



LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS AFFECTING THE MANAGEMENT OF ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES - 2013 -

Country: Australia

SECTION 1: SUSTAINABLE USE, DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION OF ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

This section targets information on legislation and policies related specifically to the management of animal genetic resources, i.e. to:

- characterization, surveying and monitoring;
- sustainable use and development;
- conservation; and
- research and development related to animal genetic resources management.

It also includes issues related to patenting and access and benefit sharing. Instruments in these fields of action may or may not include specific provisions related to animal genetic resources or to relevant broader categories such as living organisms or genetic resources for food and agriculture.

1. Overall management of animal genetic resources

Note: In the policy field, this might include, for example, a national strategy and action plan for animal genetic resources.

Legislation

No

Policy

Yes

Details of the measure(s)

Animal genetic resource conservation and management in Australia is conducted primarily by private corporations and industry organisations, commercial breeding programs and individual breed associations. Commercial breeding programs tend to focus on mainstream breeds of importance to their industries. Commercial returns to farmers are crucial in ensuring the survival of breeds.

Most animal genetic resources conservation occurs in situ on farm, and there is an active artificial insemination industry for cattle, horses, pigs and sheep. Conservation of rare breeds is conducted by private breeders and breed societies, or non-government organisations such as the Rare Breeds Trust of Australia.

Australian Government policy on management of genetic resources is to create the enabling environment to allow both owners and users of animal genetic resources to establish breeding and conservation programs for their respective industries. Industry-government partnerships collaborate through R&D activities to determine future priorities for these industries, and through these, the appropriate conservation, use and development of animal genetic resources.

In addition, Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, which provides a broad national framework for conserving the nation's biodiversity, also contains guiding principles applicable to the food and agriculture sectors.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

2. Integration of animal genetic resources management with the management of other genetic resources for food and agriculture (plant, forest or aquatic genetic resources)

Legislation

No

Policy

No

Details of the measure(s)

Integration is unnecessary because Australia has very few endemic species that are important to domestic and global agriculture. The exception to this are macadamia nuts and forestry genetic resources. These are only conserved if they are

threatened or endangered. For example, macadamia in situ conservation is supported by Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

3. Surveying and monitoring of animal genetic resources

Legislation Yes

Policy Yes

Details of the measure(s)

Australia maintains a national database of domestic animals through the five-yearly Australian Bureau of Statistics detailed census of economically important livestock species, supported by smaller surveys in the intervening years. Information is collected from commercial farms and includes basic data of numbers of breeding males and females of each species. The relevant legislation is the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

Individual breed societies, producer groups and non-government organisations maintain herd, flock and stud records in order to monitor the status of livestock breeds and advocate actions for conservation or improvement of a particular breed. Not for profit organisations such as the Rare Breeds Trust of Australia (RBTA) monitor the status of agricultural important species at intervals. The RBTA has a specific interest in the rarer breeds that occur in Australia and has established an extensive network of smaller breeders and breeder associations within the animal production industry. It also produces a number of Status of Rare Breeds in Australia reports. These reports are a valuable resource on the status of Australia's animal genetic resources for agriculture.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

4. Official recognition of livestock breeds

Legislation Yes

Policy Yes

Details of the measure(s)

Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The Act is the legislative vehicle for competition law in Australia, and seeks to promote competition, fair trading as well as providing protection for consumers (e.g. truth in advertising etc).

Official recognition of livestock breeds is undertaken by breeders' associations.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

5. Animal breeding and genetic improvement strategies

Legislation No

Policy Yes

Details of the measure(s)

Animal breeding and genetic improvement strategies are science driven and implemented by universities and state and territory government departments of agriculture.

Industry targets genetic improvement strategies to meet breeding objectives and market specifications.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Creation of breeds that are best suited to Australia's production environment.

Future needs

Do these measures address:

5.1 Animal identification and recording

Note: Sections 2 and 3 include questions on traceability and on animal identification as it relates to animal health. If relevant, please use cross-references to indicate that a given law or policy affects more than one field of action.

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The National Livestock Identification scheme (refer to Section 3; Question 1.1), although not specifically designed for this, is used by producers to identify animals in breeding programs.

