

# COONAMBLE OJD REGIONAL BIOSECURITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

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## OJD RBA Activities Throughout 2014-2015

The Coonamble OJD Regional Biosecurity Area (RBA) was formed on July 1 2013, in response to the changes to the National OJD Management Plan 2013-2018.

The RBA is made up of 152 sheep producers in the area previously known as the Coonamble Rural Lands Protection Board, and encompasses all PICs with a 17 code. These producers are committed to working together to prevent introduction and spread of OJD, as demonstrated by a well attended public meeting in September 2012, where 90 sheep producers attended and voted unanimously to support the RBA; and a postal vote where 67% of surveys were returned and 91% supported forming an RBA.

The Group is guided by an OJD Advisory Committee. This committee is made up of producers, agents, and the Local Land Services District Veterinarian (who acts as the technical advisor). This formal industry-government partnership has written a Regional Biosecurity Plan, and has adhered to it over the past 24 months.

The OJD Advisory Committee has met twice in the 2014-2015 audit period. We have communicated via email throughout this period.

An updated guide to buying and selling sheep was posted to all sheep producers in the Coonamble RBA in March 2015. It was also uploaded to the Central West Local Land Services website in February 2015. The Committee wrote to two show societies during 2014-2015 within the RBA notifying them of their obligations as part of the RBA.

There have been three media activities (newsletter articles) produced in the past 12 months, relating to the OJD Regional Biosecurity Area, using the Sheep Health Statement and risk assessing sheep prior to purchase. In addition to media activities, there were 35 producer contacts where individual advice was given regarding the requirements of the RBA.

## Monitoring Sheep Movements into the Area

The minimum standards for entry into the Coonamble RBA are documented in the Central West (Coonamble) Regional Biosecurity Plan 2013-2015.

During the period from 1st July 2014 until 30 June 2015, there were 84 sheep movements into the Coonamble RBA, as recorded on the NLIS database. This is a significant increase in the number of

movements from the 2013-2014 reporting period, which is due to the prolonged dry conditions and several producers choosing to feedlot lambs.

*1. Sheep health statement audit results*

There were 56 Sheep Health Statements submitted to the Local Land Services District Veterinarian during this period – a 67% submission rate. This submission rate is acceptable due to a large number of exempt movements – terminal lambs for fattening and slaughter before they cut their first permanent incisors (these animals pose no risk of transmitting OJD ).

*2, Movement risk assessments and outcomes*

There was one high risk movement which occurred in September 2014. This movement consisted of 15 sheep which did not meet the RBA guidelines. The sheep were accompanied by a SHS but the OJD section was not completed. Three animals were 2012 drop, ten were 2013 drop sheep, and upon notifying the receiver of the stock that they did not meet the RBA entry guidelines, the rams were immediately sold for slaughter. A technical risk assessment concluded that the risk associated with this movement is negligible due to the short period of time the rams were on the property, their age, and the fact that they had been held in a one small section of the property where sheep do not normally graze.

Surveillance

Throughout the period from 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015, a total of 1384 sheep aged over two years were examined at slaughter for signs of OJD. All were negative for OJD. These 1384 sheep were 5 lines of sheep and originated from 4 PICs within the Coonamble RBA.

The Local Land Services District Veterinarian attended 31 farm visits to sheep flocks in the Coonamble RBA throughout the period from 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015. There were no cases of OJD diagnosed during this period. As of the 30th of June 2015, the Coonamble RBA has an OJD surveillance prevalence of 0%, which it has maintained since 2001.

The Coonamble RBA has reduced abattoir surveillance numbers for the 2014-2015 period for a number of reasons. Sheep numbers in the district are down, from 335,686 prior to the introduction of the National OJD Management Plan 2013-2018 to 252,607 at present. This is due to the prolonged drought the area has experienced over the past three years. The nearest abattoir, which processes most of the adult sheep from the Coonamble district, does not offer routine abattoir surveillance for OJD. The nearest abattoir that does offer surveillance is located at Wallangarra, over 600km away. The Coonamble OJD committee welcome the extension of the abattoir testing program into more abattoirs to boost surveillance throughout NSW.

## Conclusion

The Coonamble RBA has met its aims as outlined in the Coonamble Regional Biosecurity Plan. These aims are specifically:

- To reduce the risk of OJD infected sheep entering the Coonamble Regional Biosecurity Area.
- To preserve the biosecurity of flocks and properties in the Coonamble Regional Biosecurity Area.
- To maintain the Coonamble OJD prevalence at less than 1% (based on abattoir surveillance).
- To detect any threat of OJD in the Coonamble area as quickly as possible and respond as quickly and effectively as possible.
- To assist producers to manage any outbreak of OJD, within technical, operational, financial and political limits.
- To minimise the impact of OJD on producers in the Coonamble Regional Biosecurity Area (both financially and mentally).
- To maintain market access into other areas.

The Coonamble RBA committee is actively encouraging the provision of more comprehensive abattoir surveillance availability, and has contacted various levels of industry and government regarding this matter.

The Coonamble RBA committee is in the process of rolling out a media/advisory program in the area to re-emphasise the awareness of Sheep Health Statements and safe introductions.

The Coonamble RBA committee believes it still has strong support and is an active committee which is committed to continuing the RBA into the future.

## Appendix 1: Methodology in preparing Audit Report

- The NSW DPI publishes sheep movement reports fortnightly, and these are available on the extranet.
- On a monthly basis, the technical advisor to the group checks the movements and Sheep Health Statements and investigates any movements that do not meet the RBA guidelines for safe sheep introductions.
  - This involves contacting the producer via phone, mail or email to get a Sheep Health Statement or more information about the movement.
  - It may involve checking the NLIS database for the property of origin history (are they sheep traders, are they home bred closed flock sheep etc).
  - It may involve visiting the property and checking the sheep to verify their age or health.
- The movement reports, the SHSs and any investigation details are filed.
- At the end of the audit period, the movements, SHS submitted and details of any high risk movements are collated and included in the audit report.
- Abattoir monitoring reports are received from the DPI at the end of the financial year. These are collated and included in the report.
- LHMS (the LLS Livestock Health Management System) is interrogated for any details of sheep property visits to a 17 PIC where passive surveillance for OJD may be undertaken.

- Any media activities or producer advisory events conducted throughout the year are also documented in the Coonamble RBA file, and these are documented in the audit report.
- The Coonamble RBA communicates via email during the collation of this report and meets to discuss it prior to submission.