

HEALTH | WELFARE | BIOSECURITY



Peri-Urban Welcome Pack

SHEEP & GOATS



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Thinking of buying livestock and unsure where to begin? Stock Sense have created this booklet with some key resources and information on how to get prepared.

Stock Sense is funded by the Cattle Compensation Fund and the Sheep and Goat Compensation Fund and is proudly delivered by Victorian Farmers Federation.

STOCK SENSE

Stock Sense is proudly run and delivered by the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF). The project is funded by both the Cattle Compensation Fund and the Sheep and Goat Compensation Fund.

Stock Sense was established to help Victorian livestock producers maintain and improve animal health and welfare and Victoria's overall biosecurity status.

Stock Sense achieves this through several actions including:

- Educational workshops
- Webinars
- Development of fact sheets
- Distribution of related industry material through social media and e-newsletters
- Network groups
- Other activities as required

Stock Sense engages with livestock producers across Victoria as well as peri-urban landholders, providing relevant information on owning and managing livestock.

The Stock Sense team has created this Peri-Urban Welcome Pack with the aim of helping new landowners looking to purchase livestock, understand their responsibilities whilst offering guidance to help keep their animals happy and healthy.

This Welcome Pack outlines the key legal requirements for owning livestock in Victoria; with a guide to walk you through what's required at the different stages of buying, owning, and selling livestock.

Connect with us on social media for more information on events and workshops:

 @stocksense   @vffstocksense

CONTACTS

If you have any questions regarding the Stock Sense Peri-Urban Welcome Pack, please reach out to the Stock Sense team:

Tyrone Cain
Stock Sense Project Manager

Email: tcain@vff.org.au
Phone: 0417 165 784

Tegan Brammar
Stock Sense Project Officer

Email: tbrammar@vff.org.au
Phone: 0417 316 791

Tatjana Dobrijevic
Stock Sense Project Officer

Email: tdobrijevic@vff.org.au
Phone: 0457 577 136

NEW PRODUCERS

If you have just purchased a property or are considering purchasing livestock without much experience in raising them, we have some great tips on how to keep them happy and healthy.

Whether you are planning to raise animals as a business or just want a few around the property for the farm experience, it is important to remember animals need to receive appropriate care.

The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines outline the minimum national standard for care and management of livestock regarding feed, water, appropriate handling, and management of animals.

As a livestock owner there are certain legal responsibilities that you must be aware of to protect you and your animals. In Victoria, these responsibilities are laid out as laws, codes, regulations, and industry quality assurance programs. By following the information in this booklet, you will contribute to keeping the Victorian livestock industry free from harm.

Property Identification Codes (PIC)

Before purchasing livestock, you will need to register for a Property Identification Code. A Property Identification Code (PIC) is the eight-character alphanumeric code allocated by the department to a property with its purpose being for tracing livestock movements and controlling disease outbreaks. PIC's may also be used for locating properties and contacting owners in the case of an emergency.

A PIC also provides confidence to consumers in domestic and overseas markets that the products they buy are of a good quality and disease free.

Victorian PICs begin with the numeral 3, followed by four letters and three more numerals, for example, 3ABCD123. The first two letters identify the municipality of the property.

A single PIC can be allocated to a property consisting of more than one block of land, provided the blocks are part of the one enterprise and are within the same locality.

Applying for a PIC

You can apply for a PIC through the Agriculture Victoria website and can also update your existing PIC details.

Your PIC is used in relation to the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) to monitor the movement and health of livestock to ensure that disease and health risks are being avoided. All livestock owners are required to register their animals and PIC with the NLIS to ensure they comply with the NLIS.

To apply for a Property Identification Code visit: Application for a Property Identification Code pic.agriculture.vic.gov.au

National Livestock Identification System (NLIS)

The NLIS is Australia's system for the identification and traceability of cattle, sheep and goats. The NLIS combines three elements to enable the lifetime traceability of animals:

1. An electronic ear tag
2. A PIC for identification of physical location
3. An online database to store and correlate the data.

The NLIS ensures that lifetime movements of cattle, sheep, and goats can be identified and recorded within Australia. Traceability, especially lifetime traceability, is important for biosecurity purposes, including the management of disease and chemical residues. The NLIS can also be used to improve producer knowledge of stock that are processed and help with productivity and genetic selection.