In Australia, pure livestock breeds are recorded in registration systems usually maintained by breeders' associations, industry based organisations or large commercial companies. A number of performance recordings and genetic evaluation programs, such as Best Linear Unbiased Prediction (BLUP) analyses, are carried out by industry organisations or breed societies. Funding for this is generally sourced through Rural Research and Development Corporations which are supported by the Australian Government through matching producer levies collected for industry R&D.

Breed analyses (pedigree, production characteristics of a large number of stud and commercial animals) are usually maintained in databases in a cooperative arrangement between farmer groups, breed societies, Research and Development Corporations and scientific institutions in the private sector and state government departments of agriculture. These databases include extensive information on pedigree and production characteristics of stud and commercial animals. This data is supported by additional information obtained from research programs.

The Rare Breeds Trust of Australia conducts inventories that complement the general industry data.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Improving the productivity of the national herd. This underpins our traceability system for exports.

Future needs

5.2 The establishment and operation of breeders' associations

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The Australian Government has no major role because few livestock breeds for food and agriculture are unique to Australia and no native ancestral relatives of Australia's common stock ever existed.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

The management of genetic resources associated with livestock breeds in Australia relies on commercial breeding programs and breed associations. Commercial breeding programs tend to focus on the mainstream breeds of importance to the respective industries. Breed associations manage the status of the remaining breeds to varying extents.

Future needs

6. Use of reproductive biotechnologies (excluding zoosanitary issues)

Note: Zoosanitary issues are covered in Section 3.

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Gene Technology Act 2000.

Australia has no legislation or policy on cloning.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

7. Genetic modification of animals used for food and agriculture

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

All dealings with genetically modified (GM) organisms in Australia are regulated by the Gene Technology Regulator under the *Gene Technology Act 2000*. The Regulator will only grant a licence for the commercial release of a GM crop if it has been assessed as safe for human health and the environment. Every potential licensee must provide the Regulator with an application which is subject to public consultation and a transparent risk assessment process, involving a comprehensive risk assessment and risk management plan. The principals underpinning the risk assessment process are based on international standards originally developed by bodies such as the World Health Organization, the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Similarly, GM foods are not approved for sale unless they have been assessed as safe for human consumption, and those foods that are approved must be labelled to allow consumers to make an informed choice. GM foods are only approved for sale once assessed as safe by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). To enable consumers to make informed choices GM foods are required to be labelled in accordance with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, administered by FSANZ. The exemptions to the GM labeling requirements relate to food products that do not contain GM material of any type and are therefore indistinguishable from conventionally produced foods, including animals fed on GM feed.

There are no GM animals or animal products currently approved for commercial release in Australia.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

8. Suitability of imported genetic material for use in local production environments

Note: For example, rules requiring a "genetic assessment" before genetic material can be introduced.

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Quarantine Act 1908. Further details are available in the report, 'Farm animal genetic resources: second national report - Australia'. This report is available online at <http://www.daff.gov.au/abares/publications>

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Australia's isolation as an island continent coupled with a strict biosecurity system makes it a valuable store for global conservation of animal genetic resources. However, Australia's biosecurity system also impedes the introduction of some genetic resources into Australia. Regulatory arrangements prevent imports of some live animals and reproductive material due to pest or disease risks. For rare or non-commercial breeds, imports are uncommon because of the costs of import fees and charges.

Future needs

9. Conservation programmes for animal genetic resources

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

As Australia's farm animals are based on breeds introduced from other countries, and as a result few livestock breeds are unique to Australia, the Australian Government policy position on conserving animal genetic resources is to create the enabling environment for breeding and conservation programs to operate. Industry-government partnerships collaborate through R&D activities to determine future priorities for these industries, and through these, the appropriate conservation, use and development of animal genetic resources. In addition, Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy which provides a broad national framework for conserving biodiversity, also contains guiding principles applicable to the food and agriculture sectors.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

Do these measures include provisions specifically related to:

9.1 *In vivo* conservation

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Industry determines which species need conserving for food and agriculture. Associations such as rare breeds associations voluntarily maintain non-commercial breeds *in vivo* for conservation purposes but these are not endogenous to Australia. No animal species native to Australia are specifically conserved for food and agriculture purposes.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Commercial returns to farmers are crucial in ensuring the survival of breeds, particularly rare breeds. The preservation of breeds is therefore highly dependent on the successful marketing and consumption of these breeds and their products. This is because no native ancestral relatives of Australia's common livestock for food and agriculture ever existed, so their continued existence relies on farming profitability.

