



Victorian  
Farmers  
Federation

Livestock

# the Stock Standard

Newsletter of the Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group

May 2018

## The Livestock Value Chain Must Continually Improve

VICTORIA'S PEAK LIVESTOCK BODY is disappointed by the damning progress update released by the ACCC today as it reports on the attempts to improve the transparency and efficiency of the Australian Cattle value chain.

Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock President Leonard Vallance said "we're disappointed it has come to this.

"We said it then and we're saying it again now, we implore the national industry bodies to get on board and implement the ACCC recommendations or the regulatory axe will come down.

"Industry must continually strive to improve practices along the value chain or risk government regulation; we need a sustainable industry that's fair and equitable for all participants.

"Transparencies, including further price reporting and objective measurement technologies, benefit the entire value chain and should be fast tracked", Mr Vallance said.

The VFF Livestock Council endorsed all 15 recommendations from the ACCC Beef Market Study final report, stating that transparency and accountability throughout the value chain is needed to improve. After a disappointing display by industry, the ACCC will now bypass peak industry bodies and lobby state and

commonwealth governments through the AGMIN forum, essentially calling for regulation.

In 2016-17, the ACCC's Agriculture Unit conducted a market study of the cattle and beef sector. The market study examined competition, transparency and efficiency in cattle and beef supply chains. The final report provided 15 recommendations to improve transparency and efficiency in the Australian Cattle value chain.

For the full progress update please follow this link: <https://www.accc.gov.au/about-us/market-studies/cattle-and-beef-market-study/update-report>

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## The South West Fire Fodder Drive

The South West Fire fodder drive finished on Tuesday 15 May, the drive was very successful with 19,250 bales of fodder donated, 46 generous offers of agistment and over \$77,000 donations to the VFF disaster relief fund.

Thank you to the farming communities who have donated fodder and monies to

the fund and to the volunteers for their time and effort immediately after the fires.

Livestock farmers who still require advice on feed budgeting are strongly encouraged to contact **Michele Jolliffe** from **Agriculture Victoria** on **0428 581 883**.

## 2018 Victorian Farmers Federation Annual Conference

**Date: Thursday 19 & Friday 20 July**  
**Location: Mercure Ballarat Hotel & Convention Centre,  
613 Main Rd, Golden Point VIC 3350**



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# VFF Livestock Election - As I See It

## The Victorian Farmers Federation Livestock Group leads the way on a number of issues.

We are front and centre of any policy debate that needs the voice of Victorian Livestock producers, leading negotiations with industry and government bodies.

We lead Livestock Health and Biosecurity VICTORIA, a popular extension program to educate primary producers on adopting animal health and biosecurity practices that improve capacity on farm and enhance market access.

We have spearheaded initiatives to improve livestock traceability and market access, and to make life easier and more profitable for livestock producers.

Our mission is to inspire and empower a sustainable and socially responsible Victorian livestock industry.

But we cannot become complacent as our supply chain is under more pressure than ever. Industry representation is important if we're to maintain our very existence.

The VFF Livestock Group policy council is filled with proactive and dedicated livestock producers who have all played a role in the Livestock Group's success, but every year opportunities become available for anyone to put their hand up and join the team.

This year we're calling for candidates to stand for election in the Wimmera, Corangamite, North East and East Gippsland regions.

We're encouraging anyone to apply who feels they have what it takes to represent the views of those regions.

It's a job that requires passion and vision, but it's also highly rewarding. Representing the VFF is a big responsibility but it's also an opportunity for people who want to promote a fair deal for agriculture to step up, lead the way and make a real difference.

Nominations must be lodged with the VFF CEO and addressed to Farrer House, Level 3, 24-28 Collins Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000, or [returningofficer@vff.org.au](mailto:returningofficer@vff.org.au) no later than 5:00pm, Tuesday June 18 2018. Head to: [www.vff.org.au](http://www.vff.org.au) for more information.

It's a great opportunity that should not be missed. Don't assume someone else will do it for your industry; stand up and have a crack at it.

**Leonard Vallance,**  
VFF Livestock President

## Upcoming Chain of Responsibility Info Sessions:

The VFF is deeply concerned by the excessive regulatory burden new Chain of Responsibility laws will impose on farmers, as well as the lack of clarity around farmer obligations. In response to VFF's calls for further information, NHVR will be hosting the following Chain of Responsibility information sessions for primary producers:

 Friday 18th May	 9:30 – 11:30am	 Ballarat	Midlands Golf Course, Heinz Ln, Invermay Park VIC 3350
 Tuesday 22nd May	 3:00 – 5:00pm	 Bendigo	All Seasons Hotel, 171-183 Mclvor Hwy, Bendigo VIC 3550
 Friday 25th May	 1:00 – 3:00pm	 Shepparton	Parklake, 481 Wyndham St, Shepparton VIC 3630
 Monday 4th June	 3:00 – 5:00pm	 Horsham	Horsham RSL, 36 McLachlan Street, Horsham Vic 3400
 Friday 8th June	 10:00am – 12:00pm	 Warrnambool	The Flying Horse, 10691 Princes Hwy, Warrnambool VIC 3280
 Tuesday 12th June	 2:00 – 4:00pm	 Bairnsdale	Bairnsdale RSL, 2 Bairnsdale-Forge Creek Rd, Bairnsdale VIC 3875
 Friday 15th June	 11:00am – 1:00pm	 Warragul	Lardner Park, TBC

