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<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/health/specific/sheep/ojd/about/bull-report-march-2008>

Attachment 3 – The National Plan 2007-2012

2007 - 2012 OVINE JOHNE'S DISEASE Management Plan

Final



February 2008

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ACRONYMS

ABC	Assurance Based Credit (Scheme)
ALPA	Australian Livestock and Property Agents
AMIC	Australian Meat Industry Council
AQIS	Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
AWI	Australian Wool Innovation
CLA	Caseous lymphadenitis
IMC	Industry Management Committee
JDRAG	Johne's Disease Research Advisory Group
MLA	Meat and Livestock Australia
NAOJD	National Approach to Ovine Johne's Disease
NJDCP	National Johne's Disease Control Program
NLIS	National Livestock Identification System
OJD	Ovine Johne's Disease
OJDMP	Ovine Johne's Disease Management Plan
PDMP	Property Disease Management Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ovine Johne's Disease Management Plan (OJDMP) is a significant component of the National Johne's Disease Control Program (NJDCP). The NJDCP is a special program, funded by industry. The program is coordinated by Animal Health Australia to ensure the response to Johne's disease by jurisdictions and industries continues to protect Australia's favourable Johne's disease status and reduces the impact of disease and control measures on the affected industries.

The Ovine Johne's Disease Management Plan (OJDMP) is the culmination of extended consultations between WoolProducers Australia, Sheepmeat Council of Australia, state departments of primary industry and other stakeholders and seeks to further encourage producers to undertake risk assessments prior to the purchase of stock, in addition to controlling OJD through vaccination and on-farm management practices.

In seeking to establish a viable long-term approach to the management of ovine Johne's disease (OJD), industry has determined that the principal aims of the OJDMP are:

- To minimise the risk to properties and geographic regions which currently appear disease free, and actively manage incursions when they occur;
- Reduce the area prevalence in regions where the disease is endemic through the use of vaccine and the implementation of grazing management practices to minimise the exposure of stock to *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis subsp. avium* (Mptb);
- Promote the benefits of active biosecurity planning at the individual property and regional level as a means of managing disease risk;
- Provide improved trading opportunities for producers who actively manage the disease through the use of the Assurance Based Credit (ABC) Scheme.

This business plan incorporates the following activities:

1. Prevalence Area determination
2. ABC Points allocation
3. Abattoir Monitoring
4. Communication
5. Research and Development
6. Program Coordination and Evaluation

WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia have developed a program to provide a sustainable basis for the management and control of OJD in Australia. The OJDMP involves a rationalisation of existing prevalence areas from four prevalence areas to three prevalence areas and a subsequent change in ABC points allocated to each prevalence area. Risk based trading and sufficient abattoir surveillance to underpin the ABC Scheme are seen as important aspects to the successful continuation of the program. WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat

Council of Australia have also agreed to provide further funding for OJD research, and have identified a need for an ongoing communication program.

A management committee comprising representatives from WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia, other key stakeholders nominated by the national sheep industry, and Animal Health Australia will meet six monthly to receive management reports and to provide general advice about the Program.

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INTRODUCTION

The OJD Management Plan (OJDMP) is a significant component of the National Johne's Disease Control Program (NJDCP). The NJDCP is a special program funded by industry. The program is coordinated by Animal Health Australia to ensure the response to Johne's disease by jurisdictions and industries continues to protect Australia's favourable Johne's disease status and reduce the impact of disease and control measures on the affected industries.

The OJD Management Plan (OJDMP) is the culmination of extended consultations between WoolProducers Australia, Sheepmeat Council of Australia, state departments and other stakeholders. The views, provided and the principles that were agreed in March 2006, form the basis of this program, operational aspects of which were subsequently finalised in 2007. The OJDMP Business Plan 2007 – 2012 represents a continuation of the activities initiated in the former National Approach to the Management of OJD (NAOJD) and seeks to further encourage producers to undertake risk assessments prior to the purchase of stock, in addition to controlling OJD through vaccination and on-farm management practices. The program will conclude on 30 June 2012.

The NAOJD has provided a period of stability for those sheep producers who have implemented risk based trading practices, and taken advantage of the improved trading opportunities. It has provided a sound basis upon which the national sheep industry can now build a sustainable long term approach to the management of this disease.

