Media Release

Willem Westra van Holthe, Member for Katherine
Deputy Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

NT Government leads the way on vaccination trial

15 June 2015

The Northern Territory Government is investigating the effectiveness of cattle vaccinations, with the aim of decreasing mortality rates in calves and weaners.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe said the twelve month trial will look specifically at the 5-1 vaccination which provides protection against five common clostridial diseases.

“Research suggests the vast majority of pastoralists don’t vaccinate their weaner cattle against these diseases. Only 15 per cent of cattle in the Barkly region and 29 per cent in the Katherine region are reported as receiving this form of vaccination,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“There is currently very little research available which looks specifically at the impact these diseases have on cattle mortality and production losses in the Northern Territory.

“The Country Liberals Government is making life simpler and smarter for pastoralists, by giving them up to date information on improving day-to-day operations and practices,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

The Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries (DPIF) will undertake the trial across the Barkly and Katherine regions.

Around twelve properties will be involved in the trial, where half of the animals will be vaccinated and compared against the remaining 50 per cent of animals which were not.

“DPIF will ensure conditions are exactly the same for vaccinated and unvaccinated cattle so the results of the trial are as accurate as possible,” Minister Westra van Holthe said.

“The 5-1 vaccine is extremely important, providing protection against Tetanus, Pulpy Kidney, Gas Gangrene, Blackleg and Black’s disease.
“At around 40-45 cents per dose, the trial will weigh up whether the cost of the 5-1 vaccine outweighs the benefits of reduced mortality,” he said.

Pastoralists who want to be involved in the trial should contact DPIF at www.dpif.nt.gov.au

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