



**SAFEMEAT**

**Annual Report 2017-18**

## Message from the Chair

Dear Stakeholder

I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report for SAFEMEAT for the 2017-18 financial year.

SAFEMEAT continues to promote best practice management systems and implement strategies for the safe and hygienic production of red meat and pork in Australia. Its success can be measured through progress made on key initiatives such as the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS), National Vendor Declarations (NVD) and the adoption of important industry programs such as Livestock Production Assurance (LPA), Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance (APIQ<sup>✓</sup>®), National Saleyards Quality Assurance (NSQA), National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) and Dairy Food Safety.

This Annual Report describes SAFEMEAT's progress in delivering against its role and summarises critical policy issues and work programs overseen by SAFEMEAT during 2017-18. These are reflected in the SAFEMEAT Business Plan.

A number of key outcomes during the year were:

- completing work on the Implementation Pathway established as an outcome of the SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review and the Steering Group's report titled '*Towards an Integrated Integrity System*' including recommendations related to committee arrangements resulting in the establishment of the SAFEMEAT Policy Group and a reassessment of how future short term activity will be undertaken, currently the only remaining recommendation is a review of the governance arrangements for Partners itself
- considering the Sheep Traceability Working Group's action plan to implement the recommendations outlined in the *Sheepcatcher II* Report to improve Australia's traceability system
- introduction of closer working arrangements with jurisdictions including the Commonwealth through the establishment of the Jurisdictional Traceability Group which reports to Policy Group
- holding a Jurisdictional Traceability Workshop to provide advice to the National Biosecurity Committee on a range of issues related to reform of the traceability systems including data collection and management
- introduction of mandatory arrangements for PigPass from 1 February 2018 following Agriculture Ministers' Forum (AGMIN) endorsement in 2017
- finalising the use of the three-hole punch as a permanent identifier for Silirum® vaccinated cattle.

SAFEMEAT continues to work through challenges relating to review or development of regulatory and commercial structures that are of interest to members and stakeholders and welcomes their contribution to our deliberations through a combination of trust, good will and common sense.

SAFEMEAT has faced its own challenges this year, through the transition in its governance structure, with a number of sub-committees disbanded and new groups formed. In particular I would like to welcome representatives on the SAFEMEAT Policy Group, the Sheep Traceability Group and the Jurisdictional Traceability Group.

As has been stated in previous annual reports, SAFEMEAT continues to be the most important vehicle for managing food safety and product integrity issues across the whole red meat, pork and livestock industries in Australia. The success of SAFEMEAT is due to the ongoing commitment and co-operation of its partner members.

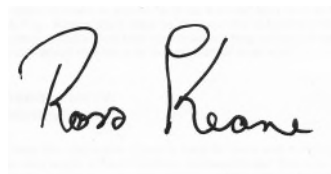
I cannot stress enough the importance of maintaining the SAFEMEAT structure in times when there are significant issues of concern around animal safety and welfare. In the 2017-18 FY there have been a number of concerns raised with SAFEMEAT including the status of animals as fit-for-transport, and the currency of SAFEMEAT protocols for stock feeding in drought conditions.

Recent biosecurity incidents in a number of non-livestock agricultural sectors has highlighted the need for ongoing scrutiny of the SAFEMEAT Incident Response Manual to ensure it is both accurate and responsive. As a strong industry and government partnership, we need to remain vigilant, focussed and committed to ensure we stay abreast of current and emerging issues so that the system can be activated at short notice if this becomes necessary. Findings from the CowCatcher III exercise undertaken across all jurisdictions in June 2018 will provide timely and practical feedback on livestock incident traceability in Australia.

I would like to thank the SAFEMEAT Partnership and the member organisations for their continued commitment and contributions in 2017-18. I would also like to acknowledge Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd (MLA), Animal Health Australia (AHA), the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR), State and Territory jurisdictions, the various industry peak bodies, Integrity Systems Company (ISC) and the Secretariat for their considerable efforts made during the year. It is important that membership continues to be drawn from the senior levels within representative organisations to ensure SAFEMEAT objectives are able to be met.

In particular I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution to SAFEMEAT made by Dr Barbara Wilson, former CEO, Safe-Food Queensland to SAFEMEAT from 2003 to June 2018. I wish Dr Wilson well in her retirement.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ross Keane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'K'.

Ross Keane  
Chair  
20 December 2018

## Role of SAFEMEAT

The primary role of SAFEMEAT is to oversee and promote sound management systems to deliver safe and hygienic product to the market place. SAFEMEAT promotes rationalisation of regulation and standards within the industry, drives the implementation of strategies to ensure meat safety and hygiene and monitors industry performance in respect of these.

