

NSW JD MAP Update

Australian Johne's Disease Market Assurance Program (MAP)

Information for Approved Veterinarians

March 2007

Welcome to an occasional newsletter from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) for approved MAP veterinarians. It is a sincere attempt to keep you informed of recent developments and current issues. Please read!

Approved Veterinarians

An approved veterinarian:

- is registered with a State veterinary practitioners' board, and
- is accredited under the Accreditation Program for Australian Veterinarians (APAV), and
- has demonstrated competency as required by the program, and
- has been authorised in writing by the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO).

Only approved veterinarians can enter into MAP owner agreements, perform annual veterinary reviews (audits), test animals for a MAP, complete status notifications and sign status certificates.

APAV accreditation is an essential element underpinning the integrity of MAPs and ensuring national consistency. To facilitate uptake of the MAPs in the early years and before APAV was established, NSW Agriculture trained and approved veterinarians to undertake MAP work. This option has now been phased out and all previous CVO approvals for non-APAV veterinarians have been revoked.

APAV-accredited veterinarians who are currently supervising MAP herds or flocks have been granted on-going CVO approval in recognition of their prior experience. This includes veterinarians who are based and have gained MAP approval in another State and are registered to practice in NSW. Veterinarians who wish to join or rejoin the scheme in future will need to complete both APAV accreditation and on-line MAP training (see next item).

On-line MAP training for veterinarians

Training for veterinarians to participate in the MAPs is now delivered on-line. This applies to veterinarians who are new to the MAPs, and to those whose previous approval has lapsed and who now wish to regain CVO approval. The on-line training is also recommended for approved veterinarians who wish to supervise another species (for example, a CattleMAP vet who needs to supervise Alpacas). The training may be used to contribute towards continuing professional development and registration requirements.

The on-line MAP training covers all species (cattle, sheep, alpacas and goats). Veterinarians who wish

to access this training should contact the MAP administrator (see page 4). On successful completion of the training, the candidate prints a certificate which is sent to the CVO for signature. Only registered veterinarians with current APAV accreditation will be approved by the CVO.

Responsibilities and communications

The approved veterinarian is the key link between the herd/flock manager (their client) and the CVO and has significant responsibilities to both parties.

DPI respects the veterinarian/client relationship and will only accept information relevant to the MAP status of a herd/flock from an approved veterinarian. If contacted by a producer, we will refer issues back to their approved veterinarian to resolve.

The current status of a herd or flock is determined by the approved veterinarian based on their on-farm risk assessment, annual veterinary reviews (audits), and correct sampling and testing in a timely manner. These are key factors in assessing the Johne's disease risk associated with a herd or flock. DPI has a supporting role in quality assessment and will decline a veterinarian's status recommendation or impose a lapsed or expired status if the annual veterinary review or testing is not performed correctly or notified in time.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) has developed Guidelines for Veterinarians to provide more detailed information about the role of the approved veterinarian. A copy of the Guidelines is enclosed, and is also available on the internet (see page 4). Please read the Guidelines carefully, taking note of the key issues that are required to maintain your clients' MAP status and your own approval as a MAP veterinarian.

CattleMAP issues

Changes to ELISA

You may have noticed that the BJD ELISA used by NSW Regional veterinary laboratories changed at the beginning of 2006. The EMAI ELISA test that had been used for many years was discontinued and the Institut Pourquier (IP) ELISA test introduced. The EMAI ELISA was proving expensive to maintain and the IP test was judged the best replacement test.

The most obvious difference with the IP test is the different format for reporting test results. Estimated comparisons with the EMAI ELISA are: IP < 60 = EMAI < 1.5; IP 60-70 = ELISA 1.5-2; IP > 70 = EMAI > 2.



There have been problems in the north east corner of the state with false positive reactors. These appear to be related to the wetter and warmer times of the year when environmental cross-reacting micro-organisms are more common. This is consistent with the high false positive reactor rate experienced in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Analysis of the results has shown that the false positive reactor rate in the rest of the state is the same as that experienced with the EMAI ELISA.

Resolution of reactors

Funding

As BJD is a notifiable disease, DPI currently has a fund which covers the cost of resolving reactors to the BJD ELISA test in herds not known to be infected. This fund, the Notifiable Diseases Surveillance Fund, will cover the cost of the repeat ELISA plus faecal culture or histology/ tissue culture of the ELISA reactors. This fund is also available to pay for BJD exclusion tests in clinically suspect animals. It is not available for herd tests.

Sample submission

The samples to be examined for resolution of positive reactors detected in a CattleMAP test differ depending on whether the herd has ever had BJD detected in it or not.

Previously positive herds require histology and tissue culture to resolve a reactor. Where a herd has no previous history of BJD, the reactor may be resolved by faecal culture or histology. It is worthwhile requesting that the tissues are held pending the results of the histology so that culture can be undertaken if the histology results are inconclusive.