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Traceability requirements

There are two types of NLIS (Sheep and Goat) tags available:

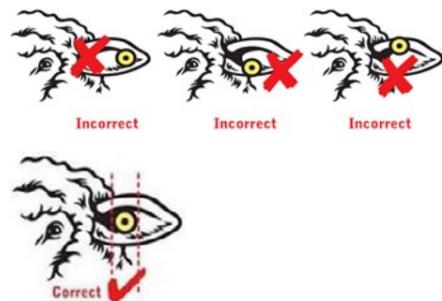
1. **NLIS (Sheep and goat) breeder tags are colour coded** to match the sheep industries 'year of birth' tag colour system and are used to permanently identify livestock before they leave their property of birth.
2. **NLIS (Sheep and goat) post-breeder tags are pink** and are used to permanently identify introduced livestock not already identified with an electronic tag, or that have lost their original tag.

It is very important that the correct NLIS tag is used, if not it will falsely indicate the breeding and life history of an animal.

From 1 January 2022 all sheep and non-exempt goats, regardless of age, must be identified with an electronic NLIS (Sheep) tag before leaving a Victorian property. Goat producers must use accredited NLIS (Sheep) tags and must specify when placing orders that the tags they are purchasing will be used to identify goats. Tagging using an NLIS (Sheep) tag is optional for some goat breeds in particular dairy goats.

For more information on exempt goats and to order NLIS tags online or to download an application form visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/national-livestock-identification-system

Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions when tagging your sheep or goats and use the recommended applicator to prevent tags falling out or being damaged. Applying tags correctly the first time avoids the cost and inconvenience of re-tagging.



⚠️ If you don't comply with the tagging regulations:

The consequences of not complying with the tagging regulations can result in being issued with an infringement notice, or court action for more serious or repeat offences.

As a livestock owner it will be your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the requirements that relate to you or seek assistance if you're not sure.

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION ASSURANCE (LPA)

If you plan on selling sheep or goats in any commercial capacity, your next step will be to gain your **Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) accreditation**.



The LPA program is Australia's red meat industry independently audited, on-farm assurance program. It is underpinned by seven key elements covering food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity. It provides evidence of livestock history and on-farm practices which are all significantly important when transferring livestock through the value chain. There is NO requirement to be LPA accredited as it is voluntary. However, if you are not part of the program you will not be able to access LPA National Vendor Declaration forms.

When applying for your LPA accreditation, you will be asked to complete some online training, developed to help you to better understand all practices required to meet LPA requirements and prepare for your accreditation assessment. You will need to complete the accreditation assessment and agree to abide by the LPA laws and standards.

To meet the requirements of LPA, each PIC must have a formal documented **Farm Biosecurity Plan** that addresses each of the following:

1. Manage and record the introduction and movement of livestock in a way that minimises the risk of introducing and/or spreading infectious diseases.

2. Where reasonable and practical, control people, equipment and vehicles entering the property, thus minimising the potential for property contamination and, if possible, keep a record of such movements.
3. Prevent and control animal diseases on-farm by regularly monitoring and managing livestock.

To find out more information, access training links and application forms, visit integritysystems.com.au/on-farm-assurance/accreditation or call the LPA helpline on 1800 683 111.

LPA farm records

LPA accredited producers need to maintain records that demonstrate compliance with LPA requirements. Things that you will need to keep a record of:

1. Property risk assessments
2. Animal treatments
3. Stock foods, grain, and pasture treatments
4. Preparation of livestock for dispatch
5. Livestock movement on and off the property
6. Chemical inventory
7. Biosecurity
8. Training

To find out more about what these records involve or to download a copy of the record book, visit mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/meat-safety-and-traceability/documents/livestock-production-assurance-record-keeping/22763-lpa-farm-records-book_web_links.pdf

LPA audits

When producers become LPA accredited, they make a promise to meet LPA's requirements whilst fulfilling their responsibilities in the ethical production and sale of red meat. Each year, On Farm audits are carried out to ensure farm management systems are complying with LPA Rules and Standards.

If you are selected for an audit, an LPA auditor will contact you to arrange a time to visit your farm and carry out the audit. They will be checking your on-farm records to make sure

they are being maintained and assess your on-farm practices for compliance with LPA Rules and Standards. Producers will receive an LPA Audit Notification Pack to assist in preparing for the audit which includes an audit checklist. By reviewing your on-farm practices against the checklist, you will identify any areas that may need attention before the audit is conducted.