**SAFEMEAT's role**, specified in the Meat Industry Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), is to:

(a) work with the objective of establishing world best practice in ensuring the safety of red meat and pork products.

(b) ensure each meat industry sector implements sound management systems to ensure safe and hygienic product is delivered to the market place.

(c) ensure adequate and nationally consistent government standards and regulations relating to meat safety and hygiene.

(d) ensure that effective crisis management strategies are put in place by the appropriate meat industry sectors and, to this end, ensure that there is a fully integrated and effective communications network.

(e) monitor industry meat safety performance.

In undertaking this role SAFEMEAT works collaboratively with industry and governments to develop and provide relevant information about current and emerging meat safety and hygiene issues.

## SAFEMEAT Structure

SAFEMEAT Partners met on the following dates during 2017-18:

- 12 December 2017
- 26 June 2018

The SAFEMEAT Partnership membership is established under Schedule 4 of the MoU.

Member organisations and their representatives attending meetings in 2017-18 were:

- Chair – Mr Ross Keane
- Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd – Mr David Inall  
Mr David Losberg
- Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Mr Malcolm Thompson  
Dr David Cunningham and  
Dr Mark Schipp CVO
- Australian Livestock Exporters' Council – Mr Simon Westaway
- Australian Lot Feeders' Association – Ms Tess Herbert
- Australian Meat Industry Council – Mr Noel Kelson  
Mr Robert Barker  
Mr Patrick Hutchinson
- Cattle Council of Australia – Ms Margo Andrae for  
Mr Howard Smith
- Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (representing State/Territory Agriculture Departments) – Dr Allison Crook
- Safe Food Queensland (representing State/Territory Meat Industry Authorities) – Dr Barbara Wilson
- SheepProducers Australia – Mr Allan Piggott  
Ms Kat Giles

In addition, the following industry sectors are also represented:

- Australian Pork Limited –  
Ms Deb Kerr
- Goat Industry Council of Australia –  
Mr Rick Gates

Observers:

- Animal Health Australia –  
Ms Kathleen Plowman
- Australian Livestock and Property  
Agents Association –  
Mr Andy Madigan
- Australian Lot Feeders' Association  
Mr Christian Mulders
- Dairy Australia –  
Ms Susannah Tymms
- Australian Livestock Markets  
Association –  
Ms Stephanie Whitaker
- Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd –  
Mr Richard Norton  
Ms Jo Quigley  
Dr Jane Weatherley
- WoolProducers Australia –  
Mr Steven Harrison

Guests:

Mr Andrew Henderson  
Chair SAFEMEAT Policy Group  
Mr Warren Straw  
Victorian Department of Primary  
Industries  
Ms Narelle Clegg  
Australian Government Department  
Agriculture and Water Resources  
Mr Jim Paradice  
National Residue Survey

The SAFEMEAT Partnership is supported by the newly established Policy Group.

The Policy Group met on 11 October 2017, 1 March 2018 and 1 May 2018.

Policy Group was established by SAFEMEAT Partners to provide a consultative platform for industry and government stakeholders to:

- a) develop unified policy for the Australian meat industry's integrity systems
- b) form recommendations for SAFEMEAT Partners on the policy, standards, rules and strategic direction of the Australian meat industry's integrity systems
- c) provide advice to integrity program owners (eg Integrity Systems Company) on operational matters pertaining to program implementation and
- d) ensure collaborative approach to the delivery of safe and hygienic Australian meat to consumers.

In 2017-18 the Policy Group comprised the following industry and regulatory membership and representatives attending:

- Independent Chair –  
Mr Andrew Henderson

*Industry Members*

- Australian Dairy Farmers –  
Mr David Inall and
- Australian Livestock Exporters  
Council –  
Mr Simon Westerway
- Australian Livestock Markets  
Association –  
Ms Kate McGilvray
- Australian Livestock and Property  
Agents Association –  
Mr Andy Madigan
- Australian Lot Feeders' Association –  
Mr Christian Mulders and  
Mr Jeff House
- Australian Meat Industry Council –  
Mr Patrick Hutchinson and  
Mr Robert Barker
- Australian Pork Limited –  
Ms Deb Kerr and  
Mr Alister Oulton
- Australian Renderers' Association –  
Mr Dennis King
- Cattle Council of Australia –  
*yet to be confirmed*

- Goat Industry Council of Australia – Mr Rick Gates
- SheepProducers Australia – Mr John McGoverne

