

FINAL REPORT

Emergency Disease Preparedness Review

PROJECT CODE: 2020-1013

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DATE SUBMITTED: 29 October 2020

DATE PUBLISHED: 29 October 2020

PUBLISHED BY: AMPC

The Australian Meat Processor Corporation acknowledges the matching funds provided by the Australian Government to support the research and development detailed in this publication.

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this project was to review and provide editing recommendations on the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*. Review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* has provided recommended observations and updates to the manual to align with current practices and regulatory requirements. If considered and implemented, these changes would enable the industry to respond quickly and effectively as the manual requirements and recommendations would align with current meat production and also allow companies and the industry to act as a whole to reduce business risk:

- / to personnel through WHS exposure
- / financially incurred through quarantining of the premises
- / to reputation with producers, suppliers and customers; and
- / to market access and trade

Following completion of the review process, findings were presented to Industry including AMIC and AMPC for consideration during the current review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this project was to review and provide editing recommendations on the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*. This manual was last reviewed in 2007, however over the last 13 years commercial production has changed:

- / supply of stock has become more integrated,
- / environment management (i.e. effluent and runoff management) has advanced to aid energy production, and
- / advancements in the understanding of disease transmission and destruction have occurred.

Animal Health Australia (AHA), on behalf of their member organisations and stakeholders, manages the review process of AUSVETPLAN. When a manual is identified for review, AHA also draws on the AUSVETPLAN registry of reviewers and may also seek expressions of interest from people with the required expertise to join the writing group. This project will allow AMPC to provide the report to industry to allow them to advocate for review and update of the manual in line with current practices and regulation.

3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The aim of this project was to review and provide editing recommendations on the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The manual was compared against publicly available state and commonwealth government documents (e.g. publicly available policies and procedures for an emergency animal disease response), the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and current industry practices. Interrelated AUSVETPLAN documents (e.g. disease strategies) were also considered. Two types of review findings were presented:

1. Review observations - broader observations based on the review of the current *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* for consideration in any future development or revision of the AUSVETPLAN.
2. Editing recommendations - editing recommendations on the current *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* based on AHA's *Providing Comments on AUSVETPLAN*.

5.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES

The aim of this project was to review and provide editing recommendations for the current *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*. As outlined in the methodology, the review process identified a number of further observations and considerations for any review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*. This process resulted in:

1. editing recommendations on the current *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* based on AHA's *Providing Comments on AUSVETPLAN*.
2. broader observations based on the review of the current *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* for consideration in any future development or revision of the AUSVETPLAN.
3. recommendations for industry based on review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* to improve the overall response to any potential future emergency disease outbreak.

The findings of the process have been presented to AMIC for inclusion in the current review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*.

If considered and implemented, these changes would enable the industry to respond quickly and effectively as the manual requirements and recommendations would align with current meat production and also allow companies and the industry to act as a whole to reduce business risk:

- / to personnel through WHS exposure
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6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1 AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing – Review Observations

1. The manual is written for two main audiences – ‘*emergency disease decision-makers at state or national level who are unfamiliar with meat processing operations*’ and ‘*meat processing industry staff and veterinarians who need specific information on how to perform operational tasks to exclude, contain or eradicate the disease, and how to prepare contingency plans for their specific enterprises*’. The knowledge and operational experience across these two groups is diverse. The current manual does not meet the current needs of both groups and aims of the manual. Reviews and revisions need to ensure they meet the needs of both target audiences and reflect the current knowledge and operational experience of both audiences.
2. The AUSVETPLAN structure requires the use of multiple manuals in an EAD incident. If operating within the same structure, future reviews and revisions need to consider whether information currently captured in other manuals should only be housed there, or whether inclusion of information specific to meat processing should be included in the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* to minimize the volume of documents that need to be accessed.
3. The manual does not reflect regulation based on outcomes and changes in industry practice - Since 2005 both commonwealth and state government regulation of meat processing plants has been based on outcomes in line with CODEX principles. This means that the businesses have taken ownership of their processes and procedures and as such individualized them. There have also been changes in legislation, including Work Health and Safety (WHS), that need to be reflected in this document.
4. Consider the usability of the manual, language and literacy – Over the past 13 years, the understanding of adult language and literacy levels has continued to advance. Given the target audience for this document is wide and language and literacy levels are also broad, it is highly recommended that the manual be drafted based on plain English and that readability of the manual is considered. Consistency in use of language and terminology also needs to be considered. For example, the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* uses both ‘co-product’ and ‘byproduct’ throughout the manual. However, the usage of these terms does not always align with the industry use and understanding of this terminology.
5. The manual is heavily focused on cattle, sheep and pigs - Since the last update of the manual in 2007, the goat meat industry has expanded from \$61.6 million in 2007 to \$235.8 million in 2019 (MLA). It is recommended that the manual be expanded to include goats as a major abattoir species.

