

Stakeholder Briefing

Ovine Footrot Management Program Review South Australia

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Aims / Objectives

- Detail the **current impacts** of the program as reported by industry and provide advice as to the veracity of the concerns raised.
- **Evaluate options** for program amendments to address impacts considering practicality, effectiveness and economics (costs and benefits) for options.
- Undertake a detail **economic analysis** on options to underpin changes to footrot management in South Australia that will guide program changes to improve cost efficiency and program effectiveness.

Methodology

➤ Consultation

- Survey (276 people)
- Face to face interviews (62 people)

➤ Apply Animal Health Decision Making Framework

- PESTLEOS
- Define the problem
- Develop Options
- Economic analysis using multi-criteria analysis (MCA)
- Communication



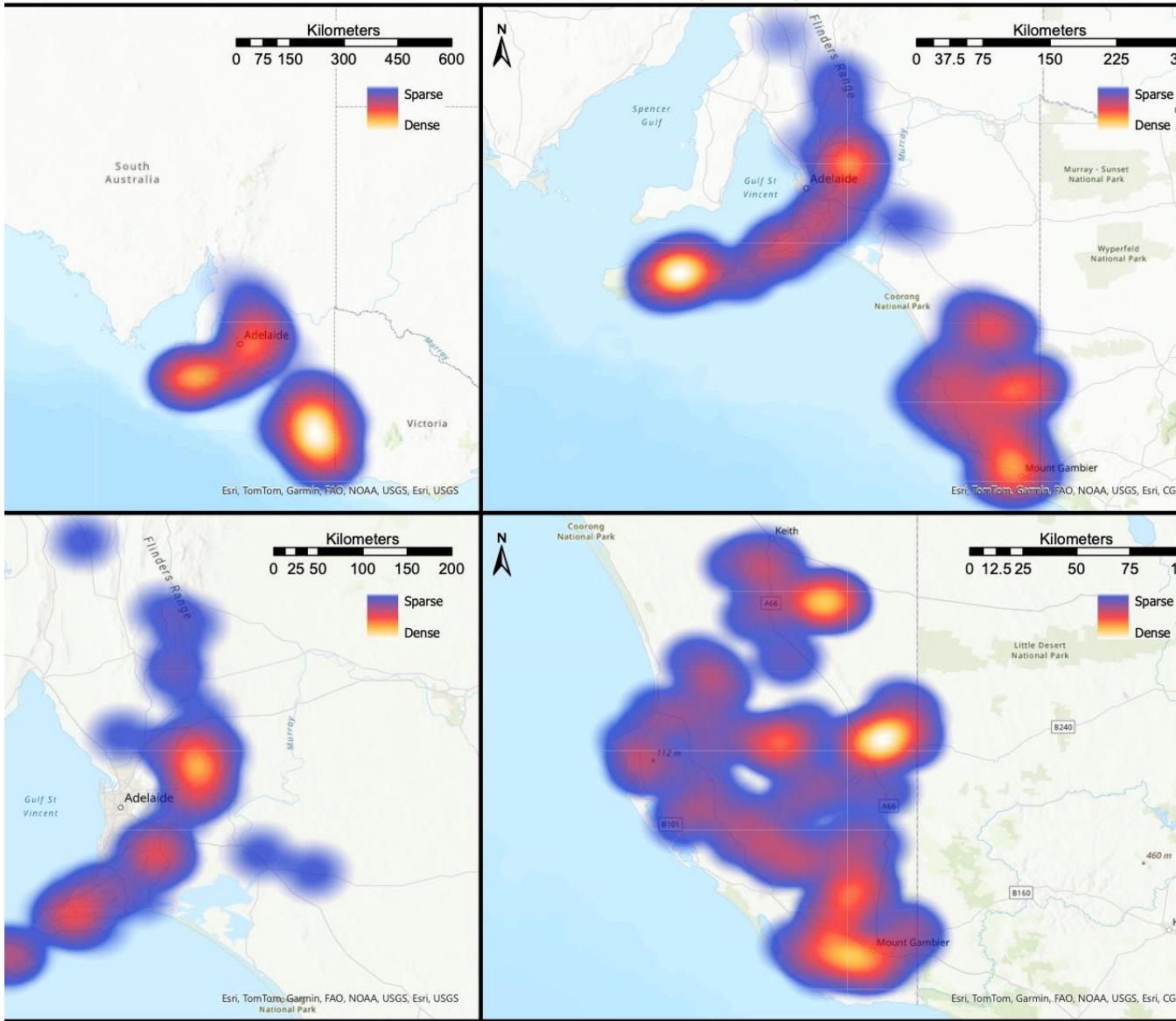
Methodology – Stakeholder Interviews

	Adelaide Hills	Interstate	Kangaroo Island/ Fleurieu	Northern	South East	Statewide	Total
Footrot Contractors	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Footrot Experts	0	9	0	0	0	2	11
Former Chief Veterinary Officers	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Livestock Agents	1	0	1	1	3	1	7
PIRSA	0	0	1	0	1	2	4
Private Vets	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Producers	4	0	8	8	10	0	30
Saleyards	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Total	5	10	11	11	19	7	62

