

OVINE JOHNE'S DISEASE

**1597. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

I refer to the stud-breeding and wider sheep industry's concerns about the most recent case of ovine Johne's disease.

- (1) Will the minister state where the property on which the case occurred is located?
- (2) What is the extent of the outbreak and what action is being taken to minimise it?
- (3) Will the minister assure the public that the event will have no negative flow-on effect?
- (4) Is it a stud-breeding property?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for the discussions we had prior to his asking this question.

- (1)-(4) At this stage, I do not intend to name the town in which the property is located simply because the nature of the incident is one that I think is best managed with the property owner. The scale of the property is such that any information about it would very quickly identify the individual owner. I can advise that the property is in the great southern district. The department is working with the owners to detail records of movements of sheep on and off the property. It is a large property. The department is arranging further testing of sheep on the property and other traced properties. Ovine Johne's disease was diagnosed in samples collected from a single sheep during routine abattoir surveillance. Abattoir records show that the sheep is from a property in the upper great southern region. The Department of Agriculture is following the agreed guidelines of the national standard definitions and rules for OJD and has quarantined the property traced from the abattoir.

I can assure the public that there will be no negative flow-on effect - as much as that is possible to do. The very purpose of the rapid quarantine procedure and the procedures that will ultimately require total destocking of the property is to avoid a negative flow-on effect. We in Western Australia have been through this three or four times. The difference is that the latest case has occurred on a very large property whereas the other cases occurred on very small properties.

My advice is that it is not a stud property. It is a property run on the principles of self-replacement genetics. The owner retains a core breeding stock to supplement the business, which supplies livestock for slaughter and live export. That is an important question, and I am glad the honourable member has asked it. Had the case occurred on a stud property, and often these outbreaks occur in stud-related circumstances, our concerns would have been much greater as animals from that property could have been very widely spread.

The department is still in that part of the investigative mode in which it tries to identify movements. Given the general description of the operation of the property, we can be hopeful that, generally speaking, this property has moved animals only for slaughter or to shipside. Perhaps we will not face some of the issues that could have arisen had the farm been a different kind of operation.