

# Germplasm Gazette

## News on trade in ruminant reproductive material



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

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Is there anything you would like to know more about or read in the Gazette? If so, please email [corrie.croton@aff.gov.au](mailto:corrie.croton@aff.gov.au)

### Chile SAG germplasm systems accreditation success

#### Export news



Figure 1: SAG delegation with Australian representatives. Source: DAFF

On May 7 to May 14, 2023 a delegation from Chile's Livestock Protection Division Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero (SAG) along with representatives from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) visited the Melbourne Repro-Hub (the operational centre for all germplasm import and export), three germplasm centers accredited for export to Chile to cover bovine, ovine and caprine germplasm, and a major laboratory centre.

This was to verify the Australian Government's inspection, approval, control and supervision system for ruminant germplasm establishments. It thus fulfils the requirements for on-site verification of sanitary conditions and management of Australian centres by SAG as per SAG's legal framework.

SAG has released a favourable report and found that these systems were in compliance with the relevant parts of its laws (SAG Resolution No 1105/2021). So SAG will delegate the authorisation of Australian establishments – exporting ruminant genetics to Chile – to the Australian Government.

This successful systems recognition by Chile of Australian bovine, ovine, and caprine germplasm export mean that Chilean audits of these DAFF accredited centres will no longer be required.

The department would like to thank everyone involved.

### Reviewing audits of artificial breeding centres

#### Export news

The Repro Hub will be looking to improve our audit framework, such as how corrective action responses are issued and closed off. Feedback from the recent systems audit from the Chile competent authority will also inform the areas for improvement, so watch this space.

The focus of the auditors from Chile was traceability, record keeping, and how department auditors address non-compliance. Industry will be consulted in due course. We are aiming to improve and strengthen our auditing system so we can provide confidence to competent authorities and thereby improve market access, so are looking for industry cooperation in this area.

### Feedback please on the standardisation of small ruminant straw labelling

#### Export news

The Repro Hub proposed to the germplasm industry during the RGATG meeting on 6 March 2023 to standardise the small ruminant straw labelling. This was following market access issues due to inconsistent or unclear straw labelling.

Please provide any feedback on this issue to [sara@nhia.org.au](mailto:sara@nhia.org.au)

## Feedback please on IETS disease categorisation

### Export news

The International Embryo Technology Society (IETS) is currently reviewing pathogens and diseases of concern for embryos for international trade which will inform the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Currently, pathogens and diseases are listed by WOAH in one of four categories that influences measures needed for international trade. This system has been reviewed and simplified so that now there are only three categories

These categories are:

Category 1	No risk
Category 2	Unknown risk
Category 3	Risk

However the IETS Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HASAC) Research Subcommittee is finding that most pathogens fall into the new category 2 (unknown risk) due to lack of available research.

Consequently, the IETS HASAC Research Subcommittee is planning to prioritise 3-4 pathogens for further research and review.

Please email [andrea@aff.gov.au](mailto:andrea@aff.gov.au) to let us know your main embryo pathogen or disease of concern for export.

## Feedback please on animal welfare

### Export and import news

The IETS would like to take stock of current welfare practices and would be grateful you could assist by filling out the [Practice in biotechnology of reproduction and animal welfare](#) questionnaire.

This survey is designed to obtain feedback on some elements of the five freedoms of animal welfare (good feeding, protection against extreme physical conditions, good health, expression of normal behavior and absence of fear and distress) that may be relevant to reproduction activities

It is part of a veterinary thesis from the Veterinary School of Maisons Alfort, France in collaboration with IETS. All the information will be treated anonymously.

The questionnaire should take about 20 minutes to complete.

