

7 March 2013

CONSULTATION OPENS ON CATTLE AND SHEEP WELFARE STANDARDS

A 60-day public consultation period opens today on the draft Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle and for Sheep.

The purpose of the welfare standards is to create improved and nationally consistent rules for the care and management of livestock across all farming enterprises in Australia.

Animal Health Australia's (AHA) Executive Manager for Market Access Support, Dr Kevin de Witte, said the consultation was an important opportunity for livestock producers and the wider community to have a say on significant welfare issues relating to cattle and sheep.

"At the end of the development process, the standards will be incorporated into legislation and become the legal requirements for livestock welfare, enforced by all the states and territories of Australia," Dr de Witte said.

"The welfare standards cover the full range of on-farm cattle and sheep management practices where welfare is a consideration, such as castration, dehorning and tail docking. However live exports, saleyards, abattoirs and domestic transport are not included in these standards and are covered by their own separate arrangements."

AHA is seeking views on how the draft welfare standards will help protect the welfare of cattle and sheep. Also open for comment is the associated Regulation Impact Statement, which aims to demonstrate the need for the standards, and identifies the key costs and benefits for cattle and sheep, as well as for producers, government and the wider community.

"These consultation documents have been under development for some time through a collaborative and scientifically based process involving government, industry and animal welfare groups," Dr de Witte said.

"I would encourage all interested members of the community to have their say."

The standards and guidelines will replace the current Model Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Cattle and Sheep, with the main difference being that the new standards are based on the latest knowledge and technology and will be adopted into legislation. The development of the standards and guidelines is a government and industry initiative coordinated by AHA which will ensure the welfare of cattle and sheep in Australia.

The public consultation period on the draft Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle and for Sheep closes on 6 May 2013.

Visit www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au for further details and to download the relevant documents.

Email cattle submissions to publicconscattle@animalwelfarestandards.net.au and

Email sheep submissions to publicconssheep@animalwelfarestandards.net.au

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