



Frequently Asked Questions

The Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program is the Australian livestock industry's on-farm food safety program. It meets the stringent requirements of our export markets, providing an assurance of the safety of red meat grown on Australian farms.

Background

Why do we need the LPA?

Food safety is paramount to consumers in Australia and in the 100+ countries which buy our red meat. LPA provides a food safety assurance to these customers and in doing so, supports the reputation and on-going economic viability of Australia's livestock producers and industry.

What does it mean for the farmer?

Producers who become LPA-accredited commit to carrying out specific on-farm practices in order to fulfil their responsibility to produce safe red meat.

What does LPA cover?

LPA covers on-farm practices in five key areas:

1. Property risk assessments
Producer responsibility: To minimise the risk of livestock being exposed to sites that are unacceptably contaminated with persistent chemicals.
2. Safe and responsible animal treatments
Producer responsibility: To ensure animal treatments are administered in a safe and responsible manner that minimises the risk of chemical residues and physical hazards.
3. Stock foods, fodder crops, grain and pasture treatments
Producer responsibility: To minimise exposure of livestock to foods containing unacceptable chemical contamination and guarantee livestock are not fed animal products.
4. Preparation for dispatch of livestock
Producer responsibility: To ensure livestock are fit for transport and minimise the risk of stress and contamination of livestock during assembly and transport.
5. Livestock transactions and movements
Producer responsibility: To ensure traceability requirements, with respect to treatments or exposure to food safety hazards, have been fulfilled for all livestock movements - between farms and feedlots, and including to slaughter and live export.



Who oversees LPA?

The LPA program is owned and led by industry. It is overseen by the LPA Advisory Committee which comprises representatives from key industry sectors including cattle, sheep, goat and dairy producers, processors and livestock agents. Member representatives include:

- Australian Lot Feeders' Association
- Cattle Council of Australia
- Sheep Meat Council of Australia
- Goat Industry Council of Australia
- Australian Dairy Farmers
- Australian Meat Industry Council
- Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association
- AUS-MEAT Limited

Observer representatives include:

- Meat & Livestock Australia
- Australian Wool Producers
- National Residue Survey
- Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

AUS-MEAT administers the program on behalf of industry. In this role, AUS-MEAT manages the audit program and distributes the LPA National Vendor Declaration (NVD) booklets.

When did LPA start?

The LPA program began in 2004.

Is LPA compulsory?

No. LPA is a voluntary industry program, however the majority of meat processors require livestock to be sourced from LPA-accredited properties. Other processors discount non-LPA-accredited stock, reportedly by as much as 40%, compared with LPA-accredited stock. It is also a requirement that LPA producers source livestock from other LPA accredited producers. More than 190,000 PICs are currently LPA accredited.

Is it necessary to complete LPA requirements as well as processor QA requirements?

The majority of processors require livestock to be sourced from LPA-accredited properties. Some processors also have independent quality assurance requirements. Producers must meet the requirements of LPA, and as well those that are required over and above LPA by the processor they are dealing with.

Part of a system

How do LPA, NVDs, NLIS and PICs all work together?

LPA is just one of the contributing programs ensuring Australia's red meat industry remains viable and sustainable.

A Property Identification Code (PIC) is an eight character code allocated by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) or equivalent authority in other states/territories to identify a livestock producing property. The PIC forms the basis of Australia's food safety and traceability programs.



LPA is an individual farmer's pledge that they have undertaken the necessary farm management practices on their property to ensure their livestock will produce safe food.

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is Australia's system for identification and traceability of livestock. It enables cattle, sheep and goats to be traced from property of birth to slaughter for:

- Biosecurity
- Meat safety
- Product integrity
- Market access

The LPA National Vendor Declaration (LPA NVD) is the main document behind Australia's meat and livestock food safety reputation. When an LPA NVD is signed, the producer is sharing information on livestock history and declaring compliance with all LPA requirements. It enables important information regarding livestock history to be transferred through the supply chain.

What is the difference between LPA and NLIS?

