

Terms of Reference

National Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines

Program of Work

Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) are investing in research, development and adoption (RD&A) initiatives that contribute to programs of work to increase the productivity, profitability and sustainability of the grass- and grain-fed beef, sheep and goat-meat sectors. Proposals are sought for enhancing this program of work.

Based on the previous model codes of practice, Animal Health Australia (AHA) developed the collection of Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines (AWSG). Stakeholder engagement included MLA, CSIRO, all peak industry bodies, AVA, RSPCA, all state/territory jurisdictions and the Commonwealth, Universities, national, state, and territory farmers' organisations and more, before undergoing a public consultation review that resulted in an estimated 75,000 public submissions. The intent of these documents is to standardise the principles of animal welfare nationally, and to provide a basis for legislation and industry best practice. To help ensure producers are acting within the law and in line with industry best practice to avoid the significant risks of failing to do so, awareness of the AWSG needs to be raised, and the documents made more easily accessible to livestock handlers, e.g. producers, transporters, sale yard and feedlot operators, and abattoir stockpersons.

Summary

The welfare of livestock is of growing concern to the community. Many animal welfare infringements in stock handling occur unintentionally, often through lack of information, or ignorance. The AWSG is a growing volume of information on the appropriate handling of livestock, the Standards being considered the "must dos" and the Guidelines the "should dos". The AWSG are in various stages of legislation in the different jurisdictions. There are AWSG for different livestock species and different stages of the supply chain (<http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/>). They need to be followed by anyone handling livestock, but awareness of their existence is low and access could be seen as obscure. State/territory differences in legislation, once the AWSG are enacted, need to be considered.

A print or electronic pocket-size version of a concise summary will go a long way towards raising awareness of, and compliance with, the AWSG. The lack of a nationally coordinated approach to the jurisdictional enactment of the AWSG will probably necessitate the periodical review and updating of this summary. This is likely to be more efficient in the electronic medium.

Priority

MLA is seeking preliminary Extension & Adoption proposals to address the following needs with regard to awareness of and compliance with the AWSG in the red meat industry:

- Undertake market research to determine user preferences for accessing information and implementing these compliance changes, such as the AWSG. This research will provide clear understanding of the differences between state and federal legislative requirements, industry and supply chain segments and demographics, and information suitable to underpin future adoption planning.
- Consult with Animal Health Australia (AHA), the Livestock Production Assurance Program (LPA), Beef/Sheep Sustainability Frameworks representatives, Processors, and other relevant stakeholders to source additional information regarding access and use of AWSG information
- According to results of research undertaken, design and develop a tool (pocket guide, app or

other) which will provide easy and appropriate access to the AWSG. This tool must be designed to enable ongoing continuous improvement and quality assurance. Make recommendations on best methods for building awareness and motivating producers to use this tool, and the most effective way to effect on-farm practice change.

- Make recommendations on the feasibility and design of an appropriate linked support system with ongoing capacity to manage the quality of materials/tools/medium and provide additional support in a unique evolving environment. This ongoing support system should have the capacity to become commercially sustainable.

A tool that provides ready access to the AWSG could enable objective assessment of awareness and engagement levels.

Scope

The work is national in scope although the applications and solutions may vary between jurisdictions and type of enterprise growing grass- and grain-fed cattle, sheep and goat-meat.

Collaborative teams across institutions are encouraged to apply to take advantage of complementary skills including research, development, adoption and expertise in the use of technologies.

Participation of producers and formal producer Innovation Networks is encouraged, especially in setting and reviewing the direction of research, development and adoption of practical, on-farm practices.

Confidentiality and intellectual property

Successful projects will be funded with sheepmeat and/or grassfed beef levies. MLA will also consider MDC applications outside of the specific terms of reference but consistent with the program objectives and provided that applicants are able to demonstrate how the project will contribute to industry impact.

Applicants must identify any background intellectual property (IP) they bring to the project.

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.

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.

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

MLA will share and discuss this proposal with producers, technical experts, other research organisations and research and development corporations. Please acknowledge this freedom to operate.

Deadline for submissions

Preliminary proposals must be received by MLA before 11.59pm (NSW time) Wednesday, 16 October 2019. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Use the preliminary proposal template to submit proposals electronically to MLA at:
projectcall@mla.com.au

Preliminary Proposals will be acknowledged and recorded on the MLA project information system. Applicants will be advised in writing of the success or failure of their Preliminary Proposal in January 2020.

Further information

If you have questions regarding these terms of reference, contact:

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