## RGTAG country priority list

### Export news

Following discussion at the the most recent Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group (RGTAG) face to face meeting, countries currently on the RGTAG priority list are as follows:

Priority	Countries
Urgent	India, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, USA
High	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Thailand
Medium	Ecuador, Philippines, Switzerland, Vietnam
Low	Chile, Kenya, Mexico

Table 1: RGTAG country priority list. Source: DAFF

If you want another market added, please join RGTAG by contacting [sara@nhia.org.au](mailto:sara@nhia.org.au)

## Import Reproductive Material Inspections – WCBM

### Import news

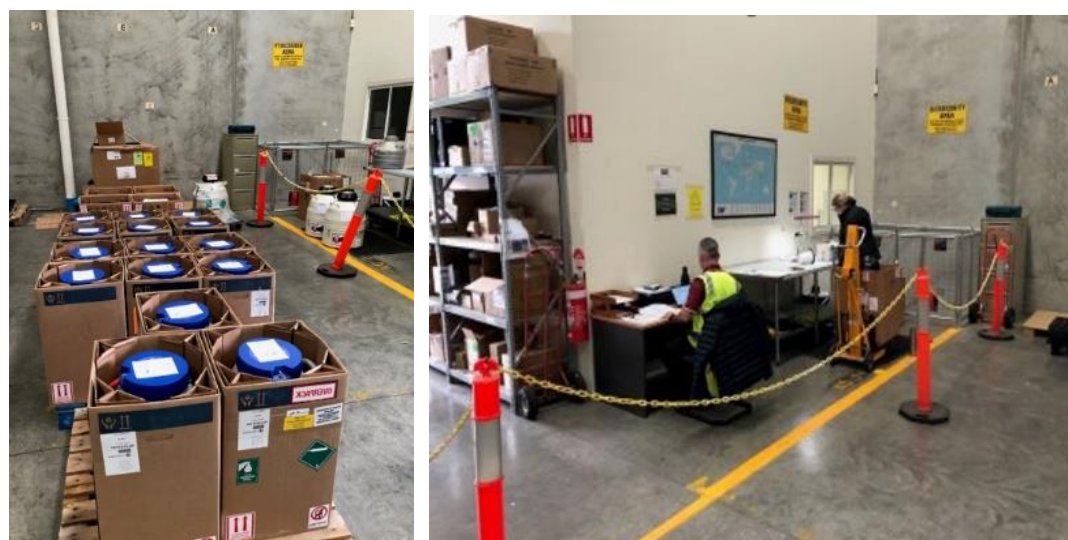


Figure 2: Images of an Import Reproductive Material Inspection at WCBM (Class 1.2 QAP). Source: DAFF

WCBM Freight was approved as a Class 1.2 Quarantine Approved Facility in February 2023.

DAFF Biosecurity Officers Daniel and Alex visited WCBM in February 2023 and met with representatives Rebecca, Kim and Joseph to provide guidance on the Inspection area.

Import Reproductive Material Inspections commenced on Thursday 9 February 2023 at WCBM. DAFF are performing Import Inspections at WCBM on Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm (must be continuous).

Inspections are offered 5 days a week at the DAFF Regional Office at Moonee Ponds. Importers have let us know they are happy with the booking process and facilities at DAFF Regional Office.

Importers have the option of both facilities to book an inspection. Choosing the location to book the inspection is dependant on when the tank arrives into Australia, when the tank can be collected from the Cargo Terminal Operator (CTO) and the urgency from the importer.

This has made organisation easier for both DAFF and importers, demonstrating flexibility and an improvement in client service.

To date we have had 30 Bookings at WCBM and inspected approximately 50+ tanks.

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## New staff at DAFF

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### Export and import news

Please welcome two new staff members.



Dr Skye Fruean

Dr Corrie Croton

Dr Skye Fruean is the principal veterinarian leading a team of veterinarians responsible for delivery of science-based policies to manage biosecurity risks associated with the import and export of live ruminants and their genetic material to and from Australia. This team is within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

Skye was raised on a sheep and beef farm on Kangaroo Island, South Australia. On graduation as a veterinarian from the University of Melbourne in 2004, Skye worked in private mixed practice in south-west Victoria, with a focus on dairy medicine. In 2007, Skye sought out new opportunities, moving to Samoa to work in a non-profit veterinary clinic and charity for the following three years.