To access a copy of the LPA audit checklist visit mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/meat-safety-and-traceability/documents/livestock-production-assurance/record-keeping/lpa-audits/22790-lpa-audit-checklist_web.pdf

National Vendor Declarations (NVD's)

Once you have registered for LPA, you can then purchase National Vendor Declarations (NVDs).

NVDs are central to Australia's red meat integrity system, as they communicate the food safety status of every animal as they move along each point in the value chain—between properties, to saleyards and to processors.

The NVD can be kept as a physical copy as a book, a downloadable form, or an eNVD (Electronic National Vendor Declaration). The eNVD is the electronic version of an NVD that can be accessed online or via a mobile phone app and sent directly to the driver and receiver. The NVD must be completed correctly so that the purchasers are aware of the stock history, including having any Hormone Growth Promoters, Withholding Periods or Export Slaughter Intervals.

Together, the three elements, LPA, NVDs and NLIS, ensure the food safety, animal welfare, biosecurity and traceability of Australian red meat for our domestic and international customers.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Animal husbandry is the term used to describe the breeding, raising, and caring for animals. It is critical to have an understanding of the basic needs of animals before purchasing livestock.

Good husbandry, hygiene and proper nutrition are all essential to maintain farm and animal health. At a basic level, you should make sure you:

- Have an appropriate living environment with suitable facilities for the type of livestock
- Identify your soil type and pasture species
- Understand seasonal changes and challenges and general livestock nutrition and mineral requirements
- Provide a clean and sufficient daily water supply
- Have time available to care for your animals

Living environment and facilities

As a livestock owner it will be your responsibility to provide livestock with appropriate living conditions suited to their needs and facilities for management activities.

Throughout the year there are several livestock management events that you will need to conduct and will require strong and sturdy facilities. This may be marking or weaning lambs, vaccinating, drenching, or shearing. When deciding what type of livestock to purchase, it is important to consider all the current facilities you have on your farm, the costs associated with installing additional, or fixing current infrastructure such as yards and sheds to adequately maintain the animal's health and welfare.

Maintaining an environment for your stock that minimises health and safety risks is essential. The potential factors that may pose as a health or welfare risk to your stock could include factors such as pests, environmental hazards or waste materials. For example, unmaintained fencing may cause the stock physical harm or be a risk factor for stock escaping their designated paddock.

Providing shade and shelter through trees and shrubs and infrastructure, can compensate for the loss of available grazing area. An animal's energy requirement can almost double in colder weather, just to maintain body heat. Shelter can provide a warmer microclimate, reducing energy use and the need for supplementary feed and can also improve survival rate of newborns.

Pasture, nutrition, mineral requirements

The feed an animal consumes has huge impacts on their growth and performance. Livestock nutritional requirements vary and are influenced by factors such as age, sex, breed, breeding stage and environment.

It is important for livestock producers to develop a basic understanding of these nutritional requirements as it can greatly assist with management decisions.

Pasture availability and quality will determine whether additional feed and/or mineral supplements are required.

For example, during periods of low pasture availability and quality, certain minerals may need to be supplemented to meet nutritional requirements.

To find out more about livestock pastures visit farmstyle.com.au/news/pastures-livestock-small-farms

Livestock may also require the supplementation of certain macro and micro minerals if their diet does not provide them enough to keep them healthy and free of illness. You can often provide these supplements to livestock as loose licks, lick blocks or vaccinations that contain the required minerals and decrease the likelihood of health issues occurring. For example, a ewe suffering from a calcium deficiency (Hypocalcaemia) during the third trimester can result in death which is a highly preventable health issue and economic loss. It is also important to consider the effects of mineral excess in the diet, which can also cause issues. Providing your stock with a nutritionally well-balanced diet that meets their requirements, will help prevent health issues from occurring.

For more information on livestock feeding and nutrition visit mla.com.au/research-and-development/livestock-production/livestock-nutrition

To find out more about mineral deficiencies in sheep and goats and how to identify them visit mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/diseases/nutritional/mineral-deficiencies

Water

It is important to know that livestock require copious amounts of clean, fresh water. Failure to provide water that is suitable and plentiful not only affects production and health but could be considered an animal welfare offence.

Your water source could include dams, rivers, creeks, channels, ground water such as bores, wells, or public supply. It is important to assess your water source to make sure it is suitable for livestock to drink.

Livestock can be sensitive to water taste and odour, and may reduce water intake if the water is unfavourable, potentially leading to a decrease in livestock performance (e.g. decreased weight gain) and an increase in health issues (e.g. salmonella infection).

