

# Terms of Reference

## Effect of offal defects on carcass characteristics, performance and health of feedlot cattle

### Summary:

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) in consultation with the Australian Lot Feeders' Association (ALFA) is seeking MLA preliminary applications from individuals, organisations or project teams with the capability to research the effect of offal defects on carcass characteristics, performance and health of feedlot cattle.

### Background:

Feedlot animal disease often manifests itself in defects in offal at slaughter. Clinical (detected) and sub-clinical (undetected) forms of disease can be observed as defects in the respiratory, cardio-vascular, renal, hepatic and gastro-intestinal systems at slaughter. Bovine respiratory disease for example can result in lung consolidation, abscess, and pleural adhesion.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest by abattoir supply chains in collecting offal defect data and passing this information back down the supply chain to feedlots and graziers. It is envisioned that this information will inform future research and development to accurately identify sick animals and also elicit change in animal health practices.

Little formal scientific research has occurred in the Australian feedlot industry to evaluate whether there is a positive value proposition to this practice. This project will examine the effect of offal defects on carcass characteristics, performance and health of feedlot cattle.

### Project Objectives:

- (1) Determine the effect of offal defect(s) on carcass characteristics, performance and health of feedlot cattle.
- (2) Determine the economic value of reducing offal defect(s) for the Australian feedlot beef supply chain ( i.e. on-farm, feedlot & processing)

### Methodology:

Whilst not limiting the capacity of the applicant to develop any particular methodology or technique it is envisioned that the methodology may include an assessment the following:

- Analysis of the effect of offal defects on carcass characteristics, performance and health of feedlot cattle.
- Veterinary pathology agreement with slaughter floor observations

Offal defects examined in feedlot cattle can result from either one or more causative disease(s). It is expected that the investigation will consider as many as practically possible dependant on the skills and interest of the applicant.

The methodology adopted must be scientifically robust and achievable within the defined project period to meet project objectives. Methodology presented in the MLA full application, must be of a standard and level of detail to be accepted into a leading scientific journal in the field of feedlot veterinary medicine or animal science. Applications must include the methodology utilised to grade the offal defect examined.

All applications must include a suitably qualified on-site project manager (MVSc, M.S. or Ph.D. qualified) to ensure that project methodology is followed on slaughter grading days. All applications are to outline a methodology for training and auditing of graders prior to formal scientific experiment commencement by a registered veterinarian or veterinary pathologist.

Prior to submitting the MLA Full application, the applicant must identify feedlot and abattoir collaborators if applicable and obtain their support for the MLA full application and methodology. Feedlot collaborators must be willing to make available and share electronic animal health treatment records and necropsy records for lots graded. Cost of offal purchase if required should be included in the budget.

**Process:**

The MLA feedlot program project application process has two stages:

**Stage 1** - Applicants submit a **preliminary application, utilising the MLA Preliminary Application form**, addressing the Terms of Reference. Proposals will be scored against the selection criteria set out in the Terms of Reference.

Preliminary applications must not exceed four (4) pages. MLA will acknowledge receipt of each application. Applicants will be advised in writing of the success or failure of their preliminary application.

**Stage 2** - Should your preliminary application be successful, MLA will invite you to submit a **full application, utilising the 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:

**Stage 1:**

1. Background of Proposed work
2. Outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project
3. Quality of Brief Project Design and Methods to achieve project objectives
4. Quality of Preliminary Budget
5. Value for Money of Preliminary Budget
6. Delivery Timeline

**Stage 2:**

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 600 word (maximum) magazine article with one high resolution image (>1MB file size)
3. 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 2 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 of delivery of outcomes for commercial industry will be viewed positively.

**Budget:**

Indicative budget for the FY18/19 financial year is \$100,000 AUD. There is no set budget for the total project however, applicants should deliver a fully justified budget to achieve project objectives. 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 Preliminary and Full application templates (Grain-Fed, Live Export & Goats), go to [www.mla.com.au](http://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 at either stage must be lodged electronically as Word document to: [applications@mla.com.au](mailto:applications@mla.com.au)

Stage 1 MLA Preliminary Applications must be received by Thursday 22nd March at 5pm (Queensland time).

Stage 2 MLA Full Applications must be received by Monday 21st of May at 5 pm (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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