

final report

Project code: B.FLT.0462
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Date published: July 2014
ISBN: 9781741919387

PUBLISHED BY

Meat & Livestock Australia Limited
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NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Online delivery Feedlot Operations course

Meat & Livestock Australia acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

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Abstract

The Australian feedlot industry has been developing improved training resources for industry employees for a number of years. The introduction of the new AHC10 training package provided an opportunity for Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA), TAFE NSW and Agrifood Skills Australia to work together to develop and accredit the Certificate III in Feedlot Operations course (ANC33311). As part of this process the content of the old RTE03 feedlot course was reviewed and new units and course structures were identified to better address the training required by the feedlot sector, resulting in a single stranded Certificate III course.

The current project upgraded and converted the principally paper-based learning materials for this course so it could be delivered online, allowing increased flexibility in delivery to feedlot sector participants. A Moodle based platform was utilised for the delivery of the course resources and assessment materials to students.

Executive summary

The Australian feedlot industry has been developing improved training resources for industry employees for a number of years. The introduction of the new AHC10 training package provided an opportunity for Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA), TAFE NSW and Agrifood Skills Australia to work together to develop and accredit the Certificate III in Feedlot Operations course (ANC33311). As part of this process the content of the old RTE03 feedlot course was reviewed and new units and course structures were identified to better address the training required by the feedlot sector, resulting in a single stranded Certificate III course, addressing the three major areas of feedlot operation activities – pen riding, feed milling and maintenance.

The current project upgraded and converted the principally paper-based learning materials for this course so it could be delivered online, allowing increased flexibility in delivery to feedlot sector participants. A Moodle based platform was utilised for the delivery of the course resources and assessment materials to students. The documentation required to satisfy the Vocational Quality Framework (VQF) requirements for audit and compliance of the course was also developed as part of the project.

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1 Background

In a previous project with Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA), TAFE NSW - New England Institute used the Beef Cattle Production and Rural Operations courses from the RTE03 national training package as a platform to develop and document industry approved training programs for workers within the feedlot industry. Topic or task based training and assessment materials that specifically addressed the needs of the feedlot industry were developed. The developed programs provided a portable nationally recognised suite of three separate qualifications for feedlot employees involved in pen riding, feeding and milling, and maintenance activities.

The introduction of the new AHC10 training package provided an opportunity for MLA, the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA), TAFE NSW and Agrifood Skills Australia to work together to develop and accredit the Certificate III in Feedlot Operations course (ANC33311). As part of this process the content of the old RTE03 feedlot delivery was reviewed and new units and course structures were identified to better address the training requirements of the feedlot sector, resulting in a single stranded Certificate III course.

The current project builds on this previous development by developing new delivery and assessment materials for the new units of competence developed for ANC33311 and reworking the old training and assessment materials so the Feedlot Operations course is available for online delivery.

2 Objectives

The objective of the project was to make the Certificate III in Feedlot Operations (ANC 33311) course materials available online, by:

- Developing a suitable Moodle based learning environment to provide a platform for the delivery of the course resources in a topic based format.
- Developing learning and assessment resources for each unit of competence in formats suitable to use in the Moodle online environment.
- Loading resources into the Moodle platform and making them available for student access.
- Developing the documentation required for the three certificates and their contained units of competence to satisfy the Vocational Quality Framework (VQF) requirements for audit and compliance.

3 Methodology

The Certificate III in Feedlot Operations course contains 40 units of competence for which learning materials were developed. The process of making these available as online and flexible learning and assessment materials involved a number of steps:

Project initiation	In this first stage the key stakeholders initiated a continuation of previous work whereby the industry standard for feedlot employees, Certificate III in Feedlot Operations, could be further developed into an online course to make it easier and more flexible for industry uptake and delivery.
Industry consultation	The lead stakeholder, TAFE NSW - New England Institute, engaged in a process with key stakeholders to determine what the new course should deliver in terms of both content and method of delivery. This resulted in three streams being identified for potential students: Feeding & Milling, Feedlot Maintenance & Pen Riding.
Course mapping & design	The units of competence were segmented into deliverable topics by a project team. The team then strategically aligned topics back to the units of competence so that students complete topics relevant only to their enrolment stream.
Content development & review	Revision and conversion of existing topic material as well as development of new topic learning resources. Both of these steps involved conversion of paper-based learning resources to a Rich Media Adobe file format using Adobe Presenter so that learning materials could be accessed by students on a full variety of devices. Assessment tasks were then created for all topics.
Development of online delivery platform & flexible learning objects	The Moodle Learning Management System was chosen as the preferred platform for course delivery as it is the platform used by TAFE NSW. A structure for the course was designed and then tested on a Test Moodle platform before being populated with the learning resources and assessment tasks. Following completion of the successful trialling of the test platform, materials were then transferred to a live Moodle site for delivery.
Course validation	Mapping of topics back to units of competency and review of both assessments and topics was undertaken to validate that all components of the course were successfully migrated to the new platform.

4 Results

The project was successfully completed and delivered the following outcomes:

- An industry specific course for the Australian feedlot industry based on the Certificate III in Feedlot Operations (ANC33311)
- Flexible learning resources in Rich Media Adobe file format, by topic, for all units of competency in the qualification.
- Assessment tasks for each topic that can be completed by flexible and online delivery.
- An online delivery platform, Moodle, for the delivery of the course to the feedlot industry.

- A course that meets Australian Skills Quality Authority requirements for the delivery of a national accredited qualification.
- Documentation required to satisfy the Vocational Quality Framework requirements for audit and compliance for the three streams and their contained units of competence.

5 Conclusions

The project has developed and put in place the resources to deliver digital learning resources to the feedlot industry for the Certificate III in Feedlot Operations course. The opportunity now exists for those in the feedlot industry needing skills development in pen riding, feeding and milling, and feedlot maintenance, to access training that is relevant without the need to be absent from the workplace.

Previous industry efforts to develop a nationally accredited, industry relevant training package have been enhanced by incorporating the ability to deliver them through an online and flexible environment. Online and flexible delivery allows training to be effectively offered not just to larger feedlot operations but also to the smaller geographically isolated feedlots that employ small numbers of staff. Staggered training of individuals that progress at their own pace through the course also means that learning can be matched to an individual's circumstances.