

# Germplasm Gazette

News on trade in Animal Reproductive Material



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## Opportunities in Mexico

### Export News

Authorities in Mexico are embarking on major projects to improve the quality of Mexico's livestock, and grow their national herds and flocks. As a result there is significant interest in importing cattle, sheep and goat semen, and embryos from Australia.

State Agriculture officials in Nuevo León in northern Mexico have previously imported Australian ruminant genetics and are very happy with the results. They are now interested in importing a range of ruminant genetic material, to support agricultural improvement programs. They are planning to establish goat and possibly sheep dairies and are specifically interested in dairy breeds that would be suitable for Nuevo León's mostly semi-arid climate. Officials have also expressed an interest in importing Boer goat and black and white Dorper sheep genetics. And are keen to hear about genetics available for other small ruminant breeds and tick resistant cattle, specifically Droughtmaster cattle.

In addition, Mexico's federal government has committed to increasing the size and productivity of the national cattle herd, primarily through the import of live cattle, as well as semen and embryos. While the program is still being developed, agricultural officials are interested in seeing what Australia has to offer, particularly in dairy cattle suited to tropical areas.

Any interested exporters can email the department's Agriculture Counsellor in Mexico, Dr Kate Makin - [kate.makin@dfat.gov.au](mailto:kate.makin@dfat.gov.au).

## Repro hub Staffing Update

Earlier this year Peter Finnin commenced in a new role as Assistant Secretary, Post Entry Quarantine. Peter worked in the Melbourne office for over ten years and was integral to the establishment of the repro hub. Prior to leaving VEMS Peter was offline for several months establishing the Independent Observer section. This was an unplanned move following the then Minister for Agriculture's announcement that independent observers would accompany all livestock exports by sea. In addition to his promotion to Assistant Secretary Peter is also currently Australia's Accredited Delegate to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) while Dr Mark Schipp, Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer, serves his 3 year term as President of the OIE. Peter recently represented Australia at the OIE General Session in Paris.

Currently the Principal Veterinary Officer position is filled by Leah Wells who commenced in with VEMS in the Melbourne office last year after transferring from the Live Animal Export Branch in Canberra. Claudia Lin is currently acting as the Senior Veterinary Officer.

Daniel Kwiatkowski will also be leaving the repro hub shortly. Daniel has worked with repro hub for the past three years and will be well known to many of you. We are pleased that Daniel will still be working for the department in the cargo inspection area.

There have also been several new veterinary officers commence in the Melbourne office who have been training in the assessment of germplasm consignments. These additional veterinary staff will assist with processing of germplasm NOIs increasing the capability of the repro hub. Ongoing recruitment in Melbourne means we expect more staff change notices for you shortly.

## Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group- RGTAG's Flag

In April the RGTAG Interim Committee met with the Department and agreed to a list of priorities that need resolving by the Department to facilitate export of ruminant germplasm on a country by county basis. A key priority identified included the organisation of the logistics to facilitate accreditation and reaccreditation of centres wanting export to China, this is due to occur next year. A number of prospective RGTAG members also participated in this meeting.

The Interim Committee have finalised the Constitution for the Group (previously circulated to Gazette receivers for comment), and agreed to proceed to seek membership. Initial membership costs are:

**Import/export centres** - \$500

**Breeders** - \$200

Financial members will be eligible to nominate candidates for the Committee and elect Committee members if nomination exceed available positions. The industry positions on the Committee are Northern Beef, Southern Beef, Dairy, Sheep, Goat, and Embryo Transfer.

The next RGTAG Interim Committee meeting is scheduled for June 13, in Sydney. If you would like to attend this meeting or enquire about membership please let Stephen Carroll ([stephen@nhia.org.au](mailto:stephen@nhia.org.au)) know.

## Two shakes of a lambs tail

RGTAG meeting (all welcome to attend) on 13 June 2019, Sydney Australia



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## 2019 export of ruminant germplasm

### Export News

During the period January to April 2019 the repro hub processed 98 consignments of reproductive material to 28 different markets.

The range of commodities included ovine and bovine semen and embryos, murine semen and embryos, equine semen, porcine semen, canine semen and caprine semen. The biggest markets were the USA, New Zealand, Germany, Canada and China.

Full details are available on the department's website: <http://agriculture.gov.au/export/controlled-goods/live-animals/live-animal-export-statistics/reproductive-material-exports>

## Canada in country verification visit

### Import News

In June 2019 departmental staff will conduct an in-country verification visit of Canada to support negotiations with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for bovine in-vitro embryos from Canada to Australia. The visit will focus on the management and surveillance of Bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis and bluetongue\*.

Bovine brucellosis (*B. abortus*) and Bovine tuberculosis are diseases of concern for Australia. In 1979 a joint initiative by industry, state and federal governments formed the 'National Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign'. This program was extensive and took nearly 20 years to achieve eradication of *B. abortus* and 35 years for freedom from *M. bovis*. Maintaining this status is a priority when considering trade. In vitro produced embryos are a risk for *B. abortus* oocyte contamination when collecting using the ovum pickup technique. *M. bovis* is a risk as not enough studies have been done to draw any conclusions. For these reasons current import conditions stipulate country of zone freedom is required.

Verification that country freedom, or a countries declared zone freedom, provides an adequate level of protection is essential

considering that the consequences of introduction would be profound socially, economically and politically with many of our export markets having also eradicated brucellosis.

Although some strains of bluetongue virus (BTV) already exist in Australia exotic strains (BTV-8) could be introduced by movement of germplasm. The economic costs of bluetongue would depend on many factors, including the virus virulence with costs due to control measures, production losses and export market effects. Sheep would more likely to be clinically affected by an outbreak, however, trade impacts could also affect the goat and cattle industries. Currently there is no evidence that IETS washing and trypsin treatment can remove BTV from bovine in vitro produced embryos with one recent study demonstrating that IETS washing and trypsin treatment failed to remove BTV-8 from bovine in vitro produced embryos.

Current import conditions require testing, country or seasonal freedom at least 60 days prior to, and at the time of, collection of oocytes.

[\*Australia recognises Canada as a country seasonally free from BTV without testing between 1 January and 15 May, except the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia].

## Market access priorities for the department

From the previous RGTAG meeting the following has been identified to the Department of Agriculture as high priorities to progress for industry:

**China-** Bovine, Ovine semen and embryos;

**Kazakhstan-** Ovine semen and embryos;

**Paraguay-** Bovine embryos;

**Peru-** Bovine, Ovine semen and embryos;

**South Africa-** Bovine semen and embryos;

**Thailand-** Bovine, Ovine, Caprine semen and embryos;

**Uruguay-** Ovine semen and embryos.



## SNAPSHOT: GERMPLASM EXPORT DATA JANUARY TO APRIL 2019