Future needs

9.2 Cryoconservation

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Industry has cryoconservation facilities in place for their breeds of importance. This is to ensure future access to genetic stock for breeding purposes mostly in relation to productivity, quality traits, environmental adaptation - including climate change, external drivers such as greenhouse gas emissions associated policies etc.

Future needs

10. Research and development related to animal genetic resources management

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The *Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989* sets out arrangements for the establishment of statutory Research and Development Corporations (RDCs). Various other legislation exists as well.

The Rural Research and Development Policy Statement (is available at: <http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/innovation/rural-research-and-development-policy>).

The RDCs are a partnership between the Australian Government and rural industries in funding and prioritising rural research, development and extension (RD&E) . The 15 RDCs are funded by statutory levies on producers and their expenditure is matched by the government, up to statutory limits. Multiple RDCs work in the livestock sector. Further information is available at <http://www.ruralrdc.com.au/Page/About/About.aspx>

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

11. Patenting

Legislation

If legislation is place or under development, does/will it include provisions (including exemptions) specifically targeting:

Animal genetic resources for food and agriculture

Living organisms in general

Details of the measure(s)

Patents Act 1990; Patents Regulations 1991; Plant Breeder's Rights Act 1994; Plant Breeder's Rights Regulations 1994; Competition and Consumer Act 2010.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

12. Access and benefit sharing arrangements

Note: The Secretariat of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, on 8 August 2013, invited countries to report on the conditions under which genetic resources for food and agriculture are exchanged and used (Circular State Letter C/ NRD-5). Please coordinate responses within your country.

Legislation

Yes

Policy

Yes

If instruments are in place or under development, do/will they include provisions (including exemptions) specifically targeting:

Animal genetic resources for food and agriculture

Yes

Genetic resources for food and agriculture in general

Yes

Details of the measure(s)

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. The legislation contains provisions on the conduct of access to biological resources (including genetic resources) in Commonwealth areas and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use, i.e. native resources. Note that the export of Australian native wildlife is regulated under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* which allows commercial export of live native invertebrates and fish from a source approved under the Act. However, export of live Australian native mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians (including their reproductive material) is prohibited for commercial purposes and is possible only for specific non-commercial purposes, such as exhibition (zoos), research and conservation breeding.

Australia is a party to the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, the *Convention on Biological Diversity* and has signed the *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization*.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

SECTION 2: MARKETING AND CONSUMER INFORMATION AND PROTECTION

This section targets information on legislation and policies addressing the marketing of animal products, including those addressing:

- the production and marketing of organic products;
- the production and marketing of products sold under protected designations of origin or similar labels;
- production and marketing of products sold under labels indicating adherence to animal-welfare-related standards; and
- food safety.

While some policies and legislation in these fields of action may include specific references to animal genetic resources, it is likely that many will not. The latter may, nonetheless, have indirect effects on animal genetic resources and their management. Consumer demand for animal products often has a major influence on the use and development of animal genetic resources. A lack of demand may place a breed at risk of extinction. Marketing initiatives for breed-specific products, or products from production systems in which locally adapted breeds are kept, can provide a means of promoting the use of at-risk breeds and reducing the risk that they will become extinct. Legislation and policies that facilitate initiatives of this kind can have a positive effect in terms of the maintenance of animal genetic diversity. Conversely, legislation and policies that inhibit the marketing of particular types of products, or products from particular locations or production systems, may inhibit the use of animal genetic resources associated with these products, locations or production systems.

1. Marketing of animal products in general

Note: This question refers to measures that are not specifically focused on market subsectors such as organic products or products with designated labels of origin.

Legislation

Yes

Policy

Yes

Details of the measure(s)

Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The Act is the legislative vehicle for competition law in Australia, and seeks to promote competition, fair trading as well as providing protection for consumers.

