

## OJD and sheep movement

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Ovine Johne's disease (OJD) is managed in NSW on the basis of buyers making informed decisions on the risk of OJD being in sheep they plan to purchase, and making decisions on that basis. There are no movement restrictions in place for OJD in any part of NSW.

Other states do have restrictions in place for OJD. These are expressed in terms of the minimum number of ABC (assurance based credit) points the sheep must have on the sheep health statement that accompanies the sheep.

### Mandatory movement documents

All movements of sheep and goats **must** be accompanied by an approved movement document as part of the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) for Sheep and Goats. These documents are a travelling stock statement or a national vendor declaration.

In addition in NSW all movements of restocker sheep (except exempt sheep) **must** be accompanied by a fully completed sheep health statement.

### What is an 'exempt sheep'?

- Sheep being moved to slaughter, either directly or via a slaughter-only sale;
- lambs accompanied by a National Vendor Declaration on which section 7 has been filled in with the words "PRIME LAMBS FOR SLAUGHTER ONLY";
- sheep being sent or delivered to an approved Health Statement for Sheep exempt sale.

These exempt sheep do not need a sheep health statement.

### The 2008–2012 OJD Management Plan

The 2008–2012 national OJD management plan has four main objectives:

1. To minimise the risk of introducing OJD to properties and regions which currently appear disease free, and to actively manage incursions when they occur.
2. Reduce the area prevalence in regions where OJD is endemic through the use of vaccine and grazing management practices to minimise the exposure of stock to infective bacteria.
3. Promote the benefits of active biosecurity planning (for both individual properties and regions) to manage disease risk.
4. Provide trading advantages for producers who actively manage the disease through the use of the ABC scheme.

The NSW approach to OJD management is consistent with the national plan, and is underpinned by the mandatory use of sheep health statements. While NSW includes three different prevalence areas, the state is essentially managed in two parts.

The Management Areas, mainly comprising the higher prevalence areas, will continue to encourage producers to manage their own risk by developing property biosecurity plans that include strategies such as vaccination, on-farm management, and informed purchase of sheep.

The Exclusion Areas, comprising most of the low prevalence regions, are self-funded and self-managed. Their district biosecurity risk management programs are designed to slow the potential spread of OJD into and within the area.

Landholders receiving sheep moved into the EA have to obtain the sheep health statement and provide a copy of it, along with the landholder's name and details of the destination of the sheep, to their RLPB within seven days of the movement being completed.



The Board uses that information to assess the risk of those sheep having OJD. If the risk is too high the landholder can be required to undertake a plan to manage the risk, but the details of the plan are up to the landholder.

Individual landholders, including the owner of a saleyard or showground, or travelling stock routes, may require a minimum OJD standard for entry of sheep onto that land. However, an EA can only recommend a minimum OJD standard for the entry of sheep into the EA.

Nothing prevents any sheep entering an Exclusion Area. The receiver of the sheep is responsible for managing their risk.

### Key principles

- OJD is a notifiable disease. An owner is required to notify an Inspector if they know a flock is infected. A vet is required to notify an Inspector if they suspect or know that a flock is infected. No regulatory action or investigation is required following notification.
- The sheep health statement is mandatory for all sheep sold as re-stockers or moved for agistment. It is signed by the seller, and accompanies the sheep. It provides a prospective buyer with an indication of OJD assurance or risk, using ABC points. ABC points provide assurance for trade but are not required for movements within NSW, though they may be required for interstate movements. The statement provides other health assurance information. **Note:** from 31 March 2008 the SHS can not be used as a travelling stock statement.
- SheepMAP approved vets are responsible for certifying approved vaccinates. NSW guidelines for approved vaccinates are:
  - lambs vaccinated by 16 weeks of age,
  - sheep vaccinated over 16 weeks of age in flocks participating in the SheepMAP,
  - sheep vaccinated over 16 weeks of age in flocks in very low and low prevalence areas, where there is no known risk of exposure prior to vaccination.
- Owners of flocks that are known or suspected to be infected are required to indicate this under category A of the sheep health statement. Resolution of suspicion is normally the responsibility of the owner and an approved vet, with advice available from district veterinarians and DPI vets, or from the OJD vet panel. Infection is normally confirmed by laboratory testing, i.e. positive histopathology or positive culture. However an owner filling out a sheep health statement may conclude, on other evidence, that their flock is infected.

- Property disease management plans (PDMPs) may be developed for flocks suspected of being infected.
- Approved vets are generally advised against certifying low-risk sheep from such flocks until suspicion has been resolved by veterinary investigation, normally including testing. Note that in some cases intensive investigation is unable to resolve suspicion in the short-term.

**Note:** for further information on other requirements relating to the movement of sheep please contact:

- officers at the Rural Lands Protection Board or
- NSW DPI on 1800 084 881.

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