LPA is one component of the system used by the red meat industry to meet the stringent requirements of our export markets. In being accredited, producers are guaranteeing their on-farm food safety practices meet the requirements of LPA.

The NLIS is Australia's system for identification and traceability of livestock.

What is the difference between a NVD and a waybill?

The LPA NVD provides a food safety declaration and acts as a Waybill (except in the NT where a separate waybill is required in addition to the LPA NVD). Note: In ACT, NT, NSW, QLD, WA and TAS, it is a legal requirement to provide waybills for any stock movement within or between states, even between properties.

Accreditation & Re-accreditation

How do producers become LPA accredited?

There are three steps:

1. Read and understand the LPA requirements, found in the **Guide to the NVD/Waybill**. Visit www.mla.com.au/lpa to download a copy free of charge. Alternatively call the LPA helpline 1800-683-111 to order a hard copy (\$16.50 GST incl).
2. Register on line at www.mla.com.au/lpa or call the LPA helpline, ensuring that details of the property (PIC) and contact details of the property owner/manager are available.
3. Agree to abide by all requirements of the LPA program via the online declaration or the LPA helpline.

Once accredited, producers are provided with a LPA user identification number/accreditation number (LPA User ID) which should be recorded in a convenient place as this is required for future use.



What does it mean to be accredited?

In signing up to LPA, producers pledge to undertake and maintain specific on-farm practices which guarantee the food safety of the red meat they sell. They may have to introduce management systems to ensure they comply with these practices. LPA-accredited producers have the right to use the LPANVD when selling their livestock. They are subject to random farm audits to ensure they are meeting all LPA requirements.

Is LPA accreditation linked to a person or a PIC?

Accreditation is linked to PICs. It is the responsibility of the PIC owner (or nominated representative) to ensure that the management systems meet LPA requirements and that all producers with access to the accredited PIC are made aware of and understand these requirements.

A PIC must be accredited to be able to obtain and use LPA NVDs.

How do producers know if their PIC is accredited?

Producers can check if their PIC is accredited through their User Profile on www.mla.com.au/lpa or call the LPA helpline. Producers will need their PIC and LPA User ID number (accreditation number) to log onto the website. As a general guide, producers that are using an LPA NVD that is pre-printed with the property PIC are accredited. The LPA accreditation status of all PICs is also available on the NLIS database. The accreditation status of a PIC can also be completed on the following website:
<http://lpawebadmin.ausmeat.com.au/accredsearch.aspx>

Can accreditation be taken away?

Yes. Producers whose on-farm practices do not meet LPA requirements risk having their accreditation suspended or withdrawn until they can demonstrate compliance in accordance with the LPA Rules and Standards. Where accreditation is suspended (or withdrawn) producers are no longer entitled to use LPA NVDs.

What is the risk if accredited producers do not comply with LPA regulations?

The requirements of LPA guarantee the safe production of red meat on Australian farms. As an industry, failure to meet these requirements may threaten our industry's international reputation and consumers trust in our product. The non-compliance of a single farmer poses a potential risk to this guarantee.

Those producers who are LPA accredited are subject to random audits. Should the audit highlight a failure to comply with the LPA regulations the producer may have their LPA accreditation revoked or suspended pending resolution of the identified issue/s.

What is the purpose of the LPA NVD?

The LPA NVD has two purposes:

1. In completing and signing the LPA NVD, the seller provides the buyer with a guarantee relating to the food safety status of the animals they are purchasing.
2. The LPA NVD enables livestock movements to be traced if necessary.

When are LPA-NVDs required?

LPA NVDs are required for any movement of stock – to processors, to saleyards or between properties if they have different Property Identification Codes (PICs).



How do producers get LPA-NVDs?

There are different LPA NVDs available for cattle, EU cattle, sheep, goats and bobby calves. They come in two formats – hard copy and electronic.

