

final report

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Pilot feedlot technology extension model

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Executive summary

While Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) have traditionally enjoyed a high level of interaction with larger feedlots, this same relationship has not existed for many small to medium sized operations (<10,000 SCU). Hence a need was identified for improvement of information flow and increased adoption of technologies across the sector. As traditional face-to-face extension through State Departments of Agriculture no longer exists at the same capacity as it previously did, this project developed a technology extension tool through social media and the development of a website to cater for this need.

The main objectives were:

- Pilot a new extension model, utilising a combination of social media and telephone communications, a dedicated Feedlot Technology Adoption Group website, quarterly newsletter updates and face-to-face interactions; and
- Assess the effectiveness of the extension model and provide recommendations on its future operation.

This project was successful in achieving its objective of developing a new information extension model, as both the FTAG Facebook page and FTAG website have been operational since October 2014. The Facebook page has over 1480 fans and the number has been steadily increasing since it launched, while more than 1600 users have viewed the website since it became operational. Lot feeders have been actively engaging with the Facebook page, liking, commenting on and sharing the page's posts, with over 591 users engaging in the past month. Quarterly e-newsletters were found to be a successful tool for keeping the FTAG audience engaged with the FTAG website and Facebook page, with 500 subscribers viewing the April e-newsletter, and over 10% of these using the newsletter to access the FTAG Facebook page and website. Face-to-face and telephone communications have been successful in promoting the online extension tools, and identified areas where online resources for lot feeders are lacking, enabling MLA to pinpoint what materials to develop going forward.

The project concluded that although a high quantity of research and development has been undertaken by MLA, this information is not easily found by lot feeders. Training videos, "Tips & Tools" and outcomes of research and development reports are underutilised by the FTAG target audience. The FTAG website and FTAG Facebook page have allowed increased extension of this information to the FTAG target audience.

Some of the main conclusions and recommendations for this project include:

- The development of "Business Systems", "Biosecurity", "Manure Management", and "WHS" videos by MLA that can be used by lot feeders as training material for staff.
- Cross promotion of the FTAG Facebook page and website by MLA and/or ALFA using a regular schedule, for example ALFA could use their "ALFA Recommended Facebook Pages" section of their website, MLA/ALFA could promote them on their websites and in their newsletters.
- The FTAG website is not turning up when users search common feedlot terms in Google which impacts the numbers of visitors accessing the site. Therefore the search engine optimisation (SEO) process needs to be improved for the website.
- The number of returning visitors to the website is 6.6%, while the bounce rate is 68%. It would be beneficial to increase the number of visitors while reducing the bounce rate. This could be done by improving the site's navigation and overall appearance, inclusion of many

different types of graphics to engage the user, and increasing the interconnectedness between the sections of the website by having links to different website sections in relevant areas of a page.

- More information is required on feedlot nutrition for the FTAG website and Facebook page. This will need to be provided by a feedlot nutrition expert.
- FTAG Facebook status updates should be posted up to three times a day, between the hours of 12pm and 9pm to coincide with highest user activity in order to promote more page likes.
- Continued engagement with Facebook and website users, and face-to-face and telephone communications to find out what key topics they have an interest in and develop material to address these. This should be continuous and on-going so as to ensure all information provided is current and addresses the needs of the FTAG target audience.

The FTAG extension model has provided many benefits to the feedlot industry over the project period, these include a direct link between lot feeders and industry where they can actively request information on topics that interest them. The online resources provide a large level of information in one central system that can easily be accessed and used by industry. In addition, it has identified areas where there is a lack of information available to lot feeders in some of the key areas of feedlot operation such as staff training, nutrition and the business systems available. This provides MLA with distinct direction for what material is required to be developed in the future.

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1 Background

While Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and the Australian Lot Feeders Association (ALFA) have traditionally enjoyed a high level of interaction with larger feedlots, this same relationship has not existed for many small to medium sized operations (<10,000 SCU). MLA and industry identified a need to engage more with these operations to improve information flow and increase adoption of technologies across the sector. Traditional extension models are difficult to implement for small to medium-sized feedlots as they are geographically sparse and the operators are time poor. Traditional face-to-face extension through State Departments of Agriculture no longer exists. Therefore, it was proposed to develop a technology extension tool through social media and the development of a website to cater for this need.

