

## Terms of Reference

### *Lifetime Animal Wellbeing Index: Scope and Governance project.*

#### Summary

Holistic consideration of the animal production process (from paddock to plate) makes it clear that “health” and “welfare” are intricately linked, and that a more appropriate mindset is the concept of *animal wellbeing*. Market research indicates that the community and red meat consumers demand that livestock are properly cared for. This sentiment is captured in Red Meat 2030 where a key priority is setting the standard for world class animal health, welfare, biosecurity and production practices.

It is expected that increasingly, statements about animal wellbeing should be underpinned by objective evidence, gathered from the observation of a range of physiological and behavioural parameters. A Lifetime Animal Wellbeing Index (LAWI) that takes into account all factors influencing an animal’s lifetime wellbeing would underpin Australia’s global positioning as a leader in animal welfare much like MSA has done with eating quality.

It is MLA’s aim to work with a consortium of stakeholders to explore the concept of developing a LAWI that measures an individual animal’s lifetime wellbeing, across all parts of the supply chain. It is anticipated that at the end of the animal’s life a metric for how well the animal has lived and been managed will be derived and value assigned to that metric, such that producers are rewarded for the quality of an animal’s carcass as well as how well it has lived.

The model and algorithms for the LAWI should be sufficiently robust to allow for simple and practical measures to be captured at the end of an animal’s life so as to demonstrate and capture value (triple bottom line) across the supply chain. Additionally, the LAWI must allow and account for all Australian beef and lamb production enterprises of all sizes in different parts of the supply chain and in different parts of Australia.

#### ***Program of work and deliverables***

MLA is calling on responses from individuals, but preferably established research groups with appropriate track records, to deliver an initial LAWI framework by **15 March 2022**. This must include the following:

- A comprehensive and extensive (global) review of similar indexes, standards, or assurance schemes, to act as a foundation for the development of this LAWI. Strengths and weaknesses of all existing programs need to be clearly articulated.
- Define and describe the value proposition and cost benefit analysis for each part of the red meat supply chain.

- Recommendation of a governance structure to oversee all phases of the delivery of a LAWI. Options include but are not limited to a strategic partnership, grants, center of excellence, or similar collaborative consortium model.
- Definition and outline of the programs of work to be addressed to enable successful delivery of a LAWI. This must include at a minimum: objective animal measures during the animal's life; post slaughter measures; on and off animal technological opportunities; physiological and behavioural measures; data platforms and management; retail and consumer buy-in delivery pathways.
- A recommended pathway for development that may include a phased approach whereby a LAWI model could be implemented but then built on as new research and/or metrics become available for inclusions. Appropriate go/no go points where industry, through appropriate consultation frameworks, should be considered.
- A timeline and basic cost estimation for pathway to development of a LAWI and the likely operational costs for delivery and identification of funding opportunities/ partnership opportunities to leverage MDC funding.
- A bringing together of all stakeholders (workshop/s) to socialise all possible avenues and ideas that may contribute to the design and implementation of a LAWI. It is anticipated that this will include deliverers of the appropriate research, representatives from industry and appropriate government agencies.

## Scope

MLA Donor Company applications will be considered favourably (<https://www.mla.com.au/about-mla/what-we-do/mla-donor-company/>).

The principal beneficiaries of this work will be all red meat producers. Collaborative teams across institutions are encouraged to apply to take advantage of complementary skills including research, development, adoption and extension expertise. Participation of producers and formal producer networks is encouraged in shaping the scope of the LAWI.

## Confidentiality and intellectual property

The successful applicant will be required to enter into a standard agreement with MLA and also adhere to confidentiality agreements as deemed necessary by MLA. 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.

MLA may 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

Proposals must be received by MLA before 11.59pm (NSW time) 24 September 2021. Late proposals will not be accepted. Use the preliminary proposal template to submit proposals electronically to MLA at:

[projectcall@mla.com.au](mailto:projectcall@mla.com.au)

[ccmlaurence@mla.com.au](mailto:ccmlaurence@mla.com.au)

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 Proposal in October 2021.

The submission must include:

- A methodology for delivering the *Program of Work*
- A list of personnel involved and what they will bring to the project
- An articulation of the strengths of the respondents' organization and how they are best placed to deliver the *Program*
- An indicative timeline for the project and description of milestones
- A detailed budget

### **Further information**

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

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