Following the revised funding base for abattoir surveillance by State departments of primary industry and the Commonwealth, the national sheep industry, represented by WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia, has developed a program to provide the basis for the sustainable management and control of OJD in Australia. Animal Health Committee members have provided technical advice in the development of this plan.

The critical elements of this program were guided by the following principles:

- OJD can cause significant economic loss on farms where clinical OJD occurs¹.
- OJD should continue to be managed principally through the use of risk assessment and on-farm management practices.
- The prophylactic use of vaccine in the absence of disease adds to the cost of production on properties and in areas where the disease appears not to occur. Producers in these areas may elect to focus on preventing its introduction. The delineation of prevalence areas should extend beyond state boundaries and be more closely aligned to major sheep trading pathways.

¹ The economic impact of OJD infection on sheep farms. Meat and Livestock Australia. November 2005

- Producers in areas with little or no OJD may wish to protect themselves through the application of regional risk management based on recommendations of a minimum ABC score to minimise the entry of high risk sheep into the region, as well as the active management of any disease incursions that may occur through the use of Property Disease Management Plans (PDMPs).
- Trading arrangements between states should be based on risk assessment and management of the disease to reduce the impact of regulatory intervention on the marketing options for producers.
- Jurisdictions have traditionally provided advice through extension services which assist producers manage production diseases, and Animal Health Committee members have agreed to continue to provide this advice as part of animal health extension services.
- There is a need for a sustainable long term approach for the management of OJD to avoid public perceptions about human health that could impact trade adversely.
- A credible management plan can:
 - withstand national and international scrutiny,
 - assist in managing any national and international market access issues and,
 - ensure that the economic loss is minimised.

The OJD Management Plan (OJDMP) aims to continue the arrangements put in place during the NAOJD. There have been some adjustments to rationalise Prevalence Areas and revise Prevalence Area confidence limits. With the benefit gained from additional surveillance information obtained during the NAOJD, the points allocated to each Prevalence Areas have also been reviewed to more closely reflect risk.

The ABC Scheme will remain the basis for trade of sheep, utilising flock risk assessment and the implementation of on-farm management practices. The present scoring system should continue to provide the basis for assessing the risk that lines of sheep are infected.

A rationalisation of existing prevalence areas, across state boundaries where appropriate, to new *Low, Medium and High Prevalence Areas* has been agreed.

Movements of sheep should be supported by the state Sheep Health Statement, which declares the risk that the sheep are infected. It is planned that during the program a national Sheep Health Statement will be developed, which will replace the current state based Sheep Health Statements. Its use will continue to be strongly encouraged for all movements of store sheep. In some circumstances its use may be mandatory for movements of sheep considered to be of high risk by individual states, where the estimate of area prevalence for the jurisdiction is very low and the consequences of infection spreading is high. The use and accuracy of Sheep Health Statements should be audited and reported to stakeholders.

Vaccination, grazing management and biosecurity planning are the tools of choice for controlling disease on-farm and reducing the risk of spreading infection. The

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appropriate and strategic use of Gudair® vaccine is encouraged in all prevalence areas in accordance with the requirements of state regulations. The vaccination of sheep at risk of infection will be promoted. Approved vaccinates will be eligible for ABC points for vaccination if they are identified by a standard NLIS (Sheep) ear tag incorporating an agreed identifier, "V".

Industry has identified the important issues for producers who wish to minimise the production losses and reduced trading opportunities caused by the disease. The continued use of the ABC Score as the basis for risk based trading; the availability of management tools, and a greater understanding of the economic consequences associated with the introduction of diseased sheep, will provide an environment conducive to the implementation of individual farm based biosecurity. Abattoir surveillance is recognised as an effective tool for the maintenance of Prevalence Areas and is able to reliably identify disease in individual flocks.

