

**Kangaroo Management Advisory Panel Meeting #22
Cascades Motor Inn –20 March 2014**

Present:

Chair: Stephen Wolter (OEH)
Ray Scott, NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA)
Greg Bates, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)
Lachlan Gall, Pastoralists Association of West Darling (PAWD)
Dr Tony English, (Australian Veterinary Association)
David O'Shannessy, (RSPCA NSW)
Greg Markwick, Department of Primary Industries (DPI)
Steve McLeod, Australasian Wildlife Management Society (AWMS)
Ray Borda, Kangaroo Industries Association of Australia (KIAA)
John Farr, NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association Inc.

Apologies:

Patrick Medway, Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia Inc (WPSA)

Adoption of Minutes of Meeting # 21

The minutes were ratified. Moved David O'Shannessy. Seconded Lachlan Gall.

Adoption of Agenda of Meeting # 22

No further agenda items were added.

Item 1. Review of actions from meeting #21

Action 1: OEH to email the restructure document to the Panel
Emailed

Action 2: OEH will email to the Panel quota figures from Northern Tablelands once they are available.
Finalised and emailed.

Action 3: OEH will let the Panel know the Scientific Division's decision as soon as it is available.
Are far as OEH is aware a decision on this is still pending. The decision will be emailed to the Panel as soon as it is available

- Stephen Wolter (OEH) also advised the Panel that the current tenure would remain until the end of the year, and then OEH could possibly extend the Panel again until the review of the Program is completed.
- The vacant FDW licence which was advised at the last meeting as being given to Devils Ark by the Minister, has not been issued. Our Legal advice was that Devils Ark did not meet the legislative requirements of the Licence.

Item 2: 2014 tag allocation and harvest update

- The final take figures for 2013 were 346,646 kangaroos which was 19.3% of the quota.
- This was less than in 2012.
- For 2014 the take figure is 26,866 which is high for the low number of Harvesters presently licenced.
- There have been 113,190 tags allocated ytd.

Item 3: industry update

Markets

- Macro Meats are at present the only Fauna Dealer Wholesaler exporting to Russia. This is a week to week proposition and is at best unstable. It is not looking good for the future. There was a meeting scheduled for March, but this has been cancelled because of the Crimean situation and the talk of sanctions against Russia.
- There was a meeting scheduled for the 18 March in Canberra for the sign off of protocol with China. This didn't happen and is the tenth year in a row that this has been the case. There is a large contingent (640 businesses), including the Prime Minister heading to China in April. Macro Meats have asked the Prime Minister's Office that Kangaroos be included. Macro believes that there is a 50/50 chance that China will come back on board.
- California's Sunset Clause which mainly affects the export of leather expires at the end of 2015. KIAA needs to raise \$120,000 for a lobbyist to make sure it stays open.
- No change in other markets.

Other issues

- **Culled kangaroos to be harvested in Victoria for pet food sales:**
 - A media report has been released stating that Victoria will begin harvesting kangaroos for pet food sales commencing March 31. This program has not been ratified by the Commonwealth, so there will be no exports. Even skins cannot be sold if not endorsed by the Commonwealth.
 - Victoria needs to follow the rest of Australia and work with the KIAA – if not markets could be destroyed. This could have huge ramifications right across Australia.
 - Industry was looking at Victoria for a Commercial cull when NSW quota was low but they were not interested at that stage.

Action 1: Stephen Wolter will call his equivalent in Victoria and find out what exactly is happening with the proposed cull commencing 31 March. Information will be sent to the Panel when available.

Item 4: Draft Annual Report for 2013

Email from Commonwealth

- OEH have received an email from the Commonwealth to say that there will be a review of the Code of Practice commencing shortly. This will be discussed further in Other Business and OEH will keep the Panel updated with its progress.

Harvest statistics – weights, male bias etc

- Steve McLeod advised that according to his calculations the male bias has been miscalculated for the past few years. It is only 1-2% (higher) out, but it is important to get the figures accurate otherwise OEH will be open to criticism.
- Steve will work with OEH to make the numbers right. This was done during the morning tea break and numbers in the Annual Report are now correct.

Non Commercial

- Harvest figures are based mainly on allocation not what is shot.
- OEH have no impact or influence on the non-commercial culling program. This program is implemented by the National Parks and Wildlife group.
- PAWD commented that activists do not unfortunately differentiate between commercial, non-commercial or illegal culling.
- There is no compliance on non-commercial shooting and buckshot from illegal or non-commercial culling found in roo carcasses in meat works, is causing huge problems for meat processors.
- People need to know that a licence is necessary if they are going to cull kangaroos and the Government needs to educate. If a few fines are issued and these make it into the Press, it may be a wakeup call and this might make a difference.
- Macro Meats will supply stats to OEH as to which areas contain most buckshot.
- The non-commercial cull is usually minimal compared to the commercial cull but has jumped above the Harvest in 2013 in some zones.
- The NSW Kangaroo Harvester's Association suggested that this figure could have been bought about by the 'Male only shooting' imposed by some Wholesalers. This is not a huge problem at the moment because with the number of licenced Harvesters being down on recent years, those hanging in have more country to service.
- KIAA and it members have voted and have decided that until a better way is found to euthanise joeys, they will continue to shoot only males. Male only shooting remains voluntary for all Wholesalers.
- KIAA believe that perception of kangaroo culling is poor across the world, especially our treatment of joeys and young at foot, and unless this perception changes Industry will not exist for much longer. Since the policy change to male only culling, China have indicated that they will at least think about buying the product.