Issues with water quality could occur due to its chemical properties (pH), or physical causes (salt level, algae). Some of these issues may be easy to identify and recognise, while others may need more research and require scientific testing. Water quality tests should be carried out annually while water quantity checks should be carried out weekly or even daily during hot periods.

Find out more on water quality by visiting the following links:

agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/water-quality-livestock

dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/111348/water-for-livestock-interpreting-water-quality-tests.pdf

vff.org.au/check-your-livestocks-water-quality

Time management

Estimating how much free time you have available to spend caring for your animals is something that should be considered prior to buying livestock. As an owner, you will have to make time to regularly check your stock's health and welfare, the feed availability and water supply.

The time that will be required will depend on the type of livestock you choose to buy and the management systems you choose to undertake.

Livestock requirements may be more time consuming during certain periods of the year. As owners you should ensure you are prepared and able to give the time required or be prepared to employ an experienced individual to undertake these tasks.

SHEEP AND GOAT HANDLING

The key to effective and low stress stock handling is understanding livestock behaviour. By understanding how your stock may react to your movements and actions, you are likely to be able to carry out management tasks in an effective manner that minimises stress to both you and your animals.

In terms of facilities and owner safety, owning sheep or goats is a little less stressful in comparison to cattle. Landowners that are wanting to purchase sheep or goats must have suitably constructed yards and race. The positive to owning sheep or goats is being able to use portable yards, meaning that if your property does not have permanent yarding facilities you can still own livestock without having to pay for the installation of yards like you would for cattle. However, portable yards must be solid and established in a way that is safe for both humans and the livestock.

To find out more about sheep and goat behaviour and handling visit:

mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/extensions-training-and-tools/documents/fs04-understanding-goat-behaviour-and-handling-final.pdf

[sksheep.com/documents/ex_understanding_sheep_behaviour.pdf](https://www.sksheep.com/documents/ex_understanding_sheep_behaviour.pdf)

Sheep handling

Successful sheep handling depends on understanding the natural behaviour of sheep and taking advantage of this. Sheep have exceptional vision and tend to rely on this heavily rather than their hearing or smell. They are highly social flock animals who form a tight group and follow the leader. They develop relationships with sub-groups within a flock which can be used to an advantage when handling sheep. Sheep learn quickly and from a young age, so it is important for producers to let their sheep become familiar with them and the yards.

It is important to note that the isolation of a single sheep should be avoided. Isolated sheep can become frantic and injure their handlers or themselves.

To find out more about how to handle your sheep and other important management aspects to owning sheep visit [leadingssheep.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/mlasheephusbandrypracticesguide-1.pdf](https://www.leadingssheep.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/mlasheephusbandrypracticesguide-1.pdf)

Goat handling

The key to handling goats is understanding goat behaviour. This allows for handling techniques to be applied which optimise the welfare of both the goat and the handler.

As with sheep, vision, point of balance and flight zone are important considerations when handling goats. However, goats do behave differently to sheep and should not be expected to respond as they would when being handled.

Goats have a hierarchical or mob structure. Guiding the leaders in the mob will encourage the rest to follow. It is generally advisable not to rush goats but rather move them as fast as the slowest goat in the mob to allow them to become comfortable with the situation.

To find out more about handling goats visit [mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/extensions-training-and-tools/documents/fs04-understanding-goat-behaviour-and-handling-final.pdf](https://www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/extensions-training-and-tools/documents/fs04-understanding-goat-behaviour-and-handling-final.pdf)

Shearing

Selecting the breed of sheep that is right for your property is a very important consideration. Shearing is the process whereby the sheep's fleece is removed using mechanical shears. Sheep breeds that are grown for their wool (e.g. Merinos) are typically shorn once a year and it usually occurs in spring or summer. Training is required to do the job of shearing so you will need to hire a professional shearer.

If you are thinking more of having companion sheep that are there to purely keep the grass down, you are probably better off choosing one of the breeds that naturally shed their wool like a Dorper or a new breed that requires less shearing such as Australian Whites.

Shearing is listed under the Health and Welfare regulations you must follow when owning sheep. If you do not shear sheep that are producing wool, you will find that the health of the animal will decline. Things such as flystrike will be more prevalent and can cause a massive decrease in production and possible legal punishment.