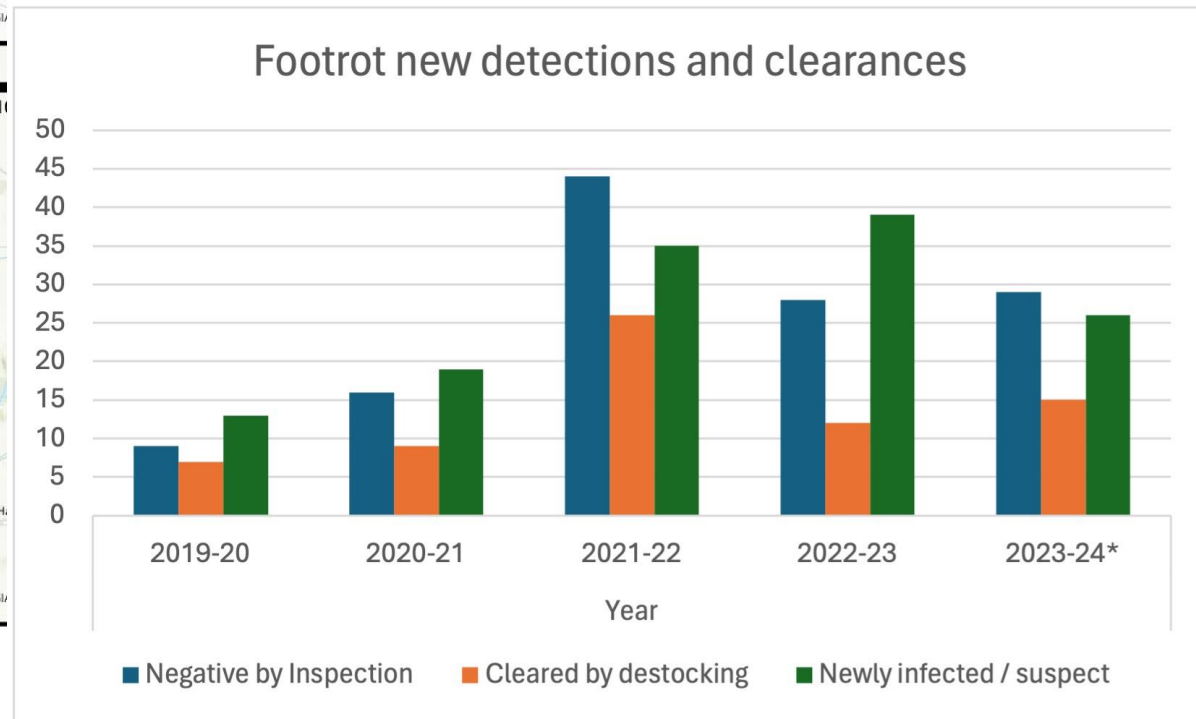
Current Situation in SA

- **Official program > 70 years**
 - Fully funded by industry since 2012
 - Notifiable disease and movement restrictions apply to properties infected or suspected to be infected with virulent footrot (Livestock Act 1997).
 - 2019 moved to using laboratory tests (elastase) to assess the footrot virulence, rather than just clinical disease expression.
 - Also more robust since that time -> improved detection rates.
- **Aims to reduce animal welfare issues, the economic impacts of the spread of footrot and to assist producers to manage the disease.**

