

South Australian Sheep Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

Friday 26th May 2006

NOTE: At the time of distribution, the Minister has not approved the outcomes listed in this document. Any misuse of information by individuals or associations will cause this service to be withdrawn.

The meeting commenced at 1:43 pm.

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all members and guests to the meeting.

2. Attendance

<i>Andrew McTaggart (Chair)</i>	<i>Sheep Industry Representative</i>
<i>Janet Hall</i>	<i>Sheep Industry Representative</i>
<i>Geoff Power</i>	<i>Sheep Industry Representative</i>
<i>John Symons</i>	<i>Sheep Industry Representative</i>
<i>Ian Pfeiffer</i>	<i>SA Meat Sheep Societies Representative</i>
<i>Francis Andrews</i>	<i>SA Stud Merino Sheepbreeders' Association Representative</i>
<i>Neil Buchanan</i>	<i>Ministerial Representative (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Trudi Goodwin</i>	<i>Executive Officer – Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)</i>

Guests

<i>Jack Van Wijk</i>	<i>Manager, Disease Control (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Elena Petrenas</i>	<i>Manager, Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Jack Langberg</i>	<i>Principal Strategy Consultant (PIRSA)</i>
<i>Robin Vandegraaff</i>	<i>Director, Animal Health (PIRSA)</i>

3. Apologies

<i>Greg Ingham</i>	<i>SAFF Sheep Industry Representative</i>
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Absent

<i>Michael Pocock</i>	<i>Sheep Industry Representative</i>
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4. Confirmation of Minutes

4.1 SASAG Meeting Minutes – 24th February 2006

The minutes from the SASAG meeting held on the 24th February 2006 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

4.2 SASAG Meeting Minutes – 15th March 2006

The minutes from the SASAG teleconference meeting held on the 15th March 2006 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

4.3 SASAG Meeting Minutes – 9th May 2006

The minutes from the SASAG meeting held on the 9th May 2006 were accepted as a true and accurate record subject to identified amendments.

5. Matters arising from Meeting Minutes/Actions

SASAG Meeting Minutes

The issue of meeting minute timeliness was raised. It was stipulated that minutes should be forwarded at least two weeks before the next meeting and suggested that speakers should in future be requested to provide written reports, which they speak to, to assist with minute taking.

All action items from the meetings were completed with the exception of the 24th February 2006 meeting item **7.1 (OJD Budget by month, source and actuals)**. This information has been requested for the next SASAG meeting on the 25th August 2006.

6. Business

6.1 Sheep Industry Fund

As at the 30th April 2006, producer contributions totalling \$2,216,565 were received. Total revenue (including interest) was \$2,296,537, which exceeds the set annual budget of \$1,987,092 by \$309,445.

Project expenditure is below budget. Less than budgeted expenditure has occurred in Advisory Group (including the SA OJD Committee) expenditure (\$27,241 compared to \$45,889), OJD Control (\$376,469 compared to \$790,173), footrot control (\$69,293.95 compared to \$80,730) and the dog fence (\$172,514 compared to \$173,490).

Funds had not been removed for either NLIS or the Box Flat Dog Fence at this time. Of concern was the increase in levy refunds - \$24,373 compared to the annual budget of \$20,000. PIRSA was requested to investigate why this is occurring. Total expenditure for the period was \$1,123,244 which is just over half a million dollars less than budgeted for the period.

The monthly cash flow statement revealed that the Fund received \$640,665 in April 2006 – a gross abnormality compared to historical data. J. Symons requested PIRSA Animal Health to confirm whether this is correct or a typographic error.

Members were advised that the 2004/2005 audited Sheep Industry Fund statement is still outstanding and will be circulated once it becomes available.

In light of producers being advised that they can have their contributions refunded, members felt it was necessary that producers are reminded that if they receive a levy refund, they will be ineligible for any benefit provided by the Fund, such as subsidised OJD vaccine.

6.2 Sheep Industry Fund (SIF) Project Reports

6.2.1 SAFF Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) Project

The South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF) 'Industry Liaison Officer' project application was approved as per the SASAG meeting teleconference on the 9th May 2006.

A. McTaggart reported that subsequent to the teleconference, he had conversed with the Chair of the SA Cattle Advisory Group (A. Withers) who also only supported reimbursing attendees for mileage and accommodation expenses incurred. It was noted that the Pig Industry Advisory Group did however support SAFF's suggested monetary incentive. SAFF has been advised of each Group's financial commitment and that a recommendation to this effect has been forwarded to the Minister for consideration.

6.2.2 Dog Fence Project

2005/2006 saw 13 projects undertaken along the dog fence for around \$293,500. The majority of projects involved improving or replacing fencing structures. The Sheep Industry Fund contribution to the Board for the period was \$172,514, which was \$136 under the estimated budget.

OUTCOME

SASAG provides in principle support for the ongoing funding arrangement for the Dog Fence project until 2008 and approves the release of \$177,830 from the SIF for the 2006/2007 period.

6.2.3 Box Flat Project

Correspondence provided by the Secretary of the Box Flat Dingo Control Committee advising that the Committee would now operate under the new Natural Resource Management (NRM) system, which involves the South East NRM Board and the SA Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board. It is anticipated that the Committee will continue to coordinate responses to dog attacks on stock.

The cost of the Box Flat Dingo Control Committee in 2005/2006 was \$15,491.23 - no request for SIF funds was received. The tabled 2006/2007 budget indicates that expenditure will increase to \$16,100 and includes a SIF contribution of \$5,100.

OUTCOME

SASAG approves the release of \$5,100 from the SIF for the Box Flat program in 2006/2007.

6.2.4 Footrot Control Program

In 2005/2006, four new cases of footrot were detected - it was pleasing to note though that no footrot was detected during market inspections at Dublin, Naracoorte, Mt Gambier, Strathalbyn, Mt Pleasant or the off-shears in high rainfall areas. The cost of the program to the 31st March 2006 was \$106,627 (90% of which is funded by SIF). Outstanding expenses include an additional \$10,000 for additional vaccine trial sites that will be invoiced in May, July, September and December 2006.

The budgeted program costs for 2006/2007 include \$122,530 for footrot control activities and \$46,000 for the vaccine trial.

OUTCOME

SASAG approves the release of up to \$168,530 from the SIF for the Footrot Control program and vaccine trial in 2006/2007.

6.2.5 Sheep Lice Regulatory Program

The project application supplied by M. Riley highlighted that up to the 9th May 2006, expiations had been issued to 19 sheep producers for exposing lousy sheep in saleyards. Collectively these expiations have raised \$5,814. Warning letters were also sent to a further 12 producers. Program expenditure to date (after deducting expiation fees) was \$43,910.

It is intended that the program is continued as is in 2006/2007. However, J. Van Wijk considers that the sheeplice program would benefit from including sheep 'lice resistance testing'.

OUTCOME

SASAG approves the release of up to \$55,509 from the SIF for the Sheep Lice Regulatory program in 2006/2007.

6.2.6 NLIS Sheep and Goat Program

The purpose of NLIS Sheep and Goats is to provide a regulatory basis for the identification of sheep – including the mandatory registration of all sheep properties. Ultimately this activity will improve identification and traceability in the case of food safety incidents, endemic disease control and emergency disease events, thereby maintaining domestic and export market access. Despite the delay in commencing NLIS Sheep and Goats until the 1st January 2006, the project application indicated that there are 10,821 sheep property identification codes (PICs) registered in South Australia.

It should be noted that SASAG approved the release of \$60,000 from the SIF for 2005/2006 for "post implementation" activities (which equates to 75% of total program costs), however due to the 12-month delay in launching the program, industry's contribution was reduced to \$30,000.

The budget for 2006/2007 is \$69,390, which represents 75% of the actual cost – the balance being funded by the State Government.

OUTCOME

SASAG approves the release of up to \$69,390 from the SIF for the NLIS Sheep and Goat program in 2006/2007.

6.2.7 Curfew Project

The R&D proposal developed by the SA Curfew Working Group (SACWG) to explore the factors influencing the soiling of sheep and strategies for producers to minimise the occurrence and subsequent impact on industry, which was due to commence in 2005/2006, has temporarily been put on hold until MLA has completed a literature review on curfews. The outcome of this review will determine MLA's contribution and support for the project. Consequently the SACWG requested that the \$15,000 approved for use in 2005/2006 be rolled over to the 2006/2007 period.

SASAG members supported the rolling over of the \$15,000 for the 'Curfew project' in 2006/2007, on the condition that MLA also financially supports the program in the same period.

OUTCOME

SASAG approves the release of up to \$15,000 from the SIF for the Curfew project in 2006/2007 on the condition that MLA also provides funding for the 2006/2007 period.

OUTCOME

Forward correspondence to the Minister recommending the release of Sheep Industry Funds for the continuation of the following projects in 2006/2007:

- **Dog Fence, Box Flat, Footrot, Sheep Lice, NLIS and Curfew Project.**

6.3 OJD Update

OJD Control Program Project Application – 2006/2007

Members were advised that the 2006/2007 SA OJD project application was not included for consideration as the SA OJD Committee had not had a chance to review the budget recommendations and will do so at a later date. It is intended that the project application will be distributed for discussion at the conclusion of Evan Sargent's presentation on the 19 June 2006.

National OJD Stakeholder Meeting

The purpose of the National OJD Stakeholder meeting held in Canberra on the 22nd March 2006 was to negotiate a national agreement between industry and state jurisdictions on the control of OJD in Australia beyond the 30th June 2006. South Australian representatives included J. Symons (SASAG), Don Plowman (PIRSA and J. Van Wijk (PIRSA, technical advisor). Mike Bond (Animal Health Australia) acted as facilitator and John Kerin (former Commonwealth Agriculture Minister) was an observer, with the role of trying to engender a common approach.

The document under consideration at the meeting was 'A Future Framework for the Management of OJD in Australia'. The meeting agenda included reaching agreement on some guiding principles, a situation report by each jurisdiction, the need for a common objective, disease management tools, risk assessment tools and emerging issues (ie vaccination uptake, abattoir monitoring, prevalence areas, sheep health statements, communication and new technologies).

Animal Health Australia (AHA) was identified as the preferred co-ordinator for any agreed on-going program.

As a result of a lack of industry/government agreement about vaccination (ie the responsibility of the buyer versus the seller and whether second generation approved vaccinates warrant additional points) and abattoir monitoring/prevalence areas, two national working groups will be set up to resolve these issues. If these issues are not resolved before the 30th June 2006, abattoir surveillance may cease in some jurisdictions until a common approach and funding issues are finalized.

The "Terms of Reference" for the vaccine working group is with the national sheep industry (ie Sheepmeat Council and Wool Producers) for consideration.

J. Van Wijk believes that the Terms of Reference will be endorsed shortly, and advised that SA will have a member on the group. SASAG will be kept informed as these matters are progressed nationally.

OJD Bio-economic Model

J. Van Wijk provided a brief overview of Evan Sergeant's (AusVet Animal Health Services) 'Bio-economic Modeling of Future Control Options for OJD in South Australia'. The model considered six scenarios (divided between the mainland SA and KI) ranging from deregulation to providing a 100% subsidy for KI and all South East flocks. The underlying assumptions about each scenario are described in the attached Table (also refer to OJD Bio-economic Model report, 5.1 Scenarios).

Members were advised that Evan Sergeant is available to present and discuss the 'Bio-economic Modeling of Future Control Options for OJD in South Australia' on Monday 19 June 2006 at Glenside. Attendees are to include SASAG and SA OJD Committee members, PIRSA Animal Health and guests (eg SAFF). J. Van Wijk informed members that AHA (Lorna Citer) believes it would assist with the national OJD program discussions if several national industry members (eg Sheepmeat Council and Wool Producers) were allowed to attend. After limited discussion, members supported inviting representatives from the key national industry groups. It was also agreed that the cost of lunch following the presentation would be split 50:50 between the SIF and PIRSA.

PIRSA Animal Health proposed cover the cost of the OJD bio-economic model (\$25,000), plus a portion of the 2005/2006 OJD program salaries normally covered by the SIF, on the condition that SASAG funds an additional abattoir inspector for the first three months of 2006/2007 pending the outcome of the national OJD program. This proposal was endorsed by SASAG.

RECOMMENDATION

SASAG endorses allocating a portion of the 2006/2007 OJD program budget towards the funding of an additional abattoir inspector for the first three months of 2006/2007 pending the outcome of the national OJD program discussions.

OJD Vaccination Site

F. Andrews advised SASAG that stud merino breeders are indicating that they may cease vaccinating their sheep against OJD until the occurrence of abscesses at the vaccination site is resolved. He went on to cite an example where a producer found that some ewes had become fly struck at the vaccination site. J. Van Wijk indicated that this example more likely reflects vaccination technique and or climatic conditions rather than a problem with the vaccine adjuvant. He went on to say that I. Sanderson's survey of 122 crossbred ewes vaccinated as lambs with 0.25" needles demonstrated that 90% (110 animals) of the vaccinated ewes did not produce observable lesions at the vaccination site, 2% (2 animals) had lesions up to 12mm in diameter, 7% (9 animals) had lesions between 12 – 25mm in diameter and 1% of the mob (1 animal) had a small open lesion. Thus only 10% of the mob inspected had visible lesions.

OUTCOME

PIRSA to investigate the allegation that sheep were fly struck on the OJD vaccination site.

OJD Committee Recommendation

The South Australian OJD Committee (SAOJDC) meeting minutes and summary from the 9th March 2006 were tabled. J. Van Wijk advised members that the SAOJDC had received correspondence from a Mt Burr sheep producer requesting consideration for the reimbursement of costs incurred for the voluntary vaccination of his flock, now that OJD has been confirmed. Apparently he commenced voluntary vaccination in 2005 as a precautionary measure due to the number of infected properties in the area. The SAOJDC supports the vaccination refund but believes that it should be restricted to a total of five years as per other infected flocks.

No recommendation was forthcoming about when the producer began his voluntary vaccination program (2005) or from when OJD was confirmed (2006). Clarification was sought by the SAOJDC about whether SASAG needed to approve specific cases such as this if the OJD program expenditure is under the approved budget.

After consideration of the facts, it was agreed that:

- to avoid setting a precedent on the indiscriminate use of OJD program funds, permission for the use of unspent funds must be sought from SASAG in the first instance; and

- the Mt Burr sheep producer should be eligible for five years worth of subsidised OJD vaccine, as per a normal inflected flock, and that it was at the discretion of the OJD Program Manager (J. Reddin) whether the funding commenced as of 2005 or 2006.

OUTCOME

SASAG approves the provision of subsidised OJD vaccine to the identified Mt Burr sheep producer as per an infected operation for five years, and that it is at the discretion of the OJD Program Manager whether the subsidy commences from 2005 or 2006.

6.4 SASAG Vacancies 2006

Members were reminded that the five commercial sheep industry positions on SASAG are due to fall vacant on the 30th September 2006. A. McTaggart advised that he is not intending to renominate, and encouraged the Group to elect a new Chairperson from within the current membership.

7. Other Business:

7.1 Meeting with Minister

A. McTaggart provided an update on the meeting held with the Minister and Ben Ryan (Chair, Sheep Industry Development Board) on Monday 22nd May 2006. He highlighted that the Minister's focus is about identifying, and remedying where possible, rate limiters (ie barriers to opportunities) across an industry's market chain so that all participants are better off. He also indicated that it is up to Industry to determine the reporting structure between SASAG and the Sheep Industry Development Board (SIDB), though he did confirm that the Groups must avoid duplication of activities. It was stated that SASAG should foster confidence amongst sheep producers that the SIF is being well managed by fostering strong networks with key industry bodies, but not necessarily through general producer forums. The Minister was reminded that SASAG needed to liaise with Fund contributors otherwise the majority of funds could be withdrawn.

Concern was raised that the Minister could not guarantee PIRSA's 20% contribution towards the OJD program. D. Plowman indicated that the State will honour its 20% responsibility to the OJD program, but was waiting on the outcome of the national program before committing funds.

R. Vandegraaff reported that PIRSA Animal Health has been working to secure South Australia's OJD commitment. He went on to explain that PIRSA Animal Health and Plant Health were targeted this year with significant funding cuts - Animal Health is required to make a 17.5% saving by 2009/2010, while Plant Health needs to source \$1.5 million for fruit fly roadblocks over the next 3 years.

Communication between SASAG and the Sheep Industry Development Board

Jack Langberg (Executive Officer, Sheep Industry Development Board) attended the meeting to provide further insight on the role of the Sheep Industry Development Board (IDB). He advised that the purpose of the Sheep IDB is to evaluate the sheep industry strategic plan and to promote new initiatives to develop the sheep industry in South Australia. The primary aims of the South Australian Sheep Industry Ten Year Strategic Plan is to:

- grow the value of the industry;
- building capacity;
- enhancing industry integration; and
- improve the relationship with the community.

The Sheep IDB has identified the following barriers that limit growth (rate limiters) within the South Australian sheep Industry:

- production efficiency;
- business efficiency;
- adoption of technology;
- value chain training development and employment; and
- food safety, biosecurity and animal welfare.

J. Langberg highlighted that even though the Sheep IDB has identified and communicated the described 'rate limiters' to industry, they do recognise that SASAG is directly involved with Animal Health and Animal Welfare issues. In order to minimise duplication in these areas, the SIDB will maintain an observer role. He also agreed with SASAG that through increased communication between the two Groups, potential duplication of agendas could be avoided.

Clarification was sought about how the Sheep IDB members were chosen. J. Langberg revealed that several individuals were targeted from existing committees with the remainder through self-nominations in response to an advertisement. The SIDB budget is \$15,000 per annum, which is used to reimburse members for attendance and mileage.

Given the communication necessary between SASAG and the Sheep IDB, clarification was sought about whether a SASAG member should be included within the Sheep IDB membership. J. Langberg indicated that if required, there might be room for two more representatives on the Board, but that his preference at the moment is to liaise with E. Petrenas and T. Goodwin. He also requested a permanent spot on SASAG's agenda to provide updates on Sheep IDB activities and discuss communal issues. This request was supported by SASAG members.

7.2 SA Stud Merino Sheepbreeders' Association Field Day

Feedback from the SA Stud Merino Sheepbreeders' Association field day suggested that this one had been the best the Association has had for several years. F. Andrews believes that this reflects increased industry involvement in the event. To further improve the event next year, it is proposed that trade stalls are spread amongst the stud displays. SASAG stall participants revealed that producers were asking for an A4 flier describing the virtues of OJD vaccination and SheepMAP accredited stock.

OUTCOME

Request PIRSA to develop an A4 brochure outlining the importance of accessing vaccinated sheep and stock from accredited SheepMAP flocks.

7.3 Sheep Industry Fund Consultation Forum

Approximately 20 Fund contributors attended the 2006 SIF Forum. Attendees appeared interested in the information provided, and with the exception of one concerned stud sheep producer re NLIS tags, saw the merit in the programs funded by the SIF. Minimal discussion occurred concerning the 40 cent levy.

OUTCOME

Forward correspondence to B. Ryan, B. Mumford, and M. Balharry expressing SASAG's appreciation for their presentations at the SIF Consultation Forum.

7.4 Changes in PIRSA Animal Health's Staff Arrangements

R. Vandegraaff informed members that he has recently resigned from the position of Chair on the National Animal Welfare Working Group and therefore will be more available to become involved in local operational issues. He went on to say that N. Buchanan's role has also changed focus to more closely deal with Emergency Animal Disease and Risk Management activities – though he will also continue to interact with the Livestock Advisory Group's. To assist R. Vandegraaff, given the change in N. Buchanan's role, R. Baker has been appointed as a Policy Advisor.

7.5 Correspondence from a Goat Advisory Group Member

A. McTaggart raised that he had received a facsimile from a SA Goat Advisory Group member requesting SASAG support for PIRSA Animal Health to oversee production livestock welfare issues rather than the RSPCA. When advised by J. Van Wijk that this proposal was contrary to that collectively supported by the SA Goat Advisory Group, A. McTaggart withdrew the communication from the table.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Friday 25th August 2006** from 9:30am – 4:00pm in the Seminar Room, Level 1, Primary Industries and Resources SA, 33 Flemington St, Glenside.

The meeting closed at 5:15pm