

Summary of 23rd Animal Health Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting

The meeting was held on the 26th October 2022 via Zoom.

Committee Membership

With terms of appointment ending for a couple of committee members, NATA will seek expressions of interest for members with expertise in General Pathology in Q3 2022 and Veterinary Microbiology in Q4 2022.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

- There is increased opportunity for initiatives in the One Health space because of collaboration between animal and human health experts due to the SARS CoV-2 pandemic and recent animal disease outbreaks.

- The General Manager, Operations and Technical reported on the following:
 - The impact of the pandemic on NATA's operations. The return to onsite assessment activities (Q4 2021) and the undertaking of remote activities if circumstances prevent an on-site visit.
 - A refreshed NATA website was launched in August 2021.
 - The Members Advisory Forum (MAF) was convened to provide strategic advice to NATA on initiatives benefitting members.
 - An increased focus on marketing with improved use of social media including the commission of videos to mark specific events including NATA's 75th anniversary.
 - The multi-site accreditation policy was introduced and will be effective from January 2023.
 - The APAC evaluation of NATA is scheduled for March 2023, this will include an application for Biobanking to be included under the MRA.
 - The systematic review of ISO/IEC 17025 - NATA intends to vote to reconfirm.
 - The systematic review of ISO/IEC 17020 - NATA has voted to review the standard.
 - The systematic review of ISO 17043 - review is at the draft international standard (DIS) stage with comments being sought from stakeholders.
 - The systematic review of ISO 15189 is nearing completion with new standard to be published in November 2022.

- Member reports included the following:
 - Emerging issues in aquaculture with the quality of commercial feed and the potential for contamination of the food chain and the environment.
 - Australia is focused on disease preparedness with the current focus on lumpy skin disease (LSD) and foot and mouth disease

(FMD). Outbreaks of both are current in economies neighboring Australia. Mobile and point of care testing are being considered as options to be used in the event of an incursion.

- Semi-automated faecal worm egg counting technology is becoming more available at agricultural merchandiser stores. This is potential competition to NATA accredited facilities, however, provides an opportunity to advertise the value of accreditation and the interpretation of results that can be provided.
- Stakeholder engagement activities include the following:
 - MoU between Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and NATA is undergoing review.
 - NATA attends SCHALS meetings as an observer.
 - NATA is attending the Australian Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians meeting in Launceston in November 2022.
 - A webinar to be organised by DAFF in Q1-Q2 2023 to raise awareness of the requirements of the Security Sensitive Biological Agents (SSBA) regulatory scheme.