Also, the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) is the Australian Government's agency for the promotion of trade, investment and education and for the development of tourism policy, programs and research.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

2. Production and marketing of organic products

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Australia has a regulated organic certification system that applies only to exports of certified organic products and a voluntary system of certification for domestically marketed organic products. The export certification system is an industry and government co-regulatory system. Under this system, the Department of Agriculture approves organisations that are authorised to certify organic and biodynamic produce destined for export. Organic products are certified according to the National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce (National Standard). Further information on the National Standard including a link to the standard is available on the department's website at <http://www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity/export/organic-bio-dynamic>

All foods produced or imported for sale in Australia and New Zealand, including organic food, must be labelled in accordance with the Food Standards Code developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). FSANZ protects the health and safety of the people in Australia and New Zealand by maintaining a safe food supply. It is a bi-national independent statutory authority which develops food standards for composition, labelling and contaminants, including microbiological limits. These standards apply to all foods produced or imported for sale in Australia and New Zealand.

The *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* and the various state and territories' fair trading laws protect against fraudulent and misleading practices (including for food labelling).

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

3. Production and marketing of products sold under protected designations of origin or similar labels

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Trade Marks Act 1995 (Certification Trade Mark provisions).

Wine Australia Corporation Act 1980 (Geographical Indication provisions).

Competition and Consumer Act 2010. The Act is the legislative vehicle for competition law in Australia, and seeks to promote competition, fair trading as well as providing protection for consumers. It protect against fraudulent and misleading practices (including for food labelling).

All packaged and some unpackaged food (including beef, sheep and chicken meat) sold in Australia must be accompanied by information stating where the food comes from (i.e. the country of origin). For packaged food, the information must be included on the label of the food. For unpackaged food, the information can be written on a sign nearby the food. Some unpackaged foods may also have labels, a piece of fruit, for example, may have a sticker on it.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

4. Production and marketing of products sold under labels indicating adherence to particular animal welfare-related standards

Note: For example, rules relating to the marketing of products as “free range” or under similar designations. Basic animal welfare legislation (i.e. not specifically related to marketing) is covered in Section 3.

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Australian states and territory governments are responsible for implementing, monitoring and enforcing animal welfare arrangements in their respective jurisdictions.

The Australian Government *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* and the various state and territories' fair trading laws protect against fraudulent and misleading practices (including for food labelling).

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

5. Safety of food products from animals

Note: If relevant, include measures related to the marketing of products derived from genetically modified organisms.

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Policy decisions about food are made by the Australia New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council which is chaired by the Minister for Health and Ageing. This council, which includes Ministers for each state and territory government and the New Zealand government, receives policy advice from the Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC). This committee is chaired by the Department of Health and Ageing. Relevant officials from state and territory and New Zealand food regulatory agencies are also represented on this committee.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is the government body responsible for developing and maintaining the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Australian law requires all food to meet the food safety standards set out in the Food Standards Code. The Food Standards Code applies to all food offered for sale in Australia, whether produced domestically or imported.

FSANZ monitors food safety incidents worldwide and provides advice to the department on monitoring and testing imported food. FSANZ advises the department when food poses a medium-high risk to human health and on appropriate testing. It also provides risk assessment advice to state and territory regulators, who are responsible for monitoring all food at point of sale, including imported food.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

6. Traceability of animal-origin products

Note: Sections 1 and 3 include questions on animal identification as it relates to breeding and to animal health. If relevant, please use cross-references to indicate that a given law or policy affects more than one field of action.

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The *National Livestock Traceability Performance Standards* (NLTPS) outline the requirements and timeframes for livestock to be traced quickly and reliably if needed. The *National Livestock Identification System* was developed to meet the NLTPS. Australian state and territory governments have legislation in place to underpin the National Livestock Identification System.

The National Livestock Identification System is Australia's system for identifying and tracing livestock. The system plays a key role in ensuring cattle, sheep and goats in Australia can be traced from property of birth to slaughter or export in the event of a threat to biosecurity, meat safety, product integrity and market access.

