

## SMALL RUMINANTS AND BORDER TRADE

By Jennifer Fleming, CSF Executive Director

On May 18, 2005, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) released a Consultation Paper: *Revising the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's BSE import Policy for Bovine Animals and their Products*. The paper outlined the proposed updates to Canada's import policy in response to the evolution of scientific understanding of BSE and the refinement of international standards.

At the time of its publication, the CSF was concerned that small ruminants were not included in the proposed regulatory change. It was also the belief of the CSF that while the CFIA had been working to reestablish some level of trade for cattle, they were doing little to re-establish trade for small ruminants; especially given that they were suggesting that we **could be** responsible for the failure of the border to open if our scrapie eradication program was not complied and enforced.

In 2004 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency approached the CSF to begin consultations with respect to changing the import regulations. These changes were endorsed by the CSF with the understanding that they would demonstrate our commitment to trade issues being based on science.

A decision was then made by the government to separate sheep from cattle in the import regulations. While Canadian officials moved forward with the cattle import regulations, the Canadian sheep industry waited and Canadian producers suffered.

During this time, Canadian sheep industry aggressively lobbied the government and the CFIA to ensure that we had the resources necessary to implement an extensive three-pronged scrapie eradication program. The implementation of the National Genotyping program, the Voluntary Scrapie Flock Certification Program and the Scrapie Surveillance program allowed the CFIA to move forward with the release of the consultation paper on *Revising the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's TSE import policy for small ruminants and their products* – some sixteen months after the BSE import policy.

The release of this consultation paper is an important move forward in the resumption of normal trade relations with the United States. Since the border closure in May 2003, Canadian sheep breeders have been unable to access international breeding stock. In order to maintain the quality of sheep genetics that Canada has a reputation for producing, sheep breeders need access to international genetics.

For the past year, animals for immediate slaughter and animals for feeding for slaughter have been able to be imported into Canada. These animals have to have identification traceable to the flock of origin, and were slaughtered by 12 months of age.

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## HOBBY FARMS BLAMED FOR SPREADING SHEEP DISEASE

Hobby farmers have been blamed for spreading livestock diseases in WA, with farmers urging the Agriculture Department to enforce the tagging of all sheep. Kojonup farmer, Geoff Jones, claims some hobby farmers' lack of expertise is responsible for the spread of diseases, such as footrot and lice in sheep, after infected stock strayed on to his property. Earlier this year, several stray sheep made their way on to Mr Jones' property after escaping from a hobby farm that had reportedly been quarantined for footrot. The sheep were unmarked and posed a threat to Mr Jones' flock of 5000 Merinos. "At first I did not know where the sheep had come from because they were not tagged," he said. The animals were riddled with lice and were immediately removed from Mr Jones' farm. Mr Jones believes it should be compulsory for all sheep to be tagged immediately after purchase, so the owners of such strays could be identified. "Although new National Livestock Identification System legislation helps to track disease it does not force farmers to tag animals which were not being sold," he said.

Source: [www.farmonline.com](http://www.farmonline.com)

## BORDER TRADE CON'T

The new regulations propose that the importation of animals for breeding purposes can occur if they bear identification traceable to the flock of origin. In addition, they must either be imported with certification that they originate from a country recognized by the CFIA as negligible risk for TSEs in small ruminants or they can be imported with certification that they originate from a TSE free establishment.

The proposed changes to the import policy for small ruminants incorporate the current World Organisation for Animal Health (formally the OIE) guidelines for recognition of a scrapie free country and a scrapie free establishment. It is the intent of the CFIA to finalize and begin implementing a revised import policy as soon as possible after the comment period for this consultation paper ends (November 30, 2006). It is the hope of the Canadian sheep industry, that this will allow imports of breeding stock to commence in early 2007.

## INCREASED TSE TESTING IN IRISH SHEEP

*IRELAND: Irish government helps sheep producers over disposal of fallen stock.*

The Irish Minister for Agriculture and Food, Mary Coughlan, has announced temporary arrangements to help Ireland meet new targets imposed by the European Commission for TSE testing of sheep over 18 months of age this year. Under the new EU requirements, Ireland will have to test up to 20,000 sheep from knackereries during the second half of the year. The new arrangements will involve the payment to knackereries by the department for every suitable sample recovered from eligible sheep at knackereries either until the 20,000 target has been met or until 31 December. This will provide a knackery service for eligible sheep at no cost to farmers until the end of the year. However, payment will not be made in respect of sheep that are not properly tagged or for ineligible or unsuitable samples. The Minister said that it was important that Ireland played its part, like every other Member State, in increasing its level of TSE testing throughout the remainder of 2006. Minister Coughlan said that sheep farmers had a legal obligation to dispose of fallen sheep and in particular that it is an offense to bury dead sheep without a license.

