

Traceability Practices On Victorian Dairy Farms: A Social Research Investigation

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Unregulated movement of livestock poses a risk to farm biosecurity and food safety. As such, timely and accurate recording and entry of Property Identification Codes (PICs) and animal movements into the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) in Australia is vital.

While compliance with the NLIS could be strengthened across all sectors of livestock industries, dairy cow, calves and/or heifer movements between properties with different PICs owned by same farming enterprise, or agistment, is an area that is not well understood.

This project, through interviews with Victorian dairy producers, provided a clearer understanding of the risk posed by undocumented property to property (P2P) movements, and captured the drivers of behaviour of Victorian dairy farmers in relation to their interactions with the NLIS.

Challenges facing the NLIS in achieving life time traceability include design and accessibility by end-users, and gaps in lifetime traceability with lost tags.

“I've had some good intentions, but I just find it clunky, old, hard to use, very non-descriptive, very unhelpful, just terrible basically.” (DP1)

“Whole of life traceability, there's at least 5% lost every year, purely because they get hooked on the ring fence...and nobody's done anything wrong. It just doesn't happen because the system doesn't make it easy for it to happen.” (DP2)

Recommendations from this project include using end-users to redesign the NLIS to increase its fitness for purpose, and are aimed at strengthening accuracy of traceability of dairy cattle in Victoria, with ramifications for the national livestock industries.