

Germplasm Gazette

News on trade in ruminant reproductive material



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

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Revised EU Health Certificates

Export news

The Repro Hub wishes to advise exporters of revised EU germplasm model health certificates as per Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024-351. These will be progressively uploaded to MICOR. Exporters are advised to confirm importing country requirements with the relevant competent authority of the market concerned. Updated CVD/ETVDs (dual language) will be provided to exporters by the Hub during export certification. Should you have any queries regarding export of germplasm to the EU, we encourage you to discuss these at the earliest opportunity with the Hub at genetics@aff.gov.au

EBL Freedom Assurance Program discontinued

Export news

The National Enzootic Bovine Leukosis (EBL) Freedom Assurance Program, coordinated by Dairy Australia, has been discontinued. This means that the department can no longer certify to EBL freedom for our dairy herd. All affected protocols include an alternate option, so existing protocol renegotiation is not considered necessary at this stage. New protocols currently under negotiation will not have any EBL freedom clause.

RGTAG update: summary

Role and composition of RGTAG

The Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group ([RGTAG](#)), supported by the National Herd Improvement Association ([NHIA](#)), recently convened with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry (DAFF) to discuss the latest developments in its ongoing efforts to expand international market access for Australian ruminant genetics.

RGTAG, which includes key industry bodies among its members, is crucial in supporting DAFF in renegotiating country-to-country trade protocols. These efforts aim to open new markets and secure opportunities for Australian breeders, producers, and exporters.

The RGTAG Chair, Penny Welch, emphasises the group's mission of meeting as many international requirements as possible while representing the interests of production facilities, stud and commercial breeders, and international customers. As the "on-the-ground" voice of industry, RGTAG is uniquely positioned to assist DAFF in shaping practical and achievable protocols for market access, ensuring that Australian producers remain competitive globally.

RGTAG update: chair

Penny Welch

Over the past year, RGTAG has addressed a series of complex challenges, making substantial progress in opening dialogues with international governments and potential markets. The dedication and passion within the RGTAG committee are extraordinary, with every member playing a vital role in securing a robust future for our industry.

I strongly encourage anyone interested in exploring new markets or in need of assistance to reach out to RGTAG. We are here to support, guide, and advocate for the industry—both within the department and on the global stage. Together, we can continue driving Australian genetics forward.



Fig 1: Penny Welch. Source: TLG

RGTAG update: secretary

Sara Merkel

RGTAG aims to expand industry representation and invites more representatives to join the collaborative Australian approach. See [current RGTAG members](#).

To add your voice and become part of the RGTAG team, see [more information](#).

For queries please contact me at sara@nhia.org.au or 0411 819 165

RGTAG update: market access priorities

Key takeaways from the RGTAG and DAFF Joint Meeting on 24 July, 2024

The meeting centred on updates regarding priority markets, classified by their urgency for access. These priorities reflect the ongoing negotiations, challenges, and potential high-growth areas for Australian ruminant genetics. Notably:

- Promising opportunities are emerging in markets such as China, Japan, and New Zealand, where re-engagement or further negotiations are underway.
- RGTAG and DAFF are jointly focused on establishing smooth, practical protocols that will facilitate the entry of Australian genetics into these and other emerging markets worldwide.

By collaborating closely, RGTAG and DAFF are laying the groundwork for sustained growth, ensuring that Australian genetics hold a significant place in the global ruminant industry.

For a detailed overview of the meeting discussions, see [general update on page 5](#).

Repro Hub update

Import and export news

The Repro Hub wishes to acknowledge the departure of biosecurity officers Daniel Kwiatkowski and Wayne Gundry from the team.

Both Daniel and Wayne have been an integral part of the reproductive material import and export operations.

Daniel has taken an opportunity to undertake higher duties in the dairy, eggs and fish exports area and we wish him all the best.

Wayne Gundry has completed a long period of service with the department and wish him all the best in his retirement.

We have taken several steps to ensure continued level of regulatory service. Prior to Daniel's move, a hand over of functions undertaken were transitioned to Catherine James along with the repro import functions managed by Wayne Gundry for management and co-ordination.

Catherine has co-ordinated the provision of those Repro Hub regulatory functions with supervision of those functions shared across the team for import and export reproductive material.

Connor Wilson has been successful in the recruitment round as Daniel's direct replacement.

Connor comes to us from the Post Entry Quarantine facility, Mickleham where he was a team leader in horse imports and worked in companion animal imports.