Source: [www.meatnews.com](http://www.meatnews.com)

## From the Chair

By Florence Henning, Chair CSF

As Chair of the CSF, I have found this past year informative, challenging and very exciting. I have also realized the time and commitment required to be a part of a national board.

Although we are a small industry, we are an important part of the Canadian agricultural landscape. This has been acknowledged by the federal government at meetings in Ottawa last week. Progress here may seem slow and non-productive but I believe effective lobbying has increased the profile of our industry and has resulted in a greater awareness of our needs and concerns.

I am very fortunate that my M.P., Rob Merrifield is open and accessible to his constituents both in Alberta and in Ottawa. He is very aware of our industry concerns and has been very helpful in forwarding these to the Minister. I met with Mr. Merrifield again in Ottawa this week and have been assured that a re-opening of the border is a main topic when he speaks with US Congressmen during his meetings.

Later that evening Jennifer and I had a very successful meeting with Minister Strahl. He was very receptive to our concerns and did note and hear what we were saying. The majority of our time was spent discussing the small ruminant import regulations. We are encouraged with the posting of these on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's website on September 29<sup>th</sup> and are optimistic that imports can begin in March 2007. Long-term surveillance for scrapie and blue-tongue (BT) were also discussed, including needing a commitment from the federal government to ensure that our export certificates are renegotiated based on the changes in BT import regulations. This will help to ensure that the export of sheep genetics can continue regardless of whether or not a flock in Canada becomes BT positive. Further communication will continue with the Minister's office on these issues and the beginning of regular value-chain meetings. Michael Presley (Director General Food Value Chain Bureau) was in attendance at our meeting with the Minister and we are in contact with him regarding the formation of sheep value-chain meetings.

Meetings with Dr. Francine Lord and Dr. Debbie Barr were informative especially regarding the procedure for regulation change. The CFIA is investigating the possibility of changing the BT regulation to ensure that exotic strains remain reportable and North American strains will be immediately notifiable.

**THESE MEETINGS THIS PAST WEEK HAVE BEEN EVIDENCE OF WHAT CAN RESULT IN HAVING YOUR VOICE HEARD.** It is now important that these accomplishments develop and we continue to be viewed as a vibrant successful industry by all levels of government working towards our goal to further the viability, expansion and prosperity of the Canadian sheep industry.

### LAMB PROCESSORS KEEN ON FORWARD CONTRACTS TO ENSURE SUPPLY

Lamb processors have announced forward contracts for lamb to help secure supply into next year, with water and feed shortages forcing early selling of many lambs and sheep. At the moment, contracts for January delivery only are available, from at least three main processors in southern Australia, with prices at \$3.30 to \$3.40 per kilogram dw. With feed grain prices rising by the day and no significant rain in sight, more pressure on lamb prices is expected. "To say we are worried about supply into the New Year would be a massive understatement," said one major lamb processor who did not wish to be named. A statewide buyer for one supermarket chain said he had never seen the industry like this in his career. "We can't swallow the sheer weight of lamb numbers coming through now...but it'll bite us later. That's why the industry is looking at more at those forward contracts," he said.

**SOURCE:** *Stock & Land*, Vic, October 12.

# On-Farm Food Safety: Update on Australia

By France Lanthier, National OFFS Coordinator

A recent poll conducted as part of the Market Development Strategy revealed that both consumers and industry customers (processors, retailers, and foodservice operators) found domestic lamb superior to imported lamb in many respects. However, it was also revealed that increased market opportunities would likely be swept up by New Zealand and Australia due to the inconsistency of domestic quality and supply.

As our industry is trying to increase or at least maintain domestic shelf space, it is also contending with emerging global issues such as premise identification, livestock identification, scrapie surveillance, and of course food safety. While Canadian producers acknowledge the importance, and express the desire to participate in these programs, cost and duplication of paperwork are commonly identified as deterrents.

As the CSF continues to develop and adapt the Canadian Sheep and Lamb Food-Safe Farm Practices program, we take a moment to have a look at Australia's Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program. Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) seems to have developed an industry friendly food safety program which integrates an array of programs, and has managed to keep it affordable!

