

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Ovine Brucellosis-Free Accreditation Scheme 1994

Objective

To protect breeding flocks from the effects of ovine brucellosis and to ensure an adequate supply of ovine brucellosis-free accredited rams to meet market demands.

1. Responsibilities of Participating parties

- 1.1 Owners
- 1.2 Veterinary surgeons
- 1.3 Breed societies and associations
- 1.4 Primary Industries and Regions South Australia

2. Procedures

2.1 Requirements for accreditation

- 2.1.1 Application
- 2.1.2 Registration
- 2.1.3 Initial testing of flocks with no known infection
- 2.1.4 Establishing from an accredited flock
- 2.1.5 Previous known infections
- 2.1.6 Results of any previous testing
- 2.1.7 Property inspection

2.2 Renewal of accreditation

- 2.2.1 Retesting period
- 2.2.2 Testing requirements by age groups
- 2.2.3 Timing of re-accreditation testing
- 2.2.4 Certificate of accreditation

2.3 Breakdown - loss of and reinstatement of accreditation

- 2.3.1 Breakdown of accreditation
- 2.3.2 Re-accreditation after breakdown
- 2.3.3 Suspension
- 2.3.4 Re-accreditation after suspension

2.4 Introductions and disposals

- 2.4.1 Introduction of rams
- 2.4.2 Introduction of rams from interstate and overseas
- 2.4.3 Introduction of ewes
- 2.4.4 Disposal of infected rams
- 2.4.5 Disposal of suspect rams

3. Generalities and Definitions

- 3.1 Relevant information
 - 3.1.1 Adequate records
 - 3.1.2 Property plan
- 3.2 Identification of rams
- 3.3 Presentation of rams
- 3.4 Rams returning to property
- 3.5 Stray sheep
- 3.6 Right of control
- 3.7 Ram lambs
- 3.8 Transport
- 3.9 Agistment
- 3.10 Artificial insemination
- 3.11 Costs
- 3.12 Testing veterinarian
- 3.13 Clinical examination
- 3.14 Laboratory testing
- 3.15 Reporting
- 3.16 Suspension of participating veterinarian

1. Responsibilities of Participating Parties

1.1 Owners

All owners of ram flocks registered with an approved breed society or association are eligible to apply for accreditation.

Applicants must make a written undertaking on the application form. They must in particular

- Maintain fences;
- Provide a property plan (see 3.1.2);
- Permit property inspections (see 2.1.7);
- Present rams for testing;
- Provide adequate records to ensure the effective running of the scheme (see 3.1.1);
- Control livestock:
 - guard against contact with non accredited, untested or infected rams;
 - guard against strays (see 3.4 & 3.5);
 - prevent straying, and treat sheep from their accredited flocks that have strayed as introductions from unaccredited flocks;
 - transport in isolation (see 3.8).

1.2 Veterinary surgeons

Those wishing to undertake testing for accreditation will be required to show awareness of their role in the scheme and to make a written undertaking. The veterinarian will be responsible for ensuring all tests are carried out by an accredited laboratory (see 1.4). The veterinarian will be responsible for submitting reports of all testing carried out and for notifying the Chief Veterinary Officer of any suspected breach of this protocol.

1.3 Breed societies and associations

The Department will liaise with the breed societies and associations regarding administrative principles and flock disease status.

1.4 Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA)

Testing must be performed by a laboratory that has NATA (National Association of Testing Authorities) Accreditation AND participates in the ANQAP (Australian National Quality Assurance Program) programme. The Animal Health section of PIRSA will maintain registers of accredited flocks and participating private veterinary surgeons. Copies of the register will be available to the public. A fee will be charged for registration of an accredited flock.

Specialist assistance will be given on individual properties where this is necessary. The Chief Veterinary Officer may take control of testing and accreditation on any property.

2. Procedures

2.1 Requirements for accreditation

There are 4 requirements to be completed before a flock can be accredited

- 1 Application
- 2 Registration
- 3 Initial testing
- 4 Property inspection

2.1.1 Application

To join the scheme the owner must:

- fill in the application form before testing is commenced;
- sign the agreement form (see attached), and return the application and agreement form to the Department;
- submit a sketch map of the property/ies involved (see 3.1.2).
- when all testing is finished, complete and return the invoice form;

Only the land described on the application may be used for the flock, unless the approval of the Chief Veterinary Officer is obtained.

2.1.2 Registration

The flock must be registered with an approved breed society or association.

2.1.3 Initial testing of flocks with no known infection

The owner must not introduce untested rams.

All rams between 6 and 12 months old (see 3.7) that are on the property must be palpated. All (clinically) suspect rams plus sufficient others to make up the sample size as determined by the table on page 5, are to be bled for laboratory tests.