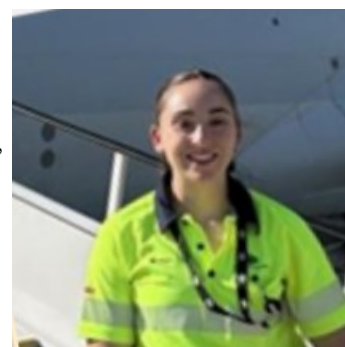


Fig 2: Catherine James. Source: DAFF



Fig 3: Connor Wilson. Source: DAFF

Pakistan international delegation

Export news

DAFF hosted two government veterinarians from Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security & Research (MNFSR) from 28 April to 11 May 2024, in a joint government/industry bovine genetics familiarisation visit of Australia.

They attended Beef Australia 2024, a triennial event in Rockhampton that unites global stakeholders to support the beef industry, with an emphasis on sustainability.

Funding was provided through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 'Advancing Australia's Agricultural Relationship with Bangladesh and Pakistan (AARBP)'.

This tour was to support Pakistan's economy and food supply through access to genetically improved and climatically sustainable Australian bovine genetics. The tour helped prioritise Australia's protocol request and resulted in bilaterally agreed protocols for bovine semen and embryos with Pakistan. The face-to-face engagement helped to build a beneficial working relationship with Pakistan for animal genetics export market and successfully showcased Australian world class biosecurity and ruminant genetics.



Fig 4: Pakistan delegation with Australian representatives. Source: DAFF

Bangladesh international delegation

Export news

DAFF hosted two government veterinarians from Bangladesh's Department of Livestock Services (DLS) from Sunday 5 May to Friday 17 May 2024 in a joint government/industry bovine genetics familiarisation visit of Australia.

Funding was provided through the same avenue as the Pakistan delegation –the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) 'Advancing Australia's Agricultural Relationship with Bangladesh and Pakistan (AARBP)' and similarly attended Beef Australia.

This tour was to assist Bangladesh's cattle breed development and secure market access for genetics to support food security.

The Bangladesh delegates have indicated they are going to make proposals to current legislation to allow additional Australian bovine breed genetics to be imported. The department is now in a strong position to open negotiations with Bangladesh for bilaterally agreed protocols for import of Australian cattle semen and embryos into Bangladesh.



Fig 5: Bangladesh delegation with Australian representatives. Source: DAFF

Samoa protocol finalisation

Export news

A bilateral protocol has been finalised for export of bovine semen to Samoa. In addition to benefiting the Australian germplasm industry by facilitating reliable access to this market, it will assist the Samoan government's herd improvement initiatives. Sample health certificates have been developed and MICOR will be updated shortly.

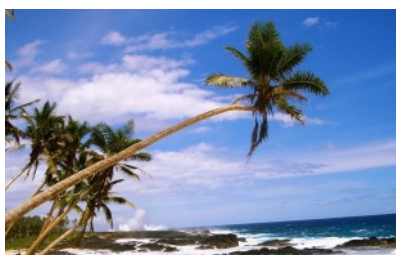


Fig 6. Source: Google Earth

IETS data inputs due

Export news

Data is being collected for the [2023 annual report](#) of the International Embryo Technology Society (IETS) Data Retrieval Committee database. This report tracks the main activities and trends in the area of commercial embryo transfer, and is important in highlighting the global importance of embryo transfer technology. Could you please put in your 2023 data (and prior data if available) if you have not already done so. The link to submit is at the [IETS Data Retrieval Committee Database](#). This data is anonymously aggregated at country level and reported on by calendar year. For further information, please contact iets@aff.gov.au

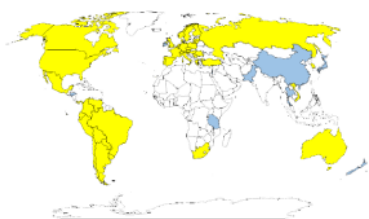


Fig 7. Source: IETS Data Report

Horses, Livestock and Bird Imports team update

Import news

The Horse, Livestock and Bird Imports team have had a busy and productive start to 2024. In April, the team welcomed a new Veterinary Officer. Dr Grace Packer joins us after working in private practice and will be working with Dr Kym Russell and Dr Emma McGrath in the reproductive imports team.

From 01 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 the imports team issued 79 germplasm import permits. The department's regional officers cleared 148 germplasm import consignments comprising of 759,288 doses of semen and embryos!

The imports team have also been working with importers on Norfolk Island and can report the successful importation of ruminant germplasm onto the island earlier this year. The island's herd will be sure to benefit from this injection of new genetics. There has been increased interest in artificial breeding programs on the island and the department will continue to work closely with Norfolk Island importers, Regional Development Australia and artificial breeding experts to support further successful germplasm imports into the future.

