

# BIOSECURITY FOR PRODUCERS AGISTING OR LEASING

Producers agisting livestock, leasing a block or making their land available for others to run livestock should consider their biosecurity risks when entering into an agreement. This is particularly important for managing animal health, or maintaining certification for voluntary risk programs like Johnne's Beef Assurance Score (J-BAS). Below are some tips to remember before any stock are moved.

## Conduct a pre-agreement inspection

Ideally this should be done in person, or by a trusted representative sent to inspect the property, such as a stock agent and can include the following:

- Inspect infrastructure to ensure it is fit for purpose. This includes fencing, yards and livestock handling facilities.
- Enquire after contaminated sites or potential chemical exposure. Managing chemical residues is one of your obligations under the Livestock Production Assurance program (LPA) and when using National Vendor Declarations (NVDs). For more information on contaminated sites contact your relevant state department.
- Assess the property for weeds harmful to livestock. Have a plan to prevent weeds being introduced when stock return from the agistment property.
- Assess the availability and quality of the water. Conduct testing if you have concerns.
- Consider any other livestock on the property and assess the risk of disease that could arise from contact between different herds or flocks.

## Request an Animal Health Declaration

Landowners can request an Animal Health Declaration<sup>1</sup> when moving or accepting livestock which provide information about the other party's herd or flock animal health status. There are declarations available for beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats and South American camelids. The Cattle Health Declaration<sup>2</sup> includes the J-BAS score. Ensure it is equal to or is higher than your score.

## Prepare a written agreement

In the event of a dispute, your written agreement is your greatest ally. This document should define:

- Who is responsible for the health of the livestock, including any procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak and natural disaster.
- Who is responsible<sup>3</sup> for updating the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database. This may depend on state or territory legislation. The land owner may need to supply NVDs for movements of livestock on and off their property, using their PIC (see 'LPA requirements').
- Who is responsible for supplying NLIS tags or devices for any livestock born on the property or who lose their identification.
- Agreed minimum biosecurity requirements, including documentation, quarantine periods, and disease and parasite treatments.

<sup>1</sup> [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements/](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/toolkit/declarations-and-statements/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.lbn.org.au/2017/10/16/whats-the-go-with-cattle-health-declarations](http://www.lbn.org.au/2017/10/16/whats-the-go-with-cattle-health-declarations)

<sup>3</sup> [www.lbn.org.au/2018/01/recording-movements-on-the-nlis-database](http://www.lbn.org.au/2018/01/recording-movements-on-the-nlis-database)

## When sending livestock to agistment or leased block:

- Prepare an Animal Health Declaration and NVD and provide this to the landowner.
- Check legislative requirements in your state with respect to moving livestock (cattle tick requirements, record keeping requirements, NLIS requirements).
- Prepare NLIS movement documents. If livestock are being transported interstate, check with the destination state or territory to ensure the livestock meet entry requirements and are accompanied by the appropriate documentation.
- If the landowner is LPA accredited, all livestock introduced on to or dispatched from the PIC must be accompanied by an accurately completed NVD which must be kept with the landowners records for a minimum of 3 years (or in accordance with statutory requirements; or for the duration of livestock on a PIC whichever is the longest period).
- Contact local government veterinarians at the destination to discuss potential disease risks present in the area.
- Ensure livestock are fit to travel in accordance with the [Fit to Load Guidelines](#)<sup>4</sup>.
- Ensure the movement of livestock from your property to the agistment/lease property has been entered into the NLIS database.

## When returning livestock to their home property

- Isolate returning stock from other animals. If you can't use a dedicated quarantine yard, consider confining stock to a smaller, secure paddock. Isolation times depend on the conditions or weeds being managed. The incubation period for many endemic diseases is 21 days.
- Treat stock for internal and external parasites and monitor closely for signs of disease whilst in isolation.
- Monitor for germination of new weeds in the isolation yard/paddock. Returning stock will empty out weed seeds whilst in isolation, minimising their spread to the broader property.
- Ensure the movement of livestock back to your property has been entered into the NLIS database.

<sup>4</sup> [www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/transportation](http://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/animal-health-welfare-and-biosecurity/transportation)



## LPA requirements

All LPA accredited PIC's must comply with the [LPA Rules and Standards](#)<sup>5</sup>, which includes having a property biosecurity plan. For LPA accredited producers who are agisting stock or leasing country, there are two options:

1. If the landowner is also LPA accredited (and therefore who's PIC is registered with the LPA program) the agistee/lessee can be supplied with the landowners NVD's for moving animals off the property for sale, slaughter or to another property. It is then the landowner's responsibility to meet LPA standards, including having a property biosecurity plan. This plan should include any agisted livestock as part of its risk management.
2. The agistee/lessee can obtain their own, separate LPA accreditation for the existing PIC, and access their own NVDs for that PIC. This additional LPA account in the agistees/lessee's name is then also subject to the LPA standards and is auditable. The agistee/lessee will need to have their own biosecurity plan for this property. This option will likely be most suitable for long-term lease agreements, where the lessee is managing the entire property, or where the landowner is not LPA accredited. For an agistee/lessee to access an existing LPA account or create their own LPA account, a third party authorisation form will need to be completed and returned to LPA administration. Call the LPA hotline on 1800 683 111 or email [lpa@mla.com.au](mailto:lpa@mla.com.au)

The full article on this topic can be found on the [LBN website](#)<sup>6</sup>. Producers who require further information on any topic within this article can contact their [LBN state manager](#)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> [www.mla.com.au/meat-safety-and-traceability/red-meat-integrity-system/about-the-livestock-production-assurance-program/lpa-rules--standards](http://www.mla.com.au/meat-safety-and-traceability/red-meat-integrity-system/about-the-livestock-production-assurance-program/lpa-rules--standards)

<sup>6</sup> [www.lbn.org.au/2017/11/biosecurity-for-producers-agisting-or-leasing-country](http://www.lbn.org.au/2017/11/biosecurity-for-producers-agisting-or-leasing-country)

<sup>7</sup> [www.lbn.org.au/regional-managers](http://www.lbn.org.au/regional-managers)