



National Aquaculture Industry Biosecurity Survey

An assessment of enterprise level biosecurity

Summary of key findings

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- A **national survey of eight aquaculture sectors** took place in late 2018 to understand the best ways to support farmers in implementing biosecurity plans on their farms.
- **Disease is seen as the highest risk** to aquaculture sectors. Biosecurity planning is seen as a way to reduce the risk of disease on-farm.
- Most farms are already implementing biosecurity practices and there is a desire from farmers to continually **improve on-farm biosecurity**.
- Three categories of **support tools to enhance on-farm biosecurity** were identified: **1)** support identifying disease, **2)** business-specific support, and **3)** sector-specific support.
- Some of the support tools identified through this survey have been prioritised to be completed over the next five years under AQUAPLAN 2022-2027.
- Individual sectors may also wish to draw on the findings of the survey to **inform additional work** to support on-farm biosecurity.
- If you'd like to find out more or have questions, please get in touch: AQUAPLAN@agriculture.gov.au

What did we want to know?

1. What did farmers think about biosecurity and what are their current practices?
2. What are the best ways to support farmers in implementing biosecurity plans on their farms?



What did we do?

- A national survey of 122 farm owners/managers from eight Australian aquaculture sectors was administered by an independent company (Instinct and Reason).
- Farmed abalone, barramundi, edible oyster, pearl oyster, farmed prawn, salmonid, southern bluefin tuna and yellowtail kingfish sectors participated.

What did we find out: farmers views on biosecurity

- Disease emerged strongly as a substantial threat to aquatic animal industries. Biosecurity is seen as one way to reduce and manage that risk.
- Farmers generally had positive and sound understanding of biosecurity and lots of good biosecurity practices in place on their farms.
- There is a desire from farmers to continually improve biosecurity implementation on their farm and willingness to participate in programs aimed to improve farm biosecurity.

What did we find out: best ways to support farmers implementing biosecurity plans on-farm

The top support tools* (rated as very helpful and extremely helpful) could be broken down into three themes:

Disease identification support



- Disease reference guides for high risk diseases
- Products or tools to help identify diseases
- Access to sampling kits

Biosecurity specific support



- Help reviewing or writing a biosecurity plan tailored to the business
- Revising existing biosecurity plans
- On-farm biosecurity training for managers

Sector specific support



- Biosecurity training workshops
- Disease training workshops

For available sector-specific biosecurity plan guidelines and templates [visit website](#).

***Note:** There was variation across industry sectors on their preferred support tools (see full report), indicating it is important to tailor the approach to each sector's needs.

The [Aquatic Animal Disease Field Guide](#) is available online and as a mobile app to help with preliminary disease identification.

What did we find out: farmer information requirements

Farmers would like more information on disease, disease risks and how to manage them. In order of most popular, information is needed on:

1. biosecurity warnings or alerts
2. solutions to mitigate risks
3. disease types and symptoms to look out for
4. risks and how to identify them
5. how to implement biosecurity measures.



What will happen next?

The results of this survey informed enterprise biosecurity activities prioritised in AQUAPLAN 2022-2027. Over the next 5 years, the following activities will be undertaken collaboratively among governments and aquatic animal industry sectors:

- **Enterprise biosecurity plan writing workshops** (activity 2.1) for interested sectors where businesses can develop or review their enterprise biosecurity plan
- **Enterprise biosecurity plan implementation support program** (activity 2.2) for farm managers to access a panel of trusted subject-matter experts to support implementation of fit-for-purpose biosecurity practices
- **Enterprise biosecurity plan evaluation and improvement training** (activity 2.3) for business managers and other interested industry members to evaluate the effectiveness of their biosecurity plans and to identify ways to improve them over time

To find out more about these AQUAPLAN activities, please visit [the AQUAPLAN webpage](#) or contact us at: AQUAPLAN@agriculture.gov.au