

MEDIA RELEASE

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Saleyards disappointed with Victorian decision for mandatory eRFID in sheep and goats

The Australian Livestock Markets Association (ALMA), the sole peak national body representing saleyards and lairages, has expressed disappointment at the Victorian Government's announcement to mandate electronic radio frequency identification (eRFID) on all sheep and goats born in Victoria after 1 January 2017 and has urged the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, the Federal Minister for Agriculture, to intervene.

ALMA Chairman Steve Loane said that 'Whilst we welcome technological advances that support, improve and secure industry growth this decision is a disastrous outcome for our industry, both in Victoria and nationally. The operational implications for saleyards have just not been considered.'

Supporters of the implementation of mandatory eRFID in sheep and goats appear to rely on just one study that looked at current technology's ability to accurately scan stock. The study, on only 100 sheep, showed less than ideal efficacy which resulted in the required rescanning of the entire mob. 'This is just not something you could fathom doing in a commercial situation,' Mr Loane said.

'It is our belief that in a commercial facility with throughput in excess of 50,000 head a day, that over \$1 million in additional infrastructure would be required, to install sufficient readers, and would add in excess of 5 hours to a sale. '

'This assumes that the technology is 100% accurate - something that is just not able to be guaranteed at the moment.

'Saleyards have a chain of responsibility to consider.

'We are concerned that the current technology will impact on the commercial speeds of scanning and ultimately have flow on impacts to health and welfare of animals as well as adverse risks to transporters and saleyard operators due to additional time required to be spent in saleyards,' Mr Loane said.

In a world where all of the livestock chain are working hard to harmonise laws in an effort to make the market and delivery of stock as stress free and efficient as possible and minimise trade confusion across state borders the decision for mandatory eRFID in Victoria is a retrograde decision. It is for situations like this that a sole National body representing the entire industry is critical.

ALMA, along with other peak bodies, supports the continuation of the current national mob-based tracing scheme under the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). The current system is effective, simple and well accepted by industry.

ALMA will however engage with the Victorian Government during the consultation period to ensure industry consultation on the implementation package results in the best possible outcomes for the saleyard industry.

ENDS

Media comment: Steve Loane 0418 848 593

General enquiries: Kate McGilvray 0409 810 954 info@australiansaleyards.com.au