

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Feedlot animal welfare benchmarking

Summary:

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) in consultation with the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) is seeking MLA full applications from individuals, organisations or project teams with the capability to develop animal welfare benchmarking for the Australian feedlot industry.

Background:

Continuous improvement of animal welfare is essential for maintaining consumer and community support for grain-fed beef. The Australian feedlot industry has been extremely proactive in promoting animal welfare through numerous initiatives including:

- Endorsement of Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines for Cattle
- Animal Welfare elements of the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme
- ALFA accredited animal welfare officer training courses supported by MLA.
- Annual R&D investment in MLA projects in feedlot animal health and welfare
- Annual ALFA animal health workshops for training feedlot staff supported by MLA
- ALFA-MLA Euthanasia and Feedlot Best Practice Management – Pregnant Heifers Guidelines

Despite this engagement, continued support is required for feedlot staff to deliver positive animal welfare outcomes on feedlot. This project proposes to develop a framework for internal animal welfare benchmarking for the Australian feedlot industry.

Objectives:

- (1) Review major systems for animal welfare benchmarking in feedlot and relevant intensive livestock industries including their adoption rates, strength & weaknesses
- (2) Determine in consultation with ALFA and MLA the adoptable outcome for internal animal welfare benchmarking for the Australian feedlot industry.
- (3) Determine in consultation with ALFA and MLA the transparency of the system to wider industry and customers.
- (4) Determine the certification requirements in consultation with ALFA and MLA.
- (5) Consult industry, retailers and animal welfare experts for appropriate criteria for objective measurement of animal welfare.
- (6) Determine a refined list of measures that encompasses animal welfare requirements, addresses key consumer concerns and is science and evidence based.
- (7) Determine an index for meeting appropriate animal welfare on Australian feedlots
- (8) Pilot measures in six feedlot supply chains and recommend the final framework to industry.

Methodology:

It is envisioned that this project will involve extensive industry consultation.

An industry steering committee will be established prior to the experiments commencement consisting of independent animal welfare experts, grain-fed beef retailer, ALFA and MLA. Selection will be determined by a terms of reference to ensure its representation is skills based.

A series of workshops and meetings will occur to:

- Review major systems for animal welfare benchmarking in feedlot and relevant intensive livestock industries including their adoption rates, strength & weaknesses
- Determine the adoptable outcome for internal animal welfare benchmarking for the Australian feedlot industry.
- Determine the transparency of the system to wider industry and customers.
- Determine the certification requirements in consultation with ALFA and MLA.
- Consult industry, retailers and animal welfare experts for appropriate criteria for objective measurement of animal welfare.
- Determine a refined list of measures that encompasses animal welfare requirements, addresses key consumer concerns and is science and evidence based.
- Determine an index for meeting appropriate animal welfare on Australian feedlots
- Pilot measures in six feedlot supply chains and recommend the final framework to industry

Applicants should budget appropriately for travel to industry meetings and consultation. Meat & Livestock Australia will cover the venue fees, attendance fees of participants if required and catering for all industry workshops.

Process:

Applicants submit a **MLA Full Application** form. Proposals will be scored against the selection criteria set out in the Terms of Reference. Final project approval will be subject to contractual agreement between the applicant/s and MLA.

In particular, the MLA Full Application should detail:

1. Detail the approach that will be adopted to address the project objectives.
2. Detail the specific work activities proposed and timelines for their achievement.
3. Provide details of the information/data to be collected, collated and assessed and how these activities will be undertaken.
4. Include a detailed and fully costed budget that covers all the resources required to undertake the work, including details of basis for charging (daily fees, number of days, expenses, etc.).
5. Propose a payment schedule, taking account of the following:
 - Progress payments may be negotiated against project milestones if the size and timescale of the project warrant this. The proposal should propose milestones and payments if required.
 - A minimum of 20% of the project budget must be retained for payment against the final milestone.
 - Payment of fees will be upon MLA acceptance of the attainment of the project milestones.

Selection Criteria:

Applications will be reviewed by Meat & Livestock Australia, and selection of the successful proposal will be based on assessment against the following criteria:

1. Applications fulfilment of the methodology and terms of reference requirements of the project.

2. Quality of the methodology to achieve project objectives.
3. Quality of budget justification.
4. Value for money of application.
5. Impact of proposed output on feedlot industry profitability and/or sustainability
6. Delivery timeline.

Reporting Requirements:

The successful applicant will provide milestone reports (if required) and a final report giving full details of the results of the work. Milestone and final reports will be prepared in line with MLA report guidelines and delivered in Microsoft Word format.

In addition to MLA standard reports, the following will also be provided to MLA at the time of delivery of the Final report:

1. a copy of all project data, including meta-data
2. a Microsoft Power-point presentation summarizing key project outcomes

MLA encourages publication of project outcomes (upon MLA approval) in relevant scientific journals. Journal publication costs if required to be supported by MLA, should be included in the budget.

Timing:

The duration of the project must not exceed 1 years from project initiation to delivery of the revised final report. However, delivery timeline is a selection criterion at both stages of application assessment and speed to delivery of outcomes for commercial industry will be viewed positively.

Budget:

There is no set budget for the total project however, applicants should deliver a fully justified budget to achieve project objectives within a 1 year timeframe. Value for money is a selection criterion at both stages of application assessment.

Meetings:

The applicant needs to allow for two half-day presentations/meetings with the MLA Feedlot Project Manager, one at project inception and one at the stage of delivery of the final report. The MLA project manager will travel to the applicant in all cases.

The successful applicant shall report directly to Dr. Joseph McMeniman, MLA Feedlot Project Manager.

Confidentiality and IP:

Where further information is available which may assist the successful applicant in meeting the requirements of the project, MLA will provide such information to the successful applicant.

All data and cited references must be acknowledged appropriately in the final publication and it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure copyright laws are not breached.

The successful applicant will be required to enter into a standard agreement with MLA.

Conflict of interest:

Applicants, research teams or subcontractors with any potential conflicts of interest, should thoroughly outline these in this application, including how they propose to manage them, if applicable.

Project Proposal Submissions:

To access the **MLA Full application templates (Grain-Fed, Live Export & Goats)**, go to www.mla.com.au and follow the links to Research and Development, then Funding opportunities and Research organisation funding to download the applications.

MLA applications must be lodged electronically as Word document to: applications@mla.com.au

MLA Full Applications must be received by Tuesday 30th April, 2019 at 5pm (Queensland time).

Strict adherence to the time deadline for applications will occur. Applications received past the deadline will not be assessed. Applications not received in the standard MLA application template will not be assessed.

Further Information:

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