

RURAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFIT PROGRAM**MEDIA RELEASE**

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Improving animal health feedback to producers

A large project aiming to improve the ability of producers to monitor disease prevalence in their livestock, and make informed on-farm decisions to manage the health status and improve productivity and profitability is nearing completion of its first stage.

The first stage of this project involves the development of business cases across the beef, goatmeat, pork and sheepmeat supply chains to demonstrate the value of recording and reporting carcase and offal animal health information by processors to producers. Opportunities for consistent reporting of this information at slaughter, the feedback of this data to producers, and the development of national species-specific standards to enable consistent and reliable carcase data collection are being quantified.

Stakeholder engagement forums, including an online forum, will be conducted during March and April 2017 to generate industry awareness of this project and ensure all activities and proposed outcomes are industry driven.

Carcases and offal are routinely inspected in Australian abattoirs to ensure that the carcase, and its associated carcase parts, are fit for human consumption. “While it is a legal requirement for producers and regulators to be advised when a carcase is fully condemned, there are no such requirements for the recording and reporting of reasons for partial condemnation information to producers and regulators,” said Ms Heather Channon, APL’s Acting General Manager, Research and Innovation.

“It is important that producers are able to be provided this information to improve on farm practices and to implement or adapt preventative treatments to ensure maximum carcase yield,” Ms Channon said.

Standardising the recording and reporting framework to document the causes of total and partial condemnation is necessary to ensure that consistent animal health information is received by producers, regardless of which processor slaughters their stock. This information will help producers, together with support from their veterinarian where applicable, change herd health programs, reduce disease prevalence, improve growth efficiency and optimise animal welfare. The Australian meat sector may also support the use of this data to demonstrate the health status of Australian beef, goatmeat, pork and sheepmeat for market access purposes.

This project has been funded under the Commonwealth’s Rural Research and Development for Profit program and is being conducted in partnership with Meat & Livestock Australia, Australian Meat Processor Corporation, the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and Agriculture Victoria (AgVic). The project will run until June 2020.

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