AIMS OF THE OVINE JOHNES DISEASE MANAGEMENT PLAN (OJDMP)

Following a national stakeholder meeting in March 2006, to consider the future management of ovine Johnes's disease, it was agreed that the long-term management be based on the following:

- *The majority of flocks in Australia appear to be free of ovine Johnes's disease;*
- *At a national level, OJD is not eradicable in the foreseeable future;*
- *Effective management of OJD requires a collaborative approach by industry and governments;*
- *The sheep industry remains committed to a risk-based approach in managing ovine Johnes's disease;*
- *The ABC Scheme should remain the basis for trade, and control of the disease should utilise grazing management, biosecurity practices and vaccination;*
- *A range of measures/strategies/tools are now available enabling sheep owners to manage OJD risks;*
- *Governments are willing to provide on-going provision of technical support, extension services and appropriate regulatory support.*

The principal aims of the OJDMP are:

- To minimise the risk to areas in which the disease occurs at a very low to low prevalence and actively manage incursions when they occur.
- Reduce the area prevalence in regions where the disease is endemic through the use of vaccine and the implementation of grazing management practices to minimise the exposure of stock to *Mptb*.
- Promote the benefits of active biosecurity in all areas.
- Provide improved trading opportunities for producers who actively manage the disease through the use of the ABC Scheme.

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RISK ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM

A risk assessment matrix has been developed to identify and address risks associated with the implementation of the OJD Management Plan.

Category	Source of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Response	Monitoring and control	Responsibility
Political	Disaffected stakeholders	Medium	Medium	Ensure relevant organisations and committees are briefed prior to implementation, and subsequently provided with regular updates on the various projects. Ongoing communication program.	Six monthly reporting to management committee. Updates to AHC annually.	State departments of primary industries, WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council, Animal Health Australia
Timing	Delays in contracting service industries	Medium	Low	Project plan developed and timeline communicated to stakeholders, variations to the plan agreed with stakeholders.	Weekly review of project plan.	Animal Health Australia
Communications	Insufficient information provided to media and stakeholders	Medium	High	Communication plan developed, including promotional and operational materials. Briefing of principal media sources and key stakeholder groups.	Monthly evaluation of the plan with Animal Health Australia Manager Communications.	State departments of primary industries, WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia, Animal Health Australia, Manager Communications
Contractual	Key performance indicators not met	Low	High	Contracts and reporting milestones agreed with stakeholders.	Circulation of Management Committee Reports circulated to stakeholders.	Animal Health Australia, Manager Endemic Disease
Financial	Cost overruns	Low	High	Budgets are determined before program commences, allocation of resources identified, Management Committee established to provide advice and receive reports.	Financial report included with quarterly operations report.	Manager Endemic Disease, WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia and OJD Management Committee
Organisational	Key performance indicators not met	Low	High	Project identified on work program and resources allocated as per work plan.	Copy of quarterly reports to CEO, Director Programs and WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia.	OJD Management Committee, Animal Health Australia, Manager Endemic Disease

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OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE OJD MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *OJD Management Plan 2007-2012* includes the following elements:

- Rationalisation of existing prevalence areas, across state boundaries where appropriate, to new *Low, Medium and High Prevalence Areas*.
- Continued abattoir surveillance to estimate Area Prevalence and to detect OJD in Low Prevalence Areas.
- Allocation of points to Prevalence Areas on the basis of the risk that sheep from these areas represent.
- Promotion of grazing management, vaccination and on-farm biosecurity planning as management tools.

The objectives of the plan will be addressed through a range of activities that reflect the priorities identified by stakeholders. For the purposes of managing the plan, these activities are:

1. Prevalence Area determination
2. Points allocation
3. Abattoir Monitoring
4. Communication
5. Research and Development
6. Program Coordination and Evaluation

1. PREVALENCE AREA DETERMINATION

Abattoir surveillance data obtained during the NAOJD surveillance program has enabled the revision of prevalence estimates. Based on advice received from Animal Health Committee, and information provided through the analysis of the 2006 Abattoir Monitoring data (see Table 1), WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia have agreed to support a future program for the management of OJD that is based on three new Prevalence Areas. The rationalisation of Prevalence Areas is expected to facilitate trade along normal trading patterns of sheep in Australia, whilst allowing a range of strategies for control and management of the disease in different geographic regions of Australia.

