

# Germplasm Gazette

## News on trade in ruminant reproductive material



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

ETV reaccreditation.....	1
Certificate updates.....	1
MICOR updates.....	1
IETS annual meeting 2024.....	1
Welcome.....	2
Farewell.....	2
RGTAG update.....	2
Import updates published.....	3
QUADS germplasm network ....	3
Merry Christmas!.....	4

Contact [corrie.croton@aff.gov.au](mailto:corrie.croton@aff.gov.au) for any queries about this gazette.

### ETV reaccreditation

#### Export news

The Embryo Transfer Veterinarian Technical Management Committee (ETV TMC) continues to fine-tune the ETV accreditation process based on the experiences of the first round of triennial reaccreditation. These adjustments are intended to improve the ease of ETVs in undergoing accreditation and reduce the chance of administrative errors.

### Certificate updates

#### Export news

New model health certificates for germplasm exports to Great Britain were recently published on the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) website. These must be in-use by the 30 April 2024. Bovine certificates have already been sent out to exporters, and the remaining updated templates will be available shortly to download from Manual of Importing Country Requirements (MICOR).

### MICOR updates

#### Export news

Since 2021, as part of the MICOR Review and Update Project, the Repro Hub has reviewed approximately 200 MICOR entries for reproductive material exports. Most entries have now been updated to provide more accurate information for exporters. The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is still in the process of negotiating certificate updates for some markets including the USA. Updates will be provided when available.

### IETS annual meeting 2024

#### Import and export news

An officer from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) will attend in person and chair the International Embryo Technology Society (IETS) Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HASAC) Regulatory subcommittee annual meeting. She will also attend a number of other IETS HASAC subcommittee meetings including: Research, Forms and Certificates, Emerging Technology and Issues, and Manual. This will occur from 7 to 12 January 2024 in Denver, Colorado, USA.

Australian representation is important because the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) takes technical direction from IETS with regard to livestock embryo international trade standards. It is also important that Australia attend in order to participate in the process of reducing biosecurity risk while innovating to facilitate trade. In 2022 it was proposed that the WOAH adopt the new IETS categorisation system for pathogens. Voting on risk categorisation of pathogens will occur at the HASAC 2023 meetings. Australia's attendance will ensure that Australia's interests are heard and understood. Australia has been active member of the IETS annual meetings since 2010.

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## Welcome

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### Import and export news

Dr Zi Yi Lim has taken on Dr Claudia Lin's role as Senior Veterinary Officer for the Repro Hub. He previously served as a District Veterinary Officer with NSW Local Land Services and in private practice prior to this.

Zi aims to build and develop on the Repro Hub's work and looks forward to working with industry stakeholders to positively impact the state of Australian animal germplasm.



Figure 1: Dr Zi Lim. Source: DAFF

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## Farewell

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### Import and export news

To the members of RGTAG and germplasm community.

I write to share news with you that after ten years working in the Repro Hub, I have moved to another role within the Department with a focus on trade and market access in meat exports. Dr Zi Lim is the new Senior Veterinary Officer for the Repro Hub. I hope you will show him the same support as you have shown me over the years.

My first introduction to the Repro Hub was joining the Chinese delegation during the germplasm reaccreditation visit in Australia in 2013. Even though the days were long and the questions raised by the auditors were tough, I was impressed with the expertise of the industry and thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all. There were many entertaining stories along the way. One time I was accompanying a Chilean auditor in Western Australia. Being from the east coast, I was not prepared for how sparsely spaced the petrol stations were in the west. As our rental vehicle was running out of fuel, the Chilean auditor ended up calming me down and reassured me that we would make it back to Perth. We did reach Perth and he narrowly avoided needing to push the car to the nearest town. This event was more stressful than the audit.

The germplasm industry, although relatively small by comparison, is a professional and highly skilful group. Our working relationship was always respectful and honest. For this I extend my appreciation to each of you for making the job an enjoyable one. Helping you create new market opportunities and resolving issues together has always been my priority to support you where we are able.

I hope you will continue the outstanding work to advance the genetic industry in Australia and in the world.