S-strain Johne's disease

There have been several recent incidents of sheep (S) strain JD detected in cattle. The clinical and post mortem presentation of the cattle appears to be identical to that caused by BJD. When ELISA reactors or clinical Johne's disease cases are detected in areas where OJD is endemic, it is strongly recommended that you request strain typing of culture samples. The regulatory approach to OJD and BJD differs significantly so it is worth determining the strain type when positive reactors are detected in herds grazing in contact with sheep or has neighbours with sheep.

It is not known how susceptible cattle are to S-strain JD but they appear to be more resistant than sheep. Research in Victoria is currently underway to address this issue. Drought and stress appear to be risk factors for cattle developing OJD in endemic sheep areas.

Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) rebates

CCA have agreed to extend the beef cattle rebate for a further 3 years until 31 December 2009, and to provide some rebates for non-assessed dairy herds during 2007.

Beef producers with NA and MN herds are eligible to claim \$11 per head (GST inclusive) up to a maximum of 50 head tested. Producers with IN and SU herds have access to the Financial and Non-Financial Assistance Package instead which provides considerable support for those herds.

Dairy producers are also eligible for a \$11 rebate for up to 50 head tested during 2007. This funding is designed to encourage producers to establish their Dairy BJD Assurance Score by at least doing a check test. This funding is limited to NA dairy herds on a 'first come first serve' basis, and is not available for existing MN herds or SU or IN herds.

Please contact Sally Spence (see page 4) for more information.

SheepMAP issues

Thin sheep

The SheepMAP rules and guidelines state that 3 thin sheep must be post-mortemed and specimens submitted for laboratory examination as part of the annual veterinary review (audit) in those years or flocks where a sample or maintenance test is not being performed. If there are no thin sheep, the Approved Veterinarian must certify that the flock has been examined and that 0, 1 or 2 thin sheep have been identified and post-mortemed for laboratory examination.

This component of the annual audit is very important to the integrity of the SheepMAP, especially in MN3 flocks (which are otherwise only tested every third year) and in vaccinated flocks (which otherwise are not tested). DPI considers that larger commercial flocks (> 300 head) would usually have at least a few thin sheep each year, while accepting that a small flock of a few dozen sheep might not.

The certification about thin sheep does not have to be provided to DPI with the audit notification but must be provided to your SheepMAP client in writing and retained in both their and your records for auditing purposes. Failure to provide or retain this certification will be considered a critical defect which will result in the flock's demotion and a review of the veterinarian's approval to undertake MAP work.

GoatMAP issues

Pooled faecal culture (PFC)

A PFC for goats has been under evaluation for some time but has not yet been approved by Animal Health Committee (the national committee of CVOs) as an approved test for goats. Until national approval is obtained, we cannot recognise PFC for goats as an approved test for MAP status.

Thin goats

The 'thin sheep' rules (see above) also apply to the GoatMAP.

AlpacaMAP issues

QAAlpaca

Herds in the AlpacaMAP that are enrolled in QAAlpaca do not have to be routinely maintenance tested provided animals over a year old that die or are euthanised, and younger animals with diarrhoea or emaciation that die or are euthanised, are tested for JD.

The AlpacaMAP recognizes short term introductions or contact with animals of lesser status, for example mobile mating, as a low risk. The same principles may be applied to assess the risk of transporting animals of different status together for a short time.

Laboratory submissions

Sample labelling

Recently inaccurate labelling of samples has resulted in the wrong animal being identified as the animal which reacted on a herd sample or maintenance test.

In two cases, DNA testing was used to demonstrate that the animal re-sampled was not the same animal as the one which had reacted at the herd test. The laboratory was alerted to the misidentification of the reactor animal when the repeat sample was ELISA negative. This is highly unlikely as ELISA positive reactions persist for some time, even if the animal is a 'false positive'.

It is essential to submit another blood sample with the faecal or tissue samples being used to resolve an animal's status. Confirming that the animal is still ELISA positive is the cheapest way of confirming that the correct animal has been re-sampled.

Be very careful when labelling samples to ensure that an animal can be identified to its sample if a reactor is detected.

Specimen advice form

As Johne's disease is a notifiable disease, sufficient information must be provided on the Specimen Advice form accompanying the samples. Please provide the property identification code (PIC), owners name and address, information on the livestock sampled and the reason for the test.

Approved laboratories.

MAP tests must be undertaken in approved laboratories such as those which are NATA accredited. Enrolment in a MAP confers an official status hence the requirement to use approved laboratories. The NSW Regional Veterinary Laboratories are NATA accredited – check with other labs that you use on their status.

Administrative rules for all MAPs

The MAP rules and guidelines are determined nationally and are outlined in the various MAP manuals. DPI's administrative procedures detail how the national rules are applied in practice.

Status notifications

A notification of change of status for each MAP herd and flock must be received by DPI from an approved veterinarian annually. The form must be fully completed, signed and dated.

Copies of owner agreements, laboratory reports or certification about thin sheep (see earlier item) do not have to be provided unless requested, but these documents must be retained in both the producer's and veterinarian's auditable records.

Provided you have clearly stated the basis for the herd/flock status, we accept your recommendation and assume that all of the required elements have been met and are underpinned by auditable records.

