



CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

SUBMISSION

28 June 2021

Andrew Horgan
Industry Engagement Manager
Agriculture and Production Horticulture
Skills Impact
559A Queensberry Street
NORTH MLBOURNE VIC 3051

Via email: andrew@skillsimpact.com.au

Dear Mr Horgan

Re: Evidence to retain AHCLSK335 Conduct dropped ovary technique procedures for spaying cattle unit

Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) is the peak industry organisation representing Australia's grass-fed cattle producers. Established in 1979, CCA brings together all state-based farming organisations (SFOs) representing cattle producers in their jurisdiction, associate member organisations with close connections to the cattle industry, and individual cattle producers.

CCA welcomes the opportunity to provide industry support to retain unit AHCLSK335 Conduct dropped ovary technique (DOT) procedures for spaying cattle. We provide this submission without prejudice to any additional submissions from our members or individual producers.

CCA acknowledges that part of the review of underutilised, being low or non-enrolled, units within training packages has resulted in deletion of units from the AHC Training Package.

Following consultation with our members and broader stakeholders, including the Kimberley Pilbara Cattlemen's Association, Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association, and AgForce we provide the following substantiation for retention of the unit and future uptake by industry.

Long-term contraception of cattle can benefit the welfare and production of animals where females cannot be reliably segregated from males and in other limited circumstances. In extensive pastoral conditions, contraception enables cull females to achieve marketable body condition by preventing the stress of unmanaged pregnancy, calving and lactation. Spaying of cattle is a widely practiced husbandry procedure in Northern and Western Australia. The Willis DOT is the preferred method of conducting this procedure and will continue as the only low-cost method of contraception until new technologies become available.

Spaying is a skilled technique and individuals performing the procedure must be registered veterinary surgeons or adequately trained and accredited as permitted by state and territory



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legislation as denoted by the following standard under *The Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Cattle* (the Standards):

S6.7 A person spaying a cow must be a veterinarian or, if permitted in the jurisdiction, be accredited or be under the direct supervision of a veterinarian or a person who is accredited.

The practice of spaying is more common in the vast rangeland states and territories of Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory, with the majority of these performed by lay spayers. With legislative adoption of the Standards imminent, CCA acknowledge the absence of a recognised accreditation scheme for lay spayers and has been working with our members and other stakeholders to devise a means by which skilled lay spayers can continue to operate or new spayers trained and accredited to commence operating.

As a result of lengthy process of consultation with four highly regarded and experienced cattle veterinarians, including the President of the Australian Cattle Veterinarians and the veterinarian who was largely responsible for introducing the DOT to Australia many years ago, the project to develop a completely new suite of training and assessment products for the spaying unit included:

- A new training manual – the only one now available for the unit
- An assessment manual and guide
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) kit
- Video evidence guide.

In addition to development of the unit and associated resources, AgForce was contracted by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) and CCA to develop a national accreditation scheme for spayers. This project is currently 95% complete and includes:

- Scheme rules – a complex document governing requirements and operations of the scheme
- Web-based database for applicants to obtain and maintain their accreditation
- Forms and process for scheme applications, assessment, accreditation approval and renewal
- An appeal process
- Agreement of a scheme manager.

The launch of the unit has been delayed while industry awaited adoption of the Standards into law, and hence the low enrolment numbers. Once adopted, the unit will officially be launched and be the only means by which non-vet DOT spayers will be legally allowed to operate into the future. Subsequent uptake of the unit by industry is likely to be driven by this legal requirement.

With the implementation of the Standards into law by Queensland announced on 23 June 2021, it is critical that this unit is available as the regulation relating to the spaying of cattle by non-veterinarians will commence on 1 January 2022. This grants industry a six-month 'grace' period to launch the scheme and commence spayer accreditation.

Each state is adopting the national standards (which require accreditation of spayers) in different timeframes and with differing implementation approaches. However, the industry will have a nationally available scheme based on this unit available for all states who wish to use it.



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Furthermore, CCA will raise awareness among its industry members of the course and retention of the unit may also contribute to overall improvement of industry images as it demonstrates industry to be meeting a legally required welfare standard.

CCA appreciates the opportunity to provide evidence to support the retention of unit AHCLSK335 and looks forward to making additional comment in the future where necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact the CCA office of 1300 653 038, or at cca@cattlecouncil.com.au if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Travis Tobin
Chief Executive Officer