Current South Australian Footrot Infected & Suspect Properties



Current Situation in SA

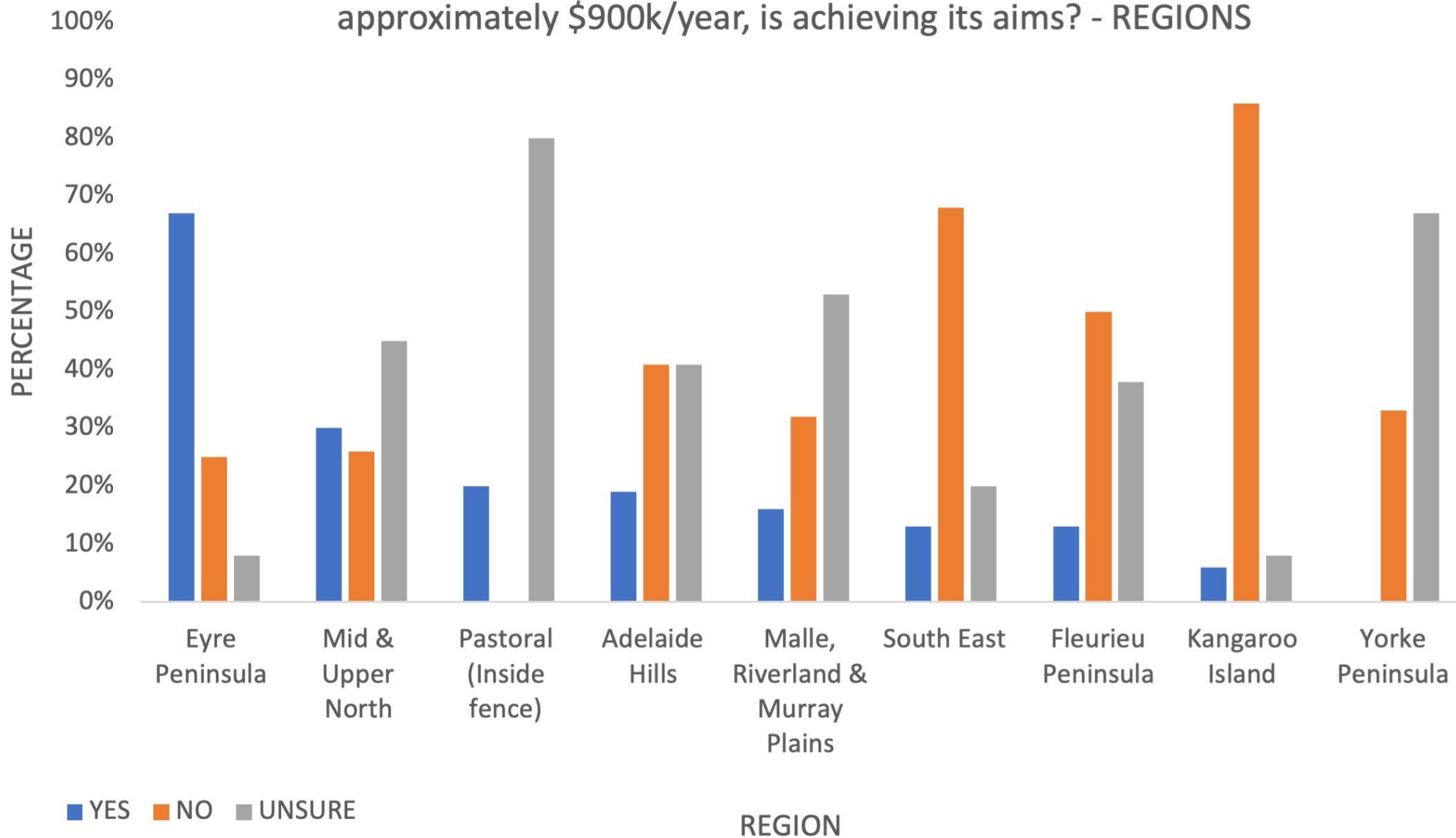


Current Situation Elsewhere

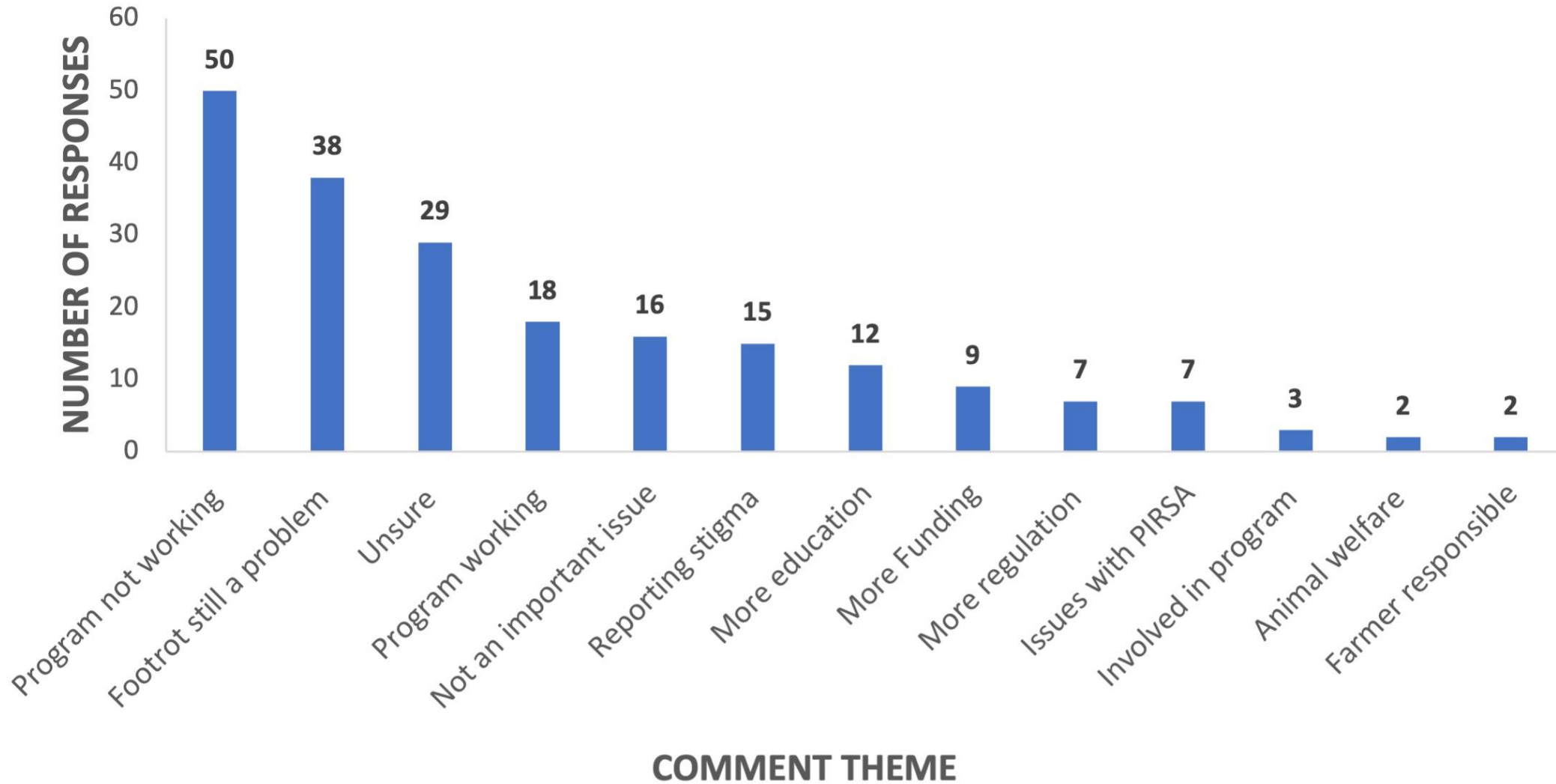
- **Victoria: notifiable, but largely unregulated.**
- **Western Australia: regulated control program similar to South Australia, plus intensive surveillance at two main abattoirs.**
- **NSW: regulated control program, but currently being redesigned with focus on education, producer empowerment and disease control.**
- **Tasmania: fully deregulated for nearly 50 years.**
- **Queensland: notifiable, but no significant impact.**