Electronic identification through the National Livestock Identification System is mandatory for cattle in Australia. The current

National Livestock Identification System for sheep and goats relies on arrangements based on visual identification, coupled with documentation recording movements of mobs of animals. Varying approaches to meeting the standard occur across jurisdictions, which may affect whole-of-life traceability of animal movements across Australia.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

SECTION 3: ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

This section targets information on legislation and policies addressing animal health and animal welfare. While some policies and legislation in these fields may include specific references to animal genetic resources, it is likely that many will not. The latter may, nonetheless, have indirect effects on animal genetic resources and their management. Animal genetic resources and their management can be affected both by the direct effects of animal diseases and by the effects of measures taken to control animal diseases. For example, a disease epidemic may threaten the existence of at-risk breeds, particularly if their populations are concentrated geographically. Animal diseases, as influenced by the presence or absence of effective animal health services, can also influence the type of animal genetic resources that can be kept in particular locations, influence breeding objectives and/or affect the economic sustainability of livestock-keeping livelihoods. Compulsory culling measures used to control disease epidemics may pose a threat to geographically concentrated breed populations. Legal restrictions on the import of genetic material because of zoonotic reasons may affect breeders' access to genetic resources. Legal restrictions on livestock movements, restrictions on particular husbandry practices, or onerous requirements for animal health-related actions on the part of livestock keepers (or in the food processing and marketing chain), may inhibit the keeping of animal genetic resources associated with the production systems targeted. Zoosanitary legislation related to the use of semen, embryos and other genetic materials may have implications for cryoconservation programmes. Legal and policy frameworks related to animal welfare might promote or inhibit the keeping of animals in particular production systems or the use of animals to provide specific products or services. In turn, these developments might promote or inhibit the continued use of the animal genetic resources associated with the respective production systems, products or services.

1. Delivery of animal health services and control of animal diseases

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Quarantine Act 1908. The Australian Government's biosecurity program works to keep Australia free from some of the world's major agricultural and aquatic pests and diseases. The Australian Government protects Australia's plant and animal health through education and awareness to prevent incursions and work to ensure robust response plans are in place if an outbreak occurs.

There is also an Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB). This is an agreement between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments (with the exception of Tasmania) which aims to strengthen the working partnership between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments and improve the national biosecurity system by identifying the roles and responsibilities of governments and outlining the priority areas for collaboration.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

Do these measures include provisions specifically related to:

1.1 Animal identification

Note: Sections 1 and 2 include questions on animal identification as it relates to breeding and on traceability. If relevant, please use cross-references to indicate that a given law or policy affects more than one field of action.

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The National Livestock Traceability Performance Standards (NLTPS) outline the requirements and timeframes for livestock to be traced quickly and reliably if needed. The *National Livestock Identification System* was developed to meet the NLTPS. Australian state and territory governments have legislation in place to underpin the National Livestock Identification System.

The National Livestock Identification System is Australia's system for identifying and tracing livestock. The system plays a key role in ensuring cattle, sheep and goats in Australia can be traced from property of birth to slaughter or export in the event of a threat to biosecurity, meat safety, product integrity and market access.

Electronic identification through the National Livestock Identification System is mandatory for cattle in Australia. The current National Livestock Identification System for sheep and goats relies on arrangements based on visual identification, coupled with documentation recording movements of mobs of animals. Varying approaches to meeting the standard occur across jurisdictions, which may affect whole-of-life traceability of animal movements across Australia.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

1.2 Control of the import of animal genetic resources (live breeding animals and/or germplasm) for zoosanitary reasons

Legislation

Details of the measure(s)

Quarantine Act 1908

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

1.3 Control of the export of animal genetic resources (live breeding animals and/or germplasm) for zoosanitary reasons

Legislation

Details of the measure(s)

Export Control Act 1982;
Australian Meat & Livestock Industry (AMLI) Act 1997
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (relevant for natives, threatened and endangered species)

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

1.4 Zoosanitary rules related to the use of reproductive technologies

Legislation

Details of the measure(s)

Export Control Act 1982;
There also exists Australian state and territory legislation

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

1.5 Control of livestock movements (within the country) for zoosanitary reasons

Legislation

Details of the measure(s)

Quarantine Act 1908;

There also exists Australian state and territory legislation

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

1.6 Restrictions or compulsory actions related to husbandry practices (for zoonosantary reasons)

Legislation

Details of the measure(s)

Quarantine Act 1908;

There also exists Australian state and territory legislation

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

1.7 Compulsory culling in the event of outbreaks of specific diseases

Legislation

If legislation is in place or under development, does/will it include provisions to protect at-risk animal genetic resources from the effects of culling programmes?

