

Health and Welfare Advisory Committee

Executive Summary

23 February 2022 | NFF House/Teams conference

Meeting Opened

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:02 am

WoolProducers service agreement with AHA

Matter Arising

Action: The National Wild Dog Facilitator to be invited to the May face-to-face meeting to present

Action: WPA to write to the Footrot Steering Committee to inform them that there are a number of organisations waiting to see what is happening and how to progress as well as seeking what info they require and what their goals are.

Action: WPA to pursue updates on the footrot issue more broadly through AHA Footrot Working Group who are likely to have a meeting towards end of march.

Action: GM to circulate the Building Supply Chain Resilience Report to the committee once received

General Manager Report

GM presented a report, highlighting the following key information:

APVMA- Emergency use permit for Custom R-Pilus Footrot vaccine

A meeting was convened at the start of February, involving most jurisdictions and their Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs). A discussion was held around gaining grower access via the APVMA minor use pathway, as presented by Rachel Chey at the August HWAC meeting. Under that pathway, there would be a set of permit conditions, including veterinary oversight of an on-farm control or eradication program for growers to get access to the vaccine. The permit could be held by a single jurisdiction (i.e. TAS), such a permit could also (at the discretion of the permit holder) allow growers in other jurisdictions (i.e. SA / VIC to access the vaccine.

Many of the meeting attendees expressed interest to work with APVMA to put together a framework and guidance on how the proposed process can be undertaken with the view to have access by 2022 spring/summer control program.

Animal Welfare Advocacy – Animal welfare – revision of EU legislation

There was concern around the EU proposing to either mandate pain relief for procedures like castration and tail docking or prohibit those procedures altogether, both domestically and on imported goods. This could mean those goods are banned at the border or will require certification. The proposed changes could also require consumer facing labelling indicating if goods are compliant with EU animal welfare laws.

A submission from WPA raised concerns around labelling requirements misleading consumers as to the animal welfare state of animals from which the products have been derived. It was made clear to the European Commission that their review should be outcome focused; not prescribe specific standards if applying regulations to imported goods.

WPA engaged AWI, keeping them in the loop on this matter.

IWTO Wool Sheep Welfare Working Group

A working group meeting was held in December last year, committing to a re-write of the Wool Sheep Welfare Specifications, which was essentially a stocktake of what's going on globally in the animal welfare space. It was observed that the industry needs to be more strategic and forward thinking. WPA will contribute to that process.

Poisons Scheduling review of Pain relief products.

Work is underway with TGA's Poisons Scheduling Review in regard to Numnuts and Buccalgesic. WPA lodged a submission into this process for consideration by the relevant Committee in March. The WPA submissions are similar to previous submissions, advocating for schedule 5 (Numnuts) and schedule 6 (Buccalgesic) products.

National Livestock Traceability Enhancement Working Group (NLTEWG)

A consultation has been undertaken to address the Safemeat recommendation 1 (national harmonisation). This is one of the requirements for WoolProducers to support mandatory EIDs in sheep. WPA were interviewed about potential governance arrangements to establish a harmonised national traceability system. That report was due to be delivered to NBC in Jan 2022, however it has been delayed until March. Mr Dawes hopes to include the report in the papers for discussion at the next HWAC meeting.

AUSVETPLAN Manual reviews

Progress of the Wool Enterprise Manual re-write was slow to start with in order to ensure the structure met with primary user needs (government). The current version of the manual was written for the information of for anybody who may be involved in or impacted by an EAD situation, however this is not the purpose of the manual. It is for decision makers and responders to plan and make decisions in industries they may not be 100% familiar with.

WPA, presented the proposed structure to the AUSVETPLAN Technical Review Group in February who were complimentary of the proposed structure noting it's focus on ensuring the manual served the needs of EAD decision makers. The manual is now expected to progress quickly as content can largely be pulled across from the existing manual.

Animal Health Australia- Industry Forum – Emergency Animal Disease Working Group

The Working Group is looking to address some of the recommendations that came out of the Exercise Argonaut in relation to industry crisis response plans. The group has finalised a list of 10 priorities which will be presented to the AHA Industry Forum for support when they meet in March.