Please rsvp to [Simone.Reinertsen@nhvr.gov.au](mailto:Simone.Reinertsen@nhvr.gov.au)

## Some issues or questions we would urge members to pose to NHVR include:

-  How do farmers ensure they have complied with CoR regulations? What must they do? Do NHVR have a checklist?
-  How do farmers demonstrate that they have complied with CoR regulations, in the event they are required to demonstrate compliance?
-  How do farmers ensure that transporters have high safety practices, prior to using them?
-  Will NHVR provide templates to assist farmers to demonstrate compliance?
-  What is the risk to a farmer if they cannot demonstrate compliance?
-  If a farmer refuses to load a truck because the driver appears fatigued and the driver then leaves, is the farmer liable for any accidents the driver then has?
-  Are farmers obligated to check their employees have loaded and restrained goods as specified in the Load Restraint Guide each time a truck is loaded?
-  Are farmers required to weigh every individual animal, if transporting stock, to ensure they provide the correct weight?
-  What obligations do farmers have, when the product is loaded and driven by a contractor (ie milk or broiler chickens) organised by the processor?

# Bird's eye view

Darren Swain's drone usage may have started as a hobby, but it didn't take him long to realise the Phantom 4 Pro had practical applications.

## Using Drones On Farm

"I regularly check troughs with it, assess water quality at watering points and fly over paddocks to assess feed quantity and quality," he said.



Darren runs a cattle trading and breeding and sheep trading enterprise on 360ha at Gunnedah in northern NSW.

"Being able to view pastures from above provides a different perspective, and sometimes I find there isn't as much feed or ground cover as I thought from a ground-level inspection."

Using these observations, Darren is confident in making feed-on-offer and stocking decisions based on what he can see on-screen.

## Cattle Versus Sheep

Darren's drone is a 'middle-of-the-range, off-the-shelf model' with collision avoidance, which he purchased with extra batteries (but not including the screen), for about \$2,500.

For the screen, he uses his smart phone or tablet.

"I've mustered animals from one paddock to another, but it still requires someone to open and shut gates. At this stage I think it's still easier to do it with a bike or vehicle," he said.

"My stock are quiet and I find the cattle, in particular, can stand up to the drone and resist moving until it's very close. There's always the risk they might damage it.

"Sheep, on other hand, seem a bit easier and move away from it."

## Farm Management From Every Angle

Darren works full-time off farm, so is under pressure to manage time efficiently when he's at home.

"The drone is good for checking stock, particularly in difficult-to-get-to places," he said.

"I've used it to check whether a lame bull is improving. The irritation of the hovering drone next to the bull will make get him up and walk.

"I can then view him from every angle to see how he's going."

However, Darren has found the drone is less effective for spotting pink eye or identifying animals that are not gaining weight as expected.

## Lines of Sight

Another drawback is the drone's lack of range in ridge country.

"In flatter country, its range is quoted at about seven to eight kilometres but, on my undulating property, about three kilometres is the maximum," he said.

"When it gets low behind a ridge or a rise, the signal cuts out and its auto return-to-base mode is initiated and it returns home."

In order to keep line-of-sight in ridge country, Darren needs to keep the drone high while flying, which reduces the detail of his vision of the ground. However, for all the challenges, Darren believes their applications will only increase as technology improves.

"I think producers will drive demand, finding more roles for them and, hopefully, economies of scale will continue to make them more affordable," he said.

## Lessons Learned

- ⊕ Drones are good tools for checking watering points.
- ⊕ Drones do not operate so well in undulating-to-hilly country due to the shorter 'lines of sight'.
- ⊕ Sheep are easier to muster than cattle with a drone.

## Drone Action

Ruralco, MLA and PrecisionHawk have developed a project to engage directly with producers to develop an aerial drone strategy for the benefit of the red meat and livestock industry. Initially running for 12 months, the functions of the project are to:

1. Demonstrate the current capabilities of aerial drone technologies
2. Map the current use of aerial drones and identify the future development needs around how aerial drones can be used more effectively on farm.

## The Project will:

- ⊕ Identify the extent and purpose of existing red meat producer aerial drone usage
- ⊕ Identify new opportunities and required future development for aerial drones in order to meet the needs and requirements of the red meat and livestock industry
- ⊕ Contribute to the development of an aerial drone strategy for MLA

You can have your say on drone usage by completing the project's drone technology survey at: [surveymonkey.com/r/DroneTechnology](http://surveymonkey.com/r/DroneTechnology)

Every survey participant will have a chance to win a PrecisionHawk DJI Phantom 4 Pro.

