

Australia's ruminant feed ban

In Australia, it is illegal to feed restricted animal material (RAM) to ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats, deer, camels and alpacas). This is known as the 'ruminant feed ban'.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is responsible for enforcing the ruminant feed ban in Western Australia.



Why is the ruminant feed ban important?

Australia's ruminant feed ban was introduced in 1996 to help keep Australia free of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, also known as 'mad cow disease').

BSE is a fatal brain disease that affects cattle. There is no treatment or vaccine for BSE. It is one of a group of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), which includes scrapie in sheep and goats, and chronic wasting disease in deer. TSEs have never been reported in other livestock species such as pigs and poultry.

BSE is transmitted when cattle eat feed contaminated with the BSE protein.

The consumption of BSE-affected meat has also been linked to a human disease, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

The BSE protein is resistant to commercial treatment procedures typically used to inactivate viruses, such as heat. Therefore, it may not be destroyed through the rendering processes.

Many countries will not import livestock and livestock products from countries where BSE is present. Australia is free of BSE and internationally recognised as having the lowest possible risk status for BSE. The ruminant feed ban has been a critical part of achieving this status. Additionally Australia's strict biosecurity requirements include border screening, import controls, and surveillance and monitoring of sheep, goats and cattle for signs.

Maintaining Australia's freedom from BSE is important for protecting the health of humans and animals, and for maintaining consumer confidence in our livestock industries.

Requirements of the ruminant feed ban

The ruminant feed ban has requirements that must be met along the entire animal feed supply chain, including stockfeed manufacturers, feed retailers and stock producers. These requirements are summarised as:

- Ruminants must not be fed or have access to RAM.

- Feed for ruminants must be produced in a manner that ensures it does not contain RAM.
- All manufactured stockfeed must be labelled with a statement specifying whether it does or does not contain RAM.
- Ruminant feed must be stored in a way that ensures it does not come into contact with RAM.

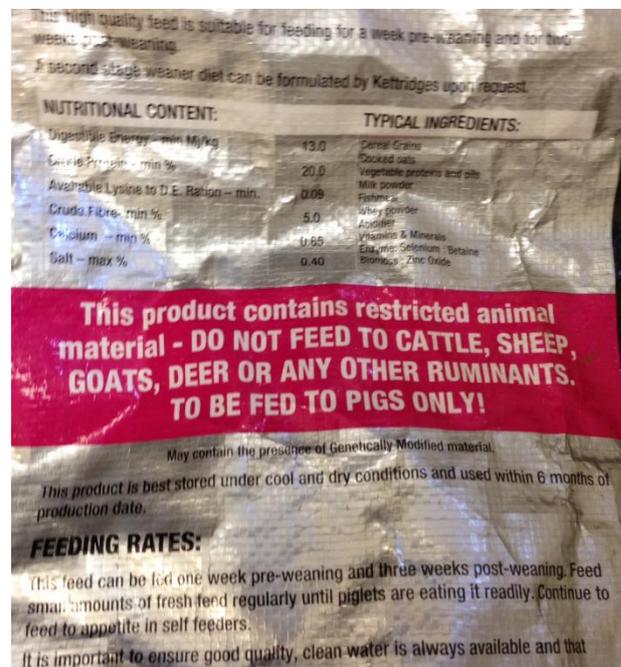
What is restricted animal material (RAM)?

RAM is any material that consists of, or contains, matter from an animal (including fish and birds). It does not include gelatine, milk or milk products.

Tallow and used cooking oil are not considered RAM if they have been processed to the specifications outlined in the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Agriculture Standards) Regulations 2013, and as detailed in the National Standard for Recycling of Used Cooking Fats and Oils Intended for Animal Feeds, published by the Australian Renderers Association.

Examples of RAM include:

- meat and offal
- rendered animal meals such as meat and bone meal, poultry, fish and feather meals
- feed that contains one or more types of animal matter including:
 - poultry feed including chicken, duck, and turkey feed
 - pig feed
 - dog and cat food
 - pig and poultry manure / litter
 - eggs
 - organic fertilisers and composts such as blood and bone fertiliser, mushroom compost, and any other compost made with animal matter.



What are your responsibilities?

Anyone who **owns or takes care of ruminants** must make sure they are not fed RAM. You can do this by following these steps:

- When purchasing manufactured feed for ruminants, (such as pellets, stock licks and premixes), check for the following statement on the packaging: **'This product does not contain restricted animal material.'** It should be found on the bag or container for packaged feed, or the delivery docket for bulk feed.

- Ensure ruminants cannot access feed containing RAM that you have on the property (e.g. poultry or pig feed, or pet food). If you are unsure whether the feed contains RAM, remember that all manufactured animal feed containing RAM must be labelled with the statement: **‘This product contains restricted animal material – DO NOT FEED TO CATTLE, SHEEP, GOATS, DEER OR ANY OTHER RUMINANTS’**.
- Never re-use poultry or pig feed bags for ruminant feed.
- Keep ruminants out of paddocks that have been top-dressed with manure or fertiliser containing RAM (e.g. chicken litter or blood and bone fertiliser) for at least three weeks after spreading to ensure that it has been well integrated into the soil.
- Do not allow ruminants access to manure piles.
- For more information see the chicken litter and organic fertiliser webpage for more information: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/prevent-ruminants-accessing-chicken-litter-and-organic-fertilisers-containing>

Manufacturers and resellers of ruminant feed must make sure it is:

- produced or re-bagged in a way that ensures it does not contain RAM.
- stored in a way that ensures there is no opportunity for it to come into contact with RAM (such as pig and poultry feed, bags of meat and bone meal, or blood and bone fertiliser).
- labelled correctly with a RAM statement, where required. Stockfeed made entirely of basic feed (such as grains, seeds, hay and chaff) does not need to be labelled. See the stockfeed labelling fact sheet or webpage for more information: <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/stockfeed-labelling-western-australia>

Compliance inspections and penalties

The requirements of the ruminant feed ban are contained in the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Agriculture Standards) Regulations 2013. For a full copy of the regulations, visit <https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au>.

DPIRD conducts regular inspections of all stockfeed manufacturers, and selects a certain number of retailers and livestock producers to inspect each year. These inspections (including number and frequency) are guided by the Australian Ruminant Feed Ban National Uniform Guidelines, available from: <https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/australian-ruminant-feed-ban>. All states and territories must report to Animal Health Australia on the outcomes of their inspections, which are collated and published annually on its website.

Failure to comply with ruminant feed ban regulations can result in \$2000 fines for each offence.

Contact information

If you have any questions about the ruminant feed ban and its requirements, contact DPIRD’s Livestock Biosecurity team by emailing livestockbiosecurity@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Important Disclaimer

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