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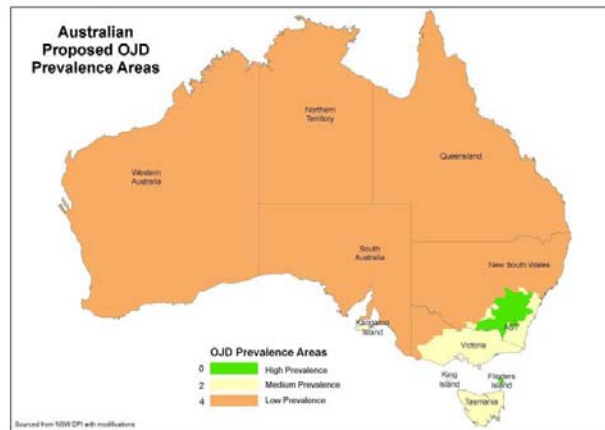
Table 1. The Regional Prevalence of OJD December 2006

State/Region	Original Prevalence Area 2006	Direct lines only		New Prevalence Area from 1 January 2008
		Median	Upper Confidence Limit (95%)	
NSW	High	54	71	High
	Medium	31	38	High
	Low	6.4	11.4	Medium
	Very Low	0.5	0.8	Low
Qld	Very Low	0.2	0.5	Low
SA	Very Low	0.1	0.3	Low
	Medium	2.6	4.7	Medium
Tas.	High	-	-	High
	Low	1.2	2.2	Medium
Vic	Low	9.4	11.0	Medium
				Low
WA	Low	0.1	0.4	Low

(Source: Analysis of OJD Abattoir surveillance data for 2006, Sergeant, ES. March 2007)

Figure 1 shows the new Prevalence Areas which are conditional upon the implementation of criteria detailed below. Management advice for OJD in each of the new Prevalence Areas will differ to meet the objectives identified for those regions.

Figure One. Prevalence Areas for OJD from 31 March 2008



Source NSW Department of Primary Industries, modified by Animal Health Australia

In the new **Low Prevalence Area** where the disease occurs sporadically, the management approach will continue to emphasise the importance of individual flock and regional biosecurity with the aim of prevention, detection and control of incursions.

Based on the low estimated disease prevalence of $<0.8\%$, disease at the 95% confidence limit, and the importance of early detection of disease and resolution of disease status, the criteria for the new **Low Prevalence Area** are:

- To notify owners of infection found in their flock or at abattoirs, and to encourage a risk assessment of newly identified infected flocks and suspect and at risk flocks, with follow up testing where appropriate.
- To strongly encourage the use of PDMPs for infected flocks.
- That the owners of infected flocks have a duty of care to advise that fact to prospective purchasers or prospective recipients of their sheep, and to the owners of flocks they know to be neighbours or traces from their flock.
- Minimum ABC scores are recommended for trading purposes to reduce the likelihood of incursions.

In the new **Medium and High Prevalence Areas**, the cut-off limits for the 95 % confidence limit for each have been determined as

- Medium Prevalence Area $0.8\% - 12.5\%$ and,
- High Prevalence Area $>12.5\%$.

As there is general agreement that the disease is unlikely to be eradicable in the foreseeable future, the strategies for disease control and management should include biosecurity planning at the individual flock and regional level, with vaccination being one of a number of important tools.

Management in these areas will reflect the differing priorities of producers and extension messages will encourage producers to:

- undertake vaccination of sheep at-risk,

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- develop PDMPs for infected flocks,
- use abattoir surveillance information to identify negative lines of sheep for the purpose of gaining ABC credits for trade,
- provide a Sheep Health Statement with each lot traded (mandatory in some states),
- access advice on management options.

There is agreement that the Prevalence Areas should be set for the duration of the program, unless Animal Health Committee members agree to have the status of an area downgraded or, the number of ABC credits allocated to an area decreased, based on estimated prevalence exceeding the agreed cut off for two consecutive years, based on abattoir surveillance of direct lines and reported to stakeholders by the National Abattoir Surveillance coordinator. An area may also be upgraded, or the number of ABC credits allocated to an area increased, on the basis of two consecutive annual prevalence estimates that indicate the criteria for inclusion in the area have been met. Animal Health Australia will report updated prevalence estimates, based on abattoir surveillance data to Sheepmeat Council of Australia, WoolProducers Australia and Animal Health Committee annually.