Do you think the current South Australia footrot control program, which costs approximately \$900k/year, is achieving its aims? - REGIONS

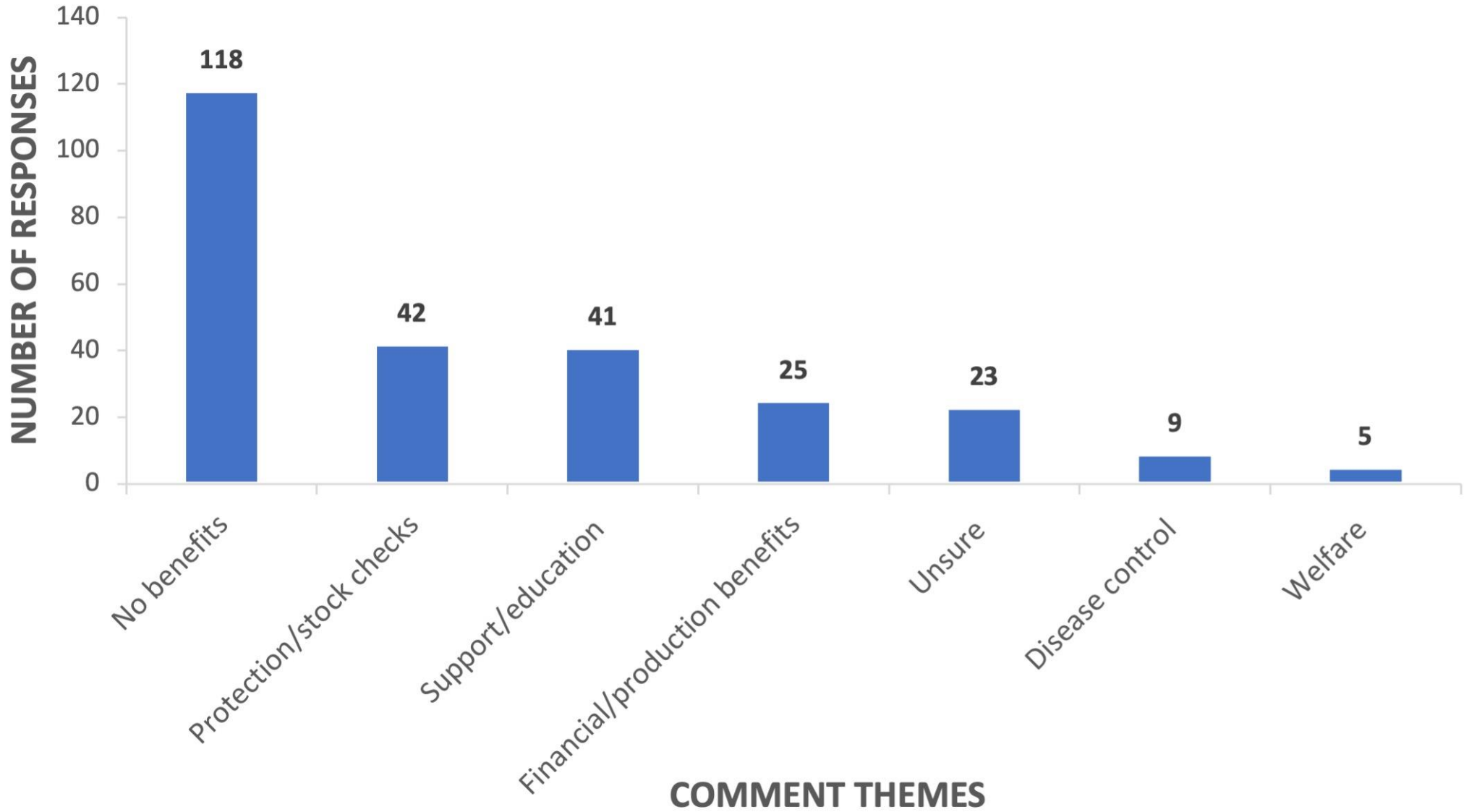
Survey Results (1) achieving aims?



