

Ovine Johne's Disease Management Program Changes

Changes to the Ovine Johne's Disease Management Program in South Australia came into effect from 1 July 2019.

Producers should note:

- Movement restrictions relating to JD for sheep entering SA will no longer be in place from 1 July 2019.
- National Vendor Declarations (NVDs) and National Sheep Health Declarations (NSHDs) will remain mandatory in SA.
- Removal of SA entry requirements will make sheep trade between states easier once dry conditions ease.
- Johne's disease in sheep (JD) is a notifiable disease and must be reported to PIRSA.
- Without movement restrictions there is increased ability for producers with JD-infected flocks to trade sheep. Producers need to check the risk of animals BEFORE purchasing - check the NVD and NSHD.
- For more information visit pir.sa.gov.au/ojd-management-program and see below FAQs.

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About the changes

What changes are being made to the Johne's disease in sheep management program?

The management of endemic sheep disease, Ovine Johne's disease (OJD) or Johne's Disease (JD), will change in South Australia from 1 July 2019 with the lifting of restrictions on sheep movements into the state. This is a natural progression of the changes to OJD management started in July 2018.

While interstate sheep movement restrictions will be lifted, it is recommended that all animals entering SA should be vaccinated for Johne's Disease, either before entry or upon entry to SA.

Why are changes being made?

The removal of movement restrictions has been recommended by the South Australian Sheep Industry Fund Board in close liaison with Primary Industries and Region SA (PIRSA) and Livestock SA.

The latest changes are consistent with a move to a less regulated program that commenced in July 2018. They are aimed at assisting producers to restock once dry conditions ease, and will make sheep trade between states easier. Removing interstate movement restrictions will also see stronger alignment in South Australia to management arrangements for the disease through the national OJD program.

Do these changes affect the Sheep Market Assurance Program (MAP)?

No. SheepMAP is a national program therefore the changes to the SA OJD program will not affect it. Under the new national management arrangements for Johne's disease SheepMAP, has been identified as one of the Sheep Health Project tools that can be used for on-farm Johne's disease management.

Will the changes affect online selling platforms such as AuctionsPlus?

All sheep movements between properties must continue to be accompanied by a NSHD within South Australia regardless of the mechanism of sale. Information on the NSHD should be available on AuctionsPlus so producers can be aware of the disease health risk of the animals they wish to purchase. If the relevant information is not available, ask for it or do not make the purchase.

How does this affect me buying stock at a market or through other platforms?

Without movement restrictions there is increased ability for producers with JD-infected flocks to trade sheep through saleyards and other platforms. Good biosecurity should be central to all purchasing decisions, and you must be aware of the disease risk of the stock you are buying i.e. check the NVD or NSHD.

How do I check the OJD risk of stock I am considering purchasing?

Livestock agents can assist you with accessing information on the NSHD. Note, it is not sufficient to just check that the animals are not from an infected property, you need to determine what evidence the risk is based on. Producer declarations of infection status on the NSHD can be unreliable as some producers may not be aware they have OJD or have undertaken any form of testing.

SheepMAP properties are the best source of sheep that have a low risk of being infected with JD. These properties have undertaken a level of testing and maintain high standards of biosecurity to attain this accreditation. The longer they have been in the program and the more testing they have undertaken, the greater the level of assurance.

If you do not understand the OJD risk, seek advice from PIRSA before purchasing stock.

Can I purchase stock from a flock that has JD and how will my disease status be affected?

You can purchase stock from an infected or suspect flock, however be aware that you will most likely introduce the causative bacterium with them. Producers need to ensure that they manage the biosecurity risk those animals pose by managing the disease. The best way to manage the disease is by vaccination using Gudair. The disease must also be managed in such a way that animal welfare is not compromised resulting in animals suffering severe clinical disease, starving, becoming emaciated or dying.

If you purchase infected or suspect animals you will by default obtain an infected status on your farm. You should understand the subsequent trade restrictions, as this disease status must be declared on the NSHD in any future trading from your property.

Can I sell sheep from a property that's infected with JD?