Source [mla.com.au](http://mla.com.au)

# LUBECK WOOLSHED

**Have your say on issues important to farming in your community.**

**Guest speakers**

**Gary Armstrong** - Agriculture Victoria  
 ❖ eID in sheep - what you must know  
 ❖ PIC 2 PIC database transfers

**Michael Warrick**  
 ❖ Demonstration in drone use in agriculture production systems

**Dr Patrick Kluver** - LHBV  
 ❖ Underestimated stock diseases - what should you actually focus on

**Rolly Coutts**  
 Elders Horsham  
 ❖ Gross margin of Livestock vs cropping

**WHAT:** Practical demonstrations and Policy Discussion with BBQ

**WHEN:** Wednesday 13 June

**TIME:** 2:00 - 6:00pm

**WHERE:** 'Marlu' Woolshed Kinsellas Rd, Lubeck

**COST:** FREE  
 Proudly Sponsored by Elders - Horsham

**RSVP essential by 30<sup>th</sup> MAY**

p: 1300 882 833  
 e: [members@vff.org.au](mailto:members@vff.org.au)  
 w: [www.vff.org.au/events](http://www.vff.org.au/events)

Victorian Farmers Federation | 24 Collins Street, Melbourne | 1300 882 833 | [members@vff.org.au](mailto:members@vff.org.au)

# Livestock Health & Biosecurity VICTORIA

## Stopping risk at the gate

Have you heard the phrase 'Disease arrives on the back of a truck'?

The biggest risk for introducing disease or weeds to your property is bringing in new animals. However, bringing in new stock may be a necessary part of your business so how can you reduce the risk?

### Pre-purchase

Before you buy, examine the stock and request an Animal Health Declaration (AHD). Specific AHDs are available for sheep, cattle and goats.

They include information about the flock or herd's health history including disease status, treatments and vaccinations. Get information about footrot, lice and ovine brucellosis in sheep, pestivirus in cattle, CAE in goats, and Johne's disease for all species and more.

AHDs are a risk profiling tool and a legally binding document. Use the health status and management history outlined on the AHD to make informed decisions about the stock you are buying. But, keep in mind, what to look for may vary depending on your type of enterprise. For instance, Johne's disease may not be as important to a trading operation as it is to a breeding operation.

Access them for free from [www.farmlivestock.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements/](http://www.farmlivestock.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements/) or in conjunction with your electronic NVD.

### At the farm gate

All stock should get a quarantine drench on arrival and be allowed to empty out in the yards for two to three days.

After you let them out of the yards, hold them in a small paddock for the next seven days. This gives additional time to empty out, confining foreign worms and weed seeds to one area. For sheep this is a good opportunity to walk them through a 10% zinc sulphate footbath to help prevent the onset of footrot.

New stock should remain separate from the main herd for at least 28 days for cattle.

Sheep should remain separate until up to six months has passed to show any signs of lice, and the end of spring to assess for footrot.

### Monitoring

Continual monitoring is important for disease management and you should keep a record of everything you see.

As strange as it sounds, taking note even when there is nothing out of the ordinary is as important as noting unusual symptoms. In the case of a disease outbreak this allows you to trace back to when symptoms first appeared.

If you do see something unusual in your stock, contact the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 immediately. Every minute counts in disease prevention.

## 'Stock up' with the latest information

With so much information coming by email, social media and through the rabbit-warren that is Google these days, sometimes it's nice to sit down and hear first-hand about the latest information.

Livestock Health & Biosecurity VICTORIA's events bring together industry experts talking about information and research tailored to the local region. These events allow you to put your questions directly to the speaker. It also provides the opportunity to catch-up with other producers and share ideas.

Upcoming events in Myrtleford and Ensay include speakers from the Integrity Systems Company, who are responsible for managing the LPA program.

They will provide tips on how to prepare for an LPA audit, helping you feel comfortable meeting the program's requirements.

LHBVs Dr Patrick Kluver will be talking through some of the key diseases to look out for, and practices to put in place, to ensure healthy and productive stock through winter.

You can see the full program and register at [www.lhbv.eventbrite.com](http://www.lhbv.eventbrite.com).



## Upcoming Events

### STOCK UP: A Practical Guide To Biosecurity

📍 Myrtleford

📅 Monday 28 May 2018

🕒 9.30am - 1.00pm

📍 Ensay

📅 Tuesday 29 May 2018

🕒 9.30am - 1.00pm

📍 Colac

📅 Wednesday 20 June 2018

🕒 9.30am - 1.00pm

For more information visit [www.lhbv.org.au](http://www.lhbv.org.au) or contact [lhbv@vff.org.au](mailto:lhbv@vff.org.au) or 1300 020 163.

## Aussie Helpers Virtual Psychologist



Should you need help please email us direct OR reach out and chat to the Aussie Helpers Psychologists at [www.virtualpsychologist.com.au](http://www.virtualpsychologist.com.au) OR if you prefer SMS or phone

📞 0431 234 988

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