2. ALLOCATION OF POINTS

Credit points will be assigned under the ABC Scheme to lines of sheep offered for sale or movement. The ABC Score will be the basis for calculating the trading score which will represent the sum of the credits allocated under separate categories for Area Prevalence, testing, vaccination and low risk declaration.

Area prevalence scores have been determined as;

Low Prevalence Area	4
Medium Prevalence Areas	2
High Prevalence Area	0

Minimum scores may be defined for store sheep movements into and within Prevalence Areas and for certain saleyards or sales.

The use of pen stickers that outline the ABC scores should also be encouraged at store sales.

3. ABATTOIR MONITORING

Abattoir monitoring for OJD will continue to be undertaken through the examination of adult sheep and the data will be collected in accordance with protocols agreed by Animal Health Committee. While the principal focus will be on the examination of 'direct' lines of mature sheep identifiable to one owner, boxed lines of adult sheep may also be included, particularly for sheep identified from the new *Low Prevalence Area*.

WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia have also agreed to fund abattoir surveillance for the early identification of infection in the new *Low Prevalence Area* and for the identification of negative lines in the new *High Prevalence area*. Surveillance will occur at a number of abattoirs selected to ensure broad coverage, particularly of the new *Low Prevalence Area* so that there is adequate stratification of data across geographic regions. Based on the existing confidence limits to detect infection and maintain prevalence, a total of 7,000 lines will be examined annually, to be allocated proportional to the estimated

numbers of flocks within each Prevalence Area. The lines identified in Tables 2a and 2b have been apportioned based on the total number of sheep flocks in each state, with the exception of Western Australia. Because of geographic isolation from the eastern states, and the minimal numbers of sheep are sent for slaughter outside the state, the number of lines allocated to Western Australia is 500. This is considered the minimum number of lines necessary to identify disease within the parameters of the Low Prevalence Area.

Table 2a. Allocation of lines to Prevalence Areas and States.

Prevalence Area	State	Number of lines
High	NSW	500
Medium	NSW	94
	VIC	807
	TAS	84
	SA	16
Sub-total		1001
Low	NSW	2399
	QLD	391
	VIC	426
	SA	1784
	Sub-total	5000
Low	WA	500
TOTAL		7001

Based on data provided by state departments of primary industries

Maintaining integrity in the ABC Assurance Scheme

Sheep Health Statements strengthen confidence in the risk based trading system and are recognised as a valid method of communicating the level of assurance associated with stock for sale. When trading sheep the Sheep Health Statements should be used to ensure purchasers actively consider the risk associated with a particular line of stock.

To encourage the accurate and verifiable description of stock for sale, it is proposed that sheep moved without a Sheep Health Statement may default to a score of zero to indicate the lack of assurance associated with such sheep.

Auditing of Sheep Health Statements may be conducted by state departments to provide producers and other stakeholders with a level of confidence in risk-based trading.

Reporting

The National Abattoir Surveillance Coordinator will report positive lines to each state OJD coordinator on a fortnightly basis to enable the timely reporting of positive lines to producers.

Quarterly reports and annual management reports will be prepared by the National Abattoir Surveillance Coordinator for circulation to stakeholders.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Prior to 2004, the control of OJD was based to a large extent on regulatory measures imposed by jurisdictions. However the experiences of producers in the regulated control of OJD, in association with increasing deregulation in other spheres of government, have led stakeholders to promote animal health risk assessment as the basis for minimising the risk of disease spread and establishment. A quantitative risk assessment for OJD has been formalised in the ABC Scheme and is used to underpin trade, supported by necessary legislation and a targeted communication program.

Building on the communication and extension activities of previous programs, the NOJDMP will continue to promote the ABC Scheme and the importance of assessing risk of OJD through the use of the ABC Scheme when purchasing sheep and the implementation of on-farm biosecurity plans.

Changes to Prevalence Areas under the ABC Scheme present an additional challenge in communicating the new program. These arise from:

- replacing four existing Prevalence Area classifications with three which utilise the names low, medium and high prevalence areas⁷,
- revision of cut-offs limits for estimated prevalence, and
- revision of boundaries.