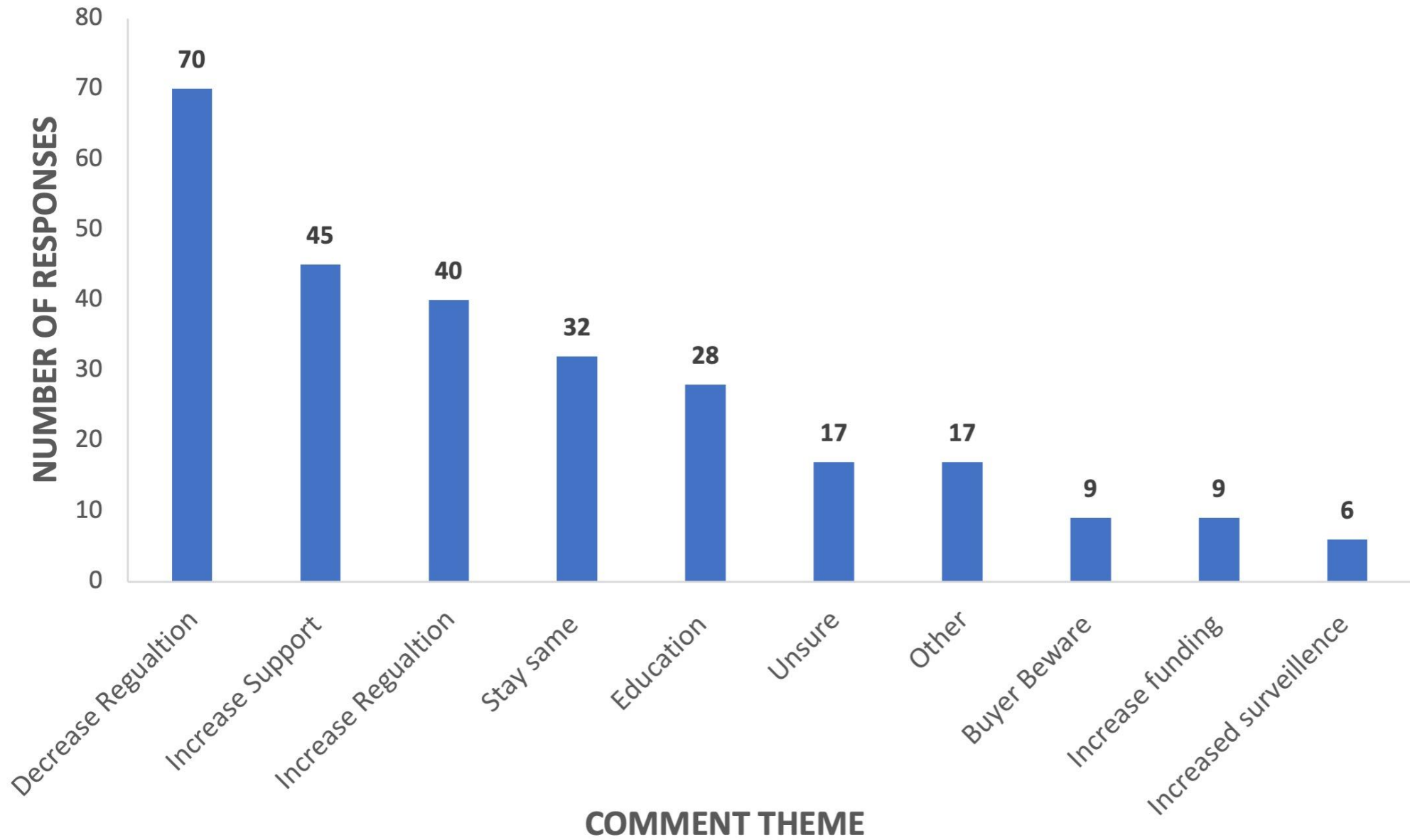
Survey Results (2) Reasons for previous answer



Survey Results (3) Benefits of the Program



Survey Results (4) Changes Required



**Stronger
regulation,
surveillance,
increased
funding.**



**Deregulation,
Increased
support,
Increased
individual
responsibility.**

Issues from Interviews (1)

- Widely held view across all stakeholder groups that the **fear of consequences** leads to very significant **under-reporting, avoidance of SA saleyards** and the **true prevalence** is much higher than the apparent prevalence.
 - Actual prevalence is unknown.
 - 2008 survey - 6.25 percent of flocks not previously known to be infected were found to be infected with virulent footrot.
- Dealing with a positive diagnosis is **high cost** and **high stress**.
- Still need to address **animal welfare** and **production** impacts.

Issues from Interviews (2)

- Producers from **less favourable environments** generally had less awareness of footrot, but were **concerned that it remained under control**.
- People generally acknowledged that the program **doesn't sufficiently suppress** footrot overall.
 - But probably reduces the number of severe, virulent cases (PIRSA estimate ~ 70 per year).
- False sense of security.
- **Risk of introducing footrot** when buying stock remains high.

Issues from Interviews (3)

- Seen as a **'government' program, yet industry funded.**
- People tend to not take **individual responsibility** for prevention.
- **Complicated** and difficult for producers to understand.
- People would like more **advice and help.**
- Need **options** for people **to purchase** disease free sheep.
- Need more **flexible** control / eradication options.
 - Eradication is not for everyone, and good control is acceptable.