To find out more information about typical husbandry practices required for sheep and goats visit [makingmorefromsheep.com.au/literature_129885/mla_sheep_husbandry_practices_guide.pdf](https://www.makingmorefromsheep.com.au/literature_129885/mla_sheep_husbandry_practices_guide.pdf)

ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

Animal welfare

Australian producers have always been conscious of the benefits of positive livestock welfare. However, the expectations of the community and international trading partners have placed greater emphasis on livestock welfare in the marketplace. It is important for livestock owners to show their commitment to animal welfare and ethical production of food and fibre.

Consumers are progressively demanding more transparency throughout the supply chain. Animal welfare legislation, along with standards and guidelines, underpins access to overseas markets and reinforces Australia's international leadership in livestock welfare.

Roles and responsibilities

As a livestock owner, you will have the responsibility of ensuring you have the knowledge, training, and skills to ensure the welfare of your animals. You will have an obligation to fulfill a duty of care for your animals which includes:

- Understanding, supporting and applying the best practice of animal welfare that aligns with legislation, codes of practice, guidelines and quality assurance programs.
- Ensuring that your animals do not impact adversely on other animals.

To find out more about animal welfare and Victorian guidelines visit [agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria](https://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria)

Health

Familiarising yourself with the healthy state of your animals and keeping an eye out for health warning signs, is an essential part of caring for livestock. Regular stock checks will help you become more attuned to their normal behaviours and to quickly become aware of any warning signs that your animals are becoming unwell, such as:

- Weight loss/loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Decreased or affected milk production (dairy)
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Abnormal movements (e.g. limping, difficulty standing or changes in stance)
- Swelling
- Nasal or eye discharge

It is a good idea to get to know the common sheep or goat diseases or health issues in your district and whether they are likely to affect your enterprise. An essential point to remember is that prevention contributes towards providing best care to your livestock and is less costly than treatment.

Victorian notifiable diseases

Notifiable diseases, when suspected by owners, vets or laboratories, must be reported within a defined time frame.

Livestock owners may recognise a disease is present in their stock by observing any of the following symptoms:

- High mortality rate or sickness in animals
- Sudden death
- Decreased milk production
- Rapid spread of illness through the flock/ herd
- Blisters, erosions, or ulcers in their mouth, on/around the muzzle, feet, udder and teats
- Excessive nasal discharge or salivation
- Nervous signs such as tremors, uncharacteristic aggression or paralysis
- Unusual disease symptoms
- Disease affects multiple species

How to notify?

There are three ways you can contact Agriculture Victoria's Chief Veterinary Officer when you suspect a notifiable disease.

1. Call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on **1800 675 888**
2. The **Notify Now app**, which allows users to send through high-quality geo-located photographs of affected animals, with the owner's details and Property Identification Code
3. Disease notification form [agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/notifiable-diseases](https://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/animal-diseases/notifiable-diseases)

Which can be emailed to cvo.victoria@agriculture.vic.gov.au or posted to:

Chief Veterinary Officer
Agriculture Victoria
475-485 Mickleham Rd
Attwood VIC 3049

Sheep and Goat health

Any stock arriving on your property present a risk of introducing disease, weeds and pests. Sheep and goats may appear healthy at the time of arrival; however, they could be carrying internal or external parasites or exotic weed seeds that are undetectable by the naked

eye and could pose a risk to the property and existing stock.

It is a good idea to have a dedicated containment zone for isolating new animals away from your existing livestock until you can be sure they are free of disease. This also includes your own stock which have returned from another property. It is also a good way for them to empty out so there is less chance of introducing unwanted weed seeds through excretion of them in faecal deposits throughout the property.

Livestock diseases can significantly impact on livestock productivity and profitability. These diseases can be infectious, nutritional, parasitic, or reproductive. A proactive approach to managing herd or flock health should be undertaken and include learning about the common livestock diseases that occur in your local area/region, developing a disease management plan and aiming for prevention rather than treatment.

For further information on sheep and goat diseases that may affect your stock visit mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/diseases

Should you be concerned with an animal's health status contact your district veterinarian and seek advice.

FOOTROT

Footrot is a highly contagious bacterial infection. It is more likely to occur in moist, warm environments, and you should suspect it when multiple animals are lame in multiple feet. An odour is often associated with foot rot described as a rotten cheese smell and can become flyblown during spring and summer. Preventing footrot is done through implementation of a biosecurity plan that may involve purchasing new stock from reputable producers, inspecting feet on arrival, running them through a chemical foot bath and placing them in quarantine (ideally until they have been through at least one moist warm period).

