



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

# National Animal Health Surveillance Plan 2022–2027



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### Cataloguing data

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### Acknowledgements

This plan draws together information provided by Animal Health Australia, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, state and territory government agencies, Animal Health Australia's industry members and Wildlife Health Australia.

Animal Health Australia would like to acknowledge the efforts of all contributors to this report.

The production of this plan was coordinated by Animal Health Australia on behalf of Animal Health Committee. The plan was submitted to the Animal Health Committee on 19 January 2023 and was endorsed in June 2023.

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Australia and their continuing connection to land and sea, waters, environment and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands we live and work on, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

# About the plan

Surveillance is a key component of Australia’s animal health system that enables early detection of emergency and emerging animal diseases, facilitates access to international markets and supports the management of endemic pests and diseases. These functions underpin national and international trade in livestock products and help to safeguard the health of Australians. A coordinated approach at a national level ensures that Australia can continue meeting international and domestic expectations and requirements for animal health.

The plan represents the commitment of Australian, state and territory governments and industry to maintain and further improve our surveillance systems. It summarises existing surveillance programs and will guide the delivery of national priority activities for government and industry to implement over the coming period. These activities will build on existing strengths and address identified gaps in the system.

This plan was developed collaboratively by a wide range of government and industry organisations following a series of workshops focusing on transformational change to Australia’s surveillance system. The plan relies on the leadership and support of government and industry for effective implementation.

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# Vision

Australia’s animal health surveillance system supports emergency disease preparedness and response activities, underpins market access, and drives better animal, human and environmental health and biosecurity outcomes.

## Governance

This *National Animal Health Surveillance Plan 2022–27* (the plan):

- contributes to Objective 2 of Animal plan 2022–27 – [Animalplan 2022 to 2027: Australia’s National Action Plan for Production Animal Health](#)
- has been developed by a steering group that includes government, academic and industry representatives
- recognises the importance of government, industry and other key stakeholders working in partnership to oversee and implement the plan
- will be reviewed annually, with progress being reported to the national Animal Health Committee and communicated with Animal Health Australia Members’ Forum
- focuses on agreed national outcomes and acknowledges that implementation processes may vary at the state and regional levels.

# Summary of objectives

## **Objective 1**

Strong partnerships between government, industry and other stakeholders underpin a robust and transformational animal surveillance system.

## **Objective 2**

Robust, verifiable, timely detection and reporting of notifiable and emerging animal diseases.

## **Objective 3**

Seamless exchange of animal health surveillance data shared between surveillance partners.

## **Objective 4**

Animal health stakeholders use national surveillance data to take action.

## **Objective 5**

Improved capacity and capability in collecting and using surveillance data.

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# Objective 1

Strong partnerships between government, industry and other stakeholders underpin a robust and transformational animal surveillance system.

## Key performance indicators

What success will look like:

- Robust partnerships that transform the surveillance system.
- High levels of satisfaction with partnership arrangements.

How we will measure success:

- Feedback from partners in surveillance about surveillance engagement initiatives.
- Feedback from partners in surveillance about partnership arrangements.

## Strategies

### Transformative stakeholder engagement

- 1) Conduct consultations with relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities and priorities for involvement and partnering on national surveillance.
- 2) Hold regular workshops or showcases to provide networking opportunities where participants can share initiatives and developments, workshop ideas, seek partnerships and learn what other sectors are doing.
- 3) Identify opportunities to realise the benefits of strong relationships between veterinarians and producers.

### Improved understanding and targeting

- 4) Develop a stakeholder map and engagement plan for each group/sector, ensuring alignment across multiple sectors where possible.
- 5) Conduct a stocktake of surveillance projects and programs.

### Respected and valued connections with indigenous communities

- 6) Increase biosecurity surveillance, engagement and partnering with Indigenous communities.

# Objective 2

Robust, verifiable, timely detection and reporting of notifiable and emerging animal diseases.

## Key performance indicators

What success will look like:

- Stakeholders have access to timely and high- quality intelligence data.
- Robust processes demonstrate surveillance outcomes.
- Strong evaluation culture within the surveillance system.

How we will measure success:

- Surveillance reports are available in electronic formats that include data visualisation.
- National Biosecurity Committee Performance Evaluation includes evaluation of surveillance outcomes.
- A tool for qualitative evaluation of selected Australian surveillance projects is developed by the Commonwealth and piloted.