6. The manual is heavily focused on the operations of export abattoirs - It is recommended that future redrafts give further consideration to the operation of domestic abattoirs as well as how the manual would be applied to mobile abattoirs.

6.2 AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing – Recommended Edits

There were a high number of editing recommendations that have been provided to AMIC for consideration in the review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*.

Key areas for review and update include simple updates/reviews based on changes in figures and links that may have changed since the last review. These include:

1. Updates to standards and references – e.g. legislation, standards and codes of practice cited throughout the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* and its appendices should be updated to reflect current legislation, standards and codes of practice.
2. Updates to links – e.g. *the AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* include numerous links to relevant pages in the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code*. Based on the links and chapter numbers cited, the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* has changed in structure since the last review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*. The *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* is also updated annually to incorporate new and revised standards that have been adopted (however note that due to COVID-19 and postponement of the 88th General Session until May 2021, the current version of the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* is the 2019 edition).
3. Accuracy and currency of figures - e.g. As the manual was last updated in 2007, the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* currently cites statistics from 2005 to demonstrate the significance of the industry. These should be updated to reflect the current industry.

More significant changes identified during this process can be broadly grouped into four categories. These are:

1. Accuracy and currency of requirements - e.g. as noted above, the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* is also updated annually to incorporate new and revised standards that have been adopted (however note that due to COVID-19 and postponement of the 88th General Session until May 2021, the current version of the *OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code* is the 2019 edition). Updates have been captured in more recently reviewed AUSVETPLAN documents, but not in the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*. This results in the reader either utilizing out of date information from the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* or reading conflicting information if working across more than one AUSVETPLAN document. The *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* currently does not consider the requirements under the Australia Standard for Hygienic Production and Transport of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS4696), Work Health and Safety and Environmental legislation all of which are requirements of all

abattoirs nationally.

2. Practicality of implementation for the industry - e.g. recommendations and requirements around truck washing should consider practicality of the requirements as well as the current legislative and importing country requirements. The management of effluent and water run should also be considered in line with Industry initiatives for energy production and environmental requirements.
3. Level and consistency of information provided - e.g. sections 1.21 and 1.2.2 provide information on key diseases. These are presented in paragraph form however the key areas covered, and information provided on each disease is inconsistent. It is recommended that future review should consider how disease summaries are presented from a user-friendly approach and also the relevance and consistency of the information given. For example, all sections could cover, at a minimum, clinical signs, transmission pathways, the meat product affected and zoonotic risk.
4. Provision of supporting materials - e.g. where readers are required to undertake a specific role or task, clear and easily accessible information such as checklists would be beneficial. Where the document refers to additional resources and support materials, these need to be easily identifiable, accessible and current.

The review process also identified a number of key areas, in addition to the update of the manual, that could be investigated by industry as ways to improve emergency disease preparedness. These included:

1. Improve state and federal government decision makers knowledge and understanding of the meat processing operational environment through initiatives that build understanding and knowledge of the operational environment.
2. Improve the training structure and availability of training by ensuring relevant EADP training is accessible to all company staff who have a role in EADP (e.g. company decision makers, plant management and livestock staff), not just QA staff. Consideration should also be given to further EAD simulation exercises

Following completion of the review process, the findings were presented to Industry including AMIC and AMPC for consideration during the current review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing*.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of the *AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Meat Processing* has provided recommended observations and updates to the manual to align with current practices and regulatory requirements. If considered, these changes would enable the industry to respond quickly and effectively as the manual requirements and recommendations would align with current meat production and also allow companies and the industry to act as a whole to reduce business risk:

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