Issues from Interviews (4)

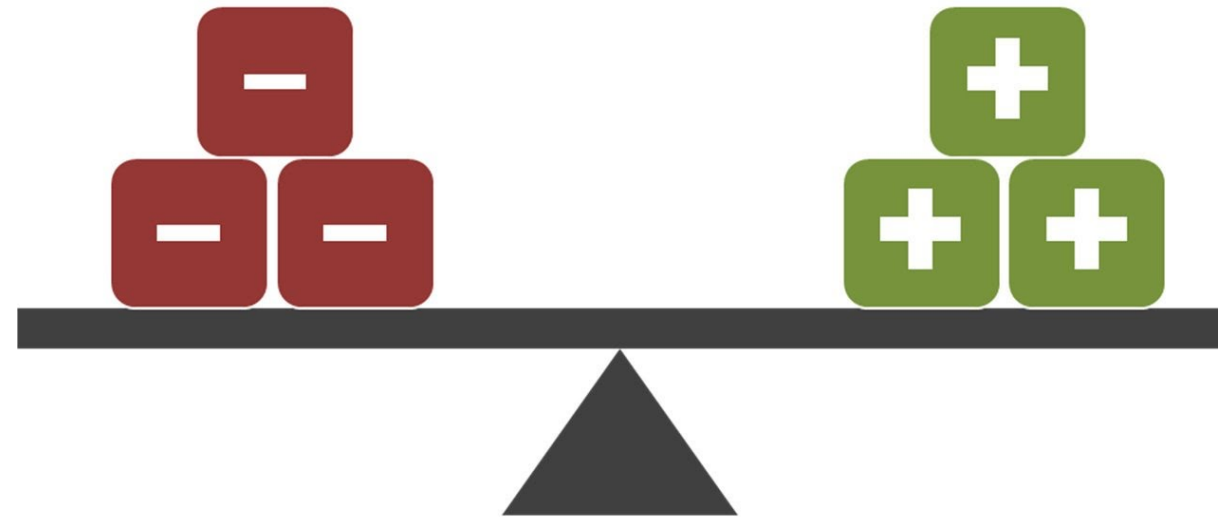
Consistent with 2016-17 southern Australian study by Best et al:

- **Highlighted the complexity of footrot, as well as the negative impacts associated with the social stigma.**
- **Need to generate trust among the sheep producer community, working in collaboration with government.**

Suggested Program Enhancements (1)

- Greater **investment** – current resources are stretched.

- Overall **program design**:
 - **Aim** – reduce economic impact and improve animal welfare
 - Management – **shared responsibility**
 - Greater **individual responsibility**.
 - Incentives.
 - Deregulation.
 - *More regulation.*
 - **Balance.**



Regulation <-> Deregulation

- Majority favoured a level of deregulation.

 - Increase reporting / taking action.
- Retention of some sort of regulatory **'safety net'** desirable, eg.
 - Ability to take action with badly affected flocks - focus on animal welfare.
 - Trading without disclosure.
- Clarify existing **rights when purchase** of stock subsequently found diseased.
- Supply of **vaccine**.
- Some **challenges** within existing disease control legislation.

Suggested Program Enhancements (2)

➤ Increased education & support.

- Availability.
- Practical demonstrations.
- Remove disincentives.
- Would people take it up?

➤ Prevention.

- Range of measures suggested.
- Improved certification.
- Individual responsibility (on-farm biosecurity).

Suggested Program Enhancements (other)

➤ Incentives / subsidies.

- Vaccine.
- Initial consultation.

➤ **Regional – national approaches.**

- Not practical.

➤ **Improve vaccine availability (incl Sydney Uni).**

➤ **Diagnostics.**

➤ **Improve genetics.**

Options for the future

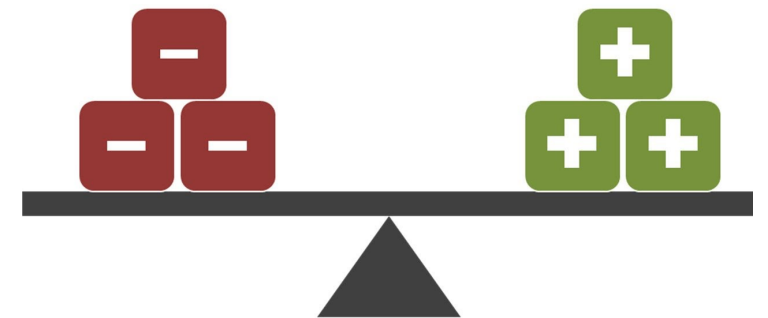
Option 1: current program

Option 2: Enhanced regulatory program

Option 3: Enhanced industry management of footrot

Option 4/Base Case: Full deregulation

No Option is Perfect



**Option 1:
current
program**

**Option 2:
Enhanced
regulatory
program**

**Option 3:
Enhanced
industry
management of
footrot**

**Option 4/Base
Case: Full
deregulation**

- Program currently costs around \$900,000 p.a.
- Surveillance, primarily through awareness and owner reporting, as well as saleyards monitoring which is variable (abattoir surveillance does not occur).
- Provision of free diagnostic services through the program.
- Properties identified with virulent footrot subject to strict movement restrictions aimed at preventing spread to other properties.
- Infected properties required to either manage or eradicate footrot.
- General education and awareness, plus support for contractors and veterinarians.

Option 1: current program

**Option 2:
Enhanced
regulatory
program**

Option 3:
Enhanced
industry
management of
footrot

Option 4/Base
Case: Full
deregulation

- Program is likely to cost more than \$1 million p.a.
- Enhanced surveillance through abattoirs and saleyards to improve detection rates.
- Strengthened sheep trading declaration system in relation to footrot status.
- Other enhancements also possible to improve support for affected producers, subject to funding availability.
- Additional resources to support the program.

