

Germplasm Gazette

News on trade in ruminant reproductive material



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Slick genes	1
ReproHub update	1
Farewell - Skye Fruean	2
IETS delegation Fort Worth January 2025	2
Welcome - Stephen Jagoe ..	3
HLB Imports team update	3
China international delegation February 2025	4
Welcome - Madeleine Rowe	4

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Slick genes

Export news



Fig 1: DNA. Source: Shutterstock— Creative Commons

The Slick gene in Holsteins has been welcomed by our overseas clients. In climates that are particularly humid or warm, the cattle appear to be performing better and becoming less stressed. This is important not only from a production point of view, but a huge leap in animal husbandry as well. Animals who are less stressed by heat are happier and that is great for everybody. Some of the RGTAG groups are already collecting Slick coated bulls for interested international customers. The demand will continue to grow exponentially.

ReproHub update

Export news

Indonesia: On 26 February, the ReproHub presented to the DAFF Minister Counsellor designate, Mr Andrew O'Sullivan, who will be posted to Jakarta. The Minister-Counsellor is aware of RGTAG's interest in Indonesia and hopes to advance this during his term.

Accreditation: The ReproHub wishes to remind germplasm export centres of their responsibility to contact their regional DAFF office to schedule their annual audits for export accreditation. Audits should be conducted well before the expiry period of the current period of accreditation. Failure to do so may jeopardise export accreditation.

TRACE: The TRACE system will be sporting a refreshed look in the coming months. Additionally, the method of login will incorporate the MyID authentication system currently used by other Australian Government services. This is to ensure greater security and integrity of information provided to the Department. It is expected these changes will be implemented in the middle of 2025. Updates will be sent out with further details by the ReproHub and TRACE team.

Egg-based diluents: A reminder to centres utilising egg-based semen diluents, please be mindful of importing country restrictions in relation to egg products as per the current HPAI outbreak in Victoria.



Fig 2: TRACE logo. Source: DAFF

Argentina: Note recent changes to the Argentina bovine embryo conditions on MICoR. ETVDs have been updated to reflect these.

Farewell - Skye Fruean

Import and export news



Fig 3: Skye Fruean. Source: DAFF

Many of you will be familiar with Dr Skye Fruean in her role as Principal Veterinary Officer leading the ruminant germplasm team at DAFF in Canberra. Skye transitioned from her Principal Veterinary Officer role remotely based in Cairns to her new and exciting leadership role as the Chief Veterinary Officer of South Australia in March 2025. She was involved in ensuring the biosecurity risks of importing genetic material into Australia were minimised and eased the export of genetic material sourced from Australian livestock to overseas markets. In addition to providing extensive leadership and support to the DAFF ruminant germplasm team and the ruminant live animal team, she was a key part of the hosting of several international delegations.

Skye started with DAFF in mid-2010 and has worked in several teams within the DAFF biosecurity group. She spent considerable time in the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) and its Animal health Surveillance Team which provides an early warning system for exotic diseases entering Northern Australia. Skye was an active participant in the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS) Health and Safety Advisory Committees (HASAC) and the QUADS Germplasm Alliance with UK/USA/Canada/NZ counterparts to ensure Australia's point of view was put forward during technical discussions on the challenges and new technologies within the industry.

We are sure that the RGTAG community join us in wishing Skye every success in her new venture in South Australia and appreciate the effort she has put in to support the Australian germplasm industry.

IETS delegation Fort Worth January 2025

Import and export news

Two senior veterinary officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) braved northern hemisphere blizzards and snowstorms to provide Australia's voice at the annual International Embryo Technology Society (IETS) Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HASAC) meetings. Meetings occurred from January 17 to 22 in Fort Worth, Texas, USA.

The theme of this year's IETS meeting was 'Emerging technologies for healthy reproduction and sustainability'. Australia currently chairs the Regulatory subcommittee (2023-2027) and is an active participant of the Research, Emerging Technologies, Forms and Certificates and Manual subcommittees of HASAC.

New business for 2025 includes a MoU between IETS and WOA of which Australia will act as one of two liaison points. Also progressed were epidemiological studies to support recategorization of diseases which will inform international trade standards, a welfare review of artificial reproductive technologies and the ongoing evaluation of rapidly emerging IVF technologies to ensure transboundary safety.

Australian representation at IETS is important because the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) takes technical direction from IETS when considering livestock embryo international trade standards. It is also important that Australia attend in order to participate in the process of reducing biosecurity risk while facilitating trade. In between the annual physical meeting, DAFF staff attend regular on-line meetings of HASAC that continue to develop standards relating to the embryo transfer industry. Attendance at these meetings ensures that Australian interests are heard and understood. Australia has been an active member of IETS annual meetings since 2010.



Fig 4: IETS 51st Annual conference. Source: www.iets.org

Welcome - Stephen Jagoe

Import and export news

Stephen Jagoe commenced as a Veterinary Officer in LZA in February and will support the team in biosecurity policy in the germplasm area.



