

# Winter Grazing Action Group

## Tuesday 19 May 2020

### MINUTES

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 19 May 2020	
<b>Time:</b>	1:00pm – 4:00pm <i>The Group took a brief pause at 2.30pm as is good practice for virtual meetings</i>	
<b>Location:</b>	Skype	
<b>Attendees</b>		
<b>Winter Grazing Action Group</b>		
Lindsay Burton	Independent Chair	
Ash Keown	NZ Veterinary Association	
Caroline Murray	Dairy Companies Association NZ	
Helen Thoday	DairyNZ	
Julie Geange	Federated Farmers	
Milton Munro	PGG Wrightson	
Miranda Hunter	Farm consultant	
Pania King (joined at 1.20pm)	Sheep & beef farmer; Taskforce member	
Peter Young	Farm consultant	
Tim Driscoll	Dairy farmer	
Tony Pearce	Deer Industry NZ	
Will Halliday (joined at 1.20pm)	Beef + Lamb NZ	
Leonie Ward	Manager, Animal Welfare Sector Liaison	
Penny Timmer-Arends	Animal Welfare Sector Liaison	
Gray Harrison	Manager Animal Welfare & NAIT Compliance	
<b>Ministry for Primary Industries staff</b>		
Tinta Tan	Senior Service Designer	
Jordache Mackenzie	Graduate, Service Design	
Ruby Macandrew (for agenda item 6)	Adviser, Media	

## **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the members, and noted an apology from Pania King and Will Halliday who joined the meeting at 1:20pm.

## **2. Minutes from 5 May 2020**

The minutes were agreed as a true & accurate record of the last meeting held on 5 May 2020. These will be placed on the MPI website for transparency.

The Group went through the actions from the previous meeting and noted them as complete or in progress.

Gray reported back on his action regarding graziers. While the NAIT database does not identify graziers, the Tb free database does. MPI Legal is reviewing the basis to request information from Tb Free under the Privacy Act. DairyNZ have emailed the attendee list from winter workshops held two years ago with their updated wintering information.

Julie reported back on her action regarding Federated Farmers contracts. The grazing contract does not have animal welfare or NAIT requirements and should be revised to include legal requirements. MPI are happy to work with Federated Farmers to provide information on this.

The Chair provided an update on the SFFF applications the Action Group had discussed previously. DairyNZ were revising their proposal based on feedback from WGAG and SFFF. VetSouth have not yet submitted a final proposal.

Miranda raised the potential for a small piece of research to be undertaken this winter at the Southern Demonstration Hub. Possibly to confirm welfare metrics for dairy cattle on crop paddocks. Further discussion to be held out of session about this.

## **3. Chair report back from meeting with the Minister**

The Chair gave an overview of the meeting held with Minister O'Connor and John Hellström, Chair of the Winter Grazing Taskforce, on Monday 11 May by Zoom.

Dr Hellström was happy with the smooth handover from the Taskforce to the Action Group, and is pleased that Pania is continuing to contribute to the Action Group.

The Chair informed the Minister of the approach to date. He noted that the work on mapping out wintering systems for the different livestock classes was delayed due to Covid-19, but the Group is picking up momentum. The industry organisations that are represented on the WGAG have been providing information & webinars to their members directly.

The Minister was pleased with how things are going, but noted the lack of visibility of the Group's work. The Chair noted that a draft Communications Plan was under review, and a press release would be issued in late May.

## **4. Discuss revised document - clear targets for animal welfare during winter**

Ash had revised and shortened the discussion document from the previous meeting, and placed it into a format used by MPI Food Safety - 'Know, Do, Show'. The Group discussed the newest version and generally liked the concept and approach. There was detailed discussion around wording, and identifying which responsibilities sit with the farmer or the grazer. The amendments will be included in a revised version for discussion at the next WGAG meeting.

## **5. Discuss press release & revised communications plan**

MPI Media Adviser Ruby Macandrew joined the meeting and provided context for the press release. Based on the time of year, the messaging is focused on the importance of:

- Correct transitioning onto a new feed type, and appropriate balance between crop & supplement
- Easy access to water
- Having a contingency plan for extreme weather or prolonged periods of wet

The Group were generally happy with the release, and suggested a few wording changes. The Chair and Ruby will agree on the revisions out-of-session, and it will be sent back to the members for final sign off.

Helen, Caroline, Ruby and Penny had met out-of-session to revise the draft Communications Plan. Suggestions from the previous meeting were incorporated, and additional farmer-facing messages were included. The Group discussed the new version and provided some feedback on the new messaging to be updated out-of-session.

## **6. Back fencing**

At Helen's request, back fencing was added to the agenda. Good practice is to back fence stock on winter crops to reduce soil damage from livestock. The distance between the feed-face and the back fence is not specified, and Helen was concerned farmers may be keeping animals on too small an area. This would reduce lying area, and submissive animals may be restricted in their ability to move away from dominant ones. Depending on the paddock, the back fence may also keep stock away from shelter and dryer lying areas.

Others in the group felt, in general, it was more likely the back fence would be a long distance from the face and not interrupt behaviour or lying area. The potential conflict between environmental requirements and animal welfare requirements was mooted. The group decided that it would be aware of the negative welfare outcomes that aggressive or tight back fencing create. WGAG could write to any organisation or rural professional that was advocating or advertising the need for tight back fencing. Stocking density will also be included in the *short-term expectations* document.

The Chair closed the meeting at 4:00pm.

## **Next meeting**

Tuesday 2 June at 1:00pm

New actions		Responsible	Timeframe / status
1.	Discuss animal welfare requirements that could be included in the Federated Farmers grazing contract	Julie MPI Milton	
2.	Discuss research proposal for winter 2020, primarily to be based at the Southern Dem Hub, to look at AW metrics for cattle on crop	Penny Helen Will Ash Tim Miranda	Helen has progressed with SDH & AgR
3.	Revise 'What good looks like' document following the 19 May discussion	Ash MPI	Complete
4.	Circulate the Know, Do, Show format used by Food Safety	Tinta Penny	Complete
5.	Press release – revise asap, circulate to the Group by Friday, feedback required by Monday	Lindsay Ruby	Complete, issued 29 May
6.	Communications plan – make minor amendments & circulate to WGAG	Penny Ruby	In progress
Previous actions (5 May)		Responsible	Timeframe / status
7.	Contact RMPP to see whether wintering information can be shared with those Action Groups with a grazing focus	Will	ASAP
8.	Contact Ospri to see whether NAIT identifies graziers who aren't levy-payers to DairyNZ/B+LNZ, and if this could be used to disseminate wintering info. <i>NAIT does not, however Tb free has some info on graziers</i>	Gray	In progress, awaiting legal advice on privacy concerns
Previous actions (21 April)		Responsible	Timeframe / status
9.	Discuss options for communicating with graziers around good wintering	Helen Will Julie	To be included in comms plan (Penny/Ruby)
10.	Share PGG winter grazing contract when finalised	Milton	When available