



# final report

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## Delivery of Feedlot E-Newsletter

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## **Executive summary**

The Quarterly Feed e-newsletter was established by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) in consultation Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) as a new way of engaging with feedlot stakeholders across the beef supply chain.

A number of priority areas have been identified for MLA's Feedlot Research and Development (R&D) Program to 2020, and The Quarterly Feed updates feedlot stakeholders on current and completed feedlot R&D projects. The e-newsletter also promotes adoption of technologies and cattle management strategies; provides relevant grainfed marketing updates; and informs stakeholders of upcoming MLA and MLA-ALFA feedlot events.

The Quarterly Feed is distributed every three months, with approximately 3,500 subscribers currently receiving the e-newsletter.

Cox Inall was contracted to provide all content for the e-newsletter from June 2016 until June 2018, starting with the launch of the spring edition in September 2016 and concluding with the winter edition in June 2018. In that time, Cox Inall has delivered the eight contracted editions of The Quarterly Feed, working with MLA Feedlot Project Manager, Dr Joe McMeniman.

A summary of the content produced for each edition is contained below.

# 1 Results

## 1.1 2016-17 content

### 1.1.1 Spring 2016

- *Feedlot R&D in the spotlight* – scene setter story introducing readers to The Quarterly Feed
- *Backgrounding study targets BRD* – R&D examining the effects of backgrounding cattle with and without the use of vaccines to help tackle bovine respiratory disease (BRD), led by Associate Professor Paul Cusack
- *VIDEO: Measuring benefits of acclimation in feedlots* – R&D led by Dr Tony Batterham to assess and quantify the health and production benefits to feedlot cattle of using cattle handling methods known as acclimation
- *MLA's grainfed investment tops \$12.7 million* – how MLA is investing \$12.7m on behalf of grainfed cattle producers in 2016/17
- *Measuring the feedlot sector's greenhouse gas footprint* – world-first R&D looking at long-term measurements of all greenhouse gases, methane, nitrous oxide, and ammonia emissions from Australian beef feedlots, led by Professor Deli Chen
- *Market news feed* – latest feeder cattle market update
- *Events and publications* – summary of upcoming grainfed industry events and new MLA publication, *Evaluation of practices used to reduce the incidence of bovine respiratory disease in Australian feedlots*

### 1.1.2 Summer 2016-17

- *Plan ahead to manage heat stress* – tips from consulting nutritionist Dr Simone Holt to reduce the severity of heat stress
- *MLA R&D examines heat load impacts* – preliminary results from R&D investigating responses to high heat load in feedlot steers, led by Dr Gene Wijffels and Associate Professor John Gaughan
- *MLA-funded project examines antimicrobials* – work underway on the Principles of Antimicrobial Stewardship for the Australian feedlot industry
- *VIDEO: Automated sickness detection* – Feedlot researcher Dr Brad White talks about new MLA-funded research which involves the automated detection of the leading cause of sickness in Australian feedlot cattle
- *Market update* – feeder cattle market update
- *Hot off the press* – latest feedlot R&D published by MLA

### 1.1.3 Autumn 2017

- *Research targets groundbreaking BRD tests* – R&D into metabolomics to develop a tool to efficiently and objectively identify BRD, led by Associate Professor Luciano González
- *VIDEO: Testing immune strength of feeder cattle* – R&D led by Dr Brad Hine assessing the strength of the immune systems of cattle before they enter a feedlot
- *Antimicrobial stewardship program set to launch* – story on the impending launch of the antimicrobial stewardship guidelines for the feedlot industry

- *Clearing the air* – review of dust suppression in feedlots investigating the main sources of dust, and how to most effectively control the issue
- *Important guides to help manage extreme conditions* – release of the *Feedlot Design Manual* and the *Waste Management and Utilisation Manual*
- *What are the price trends for feeder cattle in 2017?* – feeder cattle market update