– Dr Claudia Lin



Figure 2: Dr Claudia Lin with the Chilean SAG delegation. Source: DAFF



Figure 3: Dr Claudia Lin. Source: DAFF

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## RGTAG update

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### Import and export news

An important focus for the National Herd Improvement Association of Australia (NHIA) is the secretariat services it provides for the Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group (RGTAG). Its role includes:

- representing the industry in the setting of ruminant genetic import and export protocols
- providing advice to the government in respect to issues around genetics trade
- being a conduit between industry and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- keeping the industry informed of current trade and protocol issues and events
- presenting the Australian ruminant genetic industry to international exposure.

*Continued on page 4*

## Import updates published

### Import news

The department published new webpages to step germplasm importers through the import process earlier this year. Notice to Industry documents relevant to imports of germplasm are housed at: [Importing reproductive material semen and embryos - DAFF \(agriculture.gov.au\)](https://www.daff.gov.au/importing-reproductive-material-semen-and-embryos). For detailed information about importing germplasm from horses and livestock, follow the link embedded on this webpage, or take this shortcut: [Importing livestock and equine reproductive material - DAFF \(agriculture.gov.au\)](https://www.daff.gov.au/importing-livestock-and-equine-reproductive-material).

The department has also recently published updates to [BICON](#) pathways for semen and embryos from cattle, sheep and goats. The change separated the United Kingdom from the European Union countries. A separate pathway for bovine semen from France was also provided after the department provided formal agreement to conclude a health certificate negotiation on 12 June 2023. A permit case pathway view for bovine semen is demonstrated in Figure 4. To show this view for other commodities, please enter your BICON search term and click the appropriate title (e.g. ovine embryos), then click 'skip to import conditions'.

**Case options**

- [Follow case](#)
- [Bookmark options](#)
- [Email current scenario](#)
- [Save / Print](#)

**Case details**

- [Overview](#)
- [Appendices](#)
- [Alerts](#)
- [Changes](#)
- [History](#)
- [Risk backgrounds](#)

**Questions I have answered**

- [Species](#)

### Case: Bovine semen

Effective 30 Sep 2023

#### Define Import Scenario

Because you did not answer or provided multiple answers to some import questions, there are multiple import scenarios that may apply. Please make a selection from the table below to view your import conditions.

<a href="#">Country of export is Canada</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is a European Union member state (excluding France)</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is France</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is New Caledonia</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is New Zealand</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is Norway</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is Switzerland</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Country of export is the United States of America</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Other</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>
<a href="#">Not permitted species</a>	<a href="#">See conditions</a>

Figure 4: BICON case for bovine semen. Source: DAFF

## QUADS germplasm network reinvigorated

### Import and export news

The Quadrilateral Animal Health Alliance (Quads) includes the United States of America, New Zealand, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. Quads countries promote rules-based international trade which provides protection for our animal agriculture industries. It does so by reducing the biosecurity risks associated with international trade of animals and their products, and ensuring the conditions required to trade are based upon scientific and objective measures.

After a hiatus, the Quads Germplasm Network reconvened for its first meeting of 2023 in February, with subsequent meetings held throughout 2023. The next meeting is scheduled for 7 February 2024. The group will influence development and adoption of international standards relating to trade of ruminant germplasm, maximise trade opportunities, and provide strategic leadership through collaboration with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and other relevant commissions such as the International Embryo Technology Society (IETS).

The main function of RGTAG is to grow the trade of germplasm for ruminant species within the priorities of the RGTAG membership which supports industry. These are communicated to DAFF to assist the access of these markets. It is a slow process which requires inter-governmental negotiations to take place.

The committee also assists DAFF to review protocols to make them workable for trade. On the 23 September RGTAG and DAFF had an online meeting. One of the discussion items was an update on priority countries which are: India, USA, Israel, Japan, South Africa, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Thailand, Ecuador, Philippines, Switzerland, Vietnam, Kenya Mexico.

### China

RGTAG assisted DAFF with new contacts within the agriculture department in China. Australia has not had germplasm access into China for 5 years now and it is hoped that the Australian germplasm industry may obtain re-engagement in the near future.

### Chile

Agriculture authorities from the Agriculture and Livestock Service of Chile (SAG) recently visited Australia to audit DAFF with the view to accrediting DAFF to undertake germplasm centre audits on their behalf. A number of RGTAG export centres worked with DAFF to facilitate the centre visits. As a result of these visits, Chile has subsequently accredited DAFF. This will make access to Chile for germplasm much easier for Australian centres.