*Regulators*

- Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Dr David Cunningham
- PrimeSafe Victoria (representing State food authorities – Dr Brendan Tatham
- NSW Department of Primary Industry – Mr Peter Day and Mr David Cusack
- QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries – Mr Michael Lancaster
- Agriculture Victoria – Mr Ben Fahy
- Primary Industries and Regions SA – Ms Petra Lennon
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (TAS) – Mr Stuart Chilcott and Mr Chris Lyall
- Department of Primary Industry and regional Development WA – Mr Bob Vassallo and Ms Beth Green
- Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries NT – Mr Kevin de Witte and Mr Greg Crawford

*Required observers*

- Animal Health Australia – Mr Robert Barwell and Mr Simon Humphrys
- Australian Meat Processor Corporation – Ms Stella Lee and Mr Jonathon Vu
- Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority – Dr Jason Lutze
- Dairy Australia – Ms Susannah Tymms
- Integrity Systems Company – Ms Jo Quigley,

Dr Jane Weatherley and Mr Damon Holmes

- LiveCorp – *yet to be confirmed*
- Meat And Livestock Australia – Mr Ian Jenson and Mr Long Huynh
- National Residue Survey – Mr Jim Paradice and Mr David Cooke

*Regular Invited observers*

- Chair of SAFEMEAT Partners – Mr Ross Keane
- Chair of a number of SAFEMEAT Working Groups – Mr Bob Barwell

*Invited visitors and presenters*

11 October 2017 Policy Group meeting (Canberra):

- Chair of SAFEMEAT Executive – Mr Steve Bailey
- Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Mr Dugald MacLachlan, and (for part only) Ms Nicole Barnes and Ms Trysh Stone
- Dairy Goats Society of Australia – John Falkenhagen (part only)

*Invited visitors*

1 March 2018 Policy Group meeting (Canberra):

- Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Mr Taylor Duke

*Invited visitors and presenters*

1 May 2018 Policy Group meeting (Sydney):

*Presenters:*

- Australian Renderers' Association – Mr Andy Bennett and Mr Tim Juzefowicz
- Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Mr Alistair Davidson -

*Visitors*

- Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources – Mr Matthew Calverley

In line with recommendations from the SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review Report SAFEMEAT Partners continues to

consolidate the number of sub-committees and working groups it has to progress specific SAFEMEAT activities.

To increase the efficiency with which these groups conduct their business and to promote greater alignment with the newly formed Policy Group, where possible, groups reporting to Policy Group will be chaired by the Chair of Policy Group.

Where the task is of shorter duration it will be led by a Policy Group member with a subset of members and additional expertise if required.

In 2017-18 longer term groups included two recently established Traceability Groups both Chaired by Mr Andrew Henderson, Chair of Policy Group. Category of membership of the two groups is set out below:

#### **Sheep Traceability Group**

Chair: Mr Andrew Henderson

Membership

- Animal Health Committee (representing jurisdictions)
- State NLIS coordinator
- Australian Livestock and Property Agents
- Australian Meat Industry Council
- Integrity Systems Company
- SheepProducers Australia
- WoolProducers Australia
- Secretariat: SheepProducers Australia

#### **Jurisdictional Traceability Group**

Chair: Mr Andrew Henderson

Membership

- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Agriculture Victoria
- Primary Industries and Regions, SA
- Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (TAS) - DPIPW

- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, WA
- Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, NT
- Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
- Integrity Systems Company

A number of on-going groups met in the 2017-18 FY including the following Chaired by Mr Bob Barwell (Cattle Council of Australia):

- SAFEMEAT Bobby Calves Residue Solutions Taskforce
- Targeted Testing Working Group,
- Hormone Growth Promotant (HGP) Working Group and
- Three-hole punch Working Group.

A number of short term subgroups of Policy Group have been formed to review and provide advice to the October 2018 Policy Group meeting on possible ways forward for:

- recommendations from the Rodenticide Working Group Review Report, and
- NLIS non-regulatory statuses.

#### **SAFEMEAT Secretariat**

The SAFEMEAT Secretariat for 2017-18 was provided by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, 18 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra.

#### **Funding**

Funding to attend meetings and undertake projects is provided by the individual SAFEMEAT members.

Funding for the SAFEMEAT Secretariat is provided through Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd (MLA), the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC), LiveCorp and Australian Pork Ltd (APL).

The cost of running the Secretariat was \$200,000 for the 2017-18 financial year.