FSA Consulting previously undertook a scoping study to identify options for Feedlot Technology Adoption Groups (B.FLT.0152). This study assessed the factors that have led to the successful implementation of schemes within the dairy and grains industries and undertook a survey of feedlots within the Darling Downs and Southern NSW/Northern Victoria ("Riverina") regions to gauge the level of interest from feedlots for group participation. The scoping study indicated that older lot feeders were more interested in face-to-face information exchange while younger lot feeders preferred electronic communications. The scoping study did not identify social media as an extension tool. However, its importance was highlighted and recognised by lot feeders at many subsequent BEEF-EX conferences.

This project aimed to develop a public interactive Feedlot Technology Adoption Group Facebook page, along with a Feedlot Technology Adoption Group (FTAG) website, with the aim of providing lot feeders with timely, accurate, demand driven and relevant information. Both the FTAG website and the Facebook page are community driven extension tools which allow continual engagement with lot feeders. These electronic media platforms allow for ease of technology adoption and transfer of information. The use of Facebook ensures that the Feedlot Technology Adoption Group has the opportunity to be a highly interactive platform with greater accessibility, reach, frequency, and usability than a traditional group meeting. On the 31st October 2014, both the FTAG website and the Facebook page went live. Quarterly newsletters were sent to lot feeders starting from the end of January 2015, detailing new information and updates to the Facebook page and the FTAG website. The newsletters ensured that lot feeders without Facebook pages have a direct point of communication with the Feedlot Technology Adoption Group newsletter administrator and can send and receive information electronically.

In addition to these electronic media interactions, face-to-face and telephone communications were conducted with a number of small to medium sized feedlots operated within the south-east Queensland region and Australia-wide. For lot feeders who are unfamiliar with electronic media, telephone communication allowed for a description of where and how to access the Facebook page and the FTAG website. It also allowed lot feeders to discuss any issues they felt MLA should be addressing, allowed for innovations to be shared and allowed discussion of what training materials they would find useful. This interaction also helped to gauge if lot feeders were aware of the current research and development MLA are undertaking and if so, were they implementing any of it. In the case where lot feeders were not aware of what is being undertaken, FSA Consulting directed them to the MLA website and the FTAG website, where the information can be found.

2 Projective objectives

The original project objectives were to:

- Pilot a new extension model, utilising a combination of face-to-face interactions and social media communications, with a minimum of 20 medium and small sized feedlots; and
- Assess the effectiveness of the extension model and provide recommendations on its future operation.

Since the original contract was accepted by MLA, the project objectives have altered slightly. The revised main objectives of this project are:

- Pilot a new extension model, utilising a combination of social media and telephone communications, a dedicated Feedlot Technology Adoption Group website, quarterly newsletter updates and face-to-face interactions; and
- Assess the effectiveness of the extension model and provide recommendations on its future operation.

Therefore, the main difference between the original and revised project objectives relates to the face-to-face communications with a minimum of 20 medium and small sized feedlots. Following contract signing. A meeting was held between FSA Consulting, Des Rinehart (MLA) and Jeff House (ALFA Extension Officer, Technical Services Officer) to discuss co-ordination of survey forms and visits to feedlots. It was decided that Jeff House would use and promote the Facebook page as an extension tool when visiting lot feeders. Jeff House's role is to provide support and assistance to lot feeders. His role also involves the development of education and training material and research and development extension. FSA Consulting and Jeff House were in contact throughout the project to gather and share information.

3 Methodology

The development of the technology extension tool involved the development of:

- The Facebook page;
- The FTAG website;
- The FTAG newsletter; and
- Telephone and face-to-face communications.