Either at the same time, or when the results of the blood tests on the 6-12-month-old rams are known, and at the discretion of the owner, palpation and blood tests will be carried out on all working rams and all other rams over 12 months old that are on the property.

60-120 days following the first test on working rams and rams over 12 months old, these same rams are to be palpated and blood tested again.

Where there are adequate reasons for delaying the second accreditation test beyond 120 days, the Chief Veterinary Officer may extend the interval to 180 days.

All rams must be accounted for at both tests. Both tests must be negative for every ram tested.

Sample sizes for ram numbers for rams from 6 to 12 months old			
Number of rams	Sample size	Number of rams	Sample size
10	10	200	27
20	15	250	27
30	19	300	27
40	21	350	28
50	22	400	28
60	23	450	28
70	24	500	28
80	24	600	28
90	25	700	28
100	25	800	28
120	26	900	28
140	26	1000	28
160	26	1200	28
180	27	1400 and over	29

2.1.4 Establishing from an accredited flock

Where a newly registered flock is being established and all rams are purchased from accredited flocks, one negative test of every ram will be acceptable provided that such test is carried out within 60 days of purchase.

2.1.5 Previous known infections

Where ovine brucellosis has been diagnosed and may still be present, then all rams over 6 months of age (see 3.7) present on the property will be required to be blood tested and identified, as in 2.3.1. Rams known to be infected, or suspected of being infected, by either palpation or blood test, must be removed and the flock closed for 60 days before the first test.

2.1.6 Results of any previous testing

Where testing has been carried out for 5 years on a property and complete records of prior testing are available, the Chief Veterinary Officer may allow a flock to be admitted to the scheme with reduced testing provided:

- all prior testing results have been negative;
- the testing veterinarian is prepared to make a report on the previous history of the flock and property management where this relates to ovine brucellosis status.

2.1.7 Property inspection

The property is to be inspected by the testing veterinarian at one of the initial testing visits. The testing veterinarian will report to the Chief Veterinary Officer on the property status, emphasising the suitability of the fences to contain the rams and ram lambs. The Chief Veterinary Officer may instruct an officer of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, to inspect the property. A charge may apply to this service.

Land owned by the applicant but not included in the accredited property will be considered on the same basis as land used for agistment (3.9).

2.2 Renewal of accreditation

2.2.1 Retesting period

Reaccreditation testing will be carried out annually for the first 3 years of accreditation, so that there will be 3 annual re-accreditation tests after the initial testing to join the scheme. In satisfactory circumstances the Chief Veterinary Officer may then permit biennial testing.

2.2.2 Testing requirements by age groups

Re-accreditation testing will be as follows:

- Any ram, irrespective of age, which is suspect because of flock history or clinical examination will be bled and a laboratory test undertaken.
- Worker rams of any age must be identified, clinically examined and bled at all tests.
- 6 to 12-month-old (see 3.7) non-working rams. These rams do not require individual identification. Each ram in this group will be palpated and a sample group blood tested at each renewal test. The size of the sample group will be determined using the table in section 2.1.3. The sample group must include all the rams in this group that were found with clinical symptoms on palpation. If more than the sample size is found with clinical symptoms on palpation in this group, then all those rams will be blood tested. The veterinarian carrying out the testing will record the number of rams in this group that were found to have clinical symptoms on palpation, and if these rams are individually identified, then their identification should also be recorded.

A sample of 6 to 12 month old rams must be tested during the year when the flock is due to be tested. Failure to test this age group will result in the accreditation lapsing at the end of December in that year.

In large flocks where young rams are run in separate mobs, then the necessary sample will be blood tested from each mob.

2.2.2 Testing requirements by age groups (cont.)

- 12 to 24-month-old non-working rams. Individual identification of this group is required. Each ram will be examined clinically at each renewal test and any ram showing clinical symptoms will be blood tested.
- Over 24 month old non-working rams. Individual identification is required and clinical examination and bleeding of each ram will be required at all tests.
- Teasers.
Teaser rams will be required to undergo the same tests as would apply to an entire ram of the same age and usage.
- Complete testing.
All rams on the property must be tested in a manner appropriate to their age group.

2.2.3 Timing of re-accreditation testing

Reminder letters will be posted out at the beginning of January to flock owners with flocks that require testing that year. It will be the responsibility of the flock owner to ensure that the correct testing is carried out on his rams during that year. It will also be the responsibility of the flock owner to ensure that the re-accreditation fee, with the invoice, and the veterinarian's report form(s) are returned to the Department by the end of December in the year in which testing is due.

If all the reports and the fee have not been received at the Department by the end of December in the year in which the flock was due to be tested, then accreditation will automatically lapse.

