Welcome to the Animal Health Committee (AHC) newsletter, Vetcommunique. The aim of Vetcommunique is to provide a communication link between AHC, industry bodies and other stakeholders.

AHC meetings are attended by the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the Commonwealth, States and Territories, a New Zealand representative and representatives from Animal Health Australia (AHA), the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL), Animal Division (Department of Agriculture) and the Australian Department of Environment. National industry association representatives from the AHA Industry Forum Executive and industry representatives from the host jurisdiction also attend an AHC industry session.

AHC will meet on 30 September-2 October 2014 in Adelaide. Dr Rod Andrewartha is the Tasmanian Chief Veterinary Officer and AHC Chair for 2014.


Key items for discussion:

- **World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) evaluation** - AHC and industry representatives will be receiving information from a key OIE expert on the OIE PVS process. See http://www.oie.int/support-to-oie-members/pvs-evaluations/. This session will inform AHC consideration around possible use of the OIE PVS framework for Australia, as an input to planning for the continued strengthening of our animal health system based on internationally agreed standards.

- **National Animal Health Surveillance** – AHC will continue discussions on improving national coordination to enhance animal health surveillance in Australia for improved early detection and to support trade.

- **Avian Influenza Risk Mitigation Strategy** – AHC will explore options and develop a strategy for industry consultation to reduce ongoing avian influenza risks to Australia.

- **Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) Preparedness** – AHC will discuss a process to update and report on the FMD National Action Plan. It will also discuss a decision tree relating to a National Livestock Standstill as developed via Exercise Odysseus workshops. They will also discuss laboratory testing responsibilities in the early phases of an FMD outbreak.

- **Established Pests and Diseases of National Significance** – AHC will be developing a list of established animal diseases of national significance based on Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) criteria and the current list of nationally notifiable animal diseases. National programmes for such diseases, including Johne’s Disease, will be evaluated for their alignment with IGAB principles.
• **Coordinated AHC National Animal Health Research Priorities** – AHC will discuss a draft list of national animal health research priorities as provided by members; develop a process to finalise this document; and discuss appropriate distribution, including as the AHC input to the AHA led National Animal Biosecurity R,D&E Strategy

• **BioSecure Plus** - The AHC will discuss this new proposal to develop a farm biosecurity and market assurance scheme to improve biosecurity-related farming practices in Australia; minimise the impact of endemic diseases; and secure Australia’s status as a producer of healthy livestock.

**AHC will include an industry session providing an opportunity for industry representatives to discuss priority national animal health policy and programme issues with AHC, including those listed above.**


**AHC Key Contacts**

**Key Contacts**
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