

## VET COMMUNIQUÉ – September 2021

Animal Health Committee (AHC) provides veterinary leadership and technical expertise for Australia's animal health systems. AHC includes the Australian, state and territory chief veterinary officers (CVOs), and the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness; with Animal Health Australia and Wildlife Health Australia as observers. The committee reports to the National Biosecurity Committee. This communiqué covers the major topics discussed at meeting 40 held 24 and 26 August 2021.

With the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, AHC met again in a virtual (online) setting. Stakeholder forums continue to be held independently of the traditional face-to-face meetings.

### **Livestock traceability**

AHC endorsed in principle the work of the National Livestock Traceability Enhancement (NLTE) Working Group. The working group was established by the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) to explore options for developing a national approach to implementing improved governance, regulation, and performance of Australia's livestock traceability system. The NLTE working group's activities build on the SAFEMEAT Report - *Reform recommendations for Australia's livestock traceability system*. The Chair of the NLTE Working Group, New South Wales CVO, Sarah Britton, thanked the AHC members for their endorsement and noted that the support of the CVOs of each jurisdiction is crucial in implementing national change and improvement in traceability for all foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) susceptible livestock. Improved traceability will support enhanced management of endemic and emergency animal diseases and ensure ongoing and increased access to valuable export markets.

### **Cross-border movements of livestock**

AHC noted that a delay to cross-border movements during an animal disease event while jurisdictional movement permits are negotiated could affect emergency animal disease response outcomes, animal welfare, interstate business continuity and food security. AHC agreed there is value in streamlining permit systems to enable seamless cross-border movements. A national working group, including industry, will develop a work plan to deliver a national on-line multi-user livestock movement permit system designed to facilitate efficient cross-border movements of livestock.

### **Boar stud certification for semen movement during an African swine fever (ASF) outbreak**

The ongoing supply and regular movement of fresh semen are critical for business continuity for the pork industry. A draft national template for assessing and certifying the biosecurity status of boar studs has been

developed and is undergoing final review to ensure it is fit for purpose

The aim is to facilitate assessment and certification of boar studs before an ASF outbreak so that semen movement permits can be readily issued during an ASF outbreak.

### **National Livestock Standstill – Cost-Benefit Project**

AHC received an update on a cost-benefit analysis of a national livestock standstill in response to an FMD outbreak in Australia. The analysis is being led by Western Australia and involves economic modelling and consideration of disease control factors relevant to a standstill and will be used to inform implementation of cost-effective and cost-efficient livestock standstills.

### **Wildlife Health Australia's (WHA) outstanding contributions**

AHC commends WHA on its outstanding work and the breadth of its achievements. Some of its activities include providing data to support Australia's international reporting obligations and trade, providing intelligence on wildlife disease incidents and issues, facilitating collaboration and exchange of information on wildlife health issues between government and non-government organisations and the general community, assisting with information gathering and coordination of non-government parties during wildlife disease incidents, and ensuring researchers and private sector partners are aware of reporting obligations so that CVOs are notified of significant findings. WHA's actions help manage the adverse effects of wildlife diseases on Australia's environment, biodiversity, animal and human health, trade and tourism.

### **Welcome to New Zealand's new Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO)**

Dr Mary van Andel was appointed into the new role of CVO for the Ministry for Primary Industries in New Zealand on 2 August 2021. Dr van Andel was warmly welcomed to the AHC meeting as an observer. AHC looks forward to working collaboratively with Dr van Andel on shared animal health issues.