Option 1: current program

Option 2:
Enhanced
regulatory
program

**Option 3:
Enhanced
industry
management
of footrot**

Option 4/Base
Case: Full
deregulation

- Focus is on supporting producers to better manage virulent footrot.
- Formal government-industry partnership established for detailed program design and management.
- Enhanced education / awareness program focussing on identification, control methods, prevention strategies
- Enhanced support for technical specialists and for affected producers.
- Enhanced sheep trading declaration system.
- Footrot remains notifiable, but action only taken for significant welfare issues or marketing footrot infected sheep without disclosure.
- Illegal to sell clinically affected sheep at a saleyard or to another property without full disclosure (or a variation on this).
- Supply of vaccine does not require CVO approval.
- Incentive(s) incorporated; Other enhancements also possible.
- Possible R&D investment, especially improved vaccine technology.

Option 1: current program

Option 2:
Enhanced
regulatory
program

Option 3:
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management of
footrot

**Option
4/Base Case:
Full
deregulation**

- Footrot deregulated. No longer notifiable (could retain regulations for trading of diseased sheep – General Biosecurity Duty in new Biosecurity Act).
- Focus on owner responsibility for control and buyer beware (could publish risk areas plus mandatory health statement).
- General education and awareness regarding footrot, trading implications, risk mitigation etc.
- Supply of vaccine does not require CVO approval.
- Other enhancements possible to improve support for affected producers, subject to funding availability.
- Possible R&D investment, especially improved vaccine technology.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM FEATURES	POSITIVES OF PROGRAM	NEGATIVES OF PROGRAM
OPTION 1 Current Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Costs around \$900,000 p.a. ➤ Surveillance to identify infected properties, through awareness, owner reporting & saleyards monitoring. ➤ Free diagnostic services. ➤ Properties with virulent footrot subject to strict movement restrictions. ➤ Infected properties required to manage/eradicate footrot. ➤ General education/support for contractors & vets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supported by some sections of the sheep industry & provides a level of confidence of footrot risk management. ➤ Prevents spread of footrot from known infected flocks. ➤ Established history of footrot control & expertise within PIRSA. ➤ Funding helps PIRSA animal biosecurity capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Widespread industry dissatisfaction with the program. ➤ Surveillance component has low sensitivity of detection. ➤ Fear of consequences has led to widespread under-reporting. ➤ Actual prevalence unknown ➤ Producers with unreported footrot continue to trade. ➤ Cost of eradication high & not all producers are capable. ➤ Financial impact of detection largely borne by producers ➤ Emotional impact high for many under restrictions.
OPTION 2 Enhanced regulatory program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Likely to cost more than \$1 million p.a. ➤ Enhanced surveillance through abattoirs & saleyards. ➤ Strengthened sheep trading declaration system. ➤ Other enhancements also possible to improve support for affected producers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Favoured by some sections of industry. ➤ Improved surveillance gives program more technical credibility. ➤ May further reduce spread & prevalence of footrot. ➤ Depending on design, could provide more support to producers to control/eradicate.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The program would be more costly. ➤ Availability of on-ground resources to support. ➤ Cooperation from abattoirs & saleyards required. ➤ Surveillance information not captured for platforms. ➤ Likely to be unpopular with most producers, agents & saleyards. ➤ Increased distrust of PIRSA & increased avoidance behaviour likely. ➤ Contrary to national trend for management of endemic diseases
OPTION 3 Enhanced industry management of footrot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Likely to cost the same as current program. ➤ Focus on supporting producers to manage footrot. ➤ Formal government-industry partnership for detailed program design & management. ➤ Enhanced education program focussing on identification, control methods, prevention strategies. ➤ Enhanced support for technical specialists & affected producers. ➤ Strengthened sheep trading declaration system. ➤ Illegal to sell affected sheep without disclosure. ➤ Footrot remains notifiable, but no regulatory action taken (unless animal welfare issues etc). ➤ Supply of vaccine does not require approval. ➤ Incentives incorporated & possible R&D investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supports a culture of producer responsibility. ➤ Greater focus on reducing economic & animal welfare impacts. ➤ More consistent with interstate programs. ➤ Removes / reduces stigma associated with footrot. ➤ Should be supported by majority of producers. ➤ Should lead to a long-term improvement in the on-farm impact of footrot. ➤ More rewarding role for PIRSA staff. ➤ Improves EAD detection if producers seek assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partial deregulation will be unpopular with some sections of industry. ➤ Lack of formal trading restrictions leading to increased spread. ➤ Possible continued lack of interest from producers to improve their practices. ➤ Current lack of technical resources to support producers. ➤ Impact on known true prevalence of footrot uncertain. ➤ PIRSA staff will need to change their operations. ➤ Possible loss of funding for PIRSA staff, & reduced capability. ➤ May be difficulties implementing with current legislation. ➤ Need to be careful that enforcement of remaining regulatory provisions doesn't create similar issues as the current program.
OPTION 4 Full deregulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Footrot deregulated. No longer notifiable. ➤ Focus on owner responsibility for control & buyer beware. ➤ General education & awareness regarding footrot. ➤ Supply of vaccine does not require approval. ➤ Other enhancements possible to improve support for affected producers. ➤ Possible R&D investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greater consistency with interstate programs. ➤ Removes stigma associated with footrot. ➤ Becomes producer responsibility. ➤ Supports increased professionalism within the industry. ➤ More opportunities for private sector to support industry. ➤ Reduced call on industry funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deregulation not favoured by significant proportion of industry. ➤ Producer responsibility – uncertain how many will take seriously. ➤ Current lack of technical resources to support producers. ➤ Lack of formal trading restrictions for infected properties. ➤ Unclear the impact on true prevalence of footrot, although spread from infected properties likely to increase. ➤ Regulatory action only possible for serious animal welfare cases. ➤ Loss of core funding to maintain PIRSA field staff.

