

Implementation of electronic identification of sheep and goats in Victoria

Victoria has a valuable sheep and goat industry.

Victoria has valuable livestock industries, exporting products worth \$6.7 billion per year, with sheep meat and wool products worth more than \$2.5 billion.

These industries are essential parts of our rural and regional communities and their ongoing prosperity relies on having effective traceability systems to underpin confidence in our products and to maintain access to local and international markets.



Rapid tracking of animals protects the industry

An animal disease or food safety emergency could significantly disrupt market access or pose risks to human health.

The 2001 outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in the United Kingdom (UK) resulted in a worldwide ban on all exports of livestock, meat and animal products from the UK until markets were satisfied that FMD had been completely eradicated. Electronic identification of sheep is now mandatory in the European Union.

If an outbreak occurred in Australia, whether it was an animal disease or food safety incident, the results would be devastating for our industries. It would take a long time for international markets to reopen and the economic and social impact on our regional communities would be deep and long lasting.

Livestock exports



\$6.7 billion

Sheep meat and wool production



\$2.5 billion per year

Potential cost of FMD outbreak



\$50+ billion



Quick to locate

Compelling evidence for change

The prosperity of Victoria's livestock industries relies on our ability to quickly and reliably track sheep and goats in a disease or food safety emergency.

Local and international reports show that the visual, mob-based system is not capable of quickly or accurately tracking sheep and goats. This is a major risk to all livestock industries in Australia.

Electronic identification (EID) provides the high level of traceability needed to protect our valuable sheep and goat industries. The technology has been used successfully for sheep in Europe and in cattle in Australia for many years. Electronic identification systems are accurate, efficient and reliable and that is why Victoria is changing.



Rapid tracking with EID

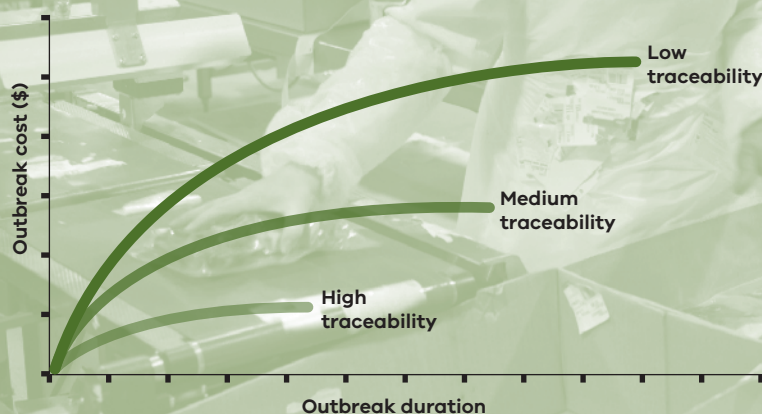


In mid 2016, a suspected case of Bovine Johne's Disease was found in a consignment of 321 cattle destined for Japan, resulting in suspension of the Japanese live export market. Using EID information, the full life histories of all 321 cattle were confirmed within one hour, involving livestock movements to more than 120 properties over five states. The ability to quickly and accurately trace the cattle involved was critical in ensuring the Japanese live export market re-opened.

