

Plain Language Statement

Melbourne Veterinary School/Department of Vet. Biosciences/
Faculty of Science



Project: Liver fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*) control practices used by livestock farmers in Australia

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. The following few pages will provide you with further information about the project, so that you can decide if you would like to take part in this research.

Please take the time to read this information carefully. You may ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

Your participation is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. If you begin participating, you can also stop at any time.

What is this research about?

The project involves studies on liver fluke (*Fasciola hepatica*) in Australian alpacas, cattle, goats and sheep. The major aims of the project include (a) a questionnaire survey on the knowledge, attitude and practices of farmers to assess current situation of liver fluke and its control in Australia, (b) prevalence and distribution studies in cattle, and (c) field efficacy studies to assess the current status of drug resistance in liver fluke.

In this specific part of project, we investigate the first aim of the study where we will gather information from farmers based on a questionnaire survey. The survey data along with outcomes from the other parts of project will form the bases of devising guidelines for effective and strategic control of liver fluke in Australian livestock animals.

What will I be asked to do?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be delivered through Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap), a secure online survey tool for research data collection that protects the privacy of personal responses. The questionnaire will be accessed from an email with a public URL (webpage) link sent by the industry organizations. The questionnaire will take up to 20 minutes to complete. The survey has been designed to minimise the time required to complete the questionnaire. Feedback will also be accepted at any time

during your participation by email to R.M. Athar Ali (ranamuhammad@student.unimelb.edu.au).

What are the possible benefits?

Of-farm liver fluke management and control strategies will be assessed on Australian livestock farms and guidelines will be published for effective control of liver fluke infection. Additionally, participants can give their consent voluntarily at the end of the online survey if they are interested in being contacted to facilitate other parts of the project, such as providing faecal samples for liver fluke occurrence studies. A separate page will be opened for such participants after submitting the survey to provide limited personal information such as farm name, phone number, and email address. This participation will be entirely optional, and it will not influence their survey responses. The project team will not charge any participating farm for any of the diagnostic testing used for the latter study.

What are the possible risks?

This research will be conducted as per The University of Melbourne's commitment to responsible research with honesty, responsibility and accountability, which demonstrates respect for research participating individual and property. We do not envisage any risks to participants arising from their participation in this research. Personal details will be coded (using an identification number) to maintain confidentiality and the nature of this information will not be released under any circumstance. In reports/publications arising from the project will not have identifiable information of the participants. All project data will be securely stored on the University of Melbourne computers and servers.

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is completely voluntary. You are able to withdraw at any time. Incomplete responses will not be the part of survey, therefore they will not be considered. You are not under any obligation to consent, and you may withdraw at any time. Owing to the anonymous nature of the data collection, it will not be possible to withdraw any data after the survey has been submitted.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

Yes, outcomes of the study will be published in international peer-reviewed journals of good reputation and results will also be presented at various national and international conferences. Participants (farmers) can get a summary of results by contacting the researchers.

What will happen to information about me?

All aspects of the study, including information collected through REDCap, and all results, will be strictly confidential (except as required by law).

Only the listed researchers will have access to data. Personal details will be coded (using an identification number) to maintain confidentiality and the nature of this information will not be released under any circumstance.

A report of the study will be submitted for publication in international peer-reviewed journals of good repute. In any such reports, individual participants will not be identifiable, as specific farm location, any identifying farm characteristics or veterinary practices will not be reported.

Your responses will be maintained for the lifetime of the project (i.e., June 2028). All other data will be destroyed 5 years after the end of data collection and publication of all reports from this project. All project data will be securely stored on the University of Melbourne computers and servers.

Where can I get further information?

If you would like more information about the project, please contact the researchers: R.M. Athar Ali (ranamuhammad@student.unimelb.edu.au); Prof Abdul Jabbar via phone (03) 9731 2022 or email (jabbara@unimelb.edu.au).

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This project has human research ethics approval from The University of Melbourne [30555]. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Research Integrity Administrator, Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 1376 or Email: research-integrity@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence, please provide the name of the research team and/or the name or ethics ID number of the research project.