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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Buying online? Buyer beware**

With online shopping becoming a major rival to traditional retailers and services such as AuctionsPlus becoming ever more popular, it seems that livestock trading is increasingly getting in on the game.

But what does buying or selling online mean for the health of your animals and what are the potential biosecurity risks to your farming operation?

When it comes to biosecurity, online purchasing can be something of a double-edged sword.

On the one hand, with stock from different properties in close proximity to one another, saleyards represent a much higher biosecurity risk than purchasing direct off property due to the threat of animal-to-animal infection.

On the other, buying 'sight unseen' prevents the purchaser from closely inspecting the animals on offer.

Duncan Rowland, Manager of Biosecurity Planning and Implementation at Animal Health Australia, says that when it comes to buying livestock, it's best not to trust photos, videos or even your own eyes.

"Animals can carry diseases and pests without showing any physical signs," Mr Rowland said. "And we know that one of the main ways for disease, weeds and pests to enter a property is through new arrivals.

"For these reasons, a National Vendor Declaration and relevant animal health statement is the best health insurance for your existing stock.

"Buyers should not be afraid to insist on the right paperwork; then check it to make sure the animals you have received are the ones you bought.

"However, it's also equally important to properly isolate and monitor new stock before introducing them to the rest of the herd or flock – we recommend a period of 10 days.

"This will allow any signs of disease to emerge and for the animals to empty their stomachs of any weed seeds they may be carrying.

"To achieve real quarantine you have to have a buffer. The surrounding yards or paddocks must be free of animals or the isolation area must be double-fenced – there can be no nose-to-nose contact," Mr Rowland said.

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For more information on Farm Biosecurity visit [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)



Before buying online, obtain more biosecurity advice from [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)

## **When buying stock online**

- Be careful not to purchase disease
- Always ask for a National Vendor Declaration and animal health statement
- Buy from a trusted source
- Ask your agent's advice
- Inspect closely on arrival – before & after unloading
- Isolate for 10 days
- Upload to NLIS – as a buyer this is your responsibility

-ENDS-

For more information, or to arrange an interview, contact Martin Blaszczyk, AHA, (02) 6203 3988.



## Further Information

### The Farm Biosecurity Initiative

Farm Biosecurity, a joint program managed by Animal Health Australia (AHA) and Plant Health Australia (PHA), is a national education and engagement campaign which provides producers with information and tools to reduce the risk of diseases, pests and weeds. Producers are encouraged to check their properties regularly and if they see anything unusual to call the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline** on **1800 084 881** or the **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline** on **1800 675 888**. For further information, visit [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au).

### Animal Health Australia

AHA is an innovative partnership involving the Australian Government, state and territory governments, major livestock industries and other stakeholders. We work with our members and stakeholders to strengthen Australia's national animal health system and maximise confidence in the safety and quality of Australia's livestock products in domestic and overseas markets. For further information, visit [www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au) or call (02) 6232 5522.

### Plant Health Australia

Plant Health Australia is the national coordinator of the government-industry partnership for plant biosecurity in Australia. As a not-for-profit company, we service the needs of Members and independently advocate on behalf of the national plant biosecurity system. Our efforts enhance Australia's plant health status, assist trade, safeguard the livelihood of producers and support the sustainability and profitability of our plant industries and the communities that rely upon them. For further information, visit [www.phau.com.au](http://www.phau.com.au) or call (02) 6215 7700.

### Hotlines

The Exotic Plant Pest Hotline (1800 084 881) and the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline (1800 675 888) are free-call telephone services provided for people to report unusual plant and animal pests and diseases. The hotlines allow callers to directly report suspect detections to an area where action can be taken by knowledgeable staff.

