

Australia has a world-class biosecurity system which has kept the country free of serious animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) for 150 years.

Significant economic benefits have flowed from our disease-free status. **Preventing an LSD and FMD incursion remains the priority** for the Australian government.

In recognition of this, the Australian government formed the **Joint Interagency Taskforce of Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness (EAD)** (the Taskforce) to consider the level of preparedness of the emergency management system as a whole to respond to an EAD incursion.

The Taskforce found that overall, the system is strong and it is prepared.

The following recommendations address specific additional preparedness actions that can be undertaken now, before resources are diverted by an active incident.

The recommendations build upon the detailed, well-rehearsed animal health response plans already in place, suggesting actions where national leadership or additional focus would benefit the system's ability to respond at speed and scale.

Legend



National leadership, accountability and coordination



National data intelligence and capability



National crisis communications



National plans and policies regularly monitored, tested, reviewed and updated



Workforce capacity



Mission critical supplies



Working with states and territories



Recommendation 1

Government consider **updating the national coordination architecture to ensure closer integration** of the National Coordination Mechanism and the DAFF-led National Coordination Centre.



Recommendation 2

Government consider **negotiation of a new instrument** to replace the 2002 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) memorandum of understanding on FMD, to align with contemporary crisis management arrangements, to operate beneath the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity.



Recommendation 3

Government consider **engaging a crisis communications consultancy** to accelerate the development of a national crisis communications strategy and 'playbook' to set out strategies, decision-making frameworks and pre-prepared content for initial actions across key time horizons (1hr, 6hrs, 12hrs, 24hrs, 3 days, 7 days).



Recommendation 4

Government consider **establishing a national biosecurity data and intelligence capability** that informs the national collection, processing and dissemination of intelligence to decision making on biosecurity preparedness and responses at the federal level.



Recommendation 5

Government consider **commissioning modelling to determine likely weather events** that could transport LSD virus infected vectors to a location where they could infect livestock.



Recommendation 6

All jurisdictions review and rationalise with a purpose of modernising and maturing key response plans and policies more than three years old to ensure they are contemporary and incorporate lessons from COVID-19 and recent hazard events.



Recommendation 7

Action on recommendations in this report, accepted by the Minister, be **reported to the Minister quarterly**.



Recommendation 8

Government consider **expanding upon its work** through Exercise Paratus.



Recommendation 9

Government consider **expanding on current work across government to conduct modelling of potential economic impacts** and develop a just-in-case policy response for support and recovery to respond to second and third order consequences in the event of an EAD outbreak.



Recommendation 10

NEMA and DAFF work with Defence to **develop contingency plans** to support nationwide biosecurity response activities in an EAD outbreak.



Recommendation 11

DAFF work across government to consider **options for creating more opportunities for First Nations people and Traditional Owners to participate** in and benefit from biosecurity activities including surveillance and feral animal management.



Recommendation 12

Government consider **working with jurisdictions to develop a system-wide strategy** for national animal disease response workforce capacity and training.



Recommendation 13

DAFF, jurisdictions and industry should work together to **develop a resource plan**, including identifying the mission critical supplies needed to operationalise response plans.



Recommendation 14

Government consider further work with the jurisdictions on:

- a **national approach to interstate border control** and permitting to ensure efficient and effective interstate border security movements as part of the enforcement of a livestock standstill or movement controls.
- **continuing engagement** by biosecurity agencies with relevant emergency management agencies to ensure that there is alignment and integration of incident management structures
- **reflecting the common definition** for prohibited pig feed (PPF) and the feeding of PPF developed and endorsed by Animal Health Committee (AHC) in state and territory legislation
- **review and update of plans**
- options to **utilise personnel from workforces that would be stood down**, as a consequence of an EAD outbreak.