To find out more about Footrot visit mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/diseases/infectious/footrot

LICE

The most common lice affecting sheep and goats is body lice. You may see your animals scratching up against a fence or gate, biting their fleece or scratching with their hind leg, which can all be indications that lice is present in your flock/herd. It is important as a producer you understand the lifecycle of lice and how it survives and spreads. Attaining this knowledge will help you monitor lice populations and will improve decision making around eradicating lice.

GASTROINTESTINAL WORMS

Internal parasites are a major problem in Australian sheep and goats.

There are four types of worms that have a huge negative impact on production when not treated:

1. Brown stomach worm
2. Black scour worm
3. Barbers pole worm
4. Liver Fluke

When sheep and goats experience a high worm egg count and are infested, the damage is caused by a mechanical irritation of the tissue or obstruction of an organ.

Sheep and goats can become unwell when this occurs, and it can encourage external parasite infestations such as flies as the wool becomes dirty and a perfect environment for flies to lay eggs.

Worms are treated by giving the animals an oral medication called drench, however, worms generally develop resistance quickly to drench groups, meaning alternating between chemical groups is a must. Doing regular worm egg counts and following a management plan will help you overcome the potential for worm infestations and drench resistance forming in your flock. Be mindful that goats and sheep require different dosage rates and goats are only allowed certain drenches if their milk is being consumed by humans.

To find out more about this watch the following webinar: youtube.com/watch?v=HbT5kSDq6L4

To find out more on gastrointestinal worms in sheep and goats visit:

smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/em9055.pdf

paraboss.com.au/wormboss.php

JOHNE'S DISEASE (JD)

Johne's disease (AKA: Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD - sheep and goats)) is a chronic wasting disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium avium subsp. Paratuberculosis*. It invariably leads to the death of the animal. In Victoria, producers are encouraged to contact Agriculture Victoria if they suspect OJD is present in their stock so that they can be properly examined. In Victoria, OJD is a notifiable disease, meaning once a OJD case has been confirmed, Agriculture Victoria must be notified.

Clinical signs that would lead you to suspect OJD:

- Progressive weight loss
- Emaciation in older animals despite a good appetite
- Affected animals may also develop diarrhoea and bottle jaw

Owners of flocks at risk of infection with OJD can speak to their local vet about implementing a vaccination program with the vaccine Gudair.

To find out more about Johne's disease visit mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/diseases/infectious/johnes-disease

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD)

Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals including:

- Cattle
- Sheep
- Pigs
- Goats

This disease has the capacity to spread rapidly between animals through both direct and indirect contact. Signs can vary and are sometimes too subtle to detect.

An affected animal may appear depressed, have a fever or be exhibiting some or all of the following signs:

- Sores and blisters in the mouth, tongue and on the feet
- Profuse drooling and smacking lips
- Sudden and uncharacterised lameness
- Tendency to lie down and reluctance to move as a result of lameness
- Unwillingness to allow lambs to suckle in sheep

FMD is an exotic disease, meaning it is not present in Australia. Farm biosecurity plays a key role in protecting the Australian livestock industry from pests and diseases. It is a good idea for producers to develop a biosecurity plan fit for their farm to help safeguard them from any potential disease outbreaks such as FMD. Remaining vigilant is vital for serious diseases such as FMD and early detection is the key to minimising social and economic impacts.

FMD is a notifiable disease so if you suspect your livestock are infected with FMD, you are legally obligated to report it. This is due to the estimation that a large outbreak lasting 12 months in Australia would cost an estimated 16 billion dollars and most significantly impact Australia's agricultural export industry. Having a biosecurity plan at the farm level is important in reducing the impact of a potential outbreak.

If you suspect FMD is present in your stock, contact the 24hr emergency Animal Disease Hotline on **1800 675 888**

To find out more on FMD visit vff.org.au/campaign/foot-and-mouth-disease-resources

ANIMAL HEALTH DECLARATIONS

National Animal Health Declarations or National Vendor Declarations (NVDs) are a way for producers to provide information about the animal health status of their flocks and herds.

When purchasing livestock, buyers are legally required to ask for a copy of the NVD and use the information provided to determine the health risks that may be associated with the

animals offered for sale. This will decrease the likelihood of diseases or pests being brought onto your property and spreading throughout Victoria.

It is important for producers to fill these out correctly when selling stock and it is just as important to review the declaration properly when you receive livestock on your property and check if they have anything you need to consider for future sales such as Withholding Periods (WHP) or Hormone Growth Promoters (HGPs).

