



Financial Assistance Measures for Ovine Johne's Disease in Victoria

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The Minister for Agriculture has approved financial assistance for owners of ovine Johne's disease (OJD) affected flocks, after considering the recommendations of the Sheep and Goat Compensation Advisory Committee and the Victorian OJD Advisory Committee.

The financial assistance measures in Parts 1 to 3 were made available to all affected producers in October 2003.

With the introduction of the national Assurance Based Credit (ABC) Scheme for OJD on 1 July 2004, the Minister has accepted the recommendation of the Committees to limit the availability of financial assistance in accordance with Part 4. Industry funds are thereby limited to producers who choose to responsibly manage the risk of OJD.

Part 1. Financial assistance for owners of Infected flocks

The assistance aims to support the control of OJD in Victoria, by helping owners of 'Infected' flocks make informed decisions about the best approach to deal with OJD. This assistance is for on-farm disease management and minimisation strategies.

The package involves:

- i. a subsidy of up to \$3000 for professional advice to affected producers, to allow informed decisions about the management of OJD on their property;
- ii. a subsidy of \$50 per test-pool for undertaking an Infected Flock Profile;
- iii. subsidisation of OJD vaccine for either:
 - 50% of the purchase price of vaccine for all non-slaughter lambs each year for 3 years, or
 - 100% of the purchase price of vaccine for 25% of the whole flock if the whole flock is vaccinated (ie a one-off payment).

In an average flock, the assistance measures are likely to amount to around \$10,000.

Professional advice to owners of infected flocks

All owners of infected flocks are entitled to payment of up to \$3,000 for professional advice to allow informed decisions about the management of OJD on their property.

This advice may be provided by (one or more) expert(s) with qualifications in veterinary science, agriculture or financial planning.

The aim of the advice should be to produce either an officially approved Property Disease Management Program (PDMP) or Property Disease Eradication Program (PDEP). A Property Disease Management Program should address:

- the minimisation or removal of risk of transmission to neighbouring properties;
- the reduction of pasture contamination on the affected property;
- control or reduction of the level of infection on the property; and if applicable
- establishment of low-risk sheep for production purposes.

Investigation in an Infected flock

An Infected Flock Profile (IFP) test is part of an epidemiological investigation that can provide information on the distribution and level of infection within the flock.

By capturing the profile of infection in the flock, the IFP can be used to facilitate the identification, isolation and removal of high-risk mobs from the infected property. This limits the spread of infection within and from the property. The IFP may also be used to identify low-risk sheep for trading purposes.

Development of an IFP is also particularly useful where infection is likely to have been recently introduced, or is likely to be present at a low prevalence, or is likely to be unevenly distributed between subgroups on the property, with some mobs unlikely to be infected.

For maximum effectiveness, an IFP should occur as soon as possible after the diagnosis of OJD is confirmed.

The maximum number of pooled faecal samples for which the subsidy can be provided is 2% of the total number of adult sheep in the flock. For example, in a flock of 4,000 sheep, a maximum of 80 test pools will qualify for the \$50 subsidy. Infected flock profiling may be carried out over time. In the example quoted, the 80 test pools available for subsidy could be split over two or three years.

OJD vaccination in an Infected flock

Assistance is available for owners of infected flocks who choose to vaccinate against OJD. Financial assistance for vaccination is at a subsidy of either:

- (a) 50% of the purchase price of the vaccine for vaccination of all non-slaughter lambs each year for 3 years, or
- (b) 100% of the purchase price of the vaccine for 25% of the whole flock (if the whole flock is vaccinated) for one year only.

For example, in a flock of 4,000 sheep producing 1,000 lambs per year, two options are available for subsidisation. If the producer chooses to vaccinate the whole flock, a one-off subsidy can be paid for 100% of the vaccine cost for 1,000 sheep. Alternatively, if the producer chooses to vaccinate lambs only, a yearly payment of 50% of the cost of vaccine for the non-slaughter lambs born each year for three years is available.

Part 2. Financial assistance for flocks suspected to be infected

The financial assistance package also aims to support owners of flocks that may be at risk of becoming infected with OJD. The risk may be due to a neighbouring infected flock, or to the introduction of sheep from an infected flock. The following financial assistance is available to owners of flocks that are suspected to be infected:

- i. A subsidy of up to \$500 is available to allow for informed decision making about testing and vaccination strategies. Professional advice is to be provided by SheepMAP-accredited veterinarians.
- ii. A vaccine subsidy, as for infected flocks, is available to owners of flocks that are suspected to be infected that test their flocks to resolve suspicion of infection.

If testing identifies infection in the flock, the financial measures in Part 1 are available (note that the total subsidy available for professional advice is capped at \$3,000).

Part 3. Sheep slaughtered to obtain a diagnosis of OJD in a flock

Where a small number of sheep or goats is destroyed for the purpose of obtaining a diagnosis of OJD, or as part of an official investigation, compensation is paid at the rate of \$45/head for ewes; \$27/head for wethers; \$27/head for lambs; and \$180/head for rams.

Further information

For details on how to apply for these assistance measures, please contact your local DPI animal health staff.

Further information about OJD can be obtained from animal health staff at your nearest DPI office or on the DPI web site: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/farming/OJD>

This Information Note was originally developed by Andrew Cameron and was previously published in September 2006.

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