



# WORKPLACE ARRANGEMENTS

26 March 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has settled upon the world and has changed the way in which we interact as a society. The good thing is the sheep and cattle don't care and the grass is still growing where it has rained. Livestock SA is actively engaged with state and national governments and bodies and will keep you regularly updated on what is being done while we represent the interests of South Australian livestock producers. The importance of the food supply chain has been recognised by the Prime Minister, Minister Littleproud and State Governments. While there is a multitude of information available regarding COVID-19, we will work to highlight some pertinent parts for livestock producers.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a human respiratory illness. Symptoms range from a mild cough to pneumonia. There is evidence the virus spreads person to person. However, there is no evidence that livestock or companion animals can be infected. Like a flu, good hygiene can prevent infection.

Livestock SA recommends prioritisation of activities to maintain the health and welfare of producers and livestock. These activities should be planned on a farm-by-farm basis.

## How can we prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Good hygiene practices include:

- No handshaking
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water (before and after eating, drinking and going to the toilet)
- Practice social distancing – 1.5 metres is the recommended distance between people
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a flexed elbow (not hands) or a tissue
- If unwell, self-isolate and avoid contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging and other intimate contact)
- Avoid contact with anyone who has symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, nausea or diarrhea.

## What are employers and employees required to do in the workplace?

Employers should:

- Communicate often with staff about hygiene and biosecurity expectations
- Make sure workplaces are clean and hygienic
- Ensure all staff take action when feeling unwell or have symptoms – self-isolate, seek medical attention and communicate with farm management
- Ensure all staff strictly follow the hygiene measures and practice social distancing
- Encourage open communication between staff and management
- Consider an outdoor shaded area for staff to have food, rather than a designated lunchroom. Stagger lunch and tea breaks so staff do not all eat together
- Ensure alcohol-based hand sanitiser and/or antibacterial soap is available to staff at key points throughout the workplace
- Put up signage in key areas covering handwashing, prevention and symptoms
- Establish washdown procedures for key equipment that is used by multiple people in any one shift and/or between shifts
- Put together hygiene kits for shared vehicles which include antibacterial sprays and/or wipes and cloths to wipe down steering wheel and controls and alcohol-based hand sanitiser for hands
- Be mindful of where staff may have travelled and if they require self-isolation

**IF YOU OR STAFF ARE FEELING UNWELL AND EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS, THEY SHOULD SELF-ISOLATE AND SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION**

- Screen and/or defer all non-essential visitors/contractors/customers/suppliers based on risk profile and travel history
- Assess staff with potential health vulnerabilities
- Assess staff needs and resourcing for when services may be shut down in the community (e.g. schools closing which may require parents to be off work)
- Consider plans to maintain animal welfare requirements

Employees should:

- Not attend work if they are infected, directed to self-isolate or if they are experiencing flu-like symptoms
- Must provide a medical clearance if they have been in contact with someone who has returned from overseas
- Make sure their workplaces are clean and hygienic
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap to clean hands regularly

## **Work leave and pay rights**

**Full Time and Part Time Employees** – Clauses 23 and 24 of the Pastoral Award 2010.

- If you are unfit for work, you must NOT attend work, but you can apply for either paid or unpaid leave.
- If you and/or a dependent family member is infected, you will be eligible for leave. This can be paid leave and/or unpaid leave. Paid leave includes annual leave and Personal Carers Leave.
- Unpaid leave may include unpaid Personal Carers Leave when your paid leave is exhausted.

**Casual Employees** - Clauses 10.4 and 10.5 of the Pastoral Award 2010

- As casual employees receive a 25 per cent loading instead of annual leave and Personal Carers leave, your absence is likely to be without pay.
- If a casual employee and/or a dependent family member is infected, the employee will be eligible for unpaid leave including Personal Carers Leave.

## **Industrial relations**

Livestock SA has an arrangement with Chas Cini of Mediation and Employment Relations Services (MERS) to provide industrial relations services for Livestock SA members.

MERS offers members the first 30 minutes free, followed by a discounted rate for advice on employment contracts and the Pastoral Award.

Contact Chas Cini, 08 8331 2422,  
 chas@mers.com.au and  
 www.mers.com.au/farms/