Yes you can, but you should minimise risk to other producers and industry by undertaking sound biosecurity practices relating to trading animals:

- any animals that are likely to be diseased should be sold direct to an abattoir or via a feedlot
- animals that are intended to live beyond 18 months of age (ie. breeding or wool production) should be vaccinated.
- if vaccinated prior to 16 weeks of age, they are an Approved Vaccinate and thus should have a NLIS tag with a V on it prior to leaving the property.
- You are encouraged to also declare on the NSHD an infected or suspect property status, false declaration can result in action being taken under the *Livestock Act 1997*.

When trading with other states, producers should check the entry requirements for each state. Saleyards and other platforms may also have their own set of entry requirements. Producers selling stock must check eligibility requirements with agents before sending animals for sale.

Will there still be compliance involved in sheep trade and who will ensure compliance?

PIRSA undertake a range of activities to detect non-compliance with the *Livestock Act 1997*. Individual producers are responsible for ensuring that any animals they bring onto their property are healthy and not

affected with diseases. Producers who have concerns regarding illegal animal movements can [report it to PIRSA](#).

What is happening with Regional Biosecurity Plan Areas (RBPA)?

Producers are now able to purchase sheep from any area of Australia so there is no longer a need for Regional Biosecurity Plan Areas as a way to gain entry to SA. RBPA were a part of the National OJD management plan and are under review as the national management of JD is transitioned into the Sheep Health Project with other diseases like footrot and ovine brucellosis. Depending on the outcome of this review the need for any RBPAs in South Australia will be considered.

OJD on-farm management

If I think sheep on my farm have JD, where can I get help?

Where producers notice symptoms consistent with JD in sheep (wasting, increased mortality, 'poor' tail end of the mob) they should contact their private veterinarians or PIRSA to have a disease investigation conducted. Subsidies are available to assist producers with costs associated with the investigation and laboratory testing.

JD will present very similar to intestinal parasites and trace mineral deficiencies. To minimise the economic impact of endemic diseases thorough disease investigations are recommended to ensure an accurate diagnosis and correct treatment/preventative actions are undertaken.

How do I get my sheep inspected for OJD at an abattoir?

A producer must request their sheep to be inspected for JD by contacting PIRSA, this does not occur automatically. In South Australia, this can only occur at the Thomas Foods International (TFI) Lobethal plant. [Find out how to apply for an abattoir inspection](#).

If a producer requests their sheep to be inspected, they will receive confirmation of the findings a week or two after the consignment is processed. If there is no request, there is no inspection.

What rules will apply to my neighbour with JD?

Your neighbour will be encouraged to declare their status when trading sheep and should ensure they are managing the health and welfare of their animals, including JD infected animals. This can be achieved by undertaking such actions as vaccination or other management practices to minimise the occurrence of disease eg. only selling diseased animals to abattoirs or feedlots and minimising potential straying of animals.

I have a neighbor that has/may have JD and their sheep are regularly straying. What can I do?

As with any disease in sheep, managing your own biosecurity is the best way to manage your risk. Consider the risk these sheep pose to your business and whether you should be vaccinating with Gudair. Ensure your fencing is adequate and checked regularly. Boundary fencing is the responsibility of both producers.

What support is available for producers to manage OJD?

The South Australian OJD management program is funded from the Sheep Industry Fund under the recommendations made by [South Australian Sheep Industry Fund Board](#). This program provides assistance to affected producers to undertake testing and best practice management programs to achieve a low risk OJD status while considering individual business needs. The whole sheep industry can access information and advice to minimise the risks that JD will pose to their business and industry.

How can I find out more?

You can find more information about the changes and how to best manage the risk of endemic diseases on your property via:

- The PIRSA website: pir.sa.gov.au/ojd-management-program
- Your local Animal Health Advisor pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/contact_us
- Livestock SA: admin@livestocksa.org.au or (08) 8297 2299.

Who is responsible for monitoring individual producer's biosecurity plans?

Individual assurance schemes are responsible for monitoring biosecurity plans as described in the program details. In some situations this may be reviewed by private veterinarians (J-BAS) or LPA auditors. The [One Biosecurity](#) on-farm biosecurity management program assists producers to create biosecurity plans that are verified by PIRSA staff. It should be noted that many programs recognise each other's biosecurity plans ie. a biosecurity plan developed on the One Biosecurity platform can be used to meet LPA and J-BAS requirements.