## Strategies

### Comprehensive scope

- 1) Seek opportunities to expand the involvement of the community, industry, and other key stakeholders in surveillance including wildlife and endemic diseases.

### Optimised surveillance

- 2) Explore, workshop and pilot tools to set priorities and optimise surveillance activities for selected diseases in each sector, including domestic animals and wildlife.

### Enhanced tools and systems

- 3) Adopt innovative technologies to facilitate the detection of significant disease events by stakeholders including producers and animal health practitioners.

### Better protocols

- 4) Develop national standard protocols for reporting of syndromes indicative of high-priority diseases.



# Objective 3

Seamless exchange of animal health surveillance data shared between surveillance partners.

## Key performance indicators

What success will look like:

- Agreed data is shared at a system level between surveillance partners using effective and sustainable resourcing.

How we will measure success:

- Surveillance partners agree on data-sharing principles.
- An animal health database system is developed that allows for improved efficiency in data sharing and improved data security.

## Strategies

### Sophisticated dashboards and reporting

- 1) Develop an online user interface and ‘dashboards’ to graphically present real-time snapshots and trends in national animal health surveillance data.
- 2) Utilise real time reporting and feedback systems for surveillance data, including for emergency responses, accessible to and useful for industry and producers.

### Performance standards and data quality

- 3) Develop and implement agreed standards for evaluating the performance of the national surveillance system.
- 4) Develop and implement agreed standards for surveillance data.

### Integrated data and linkages

- 5) Strengthen linkages and networks that connect animal and human health surveillance information.
- 6) Integrate data from diverse sources, including non-government veterinary laboratories, to provide a more sophisticated national surveillance picture.
- 7) Develop policies and information systems for timely surveillance data exchange.

# Objective 4

Animal health stakeholders use national surveillance data to take action.

## Key performance indicators

What success will look like:

- Animal health stakeholders use national surveillance data to take action.

How we will measure success:

- Percentage and number of stakeholders that use national surveillance data to take action.
- Qualitative evaluation using case studies.

## Strategies

### Shared understanding and buy in

- 1) Promote the value of surveillance data for individual producers and industry market access

### Enhanced investigations

- 2) Engage with stakeholders including producers and private veterinarians to increase the number and quality of investigations of animal disease incidents consistent with a nationally notifiable disease or an emerging disease.

### Improved surveillance information

- 3) Identify and document the needs of key stakeholders to inform collection, analysis, presentation and dissemination of surveillance information.
- 4) Provide rapid and timely capture and provision of information to decision-makers to support animal health.

### Increased reporting

- 5) Build trusted partnerships with producers and other local animal health stakeholders to increase reporting of unusual diseases.

# Objective 5

Improved capacity and capability in collecting and using surveillance data.

## Key performance indicators

What success will look like:

- Innovative approaches improve the collection and reporting of surveillance data.

How we will measure success:

- Case studies of innovative approaches.

## Strategies

### Shared understanding and buy in

- 1) Define national surveillance innovation priorities.

### Improved market access

- 2) Review market access requirements for animals and animal products, and surveillance systems of other exporting countries, to determine appropriate national surveillance needs.

### Innovative technologies

- 3) Use technology to facilitate improved capacity and capability in collecting data and converting it to information.
- 4) Drive development, investment, commercialisation, and manufacture of innovative technologies for surveillance.

### Enhanced partnerships

- 5) Partner with farming and non-farming communities, for example remote communities, for wide and proactive data collection and intelligence.

### Improved veterinary epidemiology

- 6) Develop and implement a 5-year action plan to strengthen national applied veterinary epidemiology capacity and capability.

### National analysis and action

- 7) Collect, collate, share and analyse Commonwealth data including border interception data and export abattoir data to identify emerging trends/threats and demonstrate Australia's animal health status.
- 8) Analyse animal health surveillance data from surveillance partners to identify threats and risk factors.
- 9) Schedule regular opportunities to discuss, interpret and agree on actions arising from surveillance analysis.

- 10) Conduct training and provide mentorship to build competency in internationally recognised surveillance system evaluation methodologies.