## **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN 2017-18**

Significant progress was made on implementing the recommendations of the SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review (the review), along with other activities aimed at streamlining and strengthening the integrity system, including:

- Review of SAFEMEAT Partners Terms of Reference
- Streamlining committee structures with appointment of Mr Andrew Henderson as Chair of and establishment of SAFEMEAT Policy Group, Jurisdictional Traceability Group and Sheep Traceability Working Group. Focusing on improving integrated systems delivery with Traceability Workshops being held to inform SAFEMEAT advice to the National Biosecurity Committee on reform of livestock traceability systems for consideration by the Agriculture Ministers' Forum late 2018
- CowCatcher III Traceability Exercise conducted to provide valuable feedback on NLIS capability.
- Strengthening on-farm risk management systems with recent changes to Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) to include Biosecurity and Animal Welfare requirements
- Initiating discussion with NT to achieve national consistency in use of the LPA NVD as a waybill .

### **Review of the SAFEMEAT Partners' Terms of Reference**

SAFEMEAT commenced a review of the SAFEMEAT Partners Terms of Reference to ensure that the Terms of Reference of SAFEMEAT Partners accurately reflect the current operations of SAFEMEAT, including alignment

with the revised governance structure agreed to by SAFEMEAT as part of the SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review. The review will also consider the operations of SAFEMEAT and identify any required modifications to ensure that the SAFEMEAT Partnership is effectively structured to meet the future needs of industry and government. Preliminary and final reports are expected to be available to SAFEMEAT Partners before the end of 2018.

### **Establishment of the SAFEMEAT Policy Group and Jurisdictional Traceability Group**

SAFEMEAT Policy Group has met three times in 2017-18 and progressed a number of activities required under its terms of reference including recommendations to Partners on progress of a number of tasks previously undertaken by the SAFEMEAT Executive Group including NLIS requirements in the live animal export trade; a review of non-regulatory NLIS statuses including Early Warning 1 (EW1) status access.

Policy Group also endorsed:

- changes to the NLIS Business Rules Table 14.9 to allow monitoring and tracing of cattle vaccinated against Johne's disease.
- a process for access to PigPass data for secondary purposes such as research similar to the endorsed access to NLIS data.
- a 12 months phase out period when there are changes to NVDs with the 2013 Goat NVD to cease on 1 March 2019.
- establishing a Conflict of Interest register for members
- Key Performance Indicators for secretariat support
- a new approach whereby working groups report to Policy Group with exception reporting to Partners.



### **Jurisdictional Traceability Group**

The Jurisdictional Traceability Group (JTG) met informally by teleconference on 22 May 2018 at the invitation of the Chair of Policy Group to discuss a way forward for progressing a number of outstanding matters referred from the previous Executive Group that required jurisdictional consideration as an initial step.

Since it was formally established the JTG has been actively engaged in progressing these issues.

In addition and via a request from the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) to the Chair of SAFEMEAT, the JTG is actively engaged in developing SAFEMEAT advice to NBC on priority and reform options related to livestock identification and traceability.

### **Jurisdictional Traceability Workshop**

In response to the urgent request in late May 2018 from NBC for SAFEMEAT Jurisdictional Traceability Group (JTG) advice, a JTG Workshop was held on 12 June 2018

The Workshop was called to discuss and develop options for NBC consideration, from a jurisdictional perspective, to deliver a number of specific traceability reforms including:

- nationally consistent data collection and entry requirements
- increasing industry compliance with livestock movement documentation, with a focus on building user engagement and a clear line of responsibility, and
- improving access to NLIS and NVD data for government and industry stakeholders
- harmonisation of NLIS requirements across all states and territories with a focus on current inconsistencies and exemptions
- a national approach to compliance and enforcement of livestock identification and movement

recording.

The Workshop was also attended by invited participants from Partners and a number of senior jurisdictional livestock biosecurity representatives.

The outcome from the JTG Workshop was discussed by SAFEMEAT Partners at their 26 June 2018 meeting. SAFEMEAT Partners provided in-principle support for the recommendations as a positive first step toward reform.

It was agreed that industry be given the opportunity to contribute to the JTG Workshop recommendations prior to consideration by the Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee (AGSOC) and Agriculture Ministers Forum (AgMIN) by late 2018, which was facilitated through a further workshop on 21 July 2018.

It is expected that the JTG will continue to workshop the recommendations prior to an agreed SAFEMEAT response to the 31 October NBC meeting and for subsequent consideration by AGSOC and AGMIN by the end of 2018.

The composition and seniority of members of the JTG has proved to be a useful vehicle for progressing this type of advice to Policy Group and Partners.

### **Sheep Traceability Working Group**

The SAFEMEAT Sheep Traceability Working Group (STWG) was established by SAFEMEAT Partners to implement the operations of, and improvements to, the National Livestock Identification System for Sheep and Goats arising out of the *Sheepcatcher II* tracing exercise. The STWG held its inaugural meeting on 10 October 2017 and met via teleconference in December 2017.