Details of the measure(s)

The Australian State and Territory Governments have legislation to allow for the control of emergency animal outbreaks. Various response strategies exist such as culling and other options such as using vaccines as appropriate. Industry is consulted. The process is described on the Animal Health Australia website (see <http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/emergency-animal-disease-preparedness/>).

Australian authorities, in consultation with industry, manage each emergency animal disease under pre-determined response arrangements. Part of this will be to consider the genetic value of high-importance breeding animals and whether the response to control the emergency animal disease can effectively achieve disease control without the need to cull high genetic importance animals. However, in the event that disease control involves such genetic resources, culling will be undertaken in the absence of alternative measures.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

2. Animal welfare

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Australian states and territory governments are responsible for implementing, monitoring and enforcing animal welfare arrangements in their respective jurisdictions. The states and territories set and enforce animal welfare standards through their laws on the prevention of cruelty to animals, or through their animal welfare acts.

The Standing Council on Primary Industries, through the Primary Industries Standing Committee's Animal Welfare Committee, is developing nationally consistent animal welfare standards and guidelines. The first standards and guidelines to be developed were those for the land transport of livestock, which are expected to be implemented in all jurisdictions by the end on 2013.

Australia is a member of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

SECTION 4: AGRICULTURE, LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This section targets information on legislation and policies that address the overall management of the production systems, ecosystems and environments within which animal genetic resources are used and developed. The questions address the following main topics:

- general frameworks or strategies for rural development;
- agriculture, land use and natural resources management;
- management of biodiversity;
- other aspects of environmental protection;
- overall livestock-sector development;
- management of rangelands and other grazing lands;
- establishment of livestock farms or holdings
- establishment and operation of civil society organizations in the livestock sector
- participation of livestock keepers in decision-making in livestock-sector development; and
- prevention, preparedness and response to natural or human-induced disasters

While some policies and legislation in these fields may include specific references to animal genetic resources, it is likely that many will not. The latter may, nonetheless, have indirect effects on animal genetic resources and their management. For example, policies and legislation that promote or constrain the keeping of livestock in particular production systems, for particular purposes or in particular geographical areas may promote or discourage the use of the animal genetic resources associated with these systems/uses/locations (hence possibly affecting their risk status), lead to the establishment of breeding objectives targeting the development of animals suitable for the favoured systems/uses/locations or lead to the import of genetic resources suitable for these systems/uses/locations.

1. General framework or strategy for sustainable agriculture, land use and natural-resources management

Note: This question relates to broad strategic-level instruments such as national agricultural or rural development policies, strategies or laws. Instruments related to specific aspects of agricultural and rural development should be described under other questions as and where relevant.

Legislation

Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Australia operates under a three tier system of government which includes: the Australian Government, State and Territory governments and local (council) governments. Within this system, policy and legislative responsibility for managing land and natural resources rest primarily with the State and Territory governments. The Australian government plays a key leadership and coordination role when there is a need for national action.

Part of the Department of Agriculture's mission is to lead the development of policy advice and provide services to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and related industries. The Department's objectives include: strengthening the capacity for primary producers to use sustainable natural resource management practices in a changing climate, and strengthening the national approach to weed and pest animal management and research.

In meeting these objectives, the department provides policy advice and manages programs aimed at sustainable agricultural production. For example, the Australian Government (through the Department of Agriculture) provides funding to groups - known as Landcare groups - to build the capacity of farmers to adopt sustainable practices to address natural resource issues. With farmers using over half of Australia's landmass, their role in managing land and water-based natural resources is critically important, both environmentally and economically. There are more than 6000 Landcare groups across Australia that have played a major role in raising awareness, influencing farming and land management practices and delivering environmental outcomes across Australian landscapes. Importantly, Landcare groups also collect and distribute information and data on land use, soil, groundcover, weeds, diseases and pests, land management practices and the motivations of resource users.