Compliance Statistics

- During 2013 a total of 42 infringement notices were issued.
 - Non-head shot (5)
 - Fail to return unused tags (3)
 - Exceed number authorised (1)
 - Untagged carcasses (3)
 - Fail to submit returns (Harvester) (21)
 - Tag substitution (1)
 - Harvest incorrect species (1)
 - Provide false information (4)
 - Use unregistered chiller (1)

- 8 cautions were issued, and
 - 1 prosecution was completed
- The Panel suggested that there should be different monetary fines for different offences eg Non-head shot carcasses in comparison to paperwork issues.
 - There was a discussion on how non-head shot carcasses were checked. Non-head shot carcasses are only picked up at the meat works when the skin is removed. The percentage is very low in comparison to the number of carcasses culled and at the Macro works if a Harvester presents a body shot animal he is suspended until further notice.

Research

- OEH asked for suggestions on Research scholarships for 2014. WPSA have money available toward a scholarship.
- Some suggestions were:
 - The advantages of eating kangaroo meat
 - Economic benefits to Society of the Program ie less road accidents, effects on cropping
 - Ethics of shooting in the field as compared to cattle on the back of a truck
 - Sustainability

Item 5: Updates

Discussion of Review of KMP program

- Panel members were emailed the new restructure document after the last meeting.
- The major restructure change is Compliance.
- There is no longer a compliance unit directly attached to the Kangaroo Management Program.
- The Compliance Section for North Branch is based in Dubbo and has six staff. The staff have only just been recruited and are still to be trained in Kangaroo Management. There are 16 Compliance officers across the State and all will eventually police the Program. Until the review of the Program is completed North Branch will do the compliance of Kangaroo Management for the whole State.
- An interim agreement has been sent to the Commonwealth for there to be less chiller inspections per year until the Kangaroo Management review has been finalised.
- There have been very few chiller inspections in the last months but OEH are hoping to rectify this soon.
- OEH have a working Group in place, comprising of staff from Compliance, Policy, Legal and National Parks and Wildlife to help complete the review of the Program.
- At the end of the review there will be a document recommending changes, with a link to ensure compliance is occurring.

Go through framework

- The principle aim of the review is to reduce the amount of paperwork for the Harvesters.
- There is a new data base under construction which is web based and will allow for Harvesters to enter returns on line.

- Some of the changes to the framework were discussed with the Panel. The Panel can still come to Kangaroo Management with any changes they would like to see and OEH will take them into consideration.
- OEH will have an Option's Plan available at the next KMAP meeting for the Panel to look at and make comment.
- Some option already suggested by the Panel are:

Issue of Quota

- Change “property specific tags” to “zone based” tags. This would require a change in legislation. Some problems associated with this could be that because of the travel involved, more shooting would occur around towns and pastoralists would not be serviced. Immigration of roos, however, may rectify this.
- Change ownership of tags from property owner to Harvester. Technically the property owner benefits from the tags but the Harvester is the one who has paid.
- Tags are issued for longer periods and returned for costs if not used
- In NSW tags are restricted to the quota. In Qld for example they issue the tags and then report on the take, so that quota is not exceeded.
- Auditing at the other end. ie a tag is barcoded and scanned when it is shot, not when it is sent out. GPS and barcoded tags in the future, but is this going to stop red tape and be less stressful for the Harvester?
- Co-ordinate with NSW Food Authority and all work in together.
- Issue the quota in sections, for example 20% at a time. With on-line reporting this would stop the overlap of 6 weeks before take catches up with allocation. When the quota is reached, shooting is stopped.

Harvester Accuracy Assessment Accreditation

- All the Panel agreed that there should be a standardised Accreditation across the board, or NSW should accept Accreditations from other States

Breaches of Licence and Conditions and PINs

- Should be different monetary fines for different offences
- Some offences (linked to the Animal Cruelty Act) should be prosecutions not PINs

Auditing Harvesters at point of shot

- The Panel thought this should remain as Field Harvesting auditing is the most transparent problem that the system has.
- This type of auditing gives OEH the chance to pick up procedures that may be able to be improved through education.

Population estimates and survey methodology

- Foot surveys for Western Greys have not been done for a while and a sample area survey should be done as part of this review.
- Correctional factors should also be revisited.

Policy in regard to cap on Fauna Dealer Licences

- OEH feels this Policy needs to be reviewed, but the Minister would have to approve any changes.
- Some of the Panel thought that because of the state of the Industry at the moment it would not make any difference. It would not matter how many Licences were issued, the Industry is market driven and markets cannot just be created.
- Qld, WA and SA have all opened up their Licences and they are now producing less product.
- If Licences were to be issued in certain areas where illegal and backyard processing is at present occurring, the value of the Licences would be diminished.

Item 6: Other Business

John Farr – Code of Practice

- The Male only shooting, which the Harvester's Association believed some Groups were going to push for implementation into the Code at review, was discussed earlier in the session.
- The RSPCA have been waiting for Steve McLeod's report on the euthanasia of joeys and young at foot to be finalised, hoping this would trigger a review of the Code of Practice.
- At the moment there are separate codes for Commercial and Non-commercial culling, and the question was asked as to whether this should be the case.

Cross Border Issues (NSW & Qld)

- The issue of dual chiller sites in border towns has been brought to the attention of OEH
- Harvesters would like to be able to licence a chiller to accept for example Qld and NSW carcasses if the Harvester shoots in both states.
- The Harvesters Association feels this should be allowed as long as the Harvester is taking the roos across the border with a legal Import/Export licence. This would save a double up of fees attached to registration and would be meeting the Governments requirement of cutting red tape.
- OEH will seek clarification of the cross border jurisdiction issues, to see if this is possible.

List of Actions:

Action 1: Stephen Wolter will call his equivalent in Victoria and find out what exactly is happening with the proposed cull beginning 31 March. Information will be sent to the Panel when available.