A work plan and strategies are being developed to facilitate change to enable the sheep and goat industries to meet the

National Livestock Traceability Performance Standards.

Currently the STWG is in communication with jurisdictions overseeing the development of National Standards for Sheep and Goats and with Animal Health Australia who have carriage of the process and is working with Integrity Systems Company (ISC) to develop a communications strategy on the importance of traceability for sheep and goats.

Other SAFEMEAT Working Group outcomes achieved or nearing completion in 2017-18 include processes for:

**Three-hole Punch visual identifier for cattle administered with Silirum®.**

SAFEMEAT endorsed the use of a permanent marker, (a three-hole ear punch) as a visual identifier for cattle administered with Silirum®. Cattle administered with Silirum® vaccine are likely to test positive when screened for tuberculosis (caudal fold test) or Johne's disease (blood antibody test) which might have serious implications on the Australian exports of live cattle if detected overseas.

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approved the new label in April 2018, a source of pliers has been found and the pliers will be available soon. Work is underway on advice for accredited veterinarians regarding putting the status on PICs. Once PIC and device based status are in the data base the process will be operational.

Mr Bob Barwell and members of the Working Group are to be commended for bringing this work near to completion.

A number of ongoing groups continue to progress their objectives with regular update reporting to Policy Group. In

line with committee streamlining, Policy Group provides exception reporting to Partners.

**CowCatcher III Traceability Exercise - June 2018**

The exercise was undertaken on 4 and 5 June 2018 with 60 cattle from across Australia randomly selected as target animals from various aggregation points (properties (dairy and beef), saleyards, abattoirs and feedlots).

Target animals were then provided to the jurisdictions who were required to trace the movements of the target animals and the cohort animals and report either within 24 or 48 hours according to the [National Livestock Traceability Performance Standards](#).

The number of target animals used was proportionate to the head of cattle in each jurisdiction with all State and Territory jurisdictions (apart from the ACT) participating in the exercise.

SAFEMEAT Partners is looking forward to an update on the outcome of the exercise once the Animal Health Australia report is available later in 2018.

Of particular interest to SAFEMEAT will be how well the NLIS database performed in tracing individual animals (including any other animals that may have come in contact with the test group); transfer of traces between jurisdictions; and overall performance and consistency in interpretation of national standards.

**Recent changes to Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) Biosecurity and Animal Welfare requirements**

Initiatives Review recommendations for strengthening on-farm risk management systems, included:

- development and inclusion of animal welfare and biosecurity standards within LPA

- competency based LPA accreditation
- 3 yearly recommitment requirement for LPA accreditation
- development of an eLearning module and
- development of an integrated integrity system communication plan.

All of these recommendations have now been implemented resulting in changes to the LPA program that have strengthened processes for both accreditation and recommitment.

Recommitment is required on a three yearly basis and requires a demonstrated understanding of the seven elements of LPA, which cover:

1. assessing risks on farm
2. treating animals safely and responsibly
3. managing pasture and fodder treatments
4. preparing animals for dispatch
5. documenting livestock transactions and movements
6. maintaining biosecurity practices
7. adhering to animal welfare practices.

To assist producers to understand their LPA responsibilities an online eLearning course is available.

LPA record keeping requirements now include the development of a Farm Biosecurity Plan to manage and record the introduction and movement of livestock in a way that minimises the risk of introducing or spreading infectious disease including, where practicable, keeping a record of people, equipment and vehicles entering the property.

In addition records are required that show training of all people responsible for managing livestock on the property has been conducted.

From July 2018, on-farm animal welfare and biosecurity management practices will be part of the LPA program's 2000 random audits carried out nationally each year.

### **Achieving national consistency in LPA NVD recognition for traceability**

Currently most jurisdictions in Australia accept the National Vendor Declarations (NVDs) which were developed by the livestock industries to assist producers to document the history of chemical use and treatment of animals offered for sale.

These details assist processors and buyers seeking information on the history of sale stock and are particularly important in meeting export market requirements.

While NVDs are industry marketing initiatives for sheep, cattle, goats and pigs, they do not have statutory basis and are not compulsory when selling livestock.

Victoria mandates the use of an NVD/Waybill. Most other jurisdictions in Australia recognise a LPA NVD/Waybill as a legal movement document, the exception being the Northern Territory (NT), which is the only State/Territory Government not to recognise the LPA NVD/Waybill.

NT does not allow producers the option of using a combined NVD/waybill in place of a Waybill.