Entry requirements for sheep entering SA

What is changing in regards to entry requirements for sheep into SA?

Restrictions relating to OJD for movement of sheep into SA were lifted on 1 July 2019. However, restrictions still remain in place for notifiable disease such as Footrot.

All sheep and lambs entering SA must be accompanied by a National Vendor Declaration (NVD) and a National Sheep Health Declaration (NSHD). The only exception are those moving direct to slaughter from an interstate saleyard.

What are requirements for various movements of interstate sheep and lambs in SA?

From 1 July 2019 all sheep and lambs can enter SA from interstate. The following is required to accompany sheep movements:

Movement	Requirements
Selling in an SA saleyard for restocking	Must be accompanied by an NSHD and NVD. Saleyards and other platforms may also have their own set of entry requirements – check with the relevant agent.
Selling in an SA saleyard for processing	Must be accompanied by an NSHD and NVD. Saleyards and other platforms may also have their own set of entry requirements – check with the relevant agent.
Selling direct to an SA abattoir for processing	There are no restrictions for sheep and lambs destined for slaughter. They must be accompanied by the NVD and NSHD unless they are purchased at an interstate saleyard.
Selling to an SA feedlot for finishing	Must be accompanied by an NSHD and NVD unless purchased at an interstate saleyard for the end purpose of slaughter.
Sending to SA breeding centre	Breeding Centres can set their own entry requirements. You must check these with the Breeding Centre prior dispatching of animals from your farm.
Attending shows in SA	Show Societies can set their own entry requirements. You must check these with the relevant Show Society prior to dispatch of animals from your farm.

What flock testing demonstrates a low-risk OJD status?

Flock test/abattoir inspection results in the last two years could be from either:

1. The Pooled Faecal Culture (PFC) test, or the High Throughput Johne's test (HT-J) of 350 adult sheep (animals tested must be over 2 years of age)
2. The Abattoir 500 inspection results of 500 adult sheep (animals inspected must be over 2 years of age)
3. If you are a small producer and do not have more than 350 sheep, all animals over the age of 2 years must be tested.

If you have introduced sheep or lambs to your flock in the last five years, these should also be tested to demonstrate that they are not infected or suspected of being infected with JD through participation in SheepMAP, RBP, or the flock tests/abattoir inspections.

Other than SheepMAP how can I know if I am purchasing “low risk” sheep?

Without undertaking testing there is no way to reliably determine if sheep are not infected with JD. If you wish to purchase sheep that have a low risk of being diseased then there are some basic factors you can consider.

- The environment will influence disease occurrence in animals. Animals that have been born and raised their entire life in low rainfall areas with low stocking rates are less likely to develop disease even if infection is present.
- Vaccination has a significant influence on disease. Sheep purchased from properties where all animals are approved vaccinates will have a lower risk of developing disease. If you are purchasing unvaccinated sheep and introducing them to a high rainfall/stocking density property you should consider vaccinating them on arrival.

What is an “approved vaccinate” sheep

An Approved vaccinate is a sheep that is identified by a National Livestock Identification System (sheep) ‘V’ tag and is:

- vaccinated with JD vaccine by 16 weeks of age, or
- vaccinated with JD vaccine after 16 weeks of age, when the flock:
 - was in the SheepMAP, or
 - had undertaken a negative Faecal 350 test in the two years preceding the vaccination, or
 - had a Negative Abattoir 500 status at the time of vaccination.

Are JD vaccinated sheep and lambs eligible to enter South Australia?

Yes. It is strongly recommended that all sheep entering SA are vaccinated against JD, or vaccinated upon entry. There is evidence that vaccinating sheep older than 12 weeks of age will provide some protection from OJD. As a precaution, producers should, vaccinate any stock they purchase unless they are from an area with a low OJD risk prevalence or have been demonstrated to have a low disease status Vaccination does not prevent infection and it is recommended that producers in high rainfall areas should vaccinate all sheep on their properties if they are introducing vaccinated animals.