



ALPA Media Release: Wednesday, 24 August 2016

ALPA frustrated by lack of industry consultation on RFID.

The Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association (ALPA) is frustrated and disappointed with the Victorian Government's decision to mandate RFID tags on all sheep and goats born after 1 January 2017 with scanning in Victorian saleyards from July 2017.

This decision goes against the Victorian government's commitment to national industry bodies and other state and territories that the government would not mandate tags until a national approach was agreed on and with industry consultation. The total disregard for this commitment and lack of national consultation is disappointing.

Visual NLS tags combined with a correctly completed NVD, make the current mob based system efficient, cost effective and manageable while at the same time providing traceability. The current system does and can work well when the business rules are fully implemented and are backed by government. We find it alarming that Victoria wants to introduce RFID when they haven't fully implemented the current mob based system. Improvements to our traceability systems and ways to improve are always welcome; however, there must be a national system that is appropriate for all facets of the industry.

Andy Madigan, CEO of ALPA stated, "no one from Victorian government can demonstrate how a RFID system can work in a saleyard environment at commercial speeds after repeatedly asking for this information. Previously ALPA has been unable to receive costings on scanners and readers if the Victorian government were to mandate implement RFID. Some Victorian saleyards yard in their peak selling periods in excess of 50,000 sheep and lambs on sale days. We have serious concerns to the animal welfare of sheep and lambs spending more time than is necessary in saleyards. There are also OH&S implications for our agent members who will be exposed to increased risk due to the additional time required to be spent in the saleyards. Transporters are also exposed to increased time pressures with regards driver fatigue management."

Mr Madigan acknowledged there will be confusion for cross border trade and the potential for lack of competition for livestock from buyers but also the message that is being sent to our overseas trading partners with Victoria wishing to operate under a different system to the rest of Australia.

Minister Pulford has said there will be a consultation period on the transition and draft implementation. ALPA will be engaging with the Victorian Government on this to ensure the best possible outcome for ALPA members and their vendor clients in Victoria and right across Australia.

Ends.

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Who is ALPA: ALPA is the peak industry body representing more than 1,200 livestock and property agency businesses across Australia. Our Members handle in excess of 97% of rural agency business Australia wide. It is one of the largest organisations of small rural business men and women, relied on to protect the interests of agents and producers nationally. ALPA membership is a signature of professionalism in the rural agency industry.