We look forward to the rest of 2024 continuing to be busy for germplasm imports.

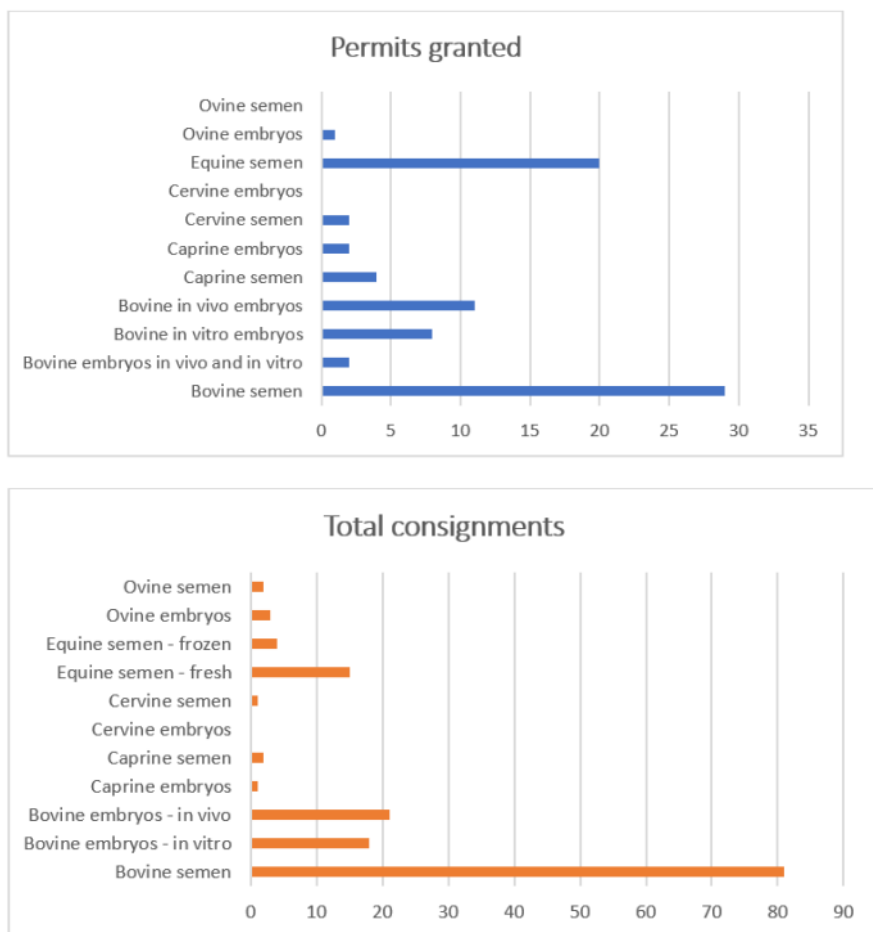


Fig 8: Livestock reproductive material import data from 01 January 2024 to 30 June 2024. Source: DAFF

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and Ruminant Genetics Trade Advisory Group (RGTAG)

General Update from Meeting held Wednesday, 24 July 2024

Market Access Updates

The meeting's key focus was an update on priority markets, categorised based on urgency for access. These market priorities reflect ongoing negotiations, challenges, and areas of high potential for Australian ruminant genetics.

Urgent	China (Bovine), USA (Bovine), India (Bovine/Ovine), Japan (Ovine Embryo/Bovine), South Africa (Bovine), New Zealand (Bovine).
High	Bangladesh (Bovine), Kazakhstan (Ovine), Fiji (Ovine), Ecuador (Bovine).
Medium	Switzerland (Ovine).
Low	Mexico (Bovine/Caprine/Ovine), Kenya (Bovine), Philippines (Bovine/Caprine/Ovine), Thailand (Bovine/Caprine/Ovine).

These updates underscore the diverse set of priorities across different markets, with each country at various stages of protocol negotiation and implementation.

