

Health and Welfare Advisory Committee

Executive Summary

1.00pm (AEST) 9 August 2023 | Hybrid

The Committee meeting was conducted in a hybrid format with WoolProducers board members in person at Queensland Farmers Federation, Brisbane. All other committee members attending virtually.

Matters arising

CEO to provide further detail on *Pathways to low emissions in the Australian sheep industry* report to the Committee after receiving a briefing from Steven Wiedemann on 10th August.

GM to compare NZ sheep decline to Australia considering seasonal adjustment.

GM to circulate WOAHA presentation as a PDF with the minutes.

Integrity Systems Company to seek responses to MyFeedback questions from the Committee and report back.

WPA to circulate the Biosecurity Protection Levy presentation to the Committee for dissemination to industry.

WPA to provide a short brief (dot points) to SFOs on the proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy charge.

WPA to write to AWI and AHA advising of a postponement of the EADR levy until after WoolPoll 2024 due to the proposed Biosecurity Protection Levy.

All SFOs to recommend their committees engage with respective governments about the double tagging issue created by the 1 Jan 2027 phase out deadline in relation of the transition to EID for sheep and Goats.

CEO to circulate an Out-Of-Session NWD paper to the Committee including the offer for a 30-minute Out-Of-Session meeting to discuss the issue if required.

Committee to provide feedback within 3 weeks of circulation of Out-Of-Session NWD paper.

General Manager Report

GM presented a report, highlighting the following key information:

EU AND GENERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Australian government EU agriculture representatives have emphasised the importance and value of materials such as the [Sheep Sustainability Framework](#) in supporting intergovernmental discussions and negotiations.

INTERNATIONAL WOOL TEXTILE ORGANISATION CONGRESS

A [report](#) was provided on the recent [IWTO Congress held in Kyoto, Japan](#) including the need for IWTO members to be more pro-active in addressing emerging issues and concerns. The global wool industry need to work together on these issues, particularly animal welfare. The next IWTO Congress will be held in Adelaide in April 2024.

WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH (WOAH, FORMERLY KNOWN AS OIE)

GM also [presented](#) on his recent trip to attend the [90th General Session of WOAH](#) in Paris as a member of the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer's delegation.

Sheep Health

NATIONAL SHEEP HEALTH MONITORING PROJECT (NSHMP)

Rob Barwell (AHA) presented on the [recent findings](#) and work taking place under the [NSHMP](#).

The committee also received a briefing from Integrity Systems Company (ISC) and Meat and Livestock Australia on the project to upgrade the [MyFeedback](#) platform to include NSHMP data. Traditionally NSHMP data has only been accessible to growers via the Livestock Data Link (LDL). It is hoped that incorporating NSHMP data into MyFeedback

will increase grower engagement and industry benefit from the NSHMP. Committee members were provided login credentials for the MyFeedback test site to provide feedback to ISC.

Biosecurity and Market Access

BIOSECURITY PROTECTION LEVY

DAFF provided a briefing on the [Biosecurity Protection Levy](#) that was announced as part of the 2023-24 federal budget. The levy seeks to charge growers \$50 million per year to subsidise Commonwealth government biosecurity operations via consolidated revenue. Unlike other agricultural levies, growers will have no direct say on how the funds are spent.

The committee agreed that referring to the charge as a levy is deceptive, as term “levy” has specific meaning in the Australian agriculture sector; referring to it as a charge or tax would be more appropriate. The committee noted that the Biosecurity Protection levy is likely to cause confusion in relation to the upcoming AWI 2024 WoolPoll.

The committee agreed to oppose the charge as proposed, noting that there is an ongoing need for biosecurity risk creators (particularly importers) to contribute additional funding to the national biosecurity system.

EAD RESPONSE LEVY

Given the threat that the Biosecurity Protection Levy presents to WoolPoll 2024, and not wishing to further compromise the process, the committee agreed to delay progressing the EAD response levy until after WoolPoll 2024 is complete to avoid unnecessary grower confusion.

Traceability

SHEEP AND GOAT TRACEABILITY

An update was provided on the Sheep and Goat Traceability Taskforce. WoolProducers continues to advocate for national harmonisation in the NLIS for sheep and goats.

While all sheep and goats born after 1 January 2025 will need to be tagged with an NLIS EID device before leaving their property of birth, WPA is concerned about the requirement in some states and territories for the “double tagging” of sheep fitted with a visual tag (born before 1 January 2025) from 1 January 2027. All committee members were encouraged to engage with respective governments about the double tagging issue created by the 1 Jan 2027 phase out deadline. It was reiterated that WPA will not support any requirement for older sheep to be double tagged for movements.

WOOL TRACEABILITY UPDATE

A high-level summary was provided of the proposed *Wool Data Hub*. The hub offers potential efficiency in bringing disparate data sets into one place, however WPAs position is that the system must be compliant with the NFF Farm Data Code. The GM committed to finding out more through attendance to an upcoming wool traceability meeting in Sydney on 28th August and reporting back to the committee as required.

Sheep Welfare

PAIN RELIEF – MULESING PAIN RELIEF POLICY

A paper was presented by the GM with the committee providing individual organisation’s positions, progress and status in relation to pain relief for mulesing. The committee were supportive of a mandated pain relief for mulesing, consistent with WoolProducers current [policy](#) position. Some committee members reserved the right not to take an official position due to timing constraints.

General Business

LIVE EXPORT UPDATE

Mark Harvey-Sutton, CEO ALEC, joined the meeting to provide an update on the proposed live export phase out. ALEC thanked WPA for their strong contributions to date and supporting the united industry front on the issue.

NATIONAL FERAL PIG ACTION PLAN (AGFORCE)

AgForce raised concern around the need for an improved structured plan to control feral pig numbers in the next dry season as well as funding to extend eliminating remaining small populations, particularly where fencing can assist. Committee members were encouraged to engage with the [National Feral Pig Action Plan](#), which does have a number of producer representative positions available as part of their implementation committee.

COST OF SHEARING (WA FARMERS)

WA Farmers raised the concern on the cost of shearing affecting woolgrowers nationally. The Committee recognised the issue was ongoing and discussed several approaches being undertaken particularly by AWI and WPA via the National Wool TAG.

NWD REVIEW

CEO provided an update on the NWD review currently underway. WoolProducers remains concerned that proposed amendments to the NWD will undermine the integrity of the document and reduce its value to the supply chain in the long term.

Meeting closed 5:00pm (AEST)