Individual exporters, both of live animals and processed meat require the LPA NVD/waybill as a movement declaration to meet their obligations. For commercial reasons, and to meet domestic and export food safety requirements, combined NVD/Waybills are used when stock are moved from property to slaughter.

To improve national consistency in reporting requirements, and to save cattle

producers in the NT from having to complete both forms, Policy Group recommended a SAFEMEAT led approach to the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries for its consideration of endorsement of the LPA NVD/Waybill as a single alternative movement document for movement of cattle in NT

To commence the process, SAFEMEAT wrote to NT stakeholders seeking industry assistance in joining with SAFEMEAT to enter into discussion with the NT government in relation to this issue.

### **Fit for Transport Considerations**

Policy Group gave consideration to management of potential situations where animals arrive at abattoirs in a condition that could be in breach of welfare requirements.

SAFEMEAT Policy Group wrote to species groups in the producer sector, outlining the concerns raised and requesting species group input for any future collaborative review to be undertaken by the Integrity Systems Company (ISC) of information regarding requirements for fit-for-transport status.

## **SAFEMEAT BUSINESS PLAN**

The strategic directions of SAFEMEAT are set out in its Business Plan. The Business Plan outlines the strategic approach to managing red meat and pork safety and hygiene within Australia and seeks to achieve this through a number of targeted projects under the following nine key programs of industry priority:

1. Standards and Regulations
2. Emergency Management
3. Animal Diseases
4. Residues

5. Pathogens
6. Systems Development and Management
7. Communications and Education
8. Emerging Issues
9. SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review

Under each key program there are defined projects, with milestones, funding arrangements and responsibilities:

### **1. Standards and Regulations**

This program contributes to the implementation of nationally consistent standards and regulations relating to meat safety and hygiene.

SAFEMEAT supports the development of harmonised and scientifically-based national and international standards and promotes minimisation of regulations that are necessary to produce safe food, ensure consumer protection, and prevent market disruption.

### **2. Emergency Management**

This program ensures that effective emergency management strategies are in place and activated at appropriate times to protect animal and human health and to minimise market disruption.

### **3. Animal Diseases (as they relate to food safety)**

This program ensures the red meat and pork sectors deal effectively with food safety issues arising from disease outbreaks in cattle, sheep, goats and pigs while minimising market disruption and contribute, where appropriate, to the development and implementation of national policies and programs designed to protect Australia from exotic animal diseases.

### **4. Residues**

This program develops and implements sound management strategies and

systems to deliver safe and hygienic food with adequate and nationally consistent government standards and regulations relating to residues.

SAFEMEAT actively promotes the observance of withholding periods (WHPs) and export slaughter intervals (ESIs) in order to prevent residues being present above the corresponding maximum residue limit (MRL) for all markets, taking into consideration cost-efficient and equitable funding implications to minimise market disruption arising from residue violations.

## **5. Pathogens**

This program implements sound management systems to deliver safe and hygienic food that meets consumer and regulatory requirements. This involves the development of pathogen and microbiological quality management programs with an emphasis on risk management as appropriate.

## **6. Systems Development and Management**

This program enables SAFEMEAT to facilitate the development and establishment of key management systems to underpin red meat and pork safety and hygiene programs in order to provide a through-chain, 'world best practice' approach for managing food safety risks in the red meat and pork industries.

## **7. Communication and Education**

This program facilitates communication, education and awareness of meat safety and hygiene issues by establishing a fully integrated and effective communication network within and outside SAFEMEAT, to encourage ongoing development of expertise on meat safety and hygiene within the industry, government and

academia and to raise the level of awareness of food safety and hygiene within the broader community.

## **8. Emerging Issues**

This program monitors and implements a range of strategic initiatives in relation to emerging issues to ensure that the industry is best positioned to meet changing market and consumer demands as they arise.

## **9. SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review and governance improvements**

The program aims to deliver more robust industry assurance programs that incentivise participation and uptake, promote greater efficiency in their delivery, and encourage continual improvement.

The overall aim of the Business Plan is to deliver a responsive and fully integrated through-chain risk management system, accompanied by technology enhancements to drive operational efficiencies that will ensure Australia's systems continue to be recognised as world's best practice, underpinning the sustainability and prosperity of the meat and livestock industries into the future.

### **New approach to Business Plan being developed**

Policy Group has commenced consideration of a new approach to the SAFEMEAT Business Plan.

The approach will focus on delivery of key SAFEMEAT outcomes that are aligned to the Meat Industry Strategic Plan (MISP) for the three year period to 2020 and consolidate SAFEMEAT activity into fewer program areas with timeframes and key performance indicators.