### **Better surveillance and diagnostics**

- 11) Implement novel technologies, such as point-of-care testing and genomics, to address current gaps in diagnostic policies and capacities.
- 12) Evaluate agreed national surveillance and diagnostic programs and implement recommendations to improve performance.
- 13) Identify and implement innovative mechanisms e.g., citizen science programs, to drive increased reporting for disease surveillance by producers, private veterinarians and the public.

# Appendix A: National and jurisdictional animal health surveillance and monitoring programs

## National and cross-jurisdictional programs and projects

- [National Animal Health Information Program](#) – NAHIP is an ongoing collaboration between Animal Health Australia, governments, livestock industries and Wildlife Health Australia. NAHIP supports Australia’s market access through the collation and reporting of animal health surveillance and monitoring information. The program maintains a database management system named the National Animal Health information System (NAHIS) and produces the Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly Report and the Animal Health in Australia Report.
- [National Significant Disease Investigation Program](#) – NSDIP facilitates investigation of significant disease events by private veterinary practitioners. The program also includes training in disease investigation to increase the level of knowledge, skills and confidence to investigate and report on disease events.
- Jurisdictional-level significant disease investigation programs in [Victoria](#), [South Australia](#) and [Western Australia](#) which aim to increase the participation of veterinarians by subsidising the cost of investigating significant diseases.
- [Wildlife Health Australia](#) – supports surveillance of wildlife and feral animals.
- [Screw-Worm Fly Surveillance and Preparedness Program](#) – SWFSPP aims for early detection of any potential incursion of screw-worm fly into Australia. Elements of the program include fly trapping and targeted wound inspections, and maintaining entomology capacity and capability.
- [Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies Freedom Assurance Program](#) – TSEFAP aims to increase market confidence that Australian animals and animal products are free from transmissible spongiform encephalopathies.
- [National Arbovirus Monitoring Program](#) – NAMP monitors the distribution of economically important arboviruses (insect-borne viruses) of ruminant livestock and associated insect vectors in Australia. Arboviruses monitored by NAMP include bluetongue, Akabane and bovine ephemeral fever (BEF) viruses.
- [National Sheep Health Monitoring Project](#) – NSHMP aims to monitor sheep for a range of significant animal health diseases and conditions which reduce productivity and provide feedback to producers about the conditions occurring in their flock. Additional surveillance occurs in South Australia through the [Enhanced Abattoir Surveillance Program](#), funded through state industry levies.
- [Livestock Production Assurance \(LPA\) Program](#) – an independently audited program for the Australian livestock industry that ensures food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity.

- [National Enzootic Bovine Leukosis \(EBL\) Freedom Assurance Program](#) – a national program coordinated by Dairy Australia to maintain confidence in the Australian dairy herd’s freedom from EBL. The program includes testing of bulk milk samples and quality assurance audits of all dairy herds.
- [Northern Australia Biosecurity Surveillance Network](#) – NABSnet is a network of veterinarians across Northern Australia. The aim of the network is to strengthen connections between pastoralists and private veterinarians and with government field and laboratory veterinarians for better information sharing and stronger biosecurity, and increase awareness of exotic disease incursion risk, pathways and consequences. The network also focuses on improving disease investigation skills to ensure accurate and timely diagnoses and build/refresh veterinary technical resources in preparation for an incursion or other emergency response.
- [Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy](#) – NAQS provides an early warning system for exotic pest, weed and disease detections across northern Australia, and helps to address the unique biosecurity risks facing the region. NAQS also contributes to national and international initiatives and engages with stakeholders, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, on measures that support effective biosecurity surveillance.
- [Australia Pork Ltd Evidence of Absence Surveillance Project](#) strengthens Australia’s substantiation of freedom from important exotic pig diseases through increased surveillance of pigs showing clinical syndromes of interest.
- [National Salmonella Enteritidis Monitoring & Accreditation Program](#) – a voluntary program available to all commercial egg producers in Australia. An accreditation certificate can be issued for accredited flocks, which can be used as evidence of the Salmonella Enteritidis-free status of these flocks and their eggs for export markets.
- National Japanese Encephalitis virus (JEV) Delimiting Surveillance in Domestic Pigs Project (2022–23) is an active surveillance project across 6 Australian states to test the hypothesis that the JEV spread in the vector season (warmer months) of 2021–22 was limited to the regions where infected pigs had been detected by passive surveillance during the 2022 JEV outbreak.
- [Notifiable Animal Disease legislation](#) – the national list of notifiable animal diseases is agreed by the national Animal Health Committee and is derived from the [Listed Animal Diseases](#) which are notifiable to the WOA (World Organisation for Animal Health). Some endemic diseases are also included for surveillance purposes.