## What is Australia's Livestock Production Assurance Program (LPA)

The LPA builds upon the National Vendor Declaration (NVD) and Waybill (Figure 1) which was introduced in the AUS sheep industry in 2000.

**Property**

**Describe breed, sex, brand or ear-**

**Trans-  
porter in-  
formation  
(name &**

**Have all ani-  
mals met the  
withdrawal pe-  
riod for animal  
health prod-**

**Within the last 60 Days have any of the sheep or lambs consumed feed that was still within a with-holding period?**

**Producer signs the declaration**

**Part B: Carrier**

**Part C: Agent Declaration for lamb and sheep sold**

**NATIONAL VENDOR DECLARATION (SHEEP AND LAMBS) AND WAYBILL** Final edition, November 2008

**Part A - To be completed by the owner or person who is responsible for the husbandry of the sheep or lambs.**

Owner of sheep or lambs: \_\_\_\_\_

Property name where the journey commenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Identification Code (PIC) of this property: \_\_\_\_\_

Identification of sheep or lambs:

Business mark	Sheepmark (mark or LPA) (LPA numbers, NVD, etc.)	Mark of shearer	Brand/Ear tag/ PIC or other mark on the lambs	Sex/sexes (if required)

Wipers off feed and water before transporting

Consignee to: \_\_\_\_\_

Destination (if different) of sheep or lambs: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of other statutory documents relating to the movement, e.g. animal health certificate: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have these sheep or lambs been raised consistent with the age of an independently audited QA program on the property the PIC of which is shown above?

Yes  No  If Yes, give details: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have all the sheep or lambs in this consignment been treated with a Scabie Mouth vaccination either at shearing or at least 14 days prior to their presentation for sale?

Yes  No  If Yes, give details: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have all of the sheep or lambs both and raised on the vendor's property?

Yes  No  If No, how long ago were the sheep obtained or purchased? \_\_\_\_\_

(If purchase of others than, tick the box corresponding to the time of the most recent purchase):

A. Less than 2 months  B. 2-6 months  C. 6-12 months  D. More than 12 months

4. Are any of the sheep or lambs in this consignment still within a Withholding Period (WSP) or Export Slaughter Interval (ESI) following treatment with any veterinary drug or chemical?

Yes  No  If Yes, give details (insert additional details in question 5): \_\_\_\_\_

5. In the past 60 days, have any of these sheep or lambs consumed any stockfeed that was still within a WSP when harvested or first grazed?

Yes  No  If Yes, give details: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have any of the sheep or lambs in this consignment ever in their lives been fed feed containing fat or gelatin?

Yes  No

7. Please include any additional information, below (eg. vaccination program, animal health certification, additional declarations, etc.)

**Declaration**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, declare that I am the owner or the person responsible for the husbandry of the sheep or lambs and that all the information in part A of this document is true and correct. I also declare that I have read and understood all the questions that I have answered, that I have read and understood the regulatory rules, and that, while under my control, the sheep or lambs were not fed restricted-ingredient stockfeed (including event and home made) while in the State or Territory jurisdiction.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Only the person whose name appears above may sign the declaration, or make amendments that may be needed.

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax no: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B - To be completed by the person in charge of the sheep or lambs when they are being moved.** Consignee of Part A is preferred to SA, WA and VIC.

Movement commenced: \_\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)

Vehicle registration number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the person in charge of the sheep or lambs during the movement and declare all the information in Part B is true and correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Only the person whose name appears above may sign the declaration, or make amendments that may be needed.

**Part C - Agent's declaration for sheep or lambs level of infection. (Consignee of Part A is optional.)**

Agents completing Part C should retain the original declaration for a minimum of two (2) years, or three (3) years in WA and NSW, or a copy or summary to any other on request.

Vendor code: \_\_\_\_\_ Agent's code: \_\_\_\_\_

Stock agent company: \_\_\_\_\_

Buyer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of sheep or lambs purchased: \_\_\_\_\_ Destination PIC: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 1: National Vendor Declaration (NVD). Part A (□) is the waybill component and is filled in by the owner or person responsible for the husbandry of the sheep and/or lambs. Parts B and C (■) NVD.

