eNVDs: a system for the future
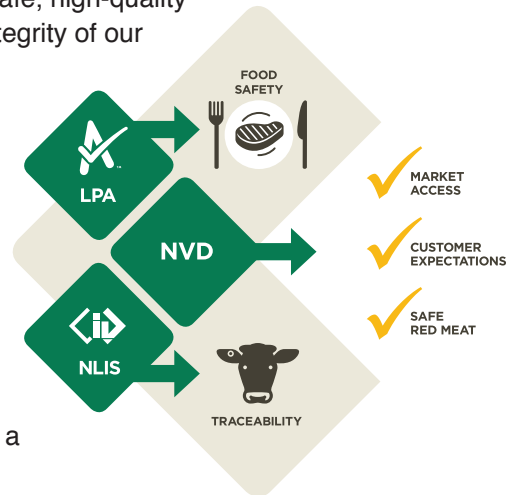
AUSTRALIA'S enviable reputation as a producer of safe, high-quality red meat is supported by a system that proves the integrity of our product.

Central to this system is the National Vendor Declaration which communicates the food safety status of every animal every time it moves from one property to another, to processors or to saleyards.

Paper-based NVDs have been in use since the 1990s. A partially electronic version of the paper-based LPA NVD – the eDEC–was introduced in 2004. It offers livestock producers significant cost savings by enabling them to complete the form using a computer and print it out once completed.

Technological advances have now allowed for the development of an eNVD system as an alternative to the original hard-copy NVD.

The benefits of the eNVD will be immediate and tangible, cutting costs and increasing the accuracy and accessibility of NVD information. Producers will find completing the eNVD easier and faster to use, saving valuable time and reducing the potential for errors when livestock are being moved.

Benefits of the eNVD system

Benefits for **saleyards**, **feedlots** and **processors**:
- Reduces the cost of reprocessing inaccurate or incomplete NVDs.
- Reduces the cost of re-entering NVD information into existing receiving computer systems and databases.
- Reduces the cost of storing and retrieving historical NVDs for auditing, reporting and administrative purposes.
- Provides greater visibility of the incoming livestock's details before the stock arrives, enabling more efficient management.

Benefits for **producers**:
- Ensures the latest versions of vendor declarations are being used and meet market requirements.
- Reduces the time taken to complete an NVD.
- Reduces the cost of storing and retrieving historical NVDs for auditing, reporting and administrative purposes.

Benefits for our **industry**:
- Improves industry integrity and traceability of vendor declarations and animal movements.
- Encourages the development of innovative eNVD software to meet market demand.
- Has potential to extend improvements to other industry integrity programs and tools (e.g. MSA, NFAS, PCAS, commodity declarations, health statements, RFID traceability).
- Once fully operational, this system will save industry up to an estimated $5.8m a year.

How eNVDs will work

The eNVD system will allow supply chain participants to use licensed software to submit eNVD records to the central NLIS database.

Licensed software must adhere to the national eNVD Standards that have been endorsed by SAFEMEAT. This ensures that whichever software system a producer chooses to use, eNVDs will flow seamlessly to receivers of the livestock also equipped with eNVD software. Producers and authorities will also be able to receive eNVDs via the NLIS database.

Trials

MLA, in partnership with a number of software companies, is conducting field trials to assess the effectiveness of the eNVD system in practice, identify necessary enhancements and determine a roll-out strategy based on lessons learned from the trials.

The trials have so far demonstrated successful transfer of information via the central NLIS platform and have encouraged software integrators to find solutions for managing the entry of eNVDs with limited or no internet connectivity.

The trials have also identified a number of issues requiring resolution before roll-out occurs. These remaining impediments are being addressed in parallel.

System refinements are under way to address these. The eNVD system is not currently available for commercial use beyond the eNVD field trials.

More information

For more information on eNVDs, contact:
Ben Lee
blee@mla.com.au

Roll out

Incremental implementation of eNVDs for commercial use is planned from August this year. Further details of the eNVD will be provided to all participants in the red meat supply chain at that stage.

Following the approval of eNVDs for commercial use, the first wave of supporting technology for producers and participating supply chains will be delivered by the integrity system's commercial partners. These apps will be complemented by integrated saleyard and processor systems to be introduced in stages from the second half of 2016.

Once eNVDs are released for general use, vendors will have the choice of using eNVDs, paper-based NVDs or eDECs.