To find out more on Animal Health Declarations visit farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements

Health treatment records

Once you tick and sign the NVD form, you are agreeing to and guaranteeing that your farm practices meet Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) requirements. Your declaration must be backed up by accurate farm records. It is in livestock owners' best interests to keep a record book to record dates and types of treatments used and some important information about this treatment e.g. Withholding Periods and Export Slaughter Intervals. This is not a requirement; it is simply a guide that can be used to assist you in fulfilling your responsibilities as an LPA-accredited producer.

Download and print out a animal treatment record keeping sheet here: farmbiosecurity.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/generic-animal-treatment-record.pdf

BIOSECURITY

Biosecurity threats pose a significant risk to the productivity and prosperity of Victorian agriculture. Whether you own only a few head of livestock or hundreds, strong biosecurity practices are crucial to preventing and reducing introduction of diseases or pests. A well-resourced and functional biosecurity system is essential for the protection of Victoria's agricultural industries from exotic pests and diseases.

On-farm biosecurity planning

For landowners, biosecurity planning involves looking at all the biosecurity risks associated with your property and deciding how you are best going to mitigate these. It is important to document these in your biosecurity management plan. Things such as quarantining new stock for at least 21 days will help decrease the chance of a disease, weeds, or pests being introduced to your property.

These are great resources and templates available to assist you in this process:

integritysystems.com.au/globalassets/isc/pdf-files/lpa-documents/lpa-records-templates/biosecurity-recording-template.pdf

mla.com.au/research-and-development/biosecurity/farm-biosecurity

farmbiosecurity.com.au

A biosecurity plan involves addressing the potential biosecurity risk of people entering your property without authorisation. Anybody that enters your property must comply with your biosecurity management plan when they enter, whilst on your property and when they leave. Not complying with your biosecurity management plan is an offence and penalties apply.

The farm biosecurity website is a joint initiative of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia. This website has resources, information, and templates to guide you through creating your plan.

Having a biosecurity management plan is a requirement of your Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) accreditation. You do not need to submit your plan, just be able produce it if you are subject to an LPA audit.

Requirements for sheep and goat movements

Before sheep and goats can be moved, unless they are an exempt breed of goat, they must have an NLIS device and be recorded on the PIC.

A **coloured** NLIS device for animals leaving their property of origin.

A **pink** NLIS device for animals who have lost their original tag and are no longer running on the property they were born on.

Tags can be ordered over the phone or online at agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/national-livestock-identification-system/livestock-identification

Make sure you understand and follow animal welfare transport standards and know your obligations. These can be found at animalwelfarestandards.net.au

When selling stock, saleyards, abattoirs, and many producers legally require the movement record is an NVD. You may also be asked to supply a livestock health statement. You must ensure that both the NVD and Health declaration form are filled out properly. If you are unsure on how to fill out these forms you can visit integritysystems.com.au/on-farm-assurance/national-vendor-declaration-nvd for NVD's, or farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements for assistance with Health Declaration forms.

When buying sheep and goats, you **must** ensure they are tagged, that the supplier provides you with a movement record (NVD), and that they supply you with a sheep or goat health statement. Once you receive the purchased stock, you will be responsible for completing the NLIS transfer if purchased through a private sale. You must record the movement within 48 hours on the NLIS database. You will need to have the NLIS tag scanned for the number, or you will need to manually read the NLIS number on the outside of the tag and have the purchased stock moved to your PIC.

When purchasing the animals from a saleyard or an official sale such as AuctionsPlus, the agent will ensure the NLIS transfer is completed for you. Make sure you register and supply this information before bidding on stock.

Withholding Periods (WHP)

Most products used to treat stock for internal or external parasites or diseases have withholding periods (WHP). A product's WHP is the legal period required between treatment of stock and slaughter for domestic markets.

It is the length of time required to ensure that any chemical residue has fallen below the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) at time of slaughter. MRLs are the maximum chemical concentrations that are permitted in human foodstuffs. WHPs are legally binding and can be found on chemical/drug labels.

Export Slaughter Intervals (ESI)

Export Slaughter Interval (ESI) is the period that must lapse between chemical application to livestock and their slaughter for export. It is important to note that the WHP and ESI may differ in length making it of high importance that producers read the chemical label.

Livestock curfews

Livestock curfews refers to the time livestock are held off feed prior to transport and slaughter. This time helps to ensure the livestock are 'empty' for transport, which means they are cleaner during and after transport and at processing. Reducing faecal contamination during transport improves animal welfare, minimises pollution risks and decreases potential biosecurity risks such as weed seeds exotic to the purchaser's property. It also significantly improves food safety at processing.