#### 1.1.4 Winter 2017

- *Bedding a boost at Rangers Valley* – Production and animal welfare benefits resulting from Rangers Valley Feedlot's decision to install woodchip bedding to boost the comfort of their long-fed cattle.
- VIDEO: *Antimicrobial stewardship explained* – Feedlot veterinarian, Dr Kev Sullivan, explains what an antimicrobial stewardship program means for Australia's lot feeders.
- *Scholarships up for grabs* – Feedlot industry representatives looking to enhance their leadership skills are encouraged to apply for three MLA-ALFA scholarships.
- *Project targets dag removal* – R&D into new enzyme systems to enable more efficient removal of dags from feedlot cattle
- *Best practice grain processing* – Best Practice Grain Processing Manual
- *Record numbers on feed* – feeder cattle market update
- *New feedlot publications* – four new reports and manuals related to industry R&D released by MLA

## 1.2 2017-18 content

### 1.2.1 Spring 2017

- *Project to test DEXA* – grainfed levies are helping fund a research project that will refine DEXA technology for the beef industry
- VIDEO: *Seaweed project targets methane emissions* – R&D trial supplementing cattle with low levels of freeze-dried seaweed to find practical, cost-effective methane reduction options, led by Dr Rob Kinley
- *How does heat impact meat quality?* – R&D exploring the relationship between heat stress and dark cutting rates in grainfed cattle, led by Dr Peter McGilchrist
- *NFAS changes on the way* – story supplied by ALFA explaining changes to the NFAS Rules and Standards
- *SMARTBEEF set for November* – preview of SMARTBEEF 2017 event
- *Lot feeding sector hits new highs* – feeder cattle market update

### 1.2.2 Summer 2017-18

- VIDEO + STORY: *New go-to guide on automatic weather stations* – release of the *Review of Automatic Weather Stations for cattle feedlots*, produced by Katestone Environmental. Interview with Katestone's Christine Killip

- *How does heat load affect feedlot cattle?* – findings of R&D into metabolic impacts of a heat load event on feedlot cattle, beyond the well-known physiological effects
- *Heat load model set to be re-evaluated* – R&D to re-evaluate the model used to predict climatic conditions and their impact on feedlot cattle in heat events
- *Australia's best grainfed MSA producers awarded* – overview of the winners of Most Outstanding Beef Producer – Grainfed, for each state and territory, presented as part of the 2017 MSA Excellence in Eating Quality Awards
- *Changes to feedlot accreditation scheme* – supplied by ALFA – updates to NFAS Rules and Standards
- *Lot feeding survey reveals new records* – feeder cattle market update

### 1.2.3 Autumn 2018

- *VIDEO + STORY: Automated bunk scanner a reality* – R&D into automation of feed bunk management and the development of a prototype sensor system to determine feed remaining in bunks
- *Induction review reveals valuable insights* – An extensive review of feedlot induction processes in Australia has found there is a positive value proposition for lot feeders in using more automated technology
- *New research targets feedlot returns* – an Australian first study exploring the effect of graded levels of woodchip on feedlot performance is one of two new projects MLA is supporting focused on boosting returns for feedlots – R&D into the effect of graded levels of woodchip on feedlot performance; and R&D into the efficacy of combination drenching cattle to control gastrointestinal parasites
- *Register now for nutrition and milling workshops* – preview of seven nutrition and milling workshops being held throughout Australia
- *NFAS changes now part of feedlot audit* – story contributed by ALFA – reminder that recently revised National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) Rules and Standards are taking full effect on 1 March 2018, and audits are now performed against the expanded Rules and Standards
- *December quarter decline for numbers on feed* – feeder cattle market update

### 1.2.4 Winter 2018

- *Research targets dark cutting* – R&D into the impact of lairage timing and duration on the meat colour of feedlot cattle, led by Bovine Dynamics
- *BRD test a step closer* – preliminary results of R&D into metabolomics to develop a tool to efficiently and objectively identify BRD, led by Associate Professor Luciano González
- *Lot feeders leading antimicrobial stewardship* – case study with Australian Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Mark Schipp, discussing the importance of the *Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidelines for the Australian Cattle Feedlot Industry*
- *Grain processing manual released* – release of the *Best practice grain processing manual for Australian feedlot cattle*
- *Feed grain price outlook* – impact of feed grain prices; latest feeder cattle market update