The Department of Agriculture also works with other agencies and stakeholders to support national approaches to environmental and natural resource management issues, including sustainable agriculture, soil, water and native vegetation policies. For example, the Department of Agriculture has contributed to the Department of Environment as it developed and implemented **Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030** and **Australia's Native Vegetation Framework** which guides native vegetation management across the Australian landscape. The framework recognises that native vegetation is crucial for the health of Australia's environment, that it supports our economy and productivity as well as our biodiversity and that it is embedded within Australia's cultural identity.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

2. Management of biodiversity

Note: Please use this question to provide information on the general framework for managing all aspects of the country's biodiversity (e.g. instruments related to the designation and management of protected areas). Include, for example, information on whether animal genetic resources issues are included in your country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and on any provisions addressing potential conflicts, or perceived conflicts, between the management of animal genetic resources and the management of other elements of biodiversity. Specific animal genetic-resources-related instruments (e.g National Strategy and Action Plans for Animal Genetic Resources) should be reported in Section 1 (Question 1).

Legislation

Yes

Policy

Yes

Details of the measure(s)

The **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999** is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places.

Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2020 is a national framework that guides management and protection of Australia's plants, animals and ecosystems.

Australia's Native Vegetation Framework is a national framework to guide the ecologically sustainable management of Australia's native vegetation.

The **Strategy for Australia's National Reserve System 2009-2030** is a national network of public, Indigenous and private protected areas over land and inland freshwater.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

3. Environmental protection

Note: Instruments specifically targeting the management of biodiversity are covered under Question 2. Please use this question to provide information on instruments addressing other environmental issues (e.g. addressing pollution of land and water, deforestation, climate change, water use or flood protection). If an instrument addresses both biodiversity and other aspects of environmental protection, please indicate this using a cross-reference to your answer to Question 2.

Legislation

Yes

Policy

Yes

Details of the measure(s)

The **Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999** is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides a legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally important flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

4. Overall development of the livestock sector

Note: This question relates to broad strategic-level instruments addressing the livestock sector as a whole, such as national livestock development strategies or laws. Instruments related to specific aspects of livestock development should be described under other questions as and where relevant.

Legislation

Yes

Policy

Yes

If provisions are in place or under development do/will they include:

Particular provisions aimed at supporting livestock keeping in harsh production environments

Note: Please consider direct and indirect forms of support (e.g. grants or subsidies, favourable access to credit or livestock services, facilitation of market access).

Legislation Policy

Particular provisions aimed at supporting large-scale, high external input or export-oriented production systems or supporting management practices associated with such systems

Note: Please consider direct and indirect forms of support (e.g. grants or subsidies, subsidized inputs, favourable access to credit or livestock services, support for infrastructure development or mechanization).

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The red meat industry has primary responsibility for its own affairs and strategic future direction. The Australian Government provides matching research and development funding (refer to the answer provided in Section 1; Question 10), collects and disperses levy monies and facilitates the management of issues of national importance. Additionally, the Australian Government works closely with the industry on market access and development opportunities and in furthering the interests of the industry in dealing with overseas governments and in multilateral negotiations. The industry's structural arrangements are set out under the *Australian Meat and Livestock Industry Act 1997*.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

5. Management of and access to rangelands or other grazing lands

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Land management is Australia largely the responsibility of the state and territory governments. The Australian Government supports the sustainable management of our agricultural resources and animals, and promotes sustainable farming through a range of measures. Funding is provided to regional natural resource management organisations to work with farmers to assist them to adopt sustainable farming practices across a range of land types, including rangelands.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

6. Establishment of livestock farms or holdings

Note: This question relates to planning rules related to the size, location, ownership, registration, etc. of livestock farms or holdings.

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

In Australia, state and territory governments are responsible for land use planning. Some states and territories have developed, or are reviewing, policies for protecting prime agricultural land. The Australian Government collaborates with state and territory governments on frameworks to assist decision making such as the National Urban Policy - which includes consideration of the potential loss of productive land to urban expansion and development. Further the Australian Collaborative Land Use and Management Program run jointly by the Australian, state and territory governments, promotes development of nationally consistent information on land use and management practices.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

7. Establishment and operation of civil society organizations in the livestock sector

Note: Instruments specifically related to organizations focused on breeding (genetic improvement) activities are covered in Section 1 (Question 5.2). Please use the present question to provide information on instruments of a more general nature (e.g. related to the operation of cooperative societies or community organizations).

