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Livestock SA calls on SA Government support for CattleMAP

By ANDREW CURTIS, Livestock SA Chief Executive Officer

LIVESTOCK SA is seeking the support of the South Australian Government regarding its concerns over changes to the National Bovine Johne's Disease Program, particularly the disbandment of the Australian Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program for Cattle (CattleMAP) from November 1.

CattleMAP has allowed producers to demonstrate and promote the low risk of BJD in their herds. It has ensured the long-term sustainability of the beef and dairy cattle industries in Australia.

Producers still need something in place to guarantee their level of biosecurity for overseas markets and any areas of Australia where there are zones in place.

Under the new approach to BJD there is a new voluntary risk profiling tool for beef cattle – the Johne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS).

J-BAS has been developed as a risk profiling tool for beef producers. The self-assessment scores will allow producers to demonstrate what they may be doing for BJD on their property. They also allow producers who may be considering buying cattle to do an initial check on BJD assurance.

It is proposed that CattleMAP herds will transition to a J-BAS of 8, which is the highest assurance level under the new, voluntary system.

The industry voluntary assurance systems also include lower assurance scores that require different biosecurity and testing options.

Producers need the option of still being able to score their cattle above 8 which demonstrates third party auditing and assurance.

This issue has been highlighted by the refusal of Western Australia to join with the other states in accepting the changes to the program and is making it virtually impossible for those wanting to sell cattle into that state.

The recent episode in Japan, when it temporarily suspended live cattle imports from Australia after a shipment of dairy heifers tested positive to BJD, shows how sensitive trading can be if there are doubts about Australia's biosecurity.

Some progress has been made on the issue nationally, with a recent Cattle Council of Australia meeting discussing problems being experienced by MN2&3 producers exporting cattle to WA now that CattleMAP has been replaced by J-BAS.



The following motion was passed at the meeting: *That CCA, as a matter of urgency, engage with the jurisdictional Chief Veterinary Officers to resolve the current interstate trade access issue with WA affecting producers previously rated as Monitored Negative 2 or 3 under the now-ceased Cattle Market Assurance Program.*

Trading cattle to WA has become increasingly more difficult under J-BAS, and Livestock SA believes there needs to be an allowance for this to continue for those who have taken the right steps to ensure they have the appropriate assurances in place.

It is important to ensure that trade can continue freely between states, and that SA producers are not penalised due to these changes. An updated Health Certificate for the movement of stock to WA is set to be released shortly, which will incorporate J-BAS as an accepted category provided traders of such cattle to WA can meet additional testing conditions that will be covered in the document.

It is vital that SA producers continue to be able to promote the low risk of BJD in their herds in the future and Livestock SA will continue to advocate for producers on this issue.

- Details: Livestock SA, 08 8297 2299