If insufficient or unclear information is provided, or there are gaps or discrepancies with the information currently recorded in DPI's database, we may ask for further information. If this is not provided in a timely manner, we may record a different status to your recommendation and issue a new status certificate accordingly.

A **new notification form** for all MAPs is enclosed. Please photocopy the front and only use this version in future. If you need a clean copy or multiple copies, please contact the MAP Administrator (see page 4). Comments on the form are welcome.

Status certificates

Since February 2006, new status certificates are printed by DPI and sent to the approved veterinarian for checking, signature and issuing to their client. This is to ensure that the information provided on the certificate to the producer is consistent with that held on the DPI and AHA databases, especially the certificate number, status and expiry date. Only unaltered status certificates printed and numbered by DPI are considered valid.

We should be able to process notifications within a week of receiving them. If you've not received a new certificate within 2 weeks, please contact the MAP Administrator. If a new certificate is required urgently, we'll do our best to process the notification more quickly on request, but it is your responsibility to ensure that the annual audit and any testing is completed and notified to us before both the expiry date of the current certificate and any event for which your client requires a new certificate.

You are welcome to request a replacement certificate if we have printed something incorrectly (bearing in mind that hand-written faxes may be difficult to read!) or if the notification or certificate has gone missing (which sometimes happens).

Certificate expiry dates

Status certificates are valid for 12 months. The expiry date each year is the anniversary of the date that a herd or flock entered the MAP and remains the same from year to year, irrespective of the date of testing or auditing, approved extensions or late notifications.

The expiry date of some herds and flocks has varied over time, sometimes drifting up to several months late. Over the past year, we have been tightening up on expiry dates, resetting them where appropriate to the date of entry or of last sampling for testing.

A status may be extended temporarily to provide a little more time to complete testing (including of reactors) or to accommodate unexpected events. A request for an extension should be sent before the expiry date to the MAP Administrator, who may approve an extension for up to 3 months. In exceptional circumstances only, the CVO may approve a longer extension. The herd/flock status becomes MNx-EXT with an expiry date equal to the approved period of extension. When the testing is finalised, the new status certificate has the original expiry date.

For example, an MN3 status expires on 25 March 2007. A 3 month extension is approved, so the status becomes MN3-EXT, expiring 25 June 2007. Maintenance testing is completed, so MN3 status is retained, expiring 25 March (not 25 June) 2008.

Lapsed status

The status lapses one level if the annual notification is more than 2 months late. Twelve months later, if there is still no notification, the status reverts to NA and the herd or flock will no longer be enrolled in the MAP.

For example, an MN3 status expires on 25 March 2007. No notification of annual audit or maintenance test (if due) has been received from the approved veterinarian, so the status lapses to MN2 in June 2007. There is still no notification received by June 2008, so the flock becomes NA.

Regaining status may simply require resending a missing notification or completing the required auditing. However, if testing has not been done, then a sample test is required to progress back to the previous status or to re-enter the MAP from NA.

Withdrawal from a MAP

We appreciate being advised as soon as possible after a herd or flock is moved, sold, dispersed or otherwise withdrawn from the MAP. This allows us to update our records and saves everyone the hassle of reminder notices, lapsed letters and so forth, which will continue to be sent until we are advised otherwise or the status lapses to NA.

Client details

A list of all your clients with their relevant details such as expiry and test due dates, and a status history for an individual client, is available from the MAP Administrator on request.

NSW MAP Statistics

There are currently 572 cattle, 337 sheep, 115 alpaca and 36 goat (total 1,060) NSW herds and flocks in the MAP. This represents 52% of the national total. 132 approved veterinarians are actively participating in the MAPs in NSW.

Contacts and further information

Like most large and diverse organizations, DPI experiences changes in staff from time to time. We'd like to thank you for your tolerance of recent changes and apologise for any delays in processing status notifications and certificates. The good news is that 'normal services' have now resumed!

Julie Wright is our **MAP administrator** and your first point of contact for all MAP enquiries. All status notifications should be sent to Julie.

Phone: (03) 5881 9911

Fax: (03) 5881 3719

Email: stockmap@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Postal: PO Box 736, Deniliquin NSW 2710

Technical advice is available from DPI veterinarians:

Sally Spence for CattleMAP, phone: 02 6391 3630

Therese Wright for SheepMAP, phone 02 6391 3351

Bronwyn Hendry for GoatMAP and AlpacaMAP as well as APAV accreditation and MAP approval, phone 02 6391 3101.

Further information is available on the web at www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/jdmaps or by contacting the MAP administrator.

Privacy notice

DPI collects and holds personal information about livestock producers and approved veterinarians for the purposes of administration of the MAPs in NSW. The supply of information is voluntary, however without it DPI may not be able to accept the participation of the producer or veterinarian in a MAP. DPI provides the information to Animal Health Australia to facilitate national administration and promotion of the MAPs, and to Rural Lands Protection Boards to facilitate disease control. A producer or their approved veterinarian may access and correct their personal information by contacting the MAP Administrator.

Edited by Ian Bell, Manager Biosecurity and Traceability Systems, NSW DPI, Orange

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (March 2007). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of NSW Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.
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