Corangamite – Scott Young

Goulburn Broken – Mark Ritchie

Mallee – Graham Maher

West Gippsland – Faye Tuchtan

North East – Peter Star

East Gippsland – Angus Zilm

Additional Councillor – Steven Harrison

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If you have any feedback on these or any other land management issue, please email policyteam@vff.org.au. Experiences and case studies really help us advocate for regulation that delivers for agriculture.

Victorian Election - Where are we at?

Candidate forums around the state

Counting down to the November 24 state election, the VFF's Delivering for Agriculture, Growing Communities campaign continued building momentum with a series of well attended candidate forums in key rural and regional electorates.

Starting in Bellarine (8/10), it was on to Polwarth (24/10), Bass (30/10), Ripon (31/10), Mildura (1/11), Shepparton (7/11), Ovens Valley (8/11), Morwell (13/11) and Euroa (14/11). The events have provided important opportunities for VFF members to question candidates on the issues important to them, with council rates, the appalling state of Victoria's rural and regional roads, reliable and affordable energy and telecommunications all featuring prominently.

How are parties and candidates delivering for agriculture?

While the VFF launched its campaign with the theme Delivering for Agriculture, Growing Communities back in July, as at the end of October party and candidate responses to the demands of our farmers had left a lot to be desired. To reflect this, the VFF on 31 October launched its state election scorecard indicating satisfaction ratings for the parties, and explanations on its www.deliveringforagriculture.org campaign website.

Below is a brief summary of party commitments relative to the VFF's key election asks as at 6 November 2018.

> VFF Ask: A fair and equitable rates system which doesn't see our farmers rated out of existence

Outcome: The Liberal Nationals on 31 October announced an elected Coalition government would prioritise an independent inquiry into rates, with rate caps to apply as the review is undertaken. VFF welcomed the announcement while also calling for more details and timelines.

The ALP on 6 November announced it too would undertake an inquiry into the council rating system if re-elected. To win bi-partisan support for a rates review is a credit to the success of the VFF campaign so far.

While commitments on a rates review from both the Coalition and ALP are welcome, the VFF is also seeking that promises go further and ensure a fairer deal for farmers within six months of the new term of government. We will be seeking further details and commitments from all parties.

> VFF Ask: \$6.2 billion over five years for fit-for-purpose roads in rural and regional Victoria

Outcome: There have been some announcements in this area, but the VFF is concerned they do not address the significant funding required across the state and may only provide 'small fixes' in some areas.

The ALP announced, on 25 October, a \$100 million "Fixing Country Roads program". Meanwhile the coalition on 30 October announced a \$1 billion investment over ten years in a new Road Fix Blitz program, comprising \$400 million for the Country Roads and Bridges program, another \$400 million for targeted road restoration and a \$200 million boost for general road maintenance.

> VFF Ask: \$155 million to develop a long-term energy plan

Outcome: There have been some announcements in this area however the VFF is looking for a long-term energy plan which ensures reliable, efficient, and affordable energy. The VFF is also concerned that there are planning rules in place to ensure productive agricultural land is not lost to housing new energy projects.

The ALP announced a 'microgrid' demonstration site at the Birchip Cropping Group. A Liberals Nationals Government has committed to supporting a "balanced energy mix that provides affordable and reliable power 24/7 – including coal, gas and renewables".

> VFF Ask: \$600 million to rid regional Victoria of blackspots to ensure farming communities have high speed internet and reliable phone access

Outcome: We have seen no announcements or commitments that we believe would deliver the necessary and timely improvements in mobile telephone reception or internet access in rural and regional Victoria.

> VFF Ask: \$10 million to build farm safety awareness

Outcome: There has been one positive announcement on Workplace, Health and Safety.

On 23 October, the ALP announced the "Smarter, Safer Farms Program" – \$10 million for farm safety and wellbeing initiatives to change farm safety culture and reduce on-farm deaths and injury.

> VFF Ask: \$13.5 million to deliver dedicated Agricultural Liaison Officers within the Victorian Police force

Outcome: There has been one positive announcement in relation to crime prevention.

On 19 July, the National Party committed to establishing a dedicated "Livestock and Rural Crime Squad" with 20 new specialist rural crime investigators.

> VFF Ask: \$18.3 million to reduce travel times to and from critical health care, appoint additional medical workers in rural and regional hospitals and expand mental health programs

Outcome: There has been some positive health announcement with potential to reach many rural and regional Victorians.

The current Government (ALP) has made several commitments around mental health support, including the extension of the "Looking over the Farm Gate" program which VFF manages. These announcements have been made primarily in response to the ongoing drought. The ALP has also announced funding for additional specialist appointments in rural and regional Victoria.

> VFF Ask: \$1.3 million to provide training for new entrants and upskill existing farmers in regulatory compliance and reporting, business skills, risk and financial management

Outcome: There has been one positive announcement on skills.

The ALP announced on 23 October, a \$10 million skills program, focussed on training in financial literacy, risk management, farm planning and adaptation to climate change.

Authorised by Stephen Sheridan, Victorian Farmers Federation, 24 Collins Street, Melbourne



Around the yards with James Kirkpatrick

Livestock Group – Vice President



From the slopes of Stockyard Hill, my wife and I run a family farm, producing wool, prime lambs and crop, twelve kilometres south of Beaufort. With the spring season closing in rapidly, we have been busy cutting hay and have dodged a bullet with limited frost damage to our cereal and oilseed crops.

We are up to date on all our animal husbandry practises for this time of year and our next task will be the first summer drench for sheep including Faecal Egg Counts.

At this time of year as a VFF Livestock Councillor, I have been out and about on various representative committees.

I am a representative on the Police Minister's Firearms Advisory Committee which typically meets three times annually, however we have battled getting a Labor politician to chair this committee.

One of the tasks we have successfully achieved through this committee is that the farmer's firearm registration will remain free. Other committees I am on include the Ballarat Sale Yards Advisory Committee and the Victorian Shearers and Shedhand Training Body. The VSSSTB receives most of it's funding from the AWI.

As part of the Livestock Group of the VFF I have attended various meetings in the last twelve months. Some of the meetings, I have attended include Stock Sense meetings at Beaufort, Ararat and Willaura, Geelong Saleyards Issue, Ripon Electorate Forum and EID Information sessions. It is important that VFF Livestock Councillors are out and about to talk to their farming colleagues to hear their concerns and give them up to date information regarding progress on issues.

The VFF has a standing representative of the board of Wool Producer's Australia. WPA is the peak industry body which deals with all the relevant issues in the wool industry including biosecurity, animal welfare, mulesing, and shearers and shed hand training.

WPA works alongside the research and development body the AWI. Due to my WPA involvement, I am also on the National Wool Forecasting and Production Committee which collates the information for exporters and processors of wool to quantify the qualities and volume of wool being produced by Aussie farmers annually.

I am also the WPA rep, for the NFF Farming Systems committee which delves into areas such as Landcare, animal welfare and farm chemical usage. In today's world we may be farmers, but we run important businesses, we produce food and fibre for the modern consumer.

This consumer is hungry for information around traceability, sustainability and farming practises – therefore making them king! The more information we can provide to the consumer, the more trusting of our products the consumer will be and this makes our businesses stronger and more competitive for the future!

Some of my top tips for my farming colleagues are:

1. Simply, fill out the National Vendor Declaration (NVD) properly when selling sheep.
2. Fill out the Animal Health Statement (pertaining to type of livestock) – it provides all the biosecurity information the purchasers needs to know.
3. Complete the National Wool Declaration (NWD), especially medullated fibre and your mulesing status section. The Buyer wants to know!
4. Embrace EID, use it well for traceability and production benefits to grow your livestock enterprise. Good Data makes for Good Decisions.

Wishing you a positive finish to the end of 2018.

(If you would like to contact a Livestock councillor email: livestock@vff.org.au)

Hay Storage

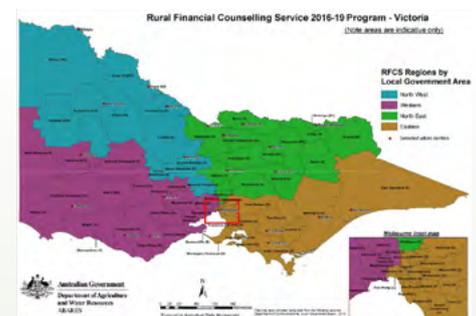
There have already been reports of hay catching on fire. Here are some recommendations for farmers storing hay:

- ▶ Regularly monitoring stored hay for signs of heating using a crow bar or temperature probe.
- ▶ Storing hay in a number of different locations around your farm and limit the size of the stacks. This will reduce the risk of losing all hay if a fire does occur.
- ▶ Protecting hay from rain, leaking roofs and spouts, and runoff.

