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Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
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Inspector-General of Animal Welfare Consultation

Animal Health Australia (AHA) is the trusted and independent national animal health body in Australia, bringing together Government and Industry to deliver animal health and biosecurity outcomes. Although not taking a lead role in national animal welfare policy development, AHA recognises that animal welfare is a foundation for sustainable livestock production and is a key consideration in all the national animal health, biosecurity and EAD preparedness projects that we manage on behalf of our members.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this consultation paper, noting we do not play an active role in live export and do not play a lead role in national animal welfare policy development or implementation. Our expertise is in emergency animal disease preparedness and response, surveillance program management and the promotion of good livestock industry biosecurity practices to underpin this. AHA is an observer member of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) run and led Livestock Export Animal Welfare Advisory Group (LEAWAG).

There is a need to develop and implement modern, sustainable and scientifically based animal welfare practices across Australian livestock sectors. AHA is concerned that the current system to develop animal welfare policy at the national level is not delivering. AHA supports the goal of a fair, consistent and transparent process for creating national animal welfare standards. This should include ample opportunities for affected industries to be consulted about these standards and participate in the development process.

The gap in knowledge about community expectations of animal welfare in production systems has resulted in animal welfare organisations taking on the role of representing consumers and community opinion. However, this introduces the significant risk that the views communicated by animal welfare organisations are representative of community members sympathetic to that organisation, rather than the broader Australian community. There is a need to take this into account in national animal welfare policy development, so a balanced approach is applied.

AHA would like to make the following recommendations on the structure of an IGAWLAE and the inclusion of additional staff/capability. The IGAWLAE office ideally needs to have expertise in:

- Veterinary and animal welfare science
- Australian animal production (industry) knowledge
- Regulatory and legal experience
- Stakeholder engagement and consultation

- Regulation impact statements (regulatory design and implementation for a cost-benefit analysis).

AHA is pleased to learn that the Australian Government will be renewing the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) and we look forward to collaborating on this with the Australian Government DAFF.

Yours sincerely



Ms Kathleen Plowman
Animal Health Australia
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER