

Germplasm Gazette

News on trade in Animal Reproductive Material



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Valais blacknose sheep germplasm imports approved

Import News

The department has recently approved the importation of semen and embryos from the Valais Blacknose breed with a scrapie-susceptible genotype (ARQ/ARQ) from permitted countries. There has been considerable interest in introducing this breed to the Australian market, with multiple inquiries received by the department. The breed originated in Switzerland and is dual purpose, reared for both meat and wool, but its biggest draw-card to potential buyers appears to be its unique looks.

Bovine germplasm imports from EU

The department's import permits for bovine germplasm from approved EU member states have been updated to include fields for 'country of collection' and 'country of export'. This is in response to confusion regarding whether semen and embryos collected in various EU countries can be imported using a permit specifying collection in and export from one EU country only. When applying for import permits, applicants must specify ALL countries of collection of germplasm, and this information will now be reflected in the permit conditions to ensure clarity and allow appropriate assessment of documentation and consignments at the border.

Biosecurity awareness when working overseas

With a recent increase in the spread of several exotic diseases overseas, it is a great time to review your biosecurity practices if performing assisted reproductive technologies overseas. All it takes is one breach of biosecurity to introduce an exotic disease into Australia's domestic herds, which could have a devastating effect on animal health, industry, and export markets.

- Update yourself on the latest animal disease outbreaks at your destination and appropriate disinfection procedures. Early warning disease alert notifications are available at <https://www.promedmail.org/> and official notifications can be found at <https://www.oie.int/alerts-disease-information/>
- Consider how you will decontaminate and disinfect any clothing/footwear or equipment you use on farm, if you intend to bring it back to Australia
- When you arrive back in Australia, declare all equipment, clothing or footwear that has been used on a farm overseas
- Consider personal decontamination before returning to Australian farms, as some diseases can live for prolonged periods on clothing, skin, and nostrils. For example, foot and mouth disease virus can survive for up to 48 hours in human nostrils.
- Whilst overseas, be aware that apparently healthy animals may still be capable of shedding pathogens and infecting equipment. For example, lumpy skin disease virus can be found in semen for 5 months after infection, and agents such as scrapie can adhere very strongly to stainless steel surfaces and are resistant to most forms of chemical decontamination.

For your own peace of mind, make biosecurity your priority.

Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group- RGTAG's Flag

RGTAG membership is now open. All import/export centres are strongly encouraged to become active financial members. Benefits for members include being able to participate in industry meetings with the Department where trade related issues are discussed and providing industry guidance to the Department about priorities that need to be addressed.

RGTAG will be managing the upcoming Chinese germplasm establishment audit visit and similar events in the future.

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.

Page 2. contains a summary of the background and purpose of RGTAG.

Two shakes of a lambs tail

For the three months May to July 2019 there were a total of 87 consignments of reproductive material exported to 23 different markets.



Staff Changes

Reprohub Staffing updates

VEMS News

- Dr Guftar Ahmed retired from the Department of Agriculture in September after almost two decades with the department. Guftar was based in Adelaide and assisted the repro hub in assessing export Reproductive Material consignments to various countries. Dr Bhavani Niramalarja has transferred to VEMG and will take over from Guftar. Bhavani is currently being trained in assessment of repro consignments.
- Dr Claudia Lin was successful in a recent internal EOI and will continue to act in the Senior Veterinary Officer role until the position is advertised externally. Claudia is the first point of contact to escalate issues associated with repro exports.
- Daniel Kwiatkowski has returned to the Repro Hub after briefly leaving to work for Inspection Group. Daniel is a welcome return to the team and is well known to most exporters.
- Wayne Gundry is expected to take extended medical leave from the end of September. Dr Sandeep Kaur will cover Wayne's role during this time. Sandeep is currently our lead veterinary officer at the Mickleham Post Entry Quarantine Facility and has recently been training with Wayne.

Upcoming overseas establishment audits

China- Bovine/Ovine/Caprine semen and embryo establishments for accreditation /re-accreditation.

Chile- Bovine/Ovine/Caprine semen and embryo establishments for accreditation /re-accreditation.

Currently, only establishments that have been listed by the competent authority are eligible to access these markets. The current listing for some of the facilities expires early 2020. At this stage, we do not know when the audit will occur. All associated costs for these visits are funded by the establishments being audited. The cost will be determined by the number of commercial parties involved among whom costs can be split.

Background and Purpose of RGTAG

RGTAG News

RGTAG is the voice of the ruminant (all species) genetics trade industry in Australia with direct liaison between the industry and government at various levels. Its role includes:

- represent the industry in the setting of import and export protocols,
- provide advice to government in respect to issues around genetics trade,
- act as a conduit between industry and the Department of Agriculture
- keep industry informed of current trade and protocol issues and events.

The ruminant genetics trade into and out of Australia has been a very fragmented industry over a number of years with very little co-ordination between the genetics industry and official Government channels.

This has meant that issues around protocols and interpretations of protocols have been managed inconsistently, with both industry and the department having frustrations and delays over the issues surrounding the smooth import and export of genetics.

Whilst the industry has, over many years, had various attempts to co-ordinate some sort of structure, the very nature of the trade has meant there have been few participants and those are generally small operators too busy to be able to support a widespread industry approach.

The new structure of RGTAG has come about because the industry and the Department

recognized that there needs to be a serious attempt to get the industry organized and efficient.

This has been brewing for some time with a relatively recent industry review paper by Nichols *et al.* also documenting the critical need for cohesion and organisation within the sector to take best advantage of the international opportunities for Australian genetics.

The new RGTAG is to be administered under the services of the National Herd Improvement Association (NHIA) with a structured, elected, committee of management representing the different species and geographical locations across Australia.

Membership of RGTAG comprises of both industry participants and interested livestock breeders and is subject to the RGTAG Constitution.

A financial membership entitles one vote and to have prioritized access to the Department of Agriculture through the RGTAG. Members will also benefit from regular information on current protocols and changes, have a say in prioritizing issues of importance, and have knowledge of events affecting the industry here in Australia and internationally.

To apply for membership or further information please contact Stephen Carroll on email: stephen@nhia.org.au.

For Information

Guidelines for Electronic Lodgement of Documentation – Export of Reproductive Material

The Export Control (Animals) Order 2004 requires the Notice of Intention (NOI) and all supporting documentation must be received at least 10 working days before the scheduled date of export. Please remember to supply enough supporting documentation (such as importing country requirements, sourcing of eligible animals, testing and treatment schedules, and property health status declarations) to allow us to complete the assessment of the NOI and determine if the reproductive material intended for export meets the relevant importing country's requirements.

Bovine semen to Indonesia

The Department of Agriculture has written to Indonesia after being made aware that permits are being issued containing revoked conditions prior to February 2018. The department is currently seeking assurances that Australian exporters holding valid permits for the export of Bovine semen to Indonesia are not required to seek dispensations to meet revoked conditions and that the agreed 2018 negotiated conditions can continue to be utilized For further information please contact Reprohub.