Multi-Criteria Analysis

Criteria	Weighting	Description
Costs to industry and government	1/3	<p>The costs incurred by producers to manage footrot on their properties (including compliance with any regulatory regime).</p> <p>The Government costs of any program to manage footrot, including any ongoing costs for education & support (including subsidies), laboratory diagnostics, compliance monitoring and enforcement.</p>
Benefits to industry	1/3	<p>The benefits of any program or activities undertaken to manage the prevalence and impact of footrot.</p>
Equity considerations	1/3	<p>Assessing the distribution of costs and benefits across industry participants (i.e. is it fair) considering the risk creators and beneficiaries.</p>

Scoring

Cost score	Scale	Benefit score	Scale
0	No change relative to Base Case	0	No change relative to Base Case
-1	Insignificant incremental cost	+1	Insignificant incremental benefit
-2	Minor incremental cost	+2	Minor incremental benefit
-3	Moderate incremental cost	+3	Moderate incremental benefit
-4	Major incremental cost	+4	Major incremental benefit
-5	Significant incremental cost	+5	Significant incremental benefit

Final Scores

PROGRAM OPTION	MCA 1 ANALYSIS COSTS TO INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT	MCA 2 ANALYSIS BENEFITS TO INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT	MCA 3 ANALYSIS EQUITY CONSIDERATION	FINAL WEIGHTED MCA SCORE
OPTION 1 Current Program	-4 Major incremental cost	+2 Minor incremental benefit	-3 Moderately negative impact	-1.33
OPTION 2 Enhanced regulatory program	-5 Significant incremental cost	+2 Minor incremental benefit	-3 Moderately negative impact	-1.67
OPTION 3 Enhanced industry management	-2 Minor incremental cost	+3 Moderate incremental benefit	+3 Moderately positive impact	1.33
OPTION 4 Full deregulation	0 No change from the Base Case	0 No change from the Base Case	0 No change from the Base Case	0

Option 1: current program

Option 2:
Enhanced
regulatory
program

**Option 3:
Enhanced
industry
management
of footrot**

Option 4/Base
Case: Full
deregulation

Positives

- Supports a culture of producer responsibility.
- Greater focus on reducing economic & animal welfare impacts.
- More consistent with interstate programs.
- Removes / reduces stigma associated with footrot.
- Should be supported by majority of producers.
- Should lead to a long-term improvement in the on-farm impact of footrot.
- More rewarding role for PIRSA staff.
- Improves EAD detection if producers seek assistance.

Option 1: current program

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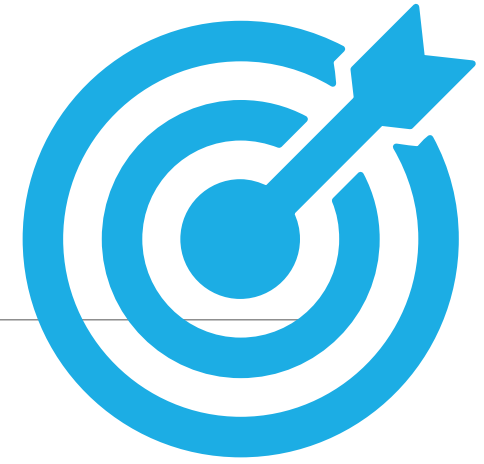
Negatives

- Partial deregulation may be unpopular.
- Lack of formal trading restrictions may lead to increased spread.
- Possible continued lack of interest from producers.
- Lack of technical resources to support producers.
- Impact on known true prevalence of footrot uncertain.
- PIRSA staff will need to change their operations.
- Possible loss of funding for PIRSA staff, & reduced capability.
- May be difficulties implementing with current legislation.

No option is perfect, but option 3 aims to bridge the current gaps.



Specific Recommendations



Recommendation 1:

A future footrot control program in South Australia should aim to:

reduce the economic and animal welfare impacts of footrot across the South Australian sheep industry, by enhancing the understanding, diagnosis, prevention and management of footrot using a collaborative industry approach.

From:

“to enhance the understanding, diagnosis and management of footrot in South Australia and reduce the number of footrot infected flocks, using a collaborative industry approach”.

Specific Recommendations

Recommendation 2.

A future footrot control program for South Australia should be jointly designed and managed by industry and government.

The devil is in the detail – work this out together.

Recommendation 3.

Option 3, Enhanced industry management of footrot, should be adopted as the model for future management of footrot in South Australia.

Option 3 as described is guide only.

No option is perfect.

Specific Recommendations

Recommendation 4.

Livestock SA should consider approving the existing program application for funding, provided it is acknowledged that it will be managed, where possible, in line with the future intended approach.

Recommendation 5.

Communication to industry of the design and time frames for the future footrot control program should be given a high priority and a full description of program features and requirements should be published on the PIRSA website.

Q & A