The meeting further discussed:

- **India (Bovine):** DAFF provided an encouraging update, reporting that negotiations for bovine genetics access in India are progressing well. India is a significant market for Australia, given the size of its dairy sector and growing demand for high-quality genetics.
- **USA (Bovine/Ovine):** The USDA had indicated they wish to renegotiate the current protocols for trade of ruminant genetics with Australia. RGTAG has offered comments on a composed draft from the USDA, keeping in mind our country freedoms as well as practical testing and protocols. DAFF are awaiting a reply from the APHIS. There are ongoing discussions around the right of reply for clerical errors and potential pre-approval of draft health certificates.
- **Japan (Bovine/Ovine):** Japan's methodical approach to negotiations, handling one item at a time, has resulted in progress for Australia's ruminant genetics exports. Previously second on Japan's priority list, Australian ruminant genetics has now moved up. This update highlights a positive shift in Japan's receptiveness to Australian bovine and ovine genetics.
- **South Africa (Bovine):** DAFF has reported limited engagement despite significant potential for growth in this market. RGTAG is encouraged to utilise any in-country contacts to help facilitate communication between governments. At this time, the protocol is workable with the application of dispensations. RGTAG committee member Rob Derksen shared insights from his recent trip to South Africa, where he observed strong growth opportunities, but also challenges with maintaining government engagement.
- **New Zealand (Bovine):** Protocols for bovine genetics have been agreed upon, with a focus on requesting amendments related to EBL. This marks a positive step for Australian exporters looking to increase their presence in the New Zealand market. For the first time in several years, bovine embryos of Australian origin are able to be exported to New Zealand. RGTAG have been working with EMAI Laboratory to establish a donor testing program which allows access to this market again.
- **Bangladesh (Bovine):** After a delegation visit in May 2024, Bangladesh expressed interest in finalising a protocol for bovine genetics. The potential for growth in this market is significant, as Bangladesh continues to invest in developing its dairy and beef industries.
- **Ecuador (Bovine/Ovine/Caprine):** Protocols were agreed upon in June 2024, with centres required to submit expressions of interest for accreditation by 29 July, 2024. DAFF and RGTAG are working closely to ensure centres have the necessary information to meet Ecuador's regulatory requirements. This market holds potential, but time is of the essence, as the country is eager to move forward with accreditation.
- **Philippines (Bovine/Ovine/Caprine):** DAFF is currently drafting this protocol, starting with bovine semen and embryos.

Challenges and Opportunities

Several markets remain challenging, with little progress to report. Vietnam and Mexico have seen minimal engagement, and efforts to negotiate protocols have stalled. However, opportunities remain in markets like China, which has signalled renewed interest in re-engaging on genetics trade.

New Zealand's requirement for testing each collection of semen has prompted discussions about the cost implications for exporters. However, DAFF and RGTAG are optimistic that by the end of the year, a more favourable protocol will be negotiated during New Zealand's review of its health standards.

In Ecuador, the Repro Hub team is gathering necessary documents for centre accreditation, with DAFF providing templates to streamline the process. While Ecuador is pushing for rapid progress, RGTAG members discussed the challenges related to documentation and the time required for centres to prepare the needed materials.

USDA Renegotiation Update

DAFF provided an update on its ongoing renegotiation with the USDA, highlighting several key points of clarification requested by the USDA, including concerns related to TB and bovine brucellosis, both of which fall under US federal regulations. Industry stakeholders are particularly focused on addressing clerical errors in certificates and exploring the possibility of pre-approving health certificates to streamline the process. We hope to be able to reach a reasonable negotiation with the USDA which favours both sides of Government and industry.

Review of RGTAG Priorities

As part of the ongoing review of market access priorities, RGTAG made several adjustments to its list, including:

China	Added back to the list due to renewed interest in re-engagement.
Fiji	Added for ovine genetics.
Indonesia	Removed for bovine genetics due to a loss of interest but added for ovine and caprine genetics,
India	Ovine genetics added to the list alongside bovine.
Israel	Removed due to political complications.
Thailand	Bovine moved to low priority due to slow negotiations.
Vietnam	Removed as negotiations have stalled.

Department Updates and Future Outlook

DAFF shared additional updates on several other markets, including progress in countries such as Pakistan, where a successful delegation recently visited, and Bangladesh, where legislative barriers are being addressed to facilitate imports of specific breeds.

The meeting concluded with a discussion on the importance of continuing to build industry relationships and maintaining engagement with international partners. RGTAG is continuing to contribute to shaping market priorities, ensuring that DAFF has the necessary justifications to push for expanded access in key regions.

As markets like China, Japan, and New Zealand show promise for re-engagement or further negotiation, RGTAG and DAFF remain focused on facilitating smooth, practical, and achievable protocols for Australian exporters. This joint effort will continue to drive Australian ruminant genetics into new and emerging markets worldwide.

By working together, RGTAG and DAFF are setting the stage for long-term growth and ensuring that Australian genetics continue to play a pivotal role in the global ruminant industry.

Please contact corrie.croton@aff.gov.au for any queries about this gazette.