Skye returned to Australia in 2010, joining DAFF in an animal health policy role in the biosecurity sector. She has since worked in the department supporting biosecurity capacity development in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste, and led the Animal Health Surveillance Program of the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy.

With post-graduate qualifications in epidemiology, veterinary public health and management, Skye has also worked as an applied epidemiologist in a veterinary clinical practice in rural New Zealand, and has field experience responding to natural disasters and animal disease outbreaks

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Dr Corrie Croton is a veterinarian in Skye's team who grew up in Western Australia and Queensland in a conventional urban setting and graduated from the University of Queensland in 2002.

He then worked in private practice with a focus on small animal emergency medicine. He transitioned into biosecurity at DAFF in 2012.

Corrie has since worked in a number of full-time roles in the department including compliance, data science, veterinary training innovation, Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer, and animal health policy.

He has attained membership of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists by examination in the Emergency and Critical Care Chapter and also the Epidemiology Chapter.

His professional interests include data science and emerging technologies. Other interests are rock climbing, labouring on his parent's hobby farm, and virtual reality.

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## TRACE upgrades

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### Export news

The Notice of Intention to Export (NOI) Animal Reproductive Material process has changed.

DAFF has worked on enhancements to the Tracking Animal Certification for Export system (TRACE) to include animal reproductive material.

As a result this has been trialled with a number of regular repro exporters, commencing Monday 28 November 2022.

This trial was a success and now all exporters of reproductive material are able to create, upload documents, and submit Repro NOIs by logging into our TRACE system.

DAFF provided support to all exporters with the *Repro User Guide* and through multiple webinar sessions.

From 1 February 2023, DAFF no longer accepts the NOI pdf and will direct the exporter back to use TRACE to submit their Repro NOI.

TRACE enhancements were completed on 17 May to address performance issues, implement a new business rule to record assessment time, and a new table in the NOI submission for displaying clear day information. It also included an antivirus scanning tool for uploaded documents.

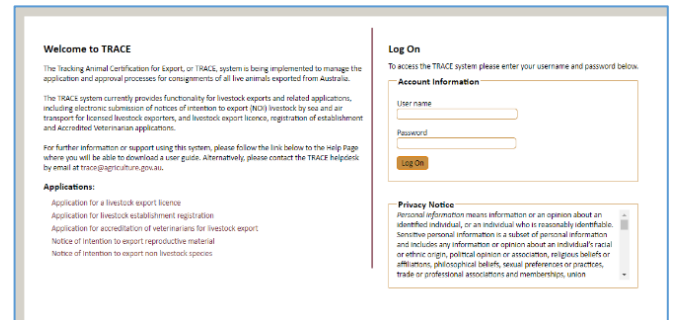


Figure 3: TRACE login screen. Source: DAFF

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## RGTAG update

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### Export and import news

The Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group (RGTAG) has had a busy 6 months with a number of issues around germplasm export and import occurring during that time needing attention.

New protocols on the import of bovine germplasm into NZ have now come into place and whilst it is possible for conventional semen to enter NZ, unfortunately the same cannot be said for sexed semen and bovine embryos. The requirements NZ have imposed around treatment of embryos for *Mycoplasma bovis* have made the production of embryos an unviable proposition and hence there is currently no embryo trade happening. And *M. bovis* testing on sexed semen is producing inconclusive results. RGTAG continue to try and find options that are acceptable to mitigate the perceived risk.

Of recent times there have been changes proposed by the USDA around the export of bovine germplasm into the US which are fairly different to the previous status quo and will make import into the USA more difficult. RGTAG continue to work with DAFF to collate a set of proposed protocols to make germplasm trade with the USA acceptable to all the relevant industry.

Australian RGTAG members have gained access to the Pakistan germplasm market over the last 12 months through provision of Pakistani import permits. RGTAG has been working with DAFF to finalise a protocol based dialogue and this is now in its final stages of development. Pakistan is a large dairy producing country and has interest in beef, embryos and other species. This increasing trade is a credit to the RGTAG members involved in developing the trade.