In developing and implementing an on-farm biosecurity plan, animal health risk management will be a key consideration. The success of the OJDMP will depend on an increased understanding of the role of individual animal health risk management plans to prevent disease incursions in conjunction with a considered risk assessment of stock offered for sale. In this context, the ABC Scheme will continue to be promoted, while state departments of

primary industries will also assist producers better understand the principles of risk management, and the development of regional and individual biosecurity plans.

The national communication effort will promote producer responsibility at either a coordinated regional level, or individually, to successfully prevent or control infection in their sheep flocks, with the assistance of veterinarians and advisers. A draft communication plan is provide as Attachment One.

There will be an ongoing need for a range of communication activities as producers commence trading in the first year of the altered management arrangements. It is anticipated that as producers' knowledge and understanding of animal health risk management strategies and OJD increases, appropriate methods of management will be implemented as part of a property management strategy and OJD specific communication activities will reduce, particularly at the national level.

5. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Some Research projects commissioned during the NOJDP will continue during the OJDMP, and new projects will be commissioned. MLA will continue to manage these projects and report to the Industry Management Committee (IMC), established by WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia.

These organisations have identified a number of targeted research projects that are expected to provide additional information to guide the future management of the OJDMP. WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia have considered a request from MLA to use levy funds held in trust by Animal Health Australia, for the establishment of these new research projects.

The national industry bodies have agreed to these arrangements for a period of three years, and will co-fund with MLA a number of research activities during the life of this program including:

- *OJD application of basic research on enhanced diagnosis and prevention.*
- *Evaluation of the effectiveness of Gudair vaccination for the control of OJD in flocks vaccinating for at least 5 years.*

MLA will continue to manage all research projects and report to the Johne's Disease Research Advisory Group (JDRAAG) and the IMC.

6. COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

Animal Health Australia has been requested to undertake the national management and coordination of the OJDMP 2007 - 2012 on behalf of stakeholders.

It has been agreed that an Industry Management Committee (IMC) be established to provide advice to WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia and determine the annual operational priorities of the Plan.

Coordination of the OJDMP will be undertaken by Animal Health Australia's Manager Endemic Disease with technical advice provided by the National Technical Adviser. The coordination of abattoir monitoring activities will be coordinated by a part time National Abattoir Surveillance Coordinator, reporting to the IMC.

Animal Health Australia will provide six-monthly surveillance reports to the Industry Management Committee and circulate these to stakeholders.

It is proposed that the IMC membership should include:

- Representatives from Sheepmeat Council of Australia and WoolProducers Australia.
- Manager Endemic Disease, Animal Health Australia
- National Technical Adviser
- State departmental representative (one per state)
- Meat and Livestock Australia and Australian Wool Innovation (one representative as determined by the organisations),

The following organisations will be represented as observers to the IMC:

- Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC),
- Australian Livestock and Property Agents (ALPA)
- AQIS

Meetings will be chaired by the CEO or Director Programs, Animal Health Australia and technical advice and secretariat services to the IMC will continue to be provided by Animal Health Australia.

The principal function of the IMC will be to determine reporting milestones and advise industry representatives on the direction of the Program. Additionally there is an expectation that the IMC will meet initially every six months to ensure such milestones are met and to determine the operational priorities of the Program. Quarterly updates will be provided to members of the management committee.

The Manager Endemic Disease will continue to be responsible for reporting on the delivery of activities in the OJDMP for which Animal Health Australia has responsibility, including the expenditure of funds against budgets and delivery of associated activities in an effective and cost-efficient manner as well as the compilation of abattoir surveillance data.

Continued technical support, communications and extension by State Governments

WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia acknowledge the assistance provided by Animal Health Committee members and state departments during the development of this Plan. In the past, state departments of primary industries have made a valuable contribution to OJD prevention and management through the provision of technical and extension advice as well as communications support to producers. WoolProducers Australia and Sheepmeat Council of Australia welcome the advice that state departments will continue to provide this support.

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BUDGET

The following annual indicative budget has been prepared for the first year of the OJDMP.

