



BIOSECURITY ACT 2015

Discussion Paper: Ovine Johne's Disease

December 2015



Photo: © NSW Department of Primary Industries

Comments on this Paper close on 12 February 2016

Email your comments to: submissions.biosecuritylegislation@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Post your comments to: Biosecurity Act 2015
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Locked Bag 21
Orange NSW 2800

Published December 2015

For more information

See: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact

Email: submissions.biosecuritylegislation@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Ref: INT15/130003

© State of New South Wales through the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, 2015. You may copy, distribute and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the NSW Department of Primary Industries as the owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (December 2015). 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 the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

Summary

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (Biosecurity Act) will repeal the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*, which currently includes regulatory controls with respect to Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD).

Having considered existing management arrangements and risks associated with the disease, no significant changes are proposed. Specifically it is recommended that similar management arrangements for OJD be implemented under the **General Biosecurity Duty**, with a supporting **mandatory measure** to notify.

Background Information

What is the problem?

OJD is an infectious bacterial disease of sheep affecting the intestines and causing wasting and death of infected animals. There is no treatment or cure available. The disease spreads slowly within a flock and district, and is extremely difficult to detect in live animals in the early stages of infection.

Areas and flocks in NSW which have a low prevalence of infection or a low probability of being infected with OJD can implement strict biosecurity measures to prevent introduction of disease.

Areas and flocks in NSW where OJD is known or suspected to be present can protect themselves against economic losses due to clinical OJD in sheep by vaccinating their flocks. All sheep require one vaccination for lifetime protection, preferably given before 16 weeks of age.

Why is it important to us?

Clinical OJD can cause significant economic costs in infected flocks. NSW Sheep producers need tools that:

1. allow them to manage the risk of introducing infection into a district or flock where OJD is not suspected to be present; and
2. protect against the development of clinical disease in sheep.

What is the outcome we are seeking?

That NSW sheep producers have the tools to manage the risk of introducing OJD into uninfected flocks and districts, and vaccine remains available for use in flocks that are at risk of exposure to OJD infection.

NSW complies with the nationally agreed management plan for OJD.

Current management arrangements

OJD is declared to be a disease for the purposes of sections 9, 20C(2)(c) and 20C(3) of the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*. There is a legal obligation on occupiers of land, owners of stock, persons in charge of travelling stock, veterinarians and other persons consulted about stock to promptly notify authorities if they know or suspect an animal has OJD.

People in charge of stock must also prevent the movement of OJD infected stock along a travelling stock reserve or across land other than land owned or occupied by the owner of the stock unless being transported in a vehicle directly to an abattoir for slaughter.

NSW is a signatory to the National Johne's Disease Management Plan which allows local groups to form and implement voluntary Regional Biosecurity Plans. In NSW these groups were formed by public ballot and are administered by a committee of local sheep industry people. Technical advice is provided by their Local Land Services veterinarian. The groups have no

regulatory powers but rely on local industry support to implement an agreed set of biosecurity standards for entry of sheep into the district covered by the Plan. The Plan is audited annually and a report is made to all other Regional Biosecurity Plan areas at the national level.

Producers moving, buying or agisting sheep within NSW are strongly encouraged to use a National Sheep Health Statement. Use of the statement is voluntary for movements within NSW, but once completed and signed, it is a legal vendor declaration.

Proposed Management under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

The Biosecurity Act introduces the concept of shared responsibility via the inclusion of a **General Biosecurity Duty (GBD)**. The GBD requires any person dealing with biosecurity matter or a carrier of biosecurity matter and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with that activity to take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

It is proposed that the risk of OJD in NSW will be managed under the **General Biosecurity Duty (GBD)** with a **mandatory measure** to notify the presence or suspected presence of OJD in sheep.

In addition to the proposed mandatory measure specified above, the General Biosecurity Duty requires that anyone who deals with sheep and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with that dealing must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate those risks as is reasonably practicable.

All people dealing with sheep should take reasonable precautions against the introduction and spread of OJD.

NSW sheep producers could demonstrate that they are complying with the GBD by maintaining good boundary fences, implementing a management plan for when stray sheep are detected on farm, and using risk assessment tools for the introduction of sheep, such as the National Sheep Health Statement when purchasing or agisting sheep.

How you can discharge your GBD may be outlined in Industry Standards, Codes of Practice and guidelines, or through other advisory or education material.

What do you think?

We value your comments on how we can improve our biosecurity system and look forward to receiving your input into this important process.

Please complete the following survey on 'Ovine Johne's Disease' at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OvineJD>.

Alternatively, submit your feedback **by Friday, 12 February 2016** via [email](#) or post to:

Biosecurity Act 2015
NSW Department of Primary Industries
Locked Bag 21
Orange NSW 2800

For more information about the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and regulatory framework, please visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact.

Appendix

Summary of current and proposed management of OJD

