

## Early detection of emerging and exotic diseases in sheep and goats

DPI Animal Health staff will investigate cases of death and disease in sheep and goats found to be ill or dead at abattoirs and saleyards. Necropsies will be performed to determine the cause of death.

The project will:

- improve emergency animal disease preparedness through early detection and diagnosis of disease
- provide a better understanding of the occurrence of diseases presenting at abattoirs and saleyards
- provide a better knowledge of the distribution of sheep and goat disease across Victoria
- potentially decrease mortalities and improve animal welfare at and during transportation to saleyards and abattoirs
- improve communications between the DPI and abattoir and saleyard management and staff.



## Competitive advantage for Victoria's livestock industries

These projects will deliver a range of economic and social benefits to industry and the community including:

- a secure high quality food supply
- increased productivity
- export growth through improved access to markets
- improved detection of exotic and new diseases
- improved detection and management of endemic disease
- good welfare for livestock.

If you would like to receive this information/publication in an accessible format (such as large print or audio) please call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186, TTY 1800 122 969, or email [customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:customer.service@dpi.vic.gov.au).

Published by the Department of Primary Industries  
Farm Services Victoria, April 2010.

© The State of Victoria 2010.

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the Department of Primary Industries  
1 Spring Street, Melbourne 3000.

ISBN: 978-1-74217-644-4 (print)  
ISBN: 978-1-74217-645-1 (online)

### Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

For more information about DPI go to [www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au)  
or phone the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.



# Victorian livestock health surveillance projects

66/LS/0410

# Maintaining competitive advantage for Victoria's livestock industries

Victoria's livestock industries have an excellent animal health status, but there is a need for on-going surveillance to ensure that significant diseases that could damage trade, public health or productivity are detected early and contained quickly. With this in mind, four new disease surveillance projects have been launched with the support of the Victorian sheep and goat industries.

These projects will run over a period of three years and will build a strong relationship between DPI and the farming community.

Endemic disease remains a problem for the livestock industries; the projects described in this pamphlet will also assist in identifying endemic diseases for which further research or improved management is needed.



## Knackery surveillance project

This project will be undertaken at four knackeries across Victoria. DPI Animal Health staff will conduct necropsies on a sample of cattle processed at knackeries to determine the cause of death.

This information will:

- identify the major causes of wastage in cattle in Victoria
- provide further evidence to support claims of 'proof of freedom' from certain diseases
- improve early detection of exotic and new diseases
- assist in the training of DPI Animal Health staff in gross pathology.

## Sentinel flock project

This project will monitor production and productivity on 20 representative sheep flocks and goat herds throughout Victoria. The project aims to collect and collate information on the causes and prevalence of death and disease in sheep flocks and goat herds and to study the impact that these losses have on production systems.

DPI Animal Health and Meat and Wool Staff will work with sentinel flocks to:

- perform annual pre-joining assessment of rams
- investigate causes of livestock death
- establish trace element status of the flock or herd
- perform drench resistance tests
- monitor worm egg counts
- ultrasound scan, weigh and condition score ewes.

## Lamb and kid mortality surveillance project

The sheep and goat industries face significant losses due to lamb and kid mortality. DPI is seeking sheep flocks and goat herds experiencing deaths in older lambs or kids. The objective of the project is to provide an accurate report on the causes of these losses with recommendations on what can be done to improve survival of older lambs and kids.

The project aims to investigate 200 mortality events in older lambs and kids (aged from two weeks to two weeks post-weaning) each year. DPI Animal Health staff and private veterinary practitioners are able to conduct a full investigation of all reported cases of lamb and kid mortality. All laboratory services for this project will be free of charge to producers, and DPI staff will not charge for their services. The investigation will include collection of a history, post mortem examination of recently dead or moribund lambs/kids, laboratory testing (where appropriate) and reporting findings to the producer. Up to three freshly dead or moribund lambs/kids will be sampled per visit.

By improving our understanding of the causes of mortality in older lambs and kids and implementing appropriate management measures, producers can potentially increase farm productivity and profitability.

**Sheep and goat producers are encouraged to report lamb and kid deaths to their local DPI Animal Health staff, or their private veterinarian, for investigation.**