The legal requirement for people to report notifiable animal diseases is contained in individual state and territory legislation. State and territory notifiable animal disease lists contain all of the diseases in the national list as a minimum but can also include other diseases that may be important to that state or territory.

- Emergency Animal Disease Hotline (1800 675 888) – the 24/7 national toll-free telephone number connects callers to a relevant state or territory veterinary or agricultural officer to report suspicion of emergency animal diseases.
- Wildlife Health Australia Coordinators provides a framework for identification, coordination and reporting of wildlife disease information into the national [electronic Wildlife Health Information System](#) (eWHIS).

- [Zoo Based Wildlife Disease Surveillance Program](#) – is a collaboration between Wildlife Health Australia and the Zoo and Aquarium Association that recognises that zoo clinics are an important source of information about wildlife disease. Wildlife disease reports from free-ranging and rehabilitation cases seen at participating zoos' wildlife hospitals are reported into eWHIS.
- [Sentinel Clinic Wildlife Disease Surveillance Program](#) – captures information from 'sentinel clinics', which are veterinary hospitals with a high wildlife caseload and those that expand the geographic or taxonomic coverage of the national surveillance system. The sentinel clinics report wildlife disease events into eWHIS.
- [University Based Wildlife Disease Surveillance Program](#) – aims to capture wildlife disease information generated by university veterinary clinics and pathology departments into eWHIS.
- [National Avian Influenza Wild Bird Surveillance Program](#) – NAIWB has 2 main components, targeted and general surveillance of wild birds for avian influenza viruses (AIV). Targeted surveillance involves collection of faecal environmental swabs and cloacal and/or oropharyngeal samples from apparently healthy and hunter-shot wild birds of known AIV reservoir species at key locations across Australia. General surveillance involves investigation and AIV exclusion in significant mortality and morbidity events in wild birds.
- Australian Bat Lyssavirus Monitoring Program – Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) works with the [Bat Health Focus Group](#) and WHA Coordinators to maintain a national dataset of Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV) testing. Summary reports of ABLV testing are provided in Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly and published in a regular, dedicated publication, ABLV Bat Stats.

## Jurisdictional programs and projects

### New South Wales

- [Local Land Services disease surveillance programs and projects](#) – such as the Annual Footrot Survey, which aims to maintain Footrot Protected Area Status for the Northern Tablelands.
- [Enhancing passive surveillance in NSW project](#) – aims to boost passive surveillance for emergency animal diseases in NSW using a syndromic diagnostic approach. This will increase the evidence base for the absence (or presence and prevalence) of emergency animal diseases in NSW and Australia and the sensitivity of early detection of emergency animal diseases in NSW terrestrial livestock.
- [Joint NSW/VIC Salmonella Pullorum Monitoring and Accreditation Program](#) – J-NSW/VIC SPMAP is available to commercial poultry producers in NSW and Victoria exporting day old chicks, hatching eggs and other poultry products to overseas markets. An accreditation certificate can be issued for accredited flocks, which can be used as evidence of the Salmonella Pullorum-free status of flocks and their eggs for export markets.

### Northern Territory

- [Cattle tick control program](#) – aims to contain ticks to within specific zones and lower the risk of spreading to areas which are not yet infected.

## Queensland

- [Surveillance program for cattle tick](#) – monitors for the presence or confirm the absence of cattle tick in the Queensland cattle tick free zone.
- [Surveillance program for Newcastle disease](#) – confirms the presence or absence of virulent Newcastle's disease (ND) virus in the State, monitors the effects of measures taken in response to a biosecurity risk of virulent ND virus and monitors compliance with reporting requirements about ND. The biosecurity program applies to a place where a person keeps a commercial broiler flock (500 or more chickens) that has withdrawn from ND vaccination in Queensland.
- [Queensland ruminant feed ban surveillance program](#) – links to the National TSEFAP and monitors compