

# South Australian Alpaca Advisory Group

## Meeting Summary

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February 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 Any misuse of information by individuals or associations will cause this service to be withdrawn.**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 11:05 am.

### 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all members and guests to the meeting. He invited all participants to introduce themselves and outline their involvement in the alpaca industry.

### 2. Attendance

*Tom Gouldie (Chair)*  
*Leanne Veitch*  
*Brian Ancell*  
*Lea Richens*  
*Jolyon Porter*  
*Rebecca Lang*  
*Trudi Goodwin*

*Alpaca Industry Representative*  
*Ministers Representative (PIRSA)*  
*Alpaca Industry Representative*  
*Alpaca Industry Representative*  
*Alpaca Industry Representative*  
*Alpaca Industry Representative*  
*Executive Officer, Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)*

### Guests:

*Elena Petrenas*  
*Jeremy Rogers*  
*Denise Rendell*

*Manager, Livestock Advisory Groups (PIRSA)*  
*Veterinary Consultant – BJD (PIRSA)*  
*Senior Animal Health Consultant (PIRSA)*

### 3. Apologies

*Nil*

### 4. Confirmation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes – 2 December 2005

The minutes from the AAG meeting held on 2nd December 2005 were accepted as a true and accurate record subject to identified amendments.

### 5. Matters Arising from 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes/Actions – 2 December 2005

**Item 7.4 (SA AAA Representative)** – Advice received from the Minister's Office, was that so long as it could be demonstrated that the AAA (SA Region) was interested in liaising with the AAG, a request should be forwarded to the Minister requesting the replacement of one industry position on the Group with a representative from the AAA (SA Region), effective as of the next appointment cycle (August 2006). Members supported progressing this matter with the Minister.

Members agreed that the SA AAG Chair and the President AAA SA Region would have ongoing discussions to ensure liaison was maintained between the AAG and the AAA (SA Region), and the SA AAG would continue to discuss areas of interest with AAA contacts (particularly nationally).

### 6. Correspondence

The correspondence was noted and accepted.

### 7. Business

#### 7.1 Industry Communication

### **SA Alpaca Advisory Group Forum**

The SA AAG successfully negotiated a \$500.00 donation from PIRSA, Livestock Group to be used for the AAG Forum and newsletter. Members were advised that this is the last time that monies will be available for this purpose due to reduced State funds and a refocus of the PIRSA Livestock Group activities.

Members unanimously supported the AAG Forum being held on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006 at the Lobethal Senior Citizens Hall. Suggested Forum topics included:

- Castration demonstration conducted by Dr Narelle Arnold, BSc BVMS
- National Livestock Identification System
- Property Identification Code (PIC)
- Q Alpaca and AlpacaMAP (aim to invite a speaker such as D. Kennedy or J. Rogers)
- Model Code of Practice and Welfare for Alpacas
- The Role of the AAG and AAA
- AAA National Conference
- Nutrition and/or Showing alpacas

It was reconfirmed that the Forum should optimally remain as an independent event rather than being held in conjunction with a AAA event, such as the AAA Extravaganza. Industry groups, such as the AAA, were welcome to participate in the AAG Forum as long as their contribution to and participation in the Forum was agreed by the AAG, and their input was seen to be in the best interests of the industry in general.

Forum advertising mediums:

- AAG newsletter – posted mid March 2006 (to include Health Bulletin);
- AAA newsletter;
- Mt Pleasant Show (18 March 2006);
- Alpaca Extravaganza; and
- Editorial press release (through PIRSAs Media Unit)

### **SA Alpaca Advisory Group Newsletter**

It was agreed that the deadline for the distribution of the AAG newsletter to all South Australian registered Alpaca PICs is before the 18 March 2006. In addition, it was felt that copies should be made available for distribution at the Mt Pleasant Show (18 March) and Alpaca Extravaganza (22 - 23 April).

Members discussed the following AAG newsletter topics:

- Forum advertisement
- NLIS (SA & national program and proposed tag retention trials)
- Property Identification Code statistics
- Vendor/Waybill/Health Declaration
- Model Code of Practice
- Q Alpaca vrs AlpacaMAP
- AAG vacancy advertisement

### **Review of Industry Communication Strategy**

Members reviewed the Group's communication strategy (in relation to AAG and Animal Health issues) and identified the following industry stakeholders:

- Alpaca Owners (including hobby farmers, commercial producers and AAA members);
- Veterinarians;
- Transport companies;
- Fodder stores;
- Fibre processors;
- Stock Agents; and
- Show Societies.

Potential communication channels for information dissemination could include:

- PIRSA Animal Health bulletin (free resource, circulated to vets);
- PIRSA Animal Health Officers;
- Australian Alpaca Veterinarians (AAV);
- Newsletters (AAG, AAA, SA Region);
- Websites (PIRSA, AAG and AAA);
- AAG Forum;
- AAA, SA Region committee meetings and events (Extravaganza and Workshops); and
- Print Media (state and regional)

Due to a degree of confusion amongst alpaca industry participants, T. Gouldie has revised the comparative table outlining the roles of the AAG and AAA. Feedback from AAG members supported the concept and suggested that the table could reflect the role of the AAA (SA Region) rather than the national AAA and may be easier to follow in a non-tabular format.

## **7.2 JD Update**

### **Q Alpaca**

J. Rogers (PIRSA Animal Health) reported that within South Australia there are currently registered twelve Q Alpaca herds and forty-four AlpacaMAP herds (some herds are on both programs). To date, Q Alpaca has only been available to AAA members; however recent advice from the AAA Animal Health, Husbandry and Welfare sub committee (which oversees the Q-Alpaca program) is that the AAA is considering expanding the program to enable non-AAA members to participate. It was noted that inaccuracies about the Q Alpaca program on the national AAA website may require amendments.

Q Alpaca is mentioned in the AlpacaMAP manual (tabled), however concern was raised that this program seems to have no external auditing frequency or process in place. Q Alpaca provides for auditing by those administering the Q Alpaca program. J. Rogers advised that the BJD Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has provided advice to the AAA Q Alpaca working group regarding the external auditing deficiency. In the JD MAP programs PIRSA is responsible for overseeing the compliance of veterinarians, with auditing practices periodically revised by the respective TAG.

### **OUTCOME**

**The Q Alpaca and AlpacaMAP comparative table will be progressed and circulate to AAG members.**

J. Rogers also tabled the revised 'Australian JD Market Assurance Program For Alpaca Herd Status Certificate' for consideration. To ensure consistency with the JD MAP Manual, it was agreed that the certificate should be amended (to improve clarity) to include the words "A herd status of..... was assigned on ..... This status is valid until.....".

### **OUTCOME**

**The Alpaca JD MAP Certificate will be updated and circulate to AAG members.**

### **JD - Pooled Faecal Testing**

J. Rogers informed members that JD pooled faecal culture (PFC) testing is being validated for cattle (pool of 5), sheep (pool of 50) and goats (pool of 25).

In relation to PFC testing for alpaca, Dr David Kennedy (AusVet) and Dr J. Van Wijk (PIRSA, Manager Disease Control and Surveillance) both recommend that less than 25 animals would likely be required, however they consider the PFC method to be not currently suitable.

There is also concern that there are no positive alpaca control protocols available for defining pool size, nor does there appear to be any funds to develop and trial the protocol.

PIRSA Animal Health recommended that the AAG (in conjunction with PIRSA) draft a letter to D. Kennedy requesting the development of a research protocol for PFC testing in alpacas. It was suggested that the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (Attwood) would be the most appropriate facility to undertake this research because of their experience in developing this test for other species and the fact that they own an alpaca herd.

As the role of the AAG is to provide recommendations to the Minister on policy issues, the Group can forward correspondence to the Minister recommending that pooled faecal testing be investigated for alpacas, with assistance from PIRSA.

## **OUTCOME**

**AAG to forward correspondence to the Minister recommending that a pooled faecal culture (PFC) testing protocol be developed for alpacas and that PIRSA liaise with interstate counterparts to develop the testing procedure.**

### **7.3 Industry Standards**

#### **JD Scoring**

J. Rogers indicated that the State Government is unlikely to endorse a JD scoring system for alpacas in the absence of any economic or trade access requirement. He therefore recommended that this concept not be progressed at this point in time.

J. Rogers invited the AAG Chair to discuss the PFC protocol with David Kennedy while he is at PIRSA on 27 February 2006 from 3:00 - 5:00 pm.

#### **Vendor Declaration**

It was suggested that one certificate is developed which includes a border pass (waybill) and animal health declaration. Members unanimously supported this initiative.

## **OUTCOME**

**Update the draft Vendor Declaration and distribute to PIRSA staff and AAG members for comment.**

#### **Alpaca Welfare Code of Practice Update**

The Animal Welfare Legislation meeting was held in Adelaide on 27 January 2006 to discuss issues affecting livestock production in Australia. The list of invitees included South Australian livestock producers, Livestock Advisory Group representatives and other industry stakeholders such as SAFF, the Department of Environment and Heritage and the Australian Veterinary Association. T. Gouldie attended as an AAG representative.

Participants were made aware of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) and working group and the importance of working with the livestock sectors to review, and where necessary, update the model welfare codes of practice, as well as standardise legislation across states. Dr Deb Kelly (Department of Environment and Heritage) also described the process undertaken to review the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1985*. Once a green copy of the Animal Welfare legislation is distributed, livestock groups will have an opportunity to contribute.

#### **Health Bulletin**

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The AAG endorses Fact sheet number FS01/06 as the final version of the Health Bulletin 'Legislation on Alpaca Husbandry Practices' for distribution.

### **7.4 NLIS Alpaca Implementation Group Update**

T. Woonton (PIRSA Animal Health) provided a NLIS report, which highlighted the following:

Following the 2001 Foot and Mouth (FMD) outbreak in the United Kingdom and subsequent cases of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States of America, Canada and Japan, it became apparent the Australia required a more robust livestock identification system to enable reliable and rapid tracing of livestock movements.

The Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) resolved in 2003 to introduce under jurisdictional legislation, mandatory regulation of livestock identification and tracing systems in Australia. The NLIS has been progressively rolled out by all states since.

South Australia is led by industry based NLIS Implementation Groups, comprised of producers, agents, livestock exporters, saleyards and abattoir operators, with PIRSA Animal Health assistance. Prior to national implementation of NLIS technology, it is firstly reviewed and considered by the technical advisory group (TAG) and the industry Implementation Groups before submission to national livestock industries for endorsement.

NLIS cattle, involves individual electronic identification and recording of all movements on a national database, which includes a 70 cent per tag rebate on the purchase of electronic tags by producers. Processors, saleyards and agents were provided with substantial financial assistance for NLIS related infrastructure.

In South Australia, the system is fully implemented and all cattle are now required to be identified with a NLIS device when they move off of a property. The Implementation Committee has allowed an exemption until July 2007 from NLIS identification for groups of 20 or more breeder cattle consigned directly to an abattoir from their property of birth.

Some technical and operational problems have arisen, necessitating ongoing technical support by PIRSA to the various industry sectors. Compliance monitoring and systematic auditing will become the main ongoing state commitment.

NLIS Sheep and Goats within South Australia commenced in January 2006. At this stage a 'flock based' identification system involving manual ear tags and mandatory movement documentation. Phased implementation over three years is being assisted by the provision of a SA Government funded subsidy of 12 cents per tag (on 2006 and 2007 colour breeder and pink post breeder ear tags).

Livestock identification systems are required to meet national performance standards to ensure risk management and regulatory objectives are being met. These performance standards for livestock identification and traceability have been developed by Animal Health Australia, in consultation with SAFEMEAT.

L. Richens provided a report to members regarding the NLIS Alpaca Implementation Group meetings held on 14 January and 5 February 2006. In summary, the report identified 3 basic components of NLIS and requested immediate implementation:

**1. Property Identification Code (PIC)**

Forward a recommendation to the Minister that South Australian PIC alpaca registrations be made mandatory from 1 July 2006.

*[Note: The registration of properties running alpacas will soon be mandatory in South Australia]*

**2. Individual Identification of Alpacas**

Forward a recommendation to the Minister that all alpacas are identified with an approved NLIS tag, with rollout occurring on the 1 July 2006.

**3. SA Vendor Declaration/Waybill and Health Declaration for Alpaca**

Recommend to the Minister that from 1 January 2007 one document should be implemented to act as a Vendor Declaration/Waybill/Health Declaration (Forum 1) and be mandatory in SA for alpaca.

Members were advised that the NLIS Sheep and Goats Implementation Group does not support the adoption of electronic tags initially by the alpaca industry (similar to sheep and goats), as it is felt that existing technology might be superseded in the foreseeable future.

T. Gouldie raised that the national body (AAA) should be involved with the NLIS Alpaca approval process and advised that the AAA will likely provide funding for the tag retention trials. N. Daniell (AAA national Chair of the NLIS-Alpaca Working Group), is currently investigating the integration of NLIS tags with the AAA International Alpaca Register (IAR) tags. This would benefit AAA breeders (approximately 72,000 registered animals) by removing the need to place an additional tag into these alpacas. In addition, he is investigating how movement data can be incorporated within the AAA IAR database.

D. Rendell (PIRSA Animal Health) advised that the Minister would be reluctant to approve South Australia independently launching NLIS Alpaca, as one state can be easily overruled by others in a national system. The alpaca industry needs to adopt a national standard for identification devices, to address the performance requirements of devices and the technology base for devices (ie visual vs electronic) and to determine identification requirements. Tag trials would be required to determine the suitability of devices for long term use in alpacas - the trials would look at retention rates, readability, general performance and on-farm benefits. More importantly, the alpaca industry does not have a funding source to look at these issues, therefore this must be resolved. NLIS for cattle, sheep and goats are industry initiatives, which are funded through transaction levies paid to Meat & Livestock Australia Pty Ltd, State and Federal Government funding and local industry funds.

D. Rendell went on to say that in retention trials multiple tags are trialed per property (to ensure the same environmental conditions) thereby requiring access to large numbers of animals. This process must satisfy national requirements and is costly. With the cattle industry, subsequent to the approval of electronic cattle tags, there were four years of tag retention trials, which included the following criteria:

- retention rate of 99.5%;
- technology easily accessed;
- readability for a specified period of time; and
- individual animal identification.

Members discussed a draft NLIS Alpaca trial protocol and highlighted the following aspects, which need to be further investigated in detail by the NLIS Alpaca working group:

- retention rate;
- readability over time;
- IAR integration (work with AAA and manufacturers);
- Satisfy national standards;
- NVD requirements;
- percentage of animals captured (sheep industry had 5 trial properties);
- increase number of PICs;
- smart tags;
- dumb tags;
- maximum of 2 tags for the life of an alpaca; and
- auditing protocols.

## **OUTCOME**

- **The AAG members will consider the sheep NLIS protocol for tag retention trials.**
- **The Group would proceed with updating the Vendor Declaration to enable identification of alpaca movements.**

## **7.5 Australian Alpaca Veterinarians**

The Australian Alpaca Veterinarians (formerly the Australian Camelid Veterinary Association, ACVA) is a voluntary Special Interest Group of the Australian Veterinary Association. The AAV began as the Australian Camelid Veterinary Network in the early 1990s, in response to the importation of South American Camelids to Australia, which commenced in the late 1980s. Today the Association consists of approximately 100 members.

The Australian Alpaca Veterinarians aim is to:

- Provide a forum for discussion amongst Australian veterinarians with an interest in camelid medicine, surgery and production;
- Provide continuing education by dissemination of new camelid information to its members through the annual conference and quarterly newsletters;
- Further knowledge and research into camelid diseases and herd health to achieve excellence in camelid practice;
- Promote the application of animal health and preventative medicine to camelid industry bodies such as the Australian Alpaca Association Inc;

- Promote co-operation among practitioners, researchers, advisory and teaching institutions and breeders in the camelid industries in relation to animal health and production knowledge; and
- Equip veterinarians with the skills to certify alpacas for breeding suitability.

The list of Australian Alpaca Veterinarians can be obtained from [www.ava.com.au/main.php](http://www.ava.com.au/main.php).

The AAG members agreed that it would be beneficial for all South Australian veterinarians (especially AVAs) to be included in the AAG communication strategy.

## **8. Other Business**

### **8.1 Industry Liaison Officer Training**

The most recent Animal Health Australia (AHA) Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) training (6 February 2006) was attended by L. Richens. AHA is seeking to train a total of 1,000 ILOs nationally, across all production industries. Once trained, ILO's are expected to be available for up to five years.

In the event of an emergency animal disease response, ILOs will work a maximum of two eight-hour shifts, for which they are paid. Trained ILOs will be kept informed through periodic updates from AHA.

In general terms, the role of ILOs in an Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) response is to:

- provide advice on the nature of the local industry to assist with disease risk assessment;
- assist with the development plans for disease eradication/control;
- provide advice on the economic and other consequences of proposed actions; and
- act as a focus for consultation and advice to the local industry.

Members noted that other livestock industries are confident that they can track livestock movements, emphasising the importance of alpaca identification and traceability within the alpaca industry.

### **8.2 2006 AAG Nominations**

Members were reminded that two of the industry positions (currently held by T. Gouldie and B. Ancell) are due to expire on the 30 September 2006. These vacancies are to be advertised within the SA AAG newsletter, and also through the AAA SA Region. Nominations are due by the 25 August 2006.

## **9. Next Meeting**

The next AAG meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2006** at 11:00am – 4:00pm to be held in the Seminar Room – Level 1, PIRSA Building, 33 Flemington Street, Glenside.

The meeting closed 4.37 pm.