## On-Farm Food Safety con't

The NVD and waybill requires information such as premise ID (each agricultural property has a unique identification number), animal description, animal health product conformance information, etc. While providing records as proof of the information in the NVD is not mandatory, producers must sign the declaration stating that all information provided is correct.

The LPA program is a two tier program presented as LPA level 1 and LPA level 2. **LPA LEVEL 1 – FOOD SAFETY** is directly linked to the NVD and Waybill. Here producers are required to keep records to back up the information provided in the NVD and Waybill. The LPA level 1 program is based on 5 elements with specific outcomes. These 5 elements are:



### **Property risk assessment**

**1**

Outcome: Livestock are not exposed to areas on your property that are contaminated with organochlorines or other persistent chemicals.



### **Safe and responsible animal treatments**

**2**

Outcome: Livestock intended for human consumption do not contain unacceptable chemical residues or physical hazards.



### **Stock foods, fodder crops, grain and pasture treatments**

**3**

Outcome: Livestock are not exposed to feeds containing unacceptable contamination, specifically any food containing animal products and/or unacceptable chemical residues.



### **Preparation for dispatch of livestock**

**4**

Outcome: Livestock to be transported are fit for the journey, they are not unduly stressed and contamination is minimised during on-farm assembly and transport to the destination.



### **Livestock transactions and movements**

**5**

Outcome: Any purchaser of your livestock can assess the chemical residue or food safety status of the animals; any animals or products purchased by you can be assessed for chemical residue status; and the movement of livestock can be traced if required.

## **AUSTRALIAN LAMBS EXPORTS RISE**

Australian lamb exports during September rose by seven percent on last year to 12,139 tons according to statistics released by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Similarly, lamb shipments for the first nine months of the year were up by four percent to 108,066 tons – the highest volume on record for the January to September period. Meat and Livestock Australia said that lamb exports to the US reached 3,273 tons during September – an increase of seven percent on the same time last year. However, shipments for the nine months to September were four percent below the same period last year, at 28,819 tons. Volumes sent to the Middle East jumped by 21 percent on September 2005 levels to 1,695 tons, with Dubai receiving 991 tons and Saudi Arabia 216 tons. Shipments to the Middle East during the first nine months of 2006 reached a record 12,934 tons, up by 26 percent on the same period last year, MLA said. The EU received 1,237 tons of Australian lamb during September – 33 percent more than September 2005 levels, with exports to the UK (the largest recipient of Australian lamb within the EU) increasing by 20 percent, to 883 tons. Australian mutton exports during September were strong, increasing by 38 percent on last year to 13,544 tons – pushing shipments for the nine months to September up by 11 percent on the same period last year, to 109,687 tons. MLA added that contributing to the overall increase for the month were higher shipments to all major markets, with volumes sent to the Middle East up by 34 percent (to 4,237 tons), South Africa up by 155 percent (to 2,320 tons) and the US up by 31 percent (to 1,207 tons).

**Source: [www.meatnews.com](http://www.meatnews.com)**

## On-Farm Food Safety con't

**LPA LEVEL 2 – QUALITY ASSURANCE**, consist of a more advanced on-farm management system. At this level producers must demonstrate that they have procedures in place for training, internal auditing, and document control.

**Is it Mandatory?** Participation in the LPA program is voluntary however five States in Australia (Figure 2) require a waybill for the movement of sheep or lambs. Producers are not required to use the NVD and Waybill form provided by the MLA but more and more it is becoming the form recognized and requested at auction and by processors. Producers can obtain 10 NVD and Waybill forms after which they must register with LPA to obtain more forms. **Audits? LPA LEVEL 1 - FOOD SAFETY-** requires that producers enter a random audit pool.

For **LPA LEVEL 2- QUALITY ASSURANCE-** producers must first successfully complete an initial audit, followed

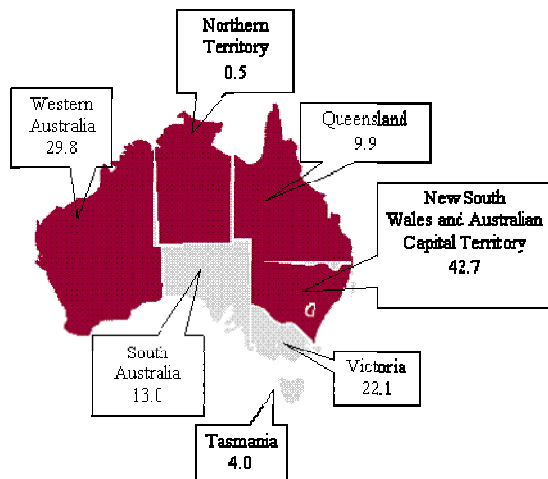


Figure 2: (■) Australian States where a waybill (Part A of the NVD/Waybill) is required when sheep or lambs are moved. The number represents the millions of sheep in each territory.

by a surveillance audit 6 months later. Thereafter audits are on an annual basis unless problems are encountered, in which case additional audits would be performed. In level 2 producers are also required to provide 2 internal record reviews per year to demonstrate self-monitoring. **Cost?**

There is no registration fee per see for participation in the LPA program. The random audits for LPA level 1 are funded through the collection of a levy which is paid by the seller. The levy is not applicable if the sale price of the sheep or lambs is less than \$5.00 a head. The levy is charged at 2% of the sale price but is capped so that it does not exceed: \$0.20 for sheep (i.e.e if the sale price is \$10.00, or over, the levy is still \$0.20), or \$1.50 for lambs (i.e. if the sale price is \$75.00, or over, the levy is still \$1.50). **FOR**

**LPA LEVEL 2 – QUALITY ASSURANCE**, the mandatory annual audit is paid for by the producer. For the time being the NVD and Waybill forms are free however a cost of \$25 for a booklet of 20 has been discussed.

**What can we learn?** In reviewing the Australian system there are points to retain as we develop our own On-Farm Food Safety program.

1. It must be user friendly – this not only means that producer form must be clear and concise but there must be consistency in forms transferred from members of the food chain. Meat and Livestock Australia seems to have achieved this with the NVD and waybill. One form is filled by the producer, passed along to the transporter and then to the buyer.
2. There must be a reason to do it – while it would be noble to provide extra work with no expectation of reward, in the real world this is not the case. Producers in Australia participating in the LPA have access to more markets and export opportunities (or rather are not blocked from them). Abattoirs and processors are requiring the documents. Furthermore the use of waybills has been legislated by five Australian State governments.
3. It must be affordable – Through the levy system the MLA is able to provide the random audit service at no extra cost.

## US WEBSITE BOOSTS AUSSIE LAMB

A pioneering website in the United States is proving a hit with local consumers and trade alike, boosting awareness of Australian lamb. The site – [www.australian-lamb.com](http://www.australian-lamb.com) – is strategic in that it provides general information for the consumer and specific technical information for the American trade.

This two-pronged approach is aiming to increase the awareness of, and potentially demand for, Australian lamb with the American consumer and then provide the US retail and food service sectors with the relevant information on how to obtain the product from Australian suppliers to meet this demand.

Meat & Livestock Australia's regional manager in the US, Michelle Gorman, says a re-launch of the website in June has prompted a massive increase in website traffic.

"The consumer section of the new site is redesigned to cater for time-poor and health-conscious American consumers who have little experience in preparing and cooking Australian lamb," Ms Gorman said. The site received more than 1.1 million hits in the three months after the re-launch in June.

"This equates to more than 12,000 every day, and is more than double the traffic the site was receiving over the same period last year," Ms Gorman said.

Well known American chefs - such as Anita Lo, co-owner and chef of the popular New York restaurant, Annisa - are featured prominently on the trade site, providing exclusive recipes and tips on how to use Australian lamb.

"I have no problem promoting it and endorsing it because my customers absolutely love it," she said.

"Consumption of lamb (as opposed to chicken and beef) is still very low, so there is definitely a need to educate both consumers and the foodservice trade about lamb and its great tasting qualities."

## On-Farm Food Safety con't

**Where do we go from here?** There are many options that the Canadian sheep industry can choose from at the moment.

1. We can carry on the way we are going which is to develop a sound, user friendly program that will be in place need be.
2. We can choose to start involving our customers (abattoirs, processors and packers) before they start requiring anything from us. This is not a popular option for all as soliciting our customers is viewed by some as encouraging a demand where there isn't one. One advantage is that if the program does become mandatory then we don't have to make changes to comply with customer demands as they are already involved in the process.
3. We can legislate ourselves. Some provincial producer associations have chosen to make national on-farm food safety programs mandatory in their provinces. For instance Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan have made the Chicken Farmer's of Canada's *Safe, Safer, Safest* program mandatory in their provinces. While this is not a popular option either, it does show a firm commitment from industry and will like fend off the next option...
4. We can wait for government legislation. While it is not uncommon to hear "I'll do it when they make me", this may not be the best option as experience has shown that anything that is forced onto the agricultural community often lacks usefulness and ease for the agricultural community.