3.1 Development of Facebook page

Facebook was used as the social media platform to interact with the feedlot community. The FTAG Facebook page was set up mid-2014 and was made live on the 31st October 2014. Posts were published on a regular basis including:

- Informative videos to help with training and management practices e.g. Caring for Cattle, Animal Welfare Freedom, Stockmanship, Acclimation, Horsemanship, Stockmanship at work, Farm Biosecurity, Feedlot Nutrition;
- Links to training courses e.g. Animal Welfare Training Courses;
- Links to guides e.g. Safework Australia: managing risks with horses;
- Links to recent MLA research reports and mobile/tablet apps such as MLA Market Information, SteakMate and Meat Cuts;

- Updates on the FTAG website;
- Links to the FTAG newsletter; and
- Updates on excessive heat load events.

In addition to these posts, the site's administrators encouraged public engagement through direct interaction with the Facebook site's users and encouraging feedback on the site. The promotion of the site through regular, interesting, informative and helpful posts ensured that the Facebook page received "Likes" from Facebook users. This was important as the more "followers" the page has, the greater the reach of the page, resulting in a large amount of publicity. In addition, paid advertisement was used to generate more page likes. This targeted Facebook users who had specific interests such as agriculture, farming, feedlots, cattle, etc. This ensured that the people engaged would have a genuine interest in the FTAG page and would find the material presented helpful and informative.

In order to track the progress of the Facebook page, the "Insights" feature within Facebook was used. This feature provides information about the page's performance and tracks user interaction.

3.2 Development of FTAG website

The FTAG website (www.feedlottechnology.com) was built using Wix.com which is a cloud-based development program. It was developed to provide current, relevant technology advancements in the cattle feedlot industry and facilitate members of the direct and wider feedlot community to transfer technical knowledge. The website contains information on five major categories:

1. The feedlot site;
2. Pens and ponds;
3. Livestock;
4. Feed and water; and
5. The National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS).

It was developed to be a community driven website based on the information needs of feedlot workers, operators and owners. Therefore a synergy between the Facebook page and the FTAG website was developed. Any areas that were identified as important or relevant through comments or queries on the Facebook page were updated on the FTAG website. In addition, any telephone or face-to-face communications that resulted in recommendations for informative material were also taken into consideration when developing the website. The FTAG website also features a "Contact Us" fillable form which allows users to contact the website administrators directly with any questions or comments they might have. The FTAG website displays a "Like us on Facebook" pop-up which directs people to the Facebook page.

In order to track the progress of the FTAG website, the web analytics service "Google analytics" was used. This program allows the website administrators to determine its audience and trace customer paths on the website. In addition, search engine optimisation (SEO) was carried out for the website. This is the process of ensuring that the FTAG website is clearly visible (i.e. on the first page of a search engine's e.g. Google's, unpaid results). In general, the higher ranked a website is on this results page, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users. In order to assess the efficacy of the SEO for the website, google searches were conducted using the search terms listed below:

- Feedlot Australia;
- Cattle feedlot information;

- Lot feeding beef cattle;
- Feedlot rations beef;
- Feedlot design;
- Feedlot technology;
- Feedlot site layout;
- Feedlot construction;
- Feedlot cattle disease;
- Feedlot cattle management;
- Welfare safety feedlots;
- National feedlot accreditation scheme; and
- Feedlot cattle heat stress.

3.3 Development of FTAG newsletter

An e-newsletter was developed as a means of updating users of the Facebook page and website with a summary of the information that had been made available. The initial newsletter was sent out on the 31st January 2015, with subsequent newsletters every 3 months after this. The newsletter was developed using the Wix ShoutOut function. This sends the newsletter out in an e-mail to a defined list of contacts. There is an unsubscribe link contained in this email which easily removes contacts from the mailing list. In addition the FTAG website contains a pop-up which asks users to subscribe to the newsletter once they access the site. The Facebook page was used to promote the newsletter also, with a post detailing the content, links to the newsletter and asking users to subscribe, when a new newsletter was released.