Stephen has had a long career in veterinary practice with the previous 24 years spent at Warrnambool in western Victoria. As a director and

Fig 5 : Stephen Jagoe. Source: DAFF

Senior Veterinarian at a large mixed animal clinic he concentrated on cattle medicine and had particular interests in cattle reproduction and nutrition. He was an advisor for the In Calf, Countdown 2020 and Transition Cow Management programs of Dairy Australia, and co-developed the Heifers on Target program for Dairy Australia. He was also involved in a big project to provide high quality animal health and fertility data to Dairy Industry Centralised Database.

Stephen graduated from Sydney University and has completed a Masters in Veterinary Science (Dairy Medicine and Production) at Melbourne University. He is a member of the Cattle Chapter of the Australia New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists and a long-standing member of Australian Cattle Veterinarians. As well as practicing at Warrnambool, Stephen was a District Veterinarian based at Bega for 12 years and commenced practice working beneath the beautiful Illawarra escarpment based at Gerringong.

Stephen is now based in Melbourne and hopes his experience will assist a thriving Australian genetics industry to send its products to many markets around the world.

Outside of work he enjoys discovering the attractions of Melbourne, and goes for an occasional sail in Port Phillip Bay.

Horses, Livestock and Bird Imports team update

Import news

The Horse, Livestock and Bird Imports team have had a busy and productive end to 2024 and start to 2025. The team implemented several changes to import conditions for ruminant semen and embryos, ensuring smoother import processes while maintaining strong biosecurity standards, including:

Updating Johne's disease conditions for ovine and caprine semen from Canada, the EU, the USA and the UK to remove testing requirements and support certification of flock/herd freedom in approved countries where Johne's disease is not 'officially' reported.

Adding RT-PCR as a testing option for bovine pestivirus (bovine viral diarrhoea virus) for in vivo derived bovine embryos from the United Kingdom.

Adding Hydrogen peroxide $\geq 0.1\%$ (e.g. Prevail/Rescue) as an option for shipping container disinfection for ruminant semen and embryo imports.

Permitting either a USDA-APHIS approved veterinarian or a USDA official government veterinarian to seal shipping containers for bovine semen and embryos imported from the USA.

The team has started publishing BICON import permit conditions in the same format as formally agreed health certificates from exporting countries, where possible. This initiative will boost confidence among exporters and importers by ensuring certification aligns with Australia's import conditions. Additionally, it will streamline the document assessment process, significantly reducing the time required for pre-export and border clearance document assessments.

Following recent Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks in Germany, Hungary, and Slovakia, the team collaborated closely with the Animal Biosecurity Branch to swiftly update import conditions in response to the increased biosecurity risk. Impacted permit holders were promptly informed of these changes. Additional restriction dates for imported ruminant semen and embryos from these countries have been added to the import conditions. However, semen and embryos collected prior to these dates may still be imported, provided all other import conditions are met. For any questions or general assistance with ruminant germplasm import conditions and consignments, please contact the Horse, Livestock, and Bird Imports team at reproimports@aff.gov.au.



Fig 6 : Europe map. Source: google maps

The team looks forward to working with Australian ruminant genetics importers throughout 2025 and is committed to providing their ongoing support and expertise.

China international delegation February 2025

Export news

DAFF hosted four government officials from Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China (MARA) and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) from 19 February to 27 February 2025. The purpose of the visit was to facilitate the import of Australian genetic material into China after a 5-year hiatus. The visit also served to demonstrate the strength of the National Arbovirus Monitoring System (NAMP) virus zoning which supports both germplasm and live animal trade.

The delegation undertook a busy schedule including visiting Agriculture House in Canberra to learn about Australia's Animal Health System then travelling to Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) to gain a more in-depth understanding of NAMP. It also audited multiple semen and embryo collection centres. The visit concluded with meetings at the ReproHub in Moonee Ponds.

Following the delegation's visit, China has now added the germplasm centres to its official registration list for export. Thanks go to the many DAFF, NAMP, EMAI and Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) staff involved in meeting and presenting to the Chinese delegates, and thanks also to the strong and enthusiastic support provided by the artificial breeding companies involved in the audits.



Fig 7: Opening meeting delegation attendees. Source: DAFF

Welcome - Madeleine Rowe

Import news

The Horse, Livestock and Bird Imports team welcomed a new Veterinary Officer in April 2025. Dr Madeleine Rowe joins us following a role in DAFF's Animal Welfare Branch where she contributed to updates to the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) and provided technical advice to stakeholders on domestic livestock and animal welfare issues. She also has extensive experience in clinical veterinary practice, most recently focussed on avian medicine and surgery. Madeleine (Maddie) will be working with Dr Kym Russell and Dr Grace Packer in the reproductive material imports team.