There is no golden option here that will please all and drop upon our laps fortune and glory all at once. If anything the Australian model seems to have incorporated all the options presented above and come up with something that works... it's probably not perfect, but it works. As recent incidences with carrot juice and spinach have shown, food safety is increasingly getting media and public attention. A workable and effective on-farm food safety program is something we must strive to achieve

## MONEY FOR FOOD SAFETY

*CANADA: Canada's new government funds food safety in Saskatchewan.*

The Province of Saskatchewan in Canada is to receive \$600,000 over the next two years to enhance and promote food safety systems in its food processing industry. The money comes from the Canadian government as part of the national Food Safety Initiative. “Canada’s New Government is proud to partner with the Province of Saskatchewan on this Food Safety Initiative,” said Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board. “I believe that this will help raise awareness of enhanced food safety systems and their growing importance in the current marketplace.” Strahl added that Canada’s New Government is getting things done to protect the health of Canadians. “Canada’s food is among the safest and is of the highest quality in the world, thanks to the collective effort of industry, governments and consumers,” he said. “The Government of Saskatchewan commends our province’s food industry for its strong commitment to producing safe and high-quality food,” said Mark Wartman, Minister of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food. “We are pleased to deliver this federal food safety funding to make plants in the province aware of food safety programs that they can implement to enhance their market access and sustainability.” The Food Safety Initiative (FSI), a component of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Canadian Food Safety and Quality Program, is designed to help industry maintain its high standards in food safety and quality. The objective of the FSI is to increase the number of non-federally registered food processing plants using standardized food safety systems. In Saskatchewan, the FSI will focus on outreach activities, which will be delivered by Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food. Outreach activities are aimed at providing better information and advice on food safety issues in the non-federally registered food processing industry through various learning activities. The FSI is funded under the Agriculture Policy Framework, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative that aims to position Canada as the world leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally responsible agricultural production.

## LAMB PILOT PROGRAM APPROVED IN THE UNITED STATES

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) has approved the implementation of the Livestock Risk Protection-Lamb pilot program. The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) approved last week the implementation of the Livestock Risk Protection-Lamb pilot program beginning with the 2007 reinsurance year. All counties in 27 states have been designated part of the pilot. The American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) and its development partners have been working with the FCIC board and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) for nearly two years on the proposal for an LRP-Lamb pilot project. The design of the project allows producers and feeders to purchase insurance to protect them against unexpected declines in lamb prices. The board approved implementation of the program in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.



## BLUE TONGUE SECURITY ZONES EXTENDED

*NETHERLANDS:* Dutch authorities extend blue tongue security zones following further outbreaks. The Dutch authorities have extended the security zone in the south of the country following the discovery of new cases of blue tongue disease among sheep flocks. The 20 kilometer zone takes in the region of Brabant around the villages of Bergeyk and Westerhoven and the region of Limbourg around the village of Horst, close to the Belgium border. A new security zone has also been established around Bargem near the German border. The security zones have put a strict ban on the movement of ruminant animals out of the area and animals must be enclosed at night. The number of cases of blue tongue disease, a disease usually associated with more southern European countries, has risen to 123 in the Netherlands since mid-August – largely in the Limbourg area.

## LAMB LOTFEEDERS QUESTION THE MERIT

The recently formed Australian Lamb Finishers (ALF) are vigorously questioning the merit of lotfeeding lambs this year. ALF spokesman, Hamish Mackinnon, said those looking to finish lambs with their own grain this year should also look at the cost, given the opportunity to sell grain at such high prices. "It is very difficult decision for everyone right now," he said. "The market is really hovering and second cross store lambs dropped from \$50 to \$60 to \$30 to \$40 in just a couple of weeks. "With another couple of weeks of dry weather, who knows how low the price could go." \_Failing or frost-affected crops across southern Australia are now being either grazed or cut for hay and won't deliver grain. Much of that hay will be used to simply keep stock alive until what will hopefully be a decent break to the season in 2007. Without rain, the lamb industry is quickly slipping further into major trouble and processors are acutely aware of the drama this will cause the industry.