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

8. Participation of livestock keepers in decision-making related to the development of the livestock sector

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The Australian Government consults with stakeholders within the livestock sector (for example, with Research and Development Corporations (RDCs), industry bodies and associations).

Specifically, the government engages with a broad cross-section of industry participants to explore areas such as:

- the outlook for Australia's agriculture and trade sectors;
- farm performance, productivity and future directions in trade policy;
- increasing agricultural efficiency and barriers for efficiency improvements;
- initiatives to foster investment, growth and sustainability of Australian agribusinesses;
- export challenges and opportunities for Australian agribusinesses in mature and emerging global markets;
- infrastructure priorities for continued growth; and
- strategic priorities and long term planning for research and development investments.

If a decision is likely to have regulatory impact on business or the not-for-profit sector, the Australian Government is required to undertake a Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) which involves assessing the benefits and costs of the proposal on potentially affected groups in the community. As part of the RIS, the Australian Government consults with potentially affected parties.

The *Primary Industries and Energy Research and Development Act 1989* sets out arrangements for the establishment of statutory Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) and the preferred structure for the administration of their R&D program funds. It also sets out the reporting and accountability obligations for statutory RDCs. Regular consultation is undertaken as part of this.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

9. Prevention, preparedness and response to natural or human-induced disasters

Legislation Policy

If instruments are place or under development, do/will they include any provisions specifically targeting:

Animal genetic resources

Note: For example, measures targeting the protection of at-risk breeds.

Legislation Policy

Livestock in general

Legislation Policy

Details of the measure(s)

The National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) assists with personal hardship and distress assistance to individuals; restoration or replacement of essential public assets; concessional loans, subsidies or grants to primary producers,

small businesses, voluntary non-profit groups and needy individuals; and community recovery funds.

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment is a once off, non means tested, payment and is only activated when the impacts of a disaster are considered so severe that further Commonwealth assistance, in addition to that provided under the NDRRA, is warranted. The Disaster Recovery Allowance provides short-term income support to people with a demonstrated loss of income as a direct result of a major disaster. The allowance is intended to help employees, primary producers and sole traders.

Further, Australia has a range of arrangements to manage risk from agricultural incidents, including biosecurity incidents, across the various levels of government and industries. Arrangements include the Emergency Animal Disease Response Arrangement, the [Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed](#) and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement. Committees such as the National Biosecurity Committee provide strategic leadership in managing national approaches to emerging and ongoing biosecurity policy issues across jurisdictions and sectors.

Further the Australian Government, with the state and territory governments, is introducing measures that help farmers and their families prepare for the future, recognising drought is one of a range of challenges that farmers face. Support will be focused on preparedness and risk management so farmers and their families are ready for the difficult times that are often encountered in Australian

farming. National Drought Program Reform is scheduled to be implemented from 1 July 2014 and will include:

- the Farm Household Allowance
- Farm Management Deposits and taxation measures
- a national approach to farm business training
- a coordinated approach to social support services
- tools and technologies to inform farmer decision-making.

The new Farm Household Allowance is an Australian Government initiative that is scheduled to be available from 1 July 2014 to support farmers when they are in hardship. Recipients will be supported by case managers as they undertake activities to improve their situation and prepare for the future.

Impact on animal genetic resources management

Future needs

SECTION 5: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please provide information on any aspects of your country's legal and policy framework that affect animal genetic resources and their management but are not covered by any of the questions above.

Australian rural industries are relatively young compared with many countries that have a long history of agriculture. European settlement history resulted in Australia's main breeds being derived from imported exotic genetic material especially those from North America and Europe. Consequently, Australia has few unique domestic breeds. No native ancestral relatives of Australia's common stock ever existed. About 12 composite breeds have been developed in Australia over 100 years and have resulted in stable, locally adapted breeds suitable to varying Aust climates. For example, the Murray Gray cattle breed, the Droughtmaster cattle breed and the Illawarra dairy breed. All breeds in Australia have undergone selection in the context of production characteristics to suit Australian conditions.

Further information is available in the report, 'Farm animal genetic resources: second national report - Australia'. This report is available online at <http://www.daff.gov.au/abares/publications>

Submit by e-mail