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Biosecurity main focus for new National OJD Management Plan

The new National Sheep Health Statement (SHS), which comes into use from next Monday, will help producers manage a range of on-farm disease risks, including Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD), and provide important information when buying and selling stock.

The SHS is a key part of the National OJD Management Plan 2013-18, which comes into effect on 1 July.

The Plan was developed by WoolProducers Australia (WPA) and Sheepmeat Council of Australia (SCA) following extensive consultation and will help producers take a risk-management approach to their farm biosecurity.

"As part of the new Plan, the SHS allows producers to list their on-farm biosecurity practices. It will encourage buyers to take responsibility for disease risks by making informed decisions about purchasing stock for their business," Sheepmeat Council President Ian McColl said.

"The SHS provides producers with information on flock history, OJD vaccination and testing, as well as footrot, lice and brucellosis, helping buyers make informed purchasing decisions."

Mr McColl said the SHS has been designed to be used across Australia. WPA and SCA have responded to producer feedback reinforcing that OJD prevalence areas should not continue.

"WPA and SCA do not have regulatory powers, therefore we have developed an effective national self-regulating plan, which includes Regional Biosecurity Plan (RBP) guidelines and a new, simpler and more comprehensive SHS," WPA President Mr Geoff Power said.

The National OJD Management Plan includes a set of guidelines for developing RBPs which encourages groups of producers to develop RBPs. These can reduce disease prevalence by working together on biosecurity issues.

"We strongly encourage the use of the SHS – it can be downloaded from the OJD website (www.ojd.com.au) or by calling 1800 332 312. The SHS is also an insert into this week's Fairfax Media agricultural weeklies to encourage its use," Mr Power said.

- More information on the National OJD Management Plan 2013-18 is available at www.ojd.com.au.

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