Hard copy – NVD/Waybill booklets containing 20 forms (in triplicate) can be ordered online or via the LPA hotline, at a cost of \$35 (GST incl)

Electronic – Producers must register to use e-DECS via www.mla.com.au/lpa. The e-DEC is available at a discount of 40% compared to the price of the hard copy NVDs. To obtain e-DECS, producers must purchase electronic tokens (\$20.90 (GST incl) per 20 tokens). One token is equivalent to one NVD.

What happens if a producer runs out of NVD forms?

The producer must order a new NVD booklet (via www.mla.com.au/lpa or via the helpline). LPA-accredited producers can also access emergency forms (once an order has been placed) by calling the LPA helpline. Emergency forms are valid for up to 15 days.

Key requirements of the LPA program

Record keeping

What record keeping is required for LPA?

Producers need to keep accurate records on chemical usage, fodder feeding, stock movement and treatment, disease and management activities, and property risk assessment.

Why is good record keeping required?

Producers are required to keep good records to demonstrate compliance with all the LPA requirements. The records substantiate all claims made on the LPA NVD. It underpins Australia's global reputation for producing safe red meat.

As a result of record keeping, producers should be able to easily check key food safety details, such as when livestock were most recently treated, whether they are outside export slaughter intervals and withholding periods, and if they can be sent to market for human consumption.

Chemical residues

How does LPA ensure that livestock are not contaminated with chemical residues?

Producers are required to carry out and document property risk assessments and ensure contamination does not occur through animal treatments, feed or transportation.

Livestock transactions and movements

How does LPA ensure livestock are properly prepared for transport?

Producers are required to ensure that the animals they are transporting are fit for transport and that the risk of stress and contamination of livestock during assembly and transport is minimised.

How does LPA ensure transactions and movements can be traced?

An LPA NVD needs to accompany all livestock movements, and all stock movements and



management activities need to be recorded.

LPA audits

Why does LPA need audits?

On farm audits are conducted each year to ensure the management systems introduced by livestock producers are complying with LPA Rules and Standards.

Who gets audited?

All LPA accredited producers - from large scale operators to hobby farmers – may be audited. Audits are selected at random from the database of all LPA accredited producers, including producers with just a few livestock. Approximately 7000 audits are conducted each year.

Who does the audits?

Qualified auditors from AUS-MEAT conduct the on-farm audits for LPA. The audit program is overseen by the LPA Advisory Committee.

What does an on-farm audit involve?

If selected for an audit, producers receive an LPA Audit Advice pack with information to help them prepare for audit. They are then contacted by an auditor to organise a mutually convenient time for the auditor to visit the farm and carry out the audit.

What happens during an audit?

On the day, the auditor will check how records are maintained and food safety-related management is being carried out. The auditor may accompany the producer on an inspection of property facilities relating to food safety. Parts of the farm that have been identified as contaminated with persistent chemicals may also be visited to review the management systems implemented at these locations.

How can producers prepare for an audit?

Producers selected for an audit will receive an LPA Audit Notification Pack, including an *Audit Checklist*. Reviewing on-farm practices against the checklist will identify any areas that may need attention before the audit. The more preparation that is done before the audit, the smoother the process is likely to be.

Can the auditor provide advice?

No. The auditor is not able to provide specific advice to producers they have audited, however they may be able to provide guidance as to where to obtain assistance or advice.

What happens if any issues are identified during the audit?

If the issue is minor, the auditor may record an 'observation' which means that the producer should consider taking action to improve the relevant practice. If the issue is more significant, the auditor may raise a 'corrective action request' which means that the producer needs to do something to ensure compliance with LPA requirements, and this action will be followed up.



How long does a producer have to rectify an issue?

If a 'corrective action request' is raised, the auditor and the producer will agree to the necessary activities that need to be undertaken to rectify the problem, and a timeframe for completion.

What happens if the results of the audit show serious problems?

The results of an audit determine what steps need to be taken. Producers can seek help to change their practices, where required. Failure to address problems identified may lead to a producer losing their accreditation. Where a critical issue is identified, producers can be suspended immediately.