It is anticipated that the new approach will be considered for implementation in the 2019-20 FY and will take into

account any agreed recommendations  
from the current Review of  
SAFEMEAT Partners Terms of  
Reference.

## **PROGRESS AGAINST THE BUSINESS PLAN**

Progress SAFEMEAT achieved in the 2017-2018 FY against the current nine key programs in the Business Plan is detailed below.

### **1. Standards and Regulations**

SAFEMEAT, through its member network, continued to promote international acceptance of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)-based quality assurance schemes to assist with the recognition and acceptance of major industry and government initiatives in order to maintain and enhance Australia's position as a world leader in the export of meat and meat products.

On an on-going basis SAFEMEAT works with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) and contributes to assessments, as required, on national agricultural and veterinary chemical registration issues, particularly where export slaughter intervals (ESIs) and withholding periods (WHPs) need to meet sensitive export market requirements. SAFEMEAT addressed inconsistencies between SAFEMEAT and APVMA ESI advice.

SAFEMEAT is a contributor to the development of the Australian Feed Standard for Food Producing Animals.

SAFEMEAT contributed to the development of a national standard for the registration of goat depots to control the movement of untagged harvested goats going direct to slaughter. Further work continues on the development of a national standard for NLIS tagging of free range harvested goats.

SAFEMEAT is contributing to Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee (AGSOC) reforms of livestock traceability systems.

Key achievement in 2017-18:

- NLIS (Pigs) Standards agreed with PigPass pig movement reporting to the NLIS database becoming mandatory in all jurisdictions in February 2018.

### **2. Emergency Management**

During the year, no incidents arose which necessitated SAFEMEAT to initiate any emergency management arrangements under the SAFEMEAT Incident Response Manual.

A small sub group of SAFEMEAT Policy Group members will review the recommendations arising from the Rodenticide Working Group Review Report in relation to possible improvement to early alert procedures in the SAFEMEAT Incident Response Manual.

The SAFEMEAT Incident Response Manual is reviewed annually to ensure that it is appropriately structured to address any emergencies with contact details being reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year.

SAFEMEAT recognises the importance of facilitating appropriate linkages between SAFEMEAT emergency management arrangements and other related arrangements including AUSVETPLAN, the National Food Incident Response Plan and industry emergency response plans such as the APL's PorkSAFE Plan whose Exercise Judas was completed May 2018.

### **3. Animal Diseases (as they relate to food safety)**

SAFEMEAT, through its representative bodies and associated technical committees, continues to actively promote Australia's food safety measures in order to maintain market confidence in the safety of Australian livestock products.

SAFEMEAT kept a watching brief, and provided advice as appropriate, on international and domestic developments regarding zoonotic diseases that have the potential to impact on Australia's livestock and meat industries.

### **4. Residues**

Since its establishment in 1998, SAFEMEAT has had a key role in:

- identifying potential residue problems and developing appropriate strategies to deal with them taking into consideration cost efficient and equitable funding implications;
- minimising market disruption arising from residue incidents; and
- actively promoting the observance of WHPs and ESIs in order to prevent residues being present above the corresponding maximum residue limits (MRL) requirements in export markets.

SAFEMEAT also assists in progressing residue monitoring activities through the:

- National Organochlorine Residue Management Program (NORM) program;
- National Antimicrobial Residue Minimisation (NARM) program;
- Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing (TART) program;
- Sheep Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing (START) program; and
- Pig Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing (PTART) program.

The management of residue risks is partly controlled through the assignment of statuses for individual animals or for 'at risk' properties. Meat processors are expected to take action where these statuses are flagged. SAFEMEAT is working with all jurisdictions to ensure these statuses are managed in a nationally consistent manner.

SAFEMEAT has worked with DAWR, the jurisdictions and the processing sector to develop a response mechanism where breaches of Australia's hormonal growth promotants (HGP) requirements are detected or suspected.

The issue of national consistency in interpreting and applying NLIS rules by the jurisdictions continued to be raised and strategies to overcome these differences are regularly discussed and acted on where appropriate in various SAFEMEAT forums.

### **5. Pathogens**

The work under this key program continues to be supported by MLA's research and development (R&D) program.



R&D projects are conducted by MLA in the areas of chemical usage, microbiological food safety, and post-mortem inspection.

One of the key components of this program is related to microbiological food safety and examines the use of scientific approaches to understanding food-safety risks and develops systems and new technologies to manage identified risks.

The Program Advisory Group (comprising representatives of peak industry councils, DAWR, MLA and AMPC) provides additional guidance and oversight of the MLA microbiological program.

In recognition of current issues concerning the presence of antibiotic resistance bacteria in the red meat supply chain, SAFEMEAT continued to support research to address the prevalence of antimicrobial resistant bacteria in the supply chain.

The 2017-18 activities in MLA's food safety research and development program continue to be reported against specific projects, budget allocations and timelines and are linked, where appropriate, to the SAFEMEAT Business Plan.

The MLA food safety program, generally aligning with SAFEMEAT Key Program 5, is now aligned with two Red Meat Industry Strategic Plan 2020 imperatives:

- reducing technical barriers to trade; and
- livestock and produce assurance through integrated integrity systems.

## **6. Systems Development and Management**

There were a number of NLIS developments during 2017-18.

Work, led by Animal Health Australia (AHA), continues on converting the draft NLIS Sheep and Goat Business Rules into a Standard. SAFEMEAT will monitor developments and provide any support and assistance to this important component of the Sheep and Goat NLIS system.

Work is continuing on the review commissioned by MLA into all Property Identification Code (PIC) and regulatory and non-regulatory device-based statuses in the database.

Promotion of the use of the national Commodity Vendor Declaration (CVD) and the By-product Vendor Declaration for Feed Ingredients continues through Integrity Systems Company (ISC) program communications. Opportunities exist for greater engagement with feedstuff suppliers to raise awareness of the CVD and required use within the livestock industries.

Key achievements in 2017-18:

- Procedures for access to data for secondary use purposes, such as research, were endorsed for NLIS data held by ISC and for PigPass data held by APL.
- The pig and cattle standards were endorsed by AGMIN in July 2017 and are being progressively implemented by the state and territory jurisdictions.

## **7. Communication and Education**

SAFEMEAT continues to:

- meet face-to-face to address all matters related to its role
- hold teleconferences as circumstances determine (these were particularly relevant for the working groups progressing agreed activities)
- keep AGSOC and AGMIN informed of significant developments
- produce educational material as needed
- maintain linkages to other committees by providing them with updates on the progress of the work outlined in the Business Plan
- provide presentations on SAFEMEAT roles and responsibilities
- post material on current issues on the SAFEMEAT website
- review content and structure of the SAFEMEAT website to improve access to relevant material
- respond to media enquiries as they arise.

## **8. Emerging Issues**

SAFEMEAT maintains a watching brief on food chain security and critical infrastructure protection issues and participates in numerous forums to discuss matters of concern.

SAFEMEAT is regularly briefed on current and emerging market access issues for Australian exports by DAWR. Such briefings assist in communicating issues specific to certain markets to the relevant industry stakeholders and in coordinating an industry wide response.

## **9. SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review**

Ongoing activities include:

- the development of an integrated electronic National Vendor Declaration (eNVD) system
- implementation of governance recommendations.

## Annual Report Acronyms

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| AGMIN                          | Agriculture Ministers' Forum                             |
| AGSOC                          | Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee                  |
| AHA                            | Animal Health Australia                                  |
| AMPC                           | Australian Meat Processor Corporation                    |
| APIQ <sup>✓</sup> <sup>®</sup> | Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance               |
| APL                            | Australian Pork Limited                                  |
| APVMA                          | Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority |
| CVD                            | Commodity Vendor Declaration                             |
| CVO                            | Chief Veterinary Officer                                 |
| DAWR                           | Department of Agriculture and Water Resources            |
| eNVD                           | electronic National Vendor Declaration                   |
| ESI                            | Export Slaughter Interval                                |
| EW1                            | Early Warning 1 (status)                                 |
| HACCP                          | Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points              |
| HGP                            | Hormonal Growth Promotant                                |
| ISC                            | Integrity Systems Company                                |
| JTG                            | Jurisdictional Traceability Group                        |
| LPA                            | Livestock Production Assurance                           |
| MISP                           | Meat Industry Strategic Plan                             |
| MLA                            | Meat and Livestock Australia                             |
| MoU                            | Memorandum of Understanding                              |
| MRL                            | Maximum Residue Limit                                    |
| NARM                           | National Antimicrobial Residue Minimisation Program      |
| NBC                            | National Biosecurity Committee                           |
| NFAS                           | National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme                    |
| NLIS                           | National Livestock Identification System                 |
| NORM                           | National Organochlorine Residue Management Program       |
| NSQA                           | National Saleyards Quality Assurance                     |
| NVD                            | National Vendor Declaration                              |
| PIC                            | Property Identification Code                             |
| PTART                          | Pig Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing               |
| R&D                            | Research and Development                                 |
| START                          | Sheep Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing Program     |
| STWG                           | Sheep Traceability Working Group                         |
| TART                           | Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing Program           |
| WHP                            | Withholding period                                       |