The CFA has developed a useful factsheet:

<https://cdn.cfa.vic.gov.au/documents/20143/202133/Preventing+Haystack-Fires-2018.pdf/97608bba-9259-19c7-dbe8-c7cc1c8e249c>

https://www.vff.org.au/vff/Documents/131003_Hay%20handy%20hints_VFF.PDF



Rural Financial Counselling Service:

Do you have questions on what financial relief is available to you?

Contact your local rural financial service to answer your questions.

<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/drought/assistance/rural-financial-counselling-service/vic>

Stock Sense

Funded by the Cattle, Sheep and Goat Compensation Funds, and proudly delivered by VFF Livestock.

Why request a Commodity Vendor Declaration?

Commodity Vendor Declaration (CVD) forms are a valuable tool which can be used to determine the quality and integrity of fodder or feed purchased, so you know exactly what you're feeding your livestock.

A CVD identifies if feed or fodder contains chemical residues or restricted animal materials (RAM). It is a guarantee that you are purchasing safe feed that will not compromise the quality of the product further down the supply chain.

The following points are a guide to understanding the CVD and why it is important: RAM refers to meat and bone meal which can include poultry offal, dog food, feather or fish meal, and manures. RAM must not be fed to livestock due to the risk of mad cow disease.

Chemical residues may be found in feed or fodder if it was harvested during a withholding period or if the crop has been affected by spray drift. A signed CVD states whether or not this has occurred and if so, it will include details of the chemicals applied, allowing the recipient to make an informed decision.

A CVD also comes into play when completing a National Vendor Declaration (NVD). NVDs contain the question: have any stock in the consignment consumed any material that was still within a withholding period when harvested, collected or first grazed?



If the livestock vendor does not know the answer, they must tick yes. If feed has been provided that did not originate on the property and a CVD hasn't been provided, they must tick yes. This is to ensure that all withholding periods have been met and meat is safe for consumption.

By requesting and receiving a signed CVD when purchasing feed and fodder, you are playing your part in maintaining the integrity of Australia's red meat supply chain. If a supplier arrives without a completed CVD you can provide them with a blank form to complete, which can be downloaded from the Meat & Livestock Australia website www.mla.com.au.

PICs required for online stock sales

A quick reminder – in a move to strengthen livestock traceability through online sales, from the 5 September 2018 those selling livestock online must include their Property Identification Code (PIC) in the advert description. This includes advertisements on platforms such as Gumtree and Facebook.

If a livestock agent is involved in the sale then the PIC details are not required but the name and contact details of the agent must be included in the advert description.

For more information contact the Stock Sense team on **1300 020 163** or email stocksense@vff.org.au.

Small farmers STOCK UP in Nar Nar Goon

Last month, Stock Sense hosted 55 livestock owners for a Sunday morning workshop in Nar Nar Goon, 'Stock up: a guide for small farm owners'.

The producer-led project provides accessible livestock health and biosecurity information to all Victorian livestock owners, whether they own one or 100 animals. The goal is to help producers understand their role in biosecurity and how animal health and biosecurity practices can benefit their enterprise.

The Nar Nar Goon workshop was the second in a series of events targeted at small farmers in semi-rural areas. The morning included introductory presentations on the legal requirements of owning livestock, the

benefits of biosecurity, the how and where of selling livestock and tips for spotting and managing livestock disease.

Attendees braved the elements and took part in this interactive workshop where they had the opportunity to get all of their questions answered by industry professionals.

The crowd ranged from small farmers new to livestock to experienced land holders, including VFF livestock councillor Faye Tuchtan and VFF Cardinia branch president David Young. Arriving hungry for information, attendees left with a head full of information, hands filled with resources and smiles on their faces.

Planning is underway for more workshops in 2019. Keep up to date by checking out the events page on our website www.stocksense.org.au and keep an eye out for a workshop near you.

Workshop presenters: Pat Kluver (Stock Sense), Helen McGregor (Redefining Agriculture), John Bowman (Agriculture Victoria), Mark McDonald (Australian Livestock Saleyards Association) & Sophie Ephick (Station Street Vet Clinic).



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