

Red meat, on farm Welfare issues, priorities and projects

Jim Rothwell (Sam Brown/Sharon Dundon)

2012 – 2015 MLA welfare vision

Australian red meat industries will have solutions that allow them to meet high standards of animal welfare without reducing productivity levels.

1. Develop replacements for aversive procedures
2. Reduce mortality rates on farms
3. Increase uptake and demonstration of welfare best practices across the whole supply chain
4. Develop ways to minimise the pain of aversive procedures

Assurance, Verification (formalise practice standards)

- Benchmarking (outcomes not inputs Objective measures, abattoir surveillance),
- Stocktake of prior system and past failures
- The example of the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme; heat stress, preg heifers,
- QA, Product integrity for the whole supply chain,
- **Any program must use and build on existing programs such as; lifetime ewe management, best prac etc.**
- **An integrity system must link to dollars – ie reward good practice and or penalise poor practice.**

- Culture change, what are the drivers for change.
 - ‘Culture beats strategy’
- Adoption of best practice guidelines, acceptable standards and guidelines
- Industry needs transparent supply chains
- Include welfare components in existing extension programs and communication programs.
- Livestock data Link.
- Social media training for producers. Young entrants/next generation.

Technology

- Pain relief but must be affordable,
- Apps
- Link welfare to productivity/profitability (eg MSA – better eating quality from humanely treated animals).
Improve practice
- Objective measures of welfare.
- Background levels of mortality (drought, disasters),
- Replace aversive procedures, castration, dehorning, spaying, visual id – no brands, ear tags,
- Virtual saleyards, saleyard improvement.

Community communications

- Transparency but must be tailored for the audience, hone messages.
- Understand community expectations and how they change
- A good goal is for constant improvement.
 - This requires communication plans about how industry will and is to get to the final goal – that is there a number of steps along the path from A to Z.
- Retailer contact is essential – shape and reflect consumer wants, measure consumer trends, lag and lead indicators
- Zero harm – not zero mortality (LE)
- **Non negotiables – eat meat, right to farm, long distance transport.**
- **Negotiable – increase welfare, measurable outcomes, better slaughter**

Current on farm projects in 2014/15, levy \$1,279,000 + MDC projects



Develop replacements for aversive procedures;

- B.AWW.0219. Chemical sterilisation as an alternative to spaying of heifers
- B.AWW.0241. GonaCon™ Trial in Bull Calves
- Plus 3 MDC projects looking for alternatives to spaying

Reduce mortality rates on farms;

- B.AWW.0237. Assessing and Addressing On-Farm Sheep Welfare and mortality
- E.REP.1404. Informing future sheep extension strategy
- B.AHE.0208. Invasive Animals CRC commitment
- B.SCR.0112 & B.SCR.0122 Sheep CRC: wellbeing program. Reducing the risk of compromised welfare & Auto monitoring and data collection.

Increase uptake and demonstration of welfare best practices across the whole supply chain;

- B.AWW.0229. Saleyards Standards and Guidelines regulatory impact statement

Develop ways to minimise the pain of aversive procedures

- B.AWW.0215. Development of a self medication methodology for pain relief in sheep and cattle
- B.AWW.0239. Numnuts Phase 2: Humane, Low Pain Method for castration and tail docking
- B.AWW.0240. Commercialisation Plan - NeedleFree Pain
- B.AWW.0242. Encephalography during castration
- Plus several MDC projects looking for practical NSAIDs for pain relief.

Feedlot Welfare R&D projects in 2014/15,
\$1,321,000.



- B.FLT.0157 Heat load nutrition program
- B.FLT.0158 Effect of mud on cattle motivation for feed
- B.FLT.0380 Heat load forecast service – Feedlot AWS
- B.FLT.0381 Updated heat load index algorithm
- B.FLT.0387 Update heat load Risk Assessment Program
- B.FLT.0388 Reducing heat load – nighttime feed intake

- **Development and Implementation HOTSTUFF & LATSA**
 - Software for the assessment of heat stress risk on livestock that has reduced the mortality during live export considerably
- **Salmonella Vaccine Development**
 - Undertaking experimental challenge studies via oral delivery of modified live Salmonella vaccine lacking DNA adenine methylase (DAM) is promising for conferring protection against salmonella in sheep and cattle
- **Inanition**
 - Tracked and monitored 10,500 sheep and a key message is that sheep that eat for <30mins are considered to be high risk of not eating at all therefore not destined for export
- **Training Materials**
 - Best practice manuals, SOPs, work instructions, livestock training DVDs, numerous translations
- **Infrastructure**
 - Improvements through key livestock export markets such as Indonesia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Doha, Oman
- **Into the future Live Export Global Assurance**