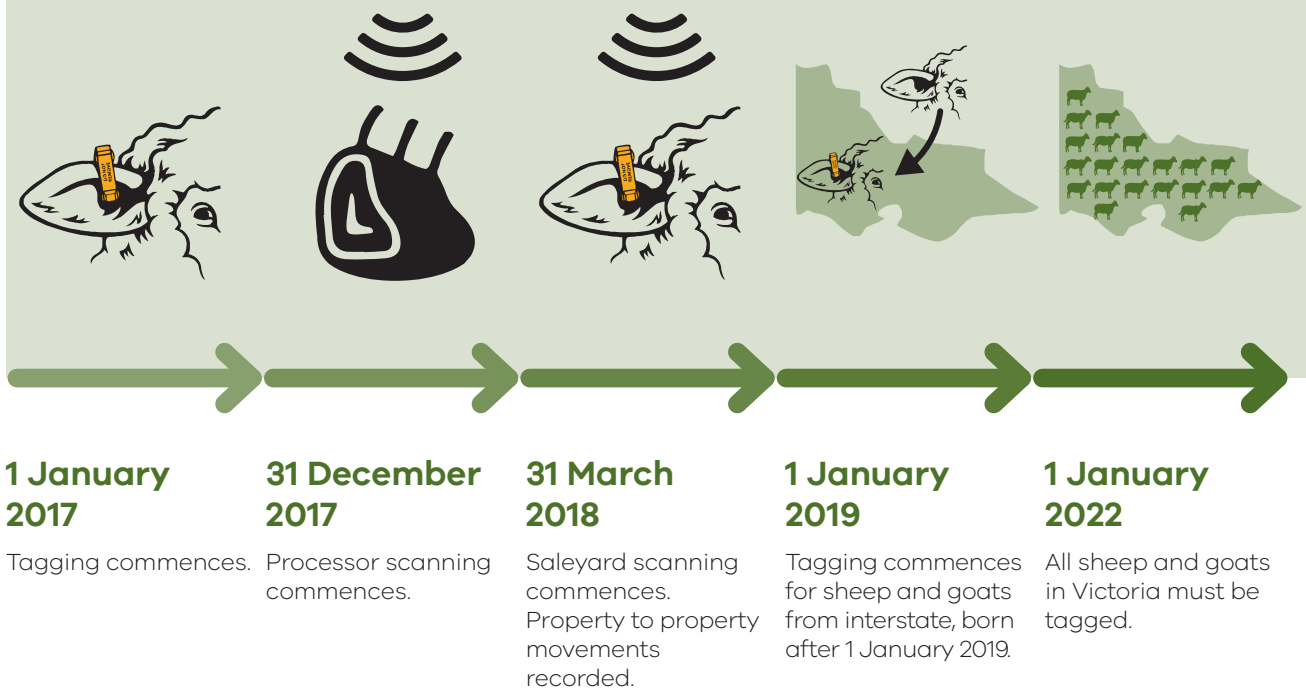


In contrast, it took three days to locate 74 sheep moved off a Victorian property infected with anthrax in March 2017 and to confirm that no infected sheep had entered the food chain.

Indicative cost outcomes of an outbreak



Electronic identification is being phased in



The new system is being phased in over a number of years. Sheep and goats will be progressively tagged over time, starting with animals born on or after 1 January 2017.

Once fully implemented, it will be possible for sheep and goats to be tracked quickly and accurately from birth to slaughter. This will limit the impact of an emergency and will protect and enhance the reputation of Victoria's livestock industries as suppliers of quality meat, fibre and dairy products.

Agriculture Victoria is delivering education, extension and training across the industry to assist with the change.

Productivity gains

In addition to traceability, the technology provides the opportunity to record and access detailed information about individual animals to improve flock management.

There are also significant benefits for the processing sector in providing accurate provenance details, managing product for market specifications, and greater efficiency across the supply chain. Individual animal statuses can be applied to EID tags, allowing improved quality assurance checks for producers and processors to ensure treated livestock are not entering the supply chain.





Investing now, protecting tomorrow

Electronic identification of sheep and goats will provide trading partners with increased confidence in the safety and origin of Victorian products, protecting and enhancing access to expanding and profitable local and export markets. As the new system is fully implemented, there is potential to open new markets, particularly in food safety conscious markets where traceability is highly regarded.



Further information

For more information, go to **www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/sheepEID**

Authorised and published by Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne. October 2017.

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, such as large print, audio or in another language, please call the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources on 136 186, email customer.service@ecodev.vic.gov.au or go to www.ecodev.vic.gov.au

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

For more information about Agriculture Victoria go to www.agriculture.vic.gov.au or call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.