Domestic and Diversified Wool Processing

This was spoken about in an EAD context, given all Export Health Certificates currently declare Australia as free from certain EADs, in the event of an incursion Australia would be unable to issue valid certification, however exporting carbonised or scoured wool is not subject to health certification, meaning could increase the volume of processed wool from Australia, it would help mitigate trade risk associated with EADs.

The process is going well with a Steering Committee convened by WPA along with representatives from AWI, AWEX, AWTA, exporters, processors and brokers to form terms of reference/specifications for the project. A preferred service provider has also been identified and WPA are negotiating with them to refine the scope of their proposal slightly, looking to start contracting this week.

Market access support

Wool Traceability Project Update

The report delivered 19 recommendations - 8 urgent/priority recommendations to enhance wool traceability; 6 next steps to push it to a higher level; and a further 5 additional steps to consider as part of implementation.

The report was presented to industry and subsequently publicly released in December 2021. Since release WPA have formed a Steering Committee including AWI, AWTA and AWEX (the industry service providers) to develop a collective response to the recommendations.

Special interest topic – Pain Relief

Policy Proposal – Pain Relief

Discussion surrounded the need for further research, ease of application of products, the definition of ‘painful procedures as a term’ – where does it start or stop, the Victorian experience of implementing mandatory pain relief for mulesing, and the current low adoption of pain relief for lamb marking (estimated to be around 3-4% uptake).

The Committee agreed to the following wording for consideration by the WPA Board:

PAIN RELIEF

WoolProducers Australia acknowledges the importance of undertaking husbandry procedures according to best practice while continually working to reduce, refine and replace these practices in response to research, development and regulatory outcomes. This includes the administration of products that minimise the severity and duration of pain when undertaking mulesing, tail docking and castration.

WoolProducers Australia is committed to:

- *Calling for pain relief to be made mandatory when mulesing to ensure that the procedure can be done in accordance with the highest standard of animal welfare*
- *Supporting initiatives that encourage grower adoption of the use of pain relief products when undertaking tail docking and castration:*
- *Investment in research, development and extension to enhance pain management strategies when undertaking painful husbandry procedures*
- *Extension and advocacy to inform growers of consumer expectations and emerging regulatory pressures*
- *Extension and advocacy to promote Australia’s world leading sheep husbandry practices, including the use of industry driven verification systems to demonstrate the use of pain relief products to downstream supply chain partners*
- *Advocacy to facilitate a balanced regulatory environment (safety and trade).*
- *Supporting the registration of new pain relief products for pain management when undertaking painful animal husbandry practices*

Youth Ambassador Presentation

WPA Youth ambassador Erin Douglas presented an excellent proposal titled “Fibre of the Future” on the utilisation and up-marketing of discarded wool scraps.

The paper was well received with the Committee, noting it was well prepared and researched in consultation with a wide variety of industry stakeholders and showed a good understanding of what goes into policy development.

Biosecurity

Rob Barwell from AHA joined the meeting and provided the following updates:

National Sheep Industry Biosecurity Strategy (NSIBS) update:

- Work continues on the development of the virtual/augmented reality tool in collaboration with red meat and wool program in SA (PIRSA funding).
- Surveillance and Biosecurity Extension project run by Bruce Jackson ongoing.
- Continued collaboration with Stock sense after webinar was held in October 2021.
- AHA will look to push out communications particularly around promotion of the National Sheep Health Declaration in the coming months.

Sheep Health Project update

- An external review of the project was completed in late 2021 after consultation with the Committee. There were some good ideas included in the report including meeting face-to-face to do a planning session/ project refresh, but due to COVID restrictions have not allowed for this in the next month.
- The abattoir monitoring has continued despite COVID with face-to-face training, inspection validation and new technologies awaiting set up starting to be planned for the coming months.
- AHA are Working with MINTRAC on developing a reporting program and collateral to be used at workshops to improve processor reporting.

Other Business

NWD update

The Chair provided an update on the NWD review process.

Various meetings were held, and a proposal was developed at the end of 2021 to remove the Ceased Mulesing category in order to reduce complication. In addition, it was proposed that the Liquid Nitrogen (LN) process was to be acknowledge on the NWD.

Once LN is added to the form it gets complicated, as LN is not mulesing, however the trade doesn't want LN treated wool in either mulesed or non-mulesed lots. As a result, the NWD becomes a more complicated document.

Meeting Closed

The chair closed the meeting at 11.52am