Can producers decline to be audited?

No. It is a condition of accreditation that LPA producers agree to participate in the audit process. Refusal to participate may result in LPA accreditation being withdrawn.

Confirming the commitment to LPA

Is LPA accreditation ongoing?

No. From 1 August 2012, accredited producers will be required to confirm their commitment to the LPA program.

Why do producers need to confirm their commitment?

All LPA-accredited producers need to be aware of and understand their responsibilities under the program. Accredited producers have previously agreed to the requirements of the program and the re-commitment process is an important step in ensuring livestock producers maintain their awareness of the on-farm practices required under LPA.

How do producers confirm their commitment to LPA?

Producers will be required to complete a declaration which has nine questions. This can be completed either online via www.mla.com.au/lpa or by calling the LPA helpline.

What does this commitment involve?

The declaration involves responding to nine questions. The questions are the same as previously agreed to by the PIC representative at the time of applying for accreditation in the LPA program.

Producers must agree to each of the following statements:

1. I understand that eligibility to use the LPA national vendor declarations (LPA NVDs) is restricted to PICs that are accredited under the LPA program.
2. I have read and understood the requirements of the LPA Program as described in the LPA Rules and Standards (as amended from time to time).
3. I will seek to ensure all persons with access to LPA NVDs for this PIC will comply with the requirements of the LPA Rules and Standards at all times.
4. I will ensure that all records required by LPA Administration and the LPA Rules and Standards are maintained, including auditable evidence to demonstrate compliance with the five (5) elements of the LPA standards - property risk assessment; animal treatment records; agricultural chemical usage and stockfeeds; preparation of livestock; and livestock movements and transactions.



5. I will provide access to LPA Administration to conduct random audits as required under the LPA program (irrespective of whether the business is a hobby farm, a small or large operation, or is currently destocked).
6. I will take any corrective action and preventative action as required under the LPA Rules and Standards.
7. I will cease using NVDs displaying the LPA logo if accreditation is withdrawn.
8. All information provided to LPA applicable to this PIC is correct to the best of my knowledge.
9. I will inform LPA Administration of all changes applicable to the LPA Accreditation of (PIC NUMBER).

Does the confirmation need to be done per person, per farm or per PIC?

The confirmation needs to be completed for each accredited PIC.

Who is required to confirm the commitment?

The confirmation can only be completed by the authorised PIC representative being either (a) the property owner, (b) the manager, or (c) the person responsible for the husbandry of the livestock.

How often do producers need to confirm their commitment?

Producers will need to confirm their commitment every time they order a new NVD booklet, but only once every 12 months for more frequent sellers.

If a producer orders say, one book every three years for a PIC, how often do they have to confirm their commitment?

In this scenario, where the producer is ordering NVDs infrequently, the producer would be required to confirm their commitment at the time of ordering NVDs - i.e. every three (3) years.

If a producer places an order for NVDs say, twice per year for a PIC, how often do they have to confirm their commitment?

In this scenario, where the producer is ordering NVDs more regularly, they are required to complete the declaration no more than once per year.

Will producers get a reminder to confirm their commitment?

Yes. The LPA database will automatically flag when it is time to confirm the commitment. This reminder flag will appear automatically for producers that take advantage of ordering NVDs online (via the website). For producers that order via the hotline, the requirement to complete the declaration will be flagged to the call centre operator who will walk through the commitment process with the caller.

What happens if a producer does not confirm their commitment?

Producers who do not confirm their commitment will not be able to purchase new LPA NVD books or e-DECs, and will be required to undergo an audit as a part of the LPA targeted audit program.

Does every producer need to confirm their commitment?

No. Producers who are accredited in the LPA QA program (incorporating Cattlecare and Flockcare programs) and feedlots accredited in the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) are not required to confirm their commitment as these red meat industry programs encompass all LPA requirements with participants required to undergo annual third party audits.



For more information on LPA

Visit: www.mla.com/lpa
Email: lpa@mla.com.au
Call: 1800 683 111