

Sheep Sustainability Framework Update 24APR2020

KEY TAKEOUTS

- The Sheep Sustainability Framework (SSF) is led by Sheep Producers Australia and WoolProducers Australia, with Australian Wool Innovation and Meat & Livestock Australia providing funding together with strategic and secretariat support.
- The Steering Group (SG) comprises nine people from across the Australian sheep industry supply chain.
- The SSF structure will provide evidence of industry status in sustainably produced Australian sheep meat and wool through:
 - Identification of priority areas for reporting
 - Identification of the appropriate indicators
 - Gathering and reporting of the indicator data
- The SSF will:
 - Identify opportunities, challenges and impacts for sheep production
 - Inform industry investment for improvement in priority areas
 - Help protect and grow access to investment and finance by providing evidence of performance and improvement
 - Foster constructive relationships with stakeholders to work collaboratively
 - Promote the sheep industry to the community and customers
 - Report on the industry's sustainability performance
- The SSF will NOT:
 - Require any specific input from individual producers
 - Impose any additional reporting costs or reporting requirements on producers
 - Attempt to move the sheep industry in a particular direction
- The SG is coordinating the consultation with both industry and external stakeholders in 3 phases:
 - Consultation I - key industry stakeholders, including the State Farming Organisations (SFOs), and involved one-on-one discussions. This was completed in early April 2020
 - Consultation II – industry and external stakeholders via a series of workshops
 - Consultation III – all interested entities via an online feedback survey
- A final consultation opportunity will be offered specifically to the State Farming Organisations (SFOs) prior to final board approval and launch.
- The feedback from each consultation informs the following draft of the SSF until we reach the final framework.
- The SG will then finalise the SSF and seek approval from the SSF Board.
- The final report is due for release in September 2020.

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

Activity/Month	Who?	Mar/ Apr	H2 Apr	H1 May	H2 May	H1 Jun	H2 Jun	H1 Jul	H2 Jul	Aug	Sep
Consultation I	SFOs, PICs, RDCs										
Draft #1 approval	SG + Board										
Consultation II	SFOs, Stakeholders										
Draft #2 approval	SG + Board										
Consultation III	SFOs, Stakeholders										
Draft #3 approval	SG + Board										
SFO Consultation	SFOs										
Final Approval	SG +Board										
Launch	Industry										

BACKGROUND

In July 2017, the Red Meat Advisory Council (RMAC) made a public commitment to a sheep framework on behalf of industry. Since then, industry leadership (SPA and WPA) has initiated the Framework to demonstrate sustainable practices, identify areas of improvement, and better communicate these with customers and consumers. Demonstrating sustainable production of sheep meat and wool is critical in securing access to local and global markets. Our customers must be confident that the food and fibre they purchase has been produced responsibly. The SSF will enable industry to share its story about sustainable food and fibre. Further, the SSF supports the priorities of the Red Meat Advisory Council’s Meat Industry Strategic Plan 2030.

THE STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group (SG) comprises 9 members from across the value chain and the regions:

- **Prof Bruce Allworth (Chair)** - Director, Fred Morley Centre, Charles Sturt University, NSW.
- **Will Barton** - CEO, Gundagai Meat Processors, NSW
- **Dr. Will Bignell** - Producer, Thorpe Farm, TAS
- **Andrew Blanch** - Managing Director, New England Wool, NSW
- **Michael Field** - Producer, Jugiong, NSW
- **Johnny Gardner** - Producer, Cavendish, VIC
- **Deanna Lush** - Managing Director, Ag Communicators, SA
- **Emily Stretch** - Producer, Kojonup, WA
- **Mark Wootton** - Producer, Manager and Principal of Jigsaw Farms, VIC

THE FRAMEWORK AND PRODUCERS

- The SSF takes an industry-wide perspective and therefore does not have any direct implications for producers. However, it may highlight areas where on-farm practices can be improved.
- The SSF will be used by industry to guide and track aggregate performance on-farm to ensure that Australia continues to be recognised as a global leader in sustainable sheep production. It is planned to include the whole production chain over time.
- At an individual business level, the SSF does not require any direct input as businesses already provide a wide range of information to government and other agencies.

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- The SSF will support individual businesses by providing the proof behind Australia's reputation as one of the global leaders in sustainable sheep production. This will assist in maintaining market access for our products.
- The SSF will not:
 - Establish or endorse measurement systems at an individual business level
 - Provide an accreditation or certification system
 - Endorse prescriptive management practices
 - Create paperwork for individual businesses. Existing data is used where available

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- The consultation process will inform development of the Framework with producers via SFOs and Peak Industry Councils (PICs). Producers will also be able to provide direct feedback via an online survey.
- There are three consultation phases, with SFOs invited to participate in each.
- **Consultation I** is complete and involved meetings with industry stakeholders including SFOs to obtain initial feedback on a discussion paper containing draft SSF elements.
- **Consultation II** will be conducted by invitation over 3 web based interactive sessions.
- All parts of the SSF will be reviewed and tested with the workshop group using key lines of questioning.
- The sessions will be structured to ensure good opportunities for discussion and feedback across the key issues.
- **Consultation III** will take the form of an online survey and will be offered more broadly.
- A wider call will go out via media and social media to make this a more public consultation and feedback will be invited on each element of the SSF.
- Stakeholders can also be invited to make individual submissions if they wish.
- A specific **SFO consultation** will be offered post Consultation III to gather final feedback before the framework is approved by the SF and The Board.
- The format of this consultation is yet undecided but will likely be conducted via Zoom meeting formats.

THE FINAL FRAMEWORK

- Both the SG and Sheep Framework Board will need to give final approval before the framework is launched.
- Launch plans are formative at this stage due to COVID-19. However, the launch will involve an appropriate amount of public and industry media and social media activity.

HOW TO BE INVOLVED

For the SSF to achieve its objectives, we need all stakeholders to engage in its development. We welcome your organisation's input during the next two consultation phases, so please make sure you attend and are involved.

Please feel free to contact the chair, Professor Bruce Allworth (ballworth@csu.edu.au) if you have any questions or concerns.