2.2.4 Certificate of accreditation

At the conclusion of any series of testing that has negative results, and provided that the other three conditions of accreditation remain valid, (see 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.7) a certificate of accreditation will be issued to the owner by the Chief Veterinary Officer.

The certificate will be valid for either 12 months or 24 months as appropriate (see 2.2.1), and will automatically expire on 31 December in the year when the test is due.

2.3 Breakdown - loss of and reinstatement of accreditation

2.3.1 Breakdown of accreditation

The detection of any positive or infected sheep (including strays) on the property constitutes a breakdown and accreditation will be suspended.

The owner must fulfil the requirements laid down for a new application for reinstatement to accredited status, except that all rams over 6 months of age (see 3.7) present on the property will be required to be blood tested and identified.

2.3.1 Breakdown of accreditation (cont.)

However, in some cases it may be possible to show that only part of the property has been infected, and a lesser degree of testing may be appropriate.

The owner must also comply with any additional conditions that the Chief Veterinary Officer may determine.

2.3.2 Re-accreditation after breakdown

After a breakdown has occurred as in 2.3.1, re-accreditation will be granted after two consecutive negative tests NOT LESS than 60 days and not more than 120 days apart.

Re-accreditation following a breakdown will be for 12 months and retesting will be annually for the first 3 years following re-accreditation. In satisfactory circumstances the Chief Veterinary Officer may then permit biennial testing, (see 2.2.1).

Re-accreditation following suspension for any reason other than positive diagnosis of ovine brucellosis, shall be at the discretion of the Chief Veterinary Officer.

2.3.3 Suspension

Accreditation may be suspended where any of the following occur:

- A diagnosis of ovine brucellosis is confirmed by a veterinarian in any ram on the property.
- Testing for renewal of accreditation is not carried out by 31 December in the year when testing is due.
- There is any breach or suspected breach of this protocol, and the Chief Veterinary Officer decides that suspension is appropriate.
- At any time the fencing is found to have deteriorated and no longer meets the required standard.
- The flock is no longer registered with a breed society or association.

2.3.4 Re-accreditation after suspension

Re-accreditation after suspension for reasons other than breakdown (dealt with in 2.3.2 above) shall be permitted -

- in the case of 2.3.3 (testing not carried out by 31 December), subject to effective testing and at the discretion of the Chief Veterinary Officer. Renewal will be for 12 or 24 months.
- in the case of 2.3.3. (breach of protocol and unsatisfactory fencing), subject to such conditions as the Chief Veterinary Officer may consider necessary.

2.4 Introductions and disposals

2.4.1 Introduction of rams

Rams and/or teasers may be introduced to the flock either:

- by transporting sheep from another accredited flock in complete isolation; or,
- where the introduced animal is from a non-accredited flock where ovine brucellosis is not known to be present, and agreement has been reached with the testing veterinarian prior to moving the animal(s), then the animal must be held in complete isolation pending the completion of two clinical examinations and two blood tests not less than 60 days or more than 120 days apart.

The first test may be carried out on the property of origin NOT MORE than 14 days before shipment. The animal(s) must be held in complete isolation from the time of the first test, during transport, and until the result of the second test is known. The second test must be NOT LESS than 60 days after shipment.

If the results of both these tests are negative, then the testing veterinarian will instruct the owner that the animal(s) can be put with the accredited flock.

2.4.2 Introduction of rams from interstate and overseas

Form 2a is required for movement of all sheep into South Australia from interstate.

Rams from flocks accredited under an approved interstate Ram Accreditation Scheme may be introduced to South Australian accredited flocks without further testing but transport must be in complete isolation from non-accredited sheep.

Rams from unaccredited flocks interstate may be introduced under the same conditions as in 2.4.1 above. Testing must be performed by a laboratory that is NATA accredited AND participates in the ANQAP program.

For introduction from overseas, apply to Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), for current requirements.

2.4.3 Introduction of ewes

Non-accredited ewes, whatever their breed, introduced to an accredited property should not be joined for four months if not pregnant, or if pregnant they should be lambed in isolation, and not rejoined for four months post-lambing. Ram lambs should be weaned early, and tested when over 6 months of age, before mixing with other ram groups.

2.4.4 Disposal of infected rams

Any ram or teaser declared positive by the testing veterinarian shall be culled immediately from the flock, held in isolation and within 30 days either slaughtered on the farm; or sold for slaughter.

Notification of disposal is to be given to the testing veterinarian, who shall advise the Chief Veterinary Officer.

2.4.5 Disposal of suspect rams

Suspect rams must be disposed of in a manner approved by the testing veterinarian, who shall advise the Chief Veterinary Officer.

Any suspect ram disposed of without such approval may be classed as infected and full flock retesting required.