### World Dairy Expo, Madison USA

RGTAG members attended the World Dairy Expo in Madison in the USA in October. Billed as the world's largest dairy cattle show it brings together over 600 companies from all over the world to a trade and cattle show. Over 3,000 head of all major dairy breeds compete at the weeklong event. Jersey Australia hosted a display and there is a growing interest, not only in the USA, but enquiries were received for Australian genetics from several Latin American countries including Ecuador, Costa Rica, Argentina, Brazil and Guatemala.

### Pakistan demand continues to increase.

Trade continues with Pakistan based on import permits. The feedback on the performance of Australian cattle continues and the focus on improved quality genetics is clearly paying dividends. The selection of live cattle sold on genetic merit and semen shipments containing high-rated Australian genetics is changing the focus away from low cost live cattle and semen to higher value high-rated Australian genetics. A second live shipment is due to be exported before the end of the year. In this shipment the majority of cattle are pregnant to Australian sexed semen, and a large shipment of semen will be sent to coincide with this live shipment. The current focus is on dairy but there is a growing interest in caprine as well as several beef breeds. With a population of 240 million people, the current expansion in improvement and productivity is set to continue as the climate, access to water and cheap labour gives Pakistan some unique advantages. Investment in the agriculture sector by private investors continues despite some political instability.

### India, the next big opportunity

The performance of Australian cattle and semen is not only being seen in Pakistan, but news is also filtering across the border into India. The Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) is growing the trade opportunities with India. RGTAG members are receiving regular enquiries for access to Australian genetics as they hear through social media the performance of Australian cattle in Pakistan. While no protocol has currently been negotiated, Australian exporters are waiting patiently as there is a growing interest in what Australia has to offer. The current performance of genetics imported from the northern hemisphere is having mixed results in the often harsh and challenging farming systems found in India. With India having a population of 1.4 billion people and currently the world's largest dairy producer, the introduction of genetics from Australia will increase productivity in the Indian dairy sector and present increased opportunities for Australian dairy farmers.



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## **RGTAG update**

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### Straw labelling for ovine genetic material

DAFF Repro Hub approached RGTAG regarding the uniformity of labelling semen straws for future exports of ovine genetic material. This is not for current semen collected or in the process of collecting for export. Changes in labelling will not affect the exportation of semen collected prior to the date the Repro Hub communicates with collection centres on the uniformity of straw labelling.

RGTAG expressed the view that there should be uniformity in labelling and a start date of uniformity should be set by the Repro Hub with suitable lead in time.

### How DAFF showcases Australian genetics

DAFF provided an online showing of its newly produced video to promote Australian germplasm. This included the footage of visiting various members' premises for the process of demonstrating quality Australian standards. This is a government-to-government communications tool to showcase what Australia has to offer.

### Committee members

RGTAG is further supported by its committee, who meet monthly, and who generously devote their time and ensure an incredible amount of work is done to support the industry:

- Dom Bayard, Global Reproduction Solutions (Embryo Transfer), Chairman
- Ruth Barber, Genetics Australia Holdings VIC (Dairy)
- Belinda Cardinal, Caprotek (Goat)
- Rob Derksen, Genetics Australia Holdings (Dairy)
- Deborah Mills, Holbrook Breeders (Southern Beef Cattle)
- Michylla Seal, Genstock (Sheep)
- Alan Smith, Rocky Repro (Northern Beef Cattle)
- Caitlin Warner, Australian Premier Genetics Pty Ltd, NSW (Beef)
- Penny Welch, Genetics Australia Holdings VIC (Dairy)
- Ced Wise, Ced Wise AB (Northern Beef Cattle)

### Looking ahead

RGTAG is looking to grow industry representation and encourage more members to join RGTAG and have a say in the export and import germplasm issues as one industry voice.

More can be found out about RGTAG at the [RGTAG home page](#).

RGTAG invites you to join a virtual meeting so you can see what is happening within the group. To register your interest or for any questions contact Sara Merckel, RGTAG [secretariat.sara@nhia.org.au](mailto:secretariat.sara@nhia.org.au) or 0411 819 165.

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## **Merry Christmas!**

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Thank you to RGTAG and germplasm industry members for all your efforts this year in working towards our common goals. Best wishes for a safe and relaxing Christmas break, and see you in 2024!