Curfews can vary depending on supply chain requirements, making it important producers develop an understanding. For an example, lambs being consigned for slaughter with MSA (Meat Standards Australia) must be curfewed for a minimum of 12 hours and maximum of 48 hours prior to slaughter.

To find out more about curfews and transport visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/livestock-health-and-welfare/transport-and-care-of-livestock

Interstate movement of livestock

Requirements for movement of livestock may differ between states. For information on permits required for interstate movement of livestock please contact Agriculture Victoria or visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/moving-livestock-and-animals/interstate-livestock-movements

APPENDIX 1: MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST FOR LIVESTOCK OWNERS

The following table provides a checklist for landholders on recommended management practices and legislation requirements that people owning livestock in Victoria must comply with. To access the website resources, **scan or click on the QR code** to be taken to the respective web page.

CHECKLIST		
	Resource	Notes or tick-off
1. Before purchasing livestock		
Register for a Property Identification Code (PIC)		
Fencing is complete and stock proof		
Adequate water and infrastructure available		
Adequate handling facilities in place		
If you own sheep or goats, register with MLA to get LPA accredited		
2. Purchasing livestock		
Buying from an agent of saleyards		
Register for sale and supply PIC details: <i>When purchasing the livestock from a saleyard or an official sale such as AuctionsPlus, the agent will ensure the NLIS transfer is completed for you. Make sure you register and supply this information before bidding on stock</i>		
Buying stock via private sale		
At private sale, the buyer will be responsible for completing the NLIS transfer. You must record the movement within 48 hours on the NLIS database. You will need to have the livestock scanned with a scanner, or you will need to manually read the NLIS number on the outside of the tag.		
Ensure stock required have NLIS devices		
Ensure the vendor provides you with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An NVD waybill or a movement record An animal health declaration 		
Register for a NLIS producer account		

Buying stock via private sale (cont.)		
If buying livestock privately, organise to borrow/purchase an NLIS reader to scan tags		
3. Transporting livestock		
Are the animals fit to load and transport		
Will the journey meet livestock movement codes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel timeframes Time off water? 		
4. On arrival of livestock		
Scan NLIS devices and complete the database transfer of all privately purchased animals		
Follow your biosecurity management plan for farm inputs (e.g. quarantining livestock in yard to reduce weed seed risk, parasite risk, and to ensure stock health)		
5. Ongoing livestock management		
Welfare/health checks		
Vaccinations/parasite control		
Supplementary feeding		
Fencing, water and feed monitoring/maintenance		
6. Before selling		
Ensure livestock have NLIS device attached and/or replace lost tags		
Complete an NVD waybill or a movement record		
Complete a health statement		
Check the stock: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are they fit to load? Are they healthy and well? 		

6. Before selling (cont.)		
Check withholding periods and export slaughter intervals		
7. Industry accreditation renewal		
Renew your LPA accreditation every three years. This is a 3-step process:		
1. Review LPA learning modes		
2. Complete assessment		
3. Complete LPA declaration and obtain LPA certificate		

APPENDIX 2: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In the table below you can find additional resources focusing on sheep and goats.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	
Resource Name	Website
Sheep	
Understanding sheep behaviour	sksheep.com/documents/ex_understanding_sheep_behaviour.pdf
Sheep	agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/sheep
Basic nutrition for sheep	nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/sheepfeed.mlc.pdf
Sheep husbandry guide	leadingsheep.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/mlasheephusbandrypracticesguide-1.pdf
Body condition scoring sheep	lils.nsw.gov.au/regions/south-east/latest-news-and-newsletters/newsletters/newsletter-issues/2018/may-2018/animal-health-update-may-2018
Goats	
Useful goat resources	australianboergoat.com.au/useful-resources
Farming goats for beginners	roysfarm.com/goat-farming
Understanding goats	mla.com.au/extension-training-and-tools/going-into-goats/factsheets
Farm Biosecurity Plan template	integritysystems.com.au/globalassets/isc/pdf-files/lpa-documents/lpa-records-templates/lpa-06-lpa-on-farm-biosecurity-plan-template-form.pdf



Victorian
Farmers
Federation



**stock
sense**

Farrer House
Level 3, 24 Collins Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

P 1300 882 833
E info@vff.org.au
www.vff.org.au