3. Generalities and definitions

3.1 Relevant information

3.1.1 Adequate records

Adequate records are required showing

- the number of rams on the property in each breed
- the origin of introduced rams
- movement of sheep to and from shows, sales and other movements away from the accredited property.

3.1.2 Property plan

A plan of the property is required, this should be approximately to scale and show

- hundred and section numbers
- boundary and subdivisional fences
- names of adjoining neighbours
- types of fences

The property plan shall be updated and presented when changes occur to the part of the property where the accredited flock is kept.

It is also the owner's responsibility to notify the Chief Veterinary Officer of any land acquired on which it is intended to run the accredited flock. It will be necessary for a further property inspection to be carried out on the new land.

3.2 Identification of rams

All working rams and all working teasers, and all rams and teasers over 12 months of age, must be individually and permanently identified by serially numbered ear tags, individual horn brands, or other approved means.

Rams under 12 months old that require identification, must be identified in a similar manner.

3.2 Identification of rams (cont.)

While it is not mandatory for rams under 12 months of age to be identified, it is in the interests of the flock owner that this group are identified.

3.3 Presentation of rams

All rams and teasers to be tested shall be made available on request in suitable facilities.

3.4 Rams returning to property from shows, sales or for any other reason

Any rams that are part of an accredited flock and leave the designated property must be held in complete isolation for 60 days on return, and then undergo one clinical and blood test, unless they have ONLY been in direct contact with other accredited sheep, and have been otherwise held and transported in isolation. If testing is necessary and if the result of this test is negative, then the testing veterinarian will instruct the owner that the ram(s) can be put with the accredited flock.

Contact with untested sheep will require two clinical and blood tests, 60 days apart.

3.5 Stray sheep

The owner shall report to the attending veterinarian any stray sheep on or from his property or any other significant failure of the isolation of his flock. Where the owner's sheep have strayed, testing shall be appropriate to the circumstances and at the discretion of the testing veterinarian. Rams may be held in isolation for 60 days and returned after one test, as in 3.4.

3.6 Right of control

The Chief Veterinary Officer may at his discretion take control of the testing and direct which rams shall be tested in any flock undergoing accreditation or retesting.

3.7 Ram lambs

Appropriate testing of ram lambs is to be carried out after 6 months of age.

3.8 Transport

Sheep subject to accreditation must at all times be transported in isolation from non-accredited sheep.

3.9 Agistment

Agistment or other pasturing of rams from an accredited flock on land separate to the accredited property may be approved by the Chief Veterinary Officer. However, all rams so depastured at a time when an accreditation test is due must be so tested within 30 days of the date when the rest of the rams in the flock are tested.

3.9 Agistment (cont.)

The conditions for returning such rams to the main flock shall be appropriate to the degree of risk involved:

- Where the fencing is good and there has been no contact with unaccredited rams, no testing will be required on return.
- Where the fencing is doubtful and it is unlikely there has been contact with other rams, then on return, isolation for 60 days and one clinical and blood test will be required (sample testing may be used for non-working rams under 18 months of age).

It is emphasised that the onus of isolation is on the owner. If the owner is concerned that there may have been contact with suspect rams or where it is known that there definitely has been contact with other rams, the rams must be isolated and have two negative clinical and blood tests before returning to the flock.

3.10 Artificial insemination

May be carried out on the ewes of an accredited flock only if the semen is derived from an ovine brucellosis-free ram, or an ovine brucellosis tested ram.

3.11 Costs

All costs of examinations, testing and registration fees shall be borne by the owner.

3.12 Testing veterinarian

Clinical examination and collection of samples shall be carried out by a registered veterinary surgeon who is approved by the Chief Veterinary Officer to participate in the ovine brucellosis-free accreditation scheme.

3.13 Clinical examination

Clinical examination involves the palpation of both testicles and both epididymi by the testing veterinarian. Any ram, positive or suspect on clinical examination, must be blood tested.

3.14 Laboratory testing

Blood and semen samples, where applicable, shall be tested by a laboratory that has NATA accreditation AND participates in the ANQAP program. The blood (serological) test will be the complement fixation test (CFT) unless otherwise directed by the Chief Veterinary officer.

3.15 Reporting

Reports of all clinical and blood tests (including a copy of laboratory results) shall be forwarded on the prescribed form by the testing veterinarian to the Chief Veterinary Officer within 14 days of each test. Any other occurrence that may contravene this protocol must be notified to the Chief Veterinary Officer as soon as possible.

3.16 Suspension of participating veterinarian

For the proper working of the scheme the Chief Veterinary Officer may suspend a veterinarian from the roll of approved veterinarians.

The Chief Veterinary Officer may require that further testing on certain properties be carried out by a government veterinary officer for which a fee may apply.