3.4 Telephone and face-to-face communications

Both telephone and face-to-face communications were conducted with feedlot operators. Ten site visits and over fifteen phone conversations to feedlot managers, feedlot veterinarians and other industry members were conducted. The main aim of these conversations was to spread awareness of the FTAG Facebook and website and to determine what content lot feeders would like to see on these websites. During site visits, lot feeders were shown how to get onto the FTAG Facebook page and also the website. Written notes were taken during communications with lot feeders in order to record what information they had provided us and also what information was lacking on the website and Facebook page.

4 Outcomes

4.1 Facebook Page

The Facebook page has had considerable success since it went “live” in October 2014. It now has 1482 followers (Figure 1). It should be noted that all statistics discussed in the following sections were correct as of 29th June 2015.



Figure 1 – Total page likes from 31/10/2014 to 29/06/2015

About 30% of users are women and 69% are men. The predominant age groups of the users are between 18-24 (34% of total users) and 25-34 (34% of total users) years of age. Users from the 35-44 age group represent 15% of total users. Over 74% of the users are based in Australia, with additional users located in a diverse number of regions including South Africa, Paraguay, the United States, the United Kingdom and Pakistan. Paid advertisement was undertaken on seven occasions to try and reach a wider audience.

Figure 2 shows the total reach from the page since October 2014. Paid followers are users who “liked” the page as a result of viewing advertising related to the page, while organic followers are users who found the page through unpaid distribution.



Figure 2 – Total reach of page (organic and paid followers)

Some of the major trends seen on the Facebook page include:

- The most popular page content by total reach are the links to video series which promote better animal welfare and management practices, and feedlot nutrition;
- Large spikes in organic page reach corresponded with the posting of videos. For example on the 5th of December 2014, the organic reach spiked due to a video post on bovine respiratory disease. On the 3rd of April, there was a large spike due to a video post from the “Caring for Cattle” series, demonstrating how to remove a single animal on horseback and on foot. On the 8/9th of June 2015, organic reach spiked due to the posting of informative content on lameness, accompanied by a photo and links to the ALFA Facebook page;
- In June 2015, the number of people who have engaged (liked, commented on or shared page posts) with the page is 591;

- In June 2015, the number of people that saw posts from the page was 19,961;
- Most of the page fans are logged into Facebook between 12pm and 9pm, with spikes seen at noon, 6pm and 9pm;
- Paid advertisement was successful in increasing the reach of the page; and
- Since the end of November 2014, there were no records of people finding the Facebook page through the FTAG website.

4.2 FTAG Website

Using the Google analytics program, it was possible to determine the following trends for the FTAG website:

- Over 1 600 users have viewed the page;
- The average session duration is just over 2 minutes;
- The number of page sessions have steadily increased since the website launch, with a significant increase since January as more content has been added;
- The bounce rate i.e. a visit where the user left the site without interacting with the site is 68%;
- The percentage of returning site visitors is 16.7%, with an average session duration of 7 minutes 40 seconds;
- 55 users returned to the site between 9-14 times and 57 users returned between 15-25 times;
- The majority of the website users are in the 25-34 age category at 33.5%, with 18-24 year olds at 27.5% and the 35-44 age group at 15.5%; and
- 45.9% of the site's users are female and 54.1% are male.

In addition, an assessment of the SEO efficacy was done (Table 1). These results show that the website is not being shown in the top ten pages of Google search results for the majority of search terms investigated.

Table 1 – Search engine optimisation (SEO) efficacy results for different search terms

Search term	Page number in Google	Ranking	Improvement required
Feedlot Australia	>10	>100	Yes
Cattle feedlot information	>10	>100	Yes
Lot feeding beef cattle	>10	>100	Yes
Feedlot rations beef	>10	>100	Yes
Feedlot design	2	20	Yes
Feedlot technology	1	9	No
Feedlot site layout	1	9	No
Feedlot construction	4	32	Yes
Feedlot cattle disease	>10	>100	Yes
Feedlot cattle management	>10	>100	Yes
Welfare safety feedlots	8	72	Yes
National feedlot accreditation scheme	8	76	Yes
Feedlot cattle heat stress	>10	>100	Yes

4.3 FTAG Newsletter

Quarterly e-newsletters have been used as a tool for keeping the FTAG audience engaged with the FTAG website and Facebook page. Continual updates and posts on the FTAG website and Facebook page mean it can be difficult for most people to keep track of websites progress, but the e-newsletter increases the chance for repeated visits and intensifies the relationship between FTAG and the site visitors. The FTAG e-newsletter includes links to the Facebook page and FTAG website. E-mails were sent to 305 subscribers, there were 500 total e-mail and webviews of this ShoutOut. 62 users used the ShoutOut to gain access to the Facebook page or FTAG website.

4.4 Telephone and face-to-face communications

Twenty-five to thirty feedlot managers, veterinarians and other industry professionals were contacted using telephone and face-to-face communications regarding the FTAG website and Facebook page. Feedback was attained from both males and females with varying levels of experience within the feedlot industry. From discussions with various feedlot operators, some of the main outcomes were:

- The training videos that are online on the Facebook and FTAG websites are very helpful;
- With the current lack of extension officers/extension groups, it can be difficult to access training material and operators felt that the online resources were a valuable source of information;
- Lot feeders were unsure where to access MLA research and development reports and/or "Tips & Tools";
- Lot feeders had not seen the training videos previously, even though they were published in 2011;
- Feedlot operators have a legal obligation to train workers on workplace health and safety (WHS) procedures when they come onsite – therefore if a video series was developed that could train workers in WHS, this would be very useful;
- There is the potential to develop multiple choice questionnaires which could be used in conjunction with the training and WHS videos to assess feedlot workers' knowledge of a particular subject. Records of the staff who have undertaken training and been informed of their WHS requirements could be kept;
- Some of the Caring for Cattle training videos provided are a bit outdated – potential for new, more up-to-date information to be developed;
- The development of "Business Systems" information would be useful, as there are few extension officers to provide this service to feedlot operators. Some of the information that could be covered includes writing position descriptions, payment of staff under the correct pastoral award, employee and employer obligations in terms of WHS and training;
- Objective information on the feedlot software programs. Some small lot feeders looking to expand understand the importance of using a feedlot software program but there is no objective information comparing products. In 2014 an ALFA article introduced two major software suppliers in Australia: Elynx and Possum Gully. However there is still a lack of readily available information for these programs. In addition, a comparison of all the different programs available could be beneficial.
- Several lot feeders have asked for information on the nutritional advancements with feedlot rations. Lot feeders have also asked for sample rations and information on nutrition;
- Information on the licencing process in various states have also been queried.

In general, positive feedback has been received from the lot feeding community with regards to the Facebook page.

5 Discussion

This project was successful in achieving its objective of developing a new information extension model, as both the FTAG Facebook page and FTAG website have been operational since October 2014. The Facebook page has over 1480 fans and the number has been steadily increasing since it launched, while more than 1600 users have viewed the website since it launched. Lot feeders have been engaging with the Facebook page and using the website to gain information on new management practices and technologies. In addition, numerous face-to-face and telephone communications have been conducted, in order to both promote the Facebook page and website, and to determine particular areas where lot feeders would like more information. The effectiveness of each component of the extension model are discussed in the following sections.

5.1 Facebook Page

Facebook was a successful method of sharing information with users. There was a high level of interaction between the users and the page. This was indicated by the high level of post likes, comments and shares. The most popular content were videos discussing animal welfare, nutrition and management practices. This indicates that this content is what Facebook users find the most interesting and helpful, therefore in order to build on the capacity of the Facebook page, it would be important to provide more information on these topics in the future. In addition to this, it is important to continue the engagement with users to find out what additional topics they have an interest in and develop material to address these. Feedback from lot feeders suggests videos are the most successful training tool, as opposed to reports or other documentation.

As the highest number of fans are logged in to Facebook between 12pm and 9pm, with spikes seen at noon, 6pm and 9pm. Posts scheduled for these times would have the highest chance of reaching the largest number of people. In addition it would be beneficial to organise interesting topics or posts at these time slots (e.g. commentary plus a link to a webinar run by ALFA or MLA)

Advertisements were successful in increasing the reach of the page, as was ensuring that the information shared was informative and engaging. Figure 2 shows that for every paid advertisement event there was a large spike in the overall reach of the page. In order to increase the following of the page in the future, paid advertisements are recommended. It would be useful to correlate these paid advertisement events when new material has been uploaded.

A surprising aspect of the page was the number of users that were not from Australia. There were a high number of users from South Africa and Paraguay. This may indicate that there is a distinct lack of information available for the feedlot industry in these countries.

Another finding from the Insights analysis was that no FTAG website users were finding the FTAG Facebook page through the website. This could indicate that the FTAG website is not effective in promoting the Facebook page.

5.2 FTAG Website

The number of returning visitors highlights that the information shared on the page is of high quality, relevant and engaging, therefore users are returning. A high percentage of return visitors shows that people view the website as a valuable resource. A large number of visitors returning to the site more often means that the content is appropriate for the site's main following. As 6.6% of

total visitors to the FTAG site returned between 9 and 25 times, this shows that there appears to be a loyal following of users that have used the website multiple times.

Engagement is measured by how much time new and returning visitors are spending on the website. The engagement analytics indicated that the site visitors who are viewing the site are quite engaged in the content, as the majority are viewing the site >1 minute. The most engaged visitors (staying on the site >30 minutes) are the return visitors – they are more likely to stay on the site longer and view more pages per session.

The bounce rate of 68% is slightly above average (Peyton 2014). Due to the nature of the website, it would be expected that users would click on multiple pages to find out more information on a given topic, or spend a considerable amount of time on a single page. However, users are typically spending less than a minute and a half on each page. Therefore, more could be done to encourage users to stay on the site longer and read more pages.

It would be beneficial to increase the percentage of return users and also to reduce the bounce rate from the page. Some of the potential options that could help achieve this include:

- Improvement of the site's navigation and overall appearance – ensure that there is a logical flow between pages, include lots of pictures and diagrams to demonstrate what is explained in text, minimise the amount of scrolling users have to do to get to their topic of interest when on a page, ensure formatting is consistent across the site, make sure pages do not contain incorrect or broken links.
- Increasing the interconnectedness between the sections of the website by having links to different website sections in relevant areas of a page. This would mean users could click on a link if it interested them, without having to navigate through the website.

The website is not turning up when users search common feedlot terms in Google. This is an issue as the lower ranking a website is on this results page, the less traffic the site will receive. The aim would be to have as many of the search terms as possible returning the FTAG website on the first page of Google search results, in order to increase the number of visitors to the site. In order for this to occur, SEO for the site has to be improved. This will involve several methods including: writing content that includes frequently searched keyword phrases; updating content frequently; and adding relevant keywords to the website's meta data.

5.3 FTAG Newsletter

Quarterly e-newsletters were used found to be a successful tool for keeping the FTAG audience engaged with the FTAG website and Facebook page, with 500 subscribers viewing the last e-newsletter, and over 10% of these using the newsletter to access the FTAG Facebook page and website.

5.4 Telephone and face-to-face communications

Between fifteen and twenty telephone conversations and fifteen face-to-face communications were conducted with feedlot operators, veterinarians or other industry professionals. These provided us with many different recommendations on what content feedlot operators would like available online. Some of the main points that were given included videos developed by MLA for business systems, biosecurity, manure management and WHS suitable for feedlot operators to use for training staff.

6 Conclusions/recommendations

The project concluded that although a high quantity of research and development has been undertaken by MLA, this information is not easily found by lot feeders. Training videos, "Tips & Tools" and outcomes of research and development reports are underutilised by the FTAG target audience. The FTAG website and FTAG Facebook page have allowed increased extension of this information to the FTAG target audience.

Below are the recommendations for the Facebook page:

- The page should post more regularly – pages that post at least three times a day get very high page reach metrics compared with pages that only post once a day or less (Ernout 2014).
- Posts should be scheduled between 12pm and 9pm as this is when most fans are online, in particular posts at 12, 6 and 9pm would be most beneficial as this is when user activity spikes.
- In addition to sharing original content, sharing high-quality content from other pages/websites/industry publications/blogs is highly recommended as a means of spreading brand awareness to the FTAG target audience. More time should be allocated to determining what sources provide the most useful content and sharing this more frequently. For example, ALFA posts regular status updates several times a day – it would be beneficial to share this content on the FTAG Facebook page.
- Promote the FTAG Facebook page more clearly on the FTAG website. A pop-up message promoting the Facebook page was recently added to the FTAG website (22nd June 2015).
- MLA and/or ALFA could cross promote the FTAG Facebook page on a more regular schedule.
- ALFA could promote FTAG on their "ALFA Recommended Facebook Pages" Section of their website (http://www.feedlots.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=102&Itemid=126).

Below are the recommendations for the FTAG website:

- Improve the SEO process for the website. This will ensure that the amount of people viewing the site will increase. In order to do this a number of methods can be used including: writing content that includes frequently searched keyword phrases; updating content frequently; and adding relevant keywords to the website's meta data will tend to improve the relevancy of a site's search listings.
- Improve the website's navigation – ensure that the site is laid out logically, does not contain incorrect or broken links and does not cause the users any confusion.
- Improve the formatting of each page so that the paragraphs are short and each page requires little to no scrolling to find all the information needed.
- Use a large number of photos and diagrams to illustrate the information provided in the text.
- Increase the interconnectedness between the sections of the website by having links to different website sections in relevant areas of a page.
- Continue to add content to the website on a regular basis.

Some overall recommendations for the project as a whole:

- A FTAG exhibition stall at the BeefWorks convention.
- Development of more videos detailing cattle welfare and management, safety, and feedlot nutrition should be by MLA and ALFA in order to ensure the information shared online is up-to-date and to ensure the continued interest of Facebook and website users.
- Additional promotion of the FTAG Facebook page and FTAG website from MLA and ALFA on their website, Facebook page and newsletters.
- The development of a “Business Systems” training video series by MLA, followed by promotion of the videos using FTAG.
- The development of a “Biosecurity” training video series by MLA, followed by promotion of the videos using FTAG.
- The development of a “Manure Management” training video series by MLA, followed by promotion of the videos using FTAG.
- The development a system of training unit videos for WHS by MLA, followed by promotion of the videos using FTAG.
- FTAG Facebook page and FTAG website used for promotion of workshops and training facilitated by MLA and/or ALFA.
- ALFA Extension Officer to actively promote use of the FTAG website and FTAG Facebook page.
- Regular communication between the FTAG team and ALFA Extension Officer to be undertaken to ensure relevance of topics posted.
- Additional information on nutrition is required for the FTAG website and FTAG Facebook page from an expert in the field.
- Continued engagement with Facebook and website users, and face-to-face and telephone communications to find out what key topics they have an interest in and develop material to address these. This should be continuous and on-going so as to ensure all information provided is current and addresses the needs of the FTAG target audience.

The FTAG extension model has provided many benefits to the feedlot industry over the project period, these include a direct link between lot feeders and industry where they can actively request information on topics that interest them. The online resources provide a large level of information in one central system that can easily be accessed and used by industry. In addition, it has identified areas where there is a lack of information available to lot feeders in some of the key areas of feedlot operation such as staff training, nutrition and the business systems available. This provides MLA with distinct direction for what material is required to be developed in the future.

7 Key messages

This project was successful in achieving its objective of developing a new information extension model for the feedlot industry.

- Lot feeders now have access to a wide range of detailed information in one central location on the FTAG website.
- Lot feeders have a forum to discuss issues and provide suggestions on what information they require for running their business, in the form of the FTAG Facebook page. This page also benefits industry as it provides up to date posts on technologies, research and operational practices on a regular basis to a wide audience.
- MLA now has a distinct list of topics that can be used to provide training videos and material for industry. This will clearly have positive economic and social benefits for industry as it will ensure feedlot staff have an engaging and up-to-date training program, and feedlot operators will have more information on how to run their business.

8 References

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