ACTIVITY	2007 -2008 (\$)
National Management	60,000
Coordination of national abattoir surveillance	90,000
Abattoir surveillance, including laboratory fees, for maintenance of three prevalence areas and the identification of disease. To be undertaken at representative abattoirs in NSW, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.	320,000
Communications	15,000
Research and Development Projects*	450,000
TOTAL	935,000

*to be matched by the Commonwealth through the MLA Donor Company

BUSINESS RULES

Animal Health Australia is responsible for the management of the OJDMP as an industry funded program. WoolProducers Australia and the Sheepmeat Council of Australia have agreed the establishment of an OJD Management Plan 2007 - 2012, to obtain data to maintain prevalence and identify disease in the Low Prevalence Area.

The following rules have been agreed:

- A management budget will be submitted annually to the OJDMP Industry Management Committee for approval.
- Abattoir surveillance will be undertaken by AQIS in accordance with agreed standard operating procedures, with data sent to the National Abattoir Surveillance Coordinator for verification and reporting.
- Animal Health Australia will provide Sheepmeat Council of Australia and WoolProducers Australia with access to expert technical advice on a needs basis.
- Funding for the OJDMP will be drawn from levies contributed by the sheep industry and held at Animal Health Australia.
- Invoices for abattoir surveillance will be managed in accordance with Animal Health Australia's finance policies and procedures.
- Expenditures will not exceed budgets unless previously agreed and approved by the Board of Animal Health Australia.

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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THREE OJD PREVALENCE AREAS

This communication strategy supports the implementation of three new OJD Prevalence Areas within the Australian sheep industry from 31 March 2008.

Aims

Ensure that producers are aware of risk management for OJD and understand the ABC Scheme and the changes to Prevalence Areas.

Encourage behavioural change and to support the sustainable management of OJD.

Target audiences

- State Farmer Organisations,
- Sheep industry organisations,
- Sheepmeat and wool producers,
- Stud breeders associations,
- Stock and station agents,
- Veterinarians working with the sheep industry,
- Jurisdiction policy and extension officers,
- Agricultural Show Societies,
- Targeted rural media sources.

Communication approaches

- Create awareness amongst producers and their influencers of the change to three OJD Prevalence Areas and why this has occurred.
- Educate producers (and their influencers) of the changes and what action they need to act as a result. Use key influencers/partners to provide information to producers about the changes.
- The eventual development of a national Sheep Health Statement to streamline the process.

Key messages

- From 31 March 2008 buying and trading sheep while managing the risk of OJD will be even easier.
- There are now three new Prevalence Areas for OJD – Low, Medium and High.
- The points allocated to these Areas and the boundaries have changed.
- The Prevalence Area or ABC credits for where you are located have changed.

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- The three prevalence areas provide the best technical solution to sustainably managing OJD.
- Moving to three prevalence areas will reduce the cost of the program to the national sheep industry and producers.
- The ABC Scheme remains the best way to control and manage the disease.

Communication channels

- Media releases.
- Advertorials in rural publications.
- Key influencers/partners: ALPA, MLA, AWI, State Farming Organisations, jurisdictional extension officers.
- Webpage.

Spokespeople

- Don Hamblin, President Wool Producers Australia.
- Chris Groves, President Sheepmeat Council of Australia.

Indicative timeline

December 2007

- Media release announcing change to three OJD prevalence areas on 31 March 2008.
- Negotiate involvement of key influencers/partners in the communication strategy.
- Develop implementation plan for the communication strategy (responsibilities and costs).
- Evaluate the reality of a national Sheep Health Statement.
- Plan for development of communication material: webpage, advertorials, media releases, and brochures.
- OJD changes outlined on the website www.ojd.com.au.

January 2008

- Produce communication materials.
- Run advertorials and targeted media releases using key industry spokespeople (used for Protect Australian Livestock Campaign biosecurity media releases in June/July so will have some residual profile).
- Activities by partners.

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- .media and key stakeholder briefings.
- Distribute OJD prevalence brochure.
- Webpage live.

31 March 2008

- Launch.
- Follow-up activities as required.

Indicative budget

- \$10,000, excluding brochure development.

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