Israel is another country seeking to import Australian bovine germplasm and RGTAG has been working with DAFF on protocol development with the aim of seeing germplasm entering Israel in the near future.

Negotiations between India and Australia continue to occur with a view to having a bovine germplasm protocol developed and this a high priority for RGTAG currently.

RGTAG and DAFF had a very productive meeting in Canberra in early March where detailed discussion was held around the various germplasm export and import issues as outlined above as well as putting forward industry experience around workability and viability of the germplasm trade.

RGTAG represents the ruminant germplasm industry in Australia across multiple species and encourages all those interested in the international trade to participate.

For further information or to become a member of RGTAG please contact Sara Merkel on email at [sara@nhia.org.au](mailto:sara@nhia.org.au)

## A review of 2022

### Import news

In 2022, the department's Horse, Livestock and Bird imports program (HLB) issued 142 germplasm import permits, and regional officers cleared more than 393 consignments. Compared to 2021, total bovine and equine semen consignments decreased, however total semen doses increased, meaning there were fewer, but larger consignments.

Bovine embryos demonstrated increases across all measurables in 2022. There were increased import permits issued by HLB and resultingly increased total consignments imported. The total number of bovine embryos imported was at a record high for 2022.

Compared to 2021, deer and sheep consignments and germplasm doses increased, whereas goat germplasm imports decreased in 2022.

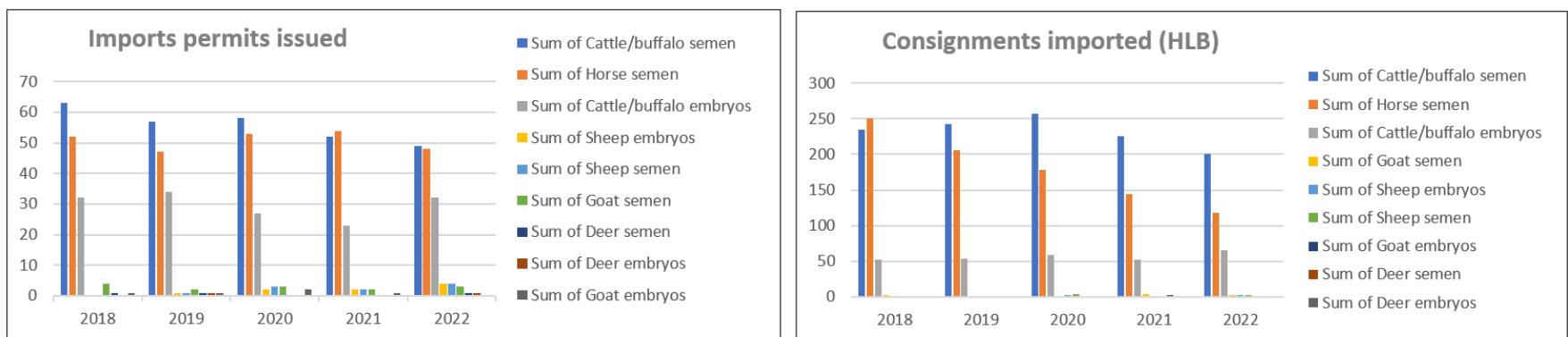


Figure 4: Number of germplasm import permits issued by HLB, and number of germplasm consignments imported into Australia. Source: DAFF

The cattle herd of Norfolk Island recently benefited from a fresh infusion of genetic diversity from the first consignment of bovine semen imported earlier this year.

The department continues to work closely with importers in providing pre-consignment arrival documentation checks to identify any non-compliance issues to ensure germplasm can be cleared efficiently when it arrives at the border.

The department will soon be publishing a webpage to assist new germplasm importers with the import process. Also available soon will be a webpage containing the current germplasm Notices to Industry and other relevant updates.

We are looking forward to 2023/24 being another busy year for germplasm imports with increased collaboration and consultation with industry.