# **Quantifying and improving goat reproductive performance and reducing kid loss in Australian goat herds**

MDC Projects

**Purpose and background**

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is committed to partnering with industry partners and producer groups to improve business profitability and productivity.

The value of the Australian goatmeat exports has continued to demonstrate growth since, with substantial increases in value due to higher in carcase price and goat slaughter numbers. Goat meat production in Australia has tripled since 2001 without increases in average carcase weight. Hence, surplus goats and price are the main drivers of the increased industry value and therefore, reproduction is an important underlying factor limiting sustainable supply. Despite this, there is limited data on reproductive performance for commercial goat herds. To address this, MLA is calling for applications for MDC projects related to improving goat enterprise profitability and productivity through quantifying and improving goat reproductive performance and increasing kid turn-off percentages.

Projects may be conducted in a range of situations including, on research stations or on commercial properties and may deploy existing tools, technologies and management practices or develop a new approach to supporting improved reproductive performance and reduced kid loss. Demonstration of production and economic benefits, within the local environment is the desired outcome.

**Priority areas:**

Applicants should address one or more of the following priority areas.

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| **Category** | **Priority** |
| Benchmarking reproductive performance | 1. **Quantification of goat reproductive performance and kid loss**.   Applications against this terms of reference should collect data on key reproductive performance metrics which may include, but need not be limited to, the following:   * Doe conception rates * Foetuses conceived per doe (pregnancy scanning) * Kid survival * Doe survival * Maiden doe and kid survival   Applications that collect data over multiple years will be favourably assessed. |
| Kid loss reduction strategies | 1. Demonstration of the farm productivity and kid loss benefits of **pregnancy scanning and managing for litter size**. |
| 1. Examination of the sources of **reproductive wastage and determination of management strategies** to mitigate these sources. Focus areas could include:    1. Factors affecting fertility    2. Quantifying foetal losses levels and causes    3. Quantifying rates of kid loss due to predation |
| 1. Development of supporting resources and tools for goat producers: 2. Management packages of resources and tools the establish **weight and condition score targets for maidens and does**. 3. Producer resources and tools to support **self-replacing goat herds** |
|  | 1. The development of **sentinel** **herds** supported by producer demonstration herds aimed at: 2. Improving production and welfare focussed management options 3. Enabling industry to witness best management practice 4. Collecting baseline kid loss data and demonstrating how management practices are being used to mitigate kid loss. |

**Applications close on 20th October 2021** and applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant MLA Managers prior to submitting applications.

**See separate tender documents for further information and templates required to submit applications.**

**For further information**:

* Joe Gebbels, MLA Program Manager, Sheep & Goat Productivity Research & Development, Phone: 0407 002 928, email: jgebbels@mla.com.au