## NEW ERA FOR ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY IN AUSTRALIA

Australia's cattle and sheep producers now have access to a single, one-size-fits-all quality assurance program that is easier and cheaper to use. The previous on-farm QA programs – Cattlecare and Flockcare – have been incorporated into a single non-species specific QA program now known as Livestock Production Assurance QA. "There was a lot of replication between the Cattlecare and Flockcare QA programs so it made sense to consolidate the two and develop a single standard QA program for both cattle and sheep producers," chairman of the LPA Standards and Accreditation Committee, Kevin Roberts said. LPA QA will be administered by the LPA Standards and Accreditation Committee; the same group that oversees the LPA food safety program (LPA Level I), of which more than 86,000 producers are now fully accredited. More than 50pc of LPA registrations are now fully accredited. Mr Roberts says the new LPA QA program is a step up that should be considered by producers already accredited with LPA Level I. "The 86,000 producers who are fully accredited with LPA Level I are already one-third of the way along the road towards LPA QA because the Food Safety Management module within LPA QA is made up of the same five elements that are the LPA Level I program," Mr Roberts said. Livestock producers have to be fully accredited in LPA Level I in order to participate in LPA QA. Cattle and sheep producers currently in Cattlecare and Flockcare gain automatic entry to LPA QA. Access to LPA QA will be free for those producers taking advantage of the newly developed 'LPA QA online'.

**SOURCE:** *Queensland Country Life*

## Food Safety Reviewed in Brazil

The European Commission has reinforced its stance to stop unfit food stuffs being exported to the EU from Brazil. Markos Kyprianou, the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, is visiting Brazil this week to reiterate the EU's determination to protect consumers with regard to food safety and animal health. He is to use the visit to underline the duty that Brazilian authorities have in ensuring that products destined for Europe are fully compliant with EU rules. The Commission has already taken stringent measures for certain Brazilian commodities due to food safety and animal health concerns, and Mr. Kyprianou is expected to stress that further measures may be taken if identified problems are not satisfactorily addressed. During this trip, Mr. Kyprianou will meet with Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim, Agriculture Minister Luis Carlos Guedes Pinto and Secretary of State for Agriculture Gabriel Alves Maciel, among others. He will also visit a residue control laboratory, a slaughterhouse, a tuna factory and a cattle ranch in the State of Goiás. Commissioner Kyprianou said, "The EU's rules on food safety state that imports must meet the same high standards as are demanded of EU products or they will not be allowed on our market. "The Food and Veterinary Office carries out regular inspections in Brazil, and the Commission is closely monitoring the action being taken by the

authorities there to amend any deficiencies found. If there is deemed to be any threat to food safety or consumer protection, the Commission has shown that it will not hesitate in taking the necessary measures." Past inspections in Brazil carried out by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) have found deficiencies in Brazilian controls for food exports to the EU, including inadequate controls for veterinary residues in certain commodities. In response, the European Commission banned certain imports from Brazil, such as honey and game-meat, and has been closely monitoring Brazil's progress in addressing problems in other areas. The Commission intends to withdraw the approval of the residue plans for pig meat, sheep and goat meat and milk and milk products, although these products cannot be exported because of other sanitary reasons. As far as beef, horse meat, poultry meat and aquaculture are concerned, the guarantees provided by the Brazilian authorities are considered to be sufficient to address EU concerns. The Commission said that a clear message has been sent to the Brazilian authorities that failure to satisfactorily implement these guarantees to comply with EU residue control requirements may result in further measures. The Brazilian authorities have committed to rectifying the situation, and are in frequent contact with the Commission with regard to the action they are taking in this respect. Another FVO inspection of Brazil's residue

controls is scheduled for early 2007. Animal traceability is another area in which the European Commission has demanded that the Brazilian authorities tighten their controls and improve their legislation. Brazil has now assured the EU that it is implementing the FVO's recommendations and overhauling its system for animal identification and traceability. Recent FVO inspections have reported evidence of restructuring in this area, and Brazil recently adopted new, stricter legislation on animal traceability. The Commission said it will be closely examining the implementation of these new rules and procedures during the next FVO visit to Brazil. Outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in some parts of Brazil have also led the EU to block imports of beef from three Brazilian states (which cover an area larger than the EU) and require strict certification for beef from the areas authorized for export. The FVO has conducted numerous inspections to assess the FMD situation in Brazil, and has deemed the current import ban to be sufficient protection against this disease entering the EU through Brazilian products. However, the European Commission said that the import ban can be extended at any time if FMD were to spread to other regions of Brazil.



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