

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the costs and benefits of ceasing mulesing in prime lamb systems

Summary

Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) is seeking Preliminary Proposals from individuals, organisations or project teams with the capability to undertake research into the economics and practicalities of ceasing mulesing in prime lamb production systems.

Table: Key industry performance indicators addressed by this ToR

	MLA 2020	MISP 2020	SISP 2020
Pillar	Consumer and Community Support	Consumer and Community Support	
Priority / theme	Continuous improvement of the welfare of animals in our care	Welfare of the animals within our care	Wellbeing of the animals within our care
Imperative / activity / program		Continuous improvement of animal welfare / Minimising the impact of endemic disease	Continuous improvement of animal welfare / Minimising the impact of endemic disease
KPI	<p>Restrict % consumers limiting red meat consumption due to animal welfare concerns to 10%.</p> <p>Four new products including vaccines, diagnostic tests and tools to reduce the cost and welfare impact of endemic and emergency disease in Australia</p>	Increase in community support for industry animal welfare practices on 2015 baseline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and actively respond to community perceptions and concerns about sheep industry practices across the entire supply chain. • Achieve enhanced animal welfare outcomes through the adoption of consistent, science-based practices. • Undertake RD&E to reduce the risk of compromised wellbeing of sheep and develop enhanced husbandry and management procedures.

Background

MLA has a regional consultation framework for directing research, development and adoption (RD&A) investment for grassfed beef and sheepmeat levies. These producer panels have identified the following needs and gaps in the MLA R&D portfolio in the areas of health and welfare:

- Develop data on the productivity benefits of no mulesing.
- Research and develop management strategies and tactics to aid the selection of sheep that don't require mulesing, focusing on the management considerations and economics of traits correlated with flystrike (e.g. tail length/docking methods, fleece structure, breach attributes, etc.)

- Methods to preventing the need for mulesing by addressing the causes and prevention of scouring.
- Innovative solutions and novel delivery methods for internal and external parasite management.

Objective

Meat & Livestock Australia is seeking Preliminary Proposals to evaluate the barriers, incentives and benefits to moving prime lamb systems, including those with a Merino ewe base, to mulesing free.

Scope

There is a need for a practical group of field based studies that quantify the costs and gains associated with moving prime lamb system to mulesing free. What are the drivers to continue mulesing prime lamb mothers and what is needed for them to move to mulesing-free. The evaluation will need to consider Sheep EBVs for breech cover, dag score, wrinkle, the FlyBoss Tools, the optimum use of chemicals and whole farm management. Consideration must also be given to the susceptibility of ewes to scouring during southern winters, recommendations made on how to address this problem in prime lamb production and whether further work needs to be done in this space.

Tail length is considered a management issue and although a genetic solution is possible it is outside scope for this work.

Output/s

A publishable final report and advisory/extension information to enable those in the prime lamb supply chain to eliminate mulesing.

Outcome/s

Tools to enable the rapid phasing out of mulesing from prime lamb production systems.

Proposed budget and timeframe

Proposals will be considered on their merits and the costs compared with the deliverables to give a value for money estimate. MLA envisage that the work will be done on producer properties and have a strong desk based and economic strands rather than requiring new research.

Confidentiality and intellectual property

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 6.00pm (NSW time) Monday, 30 October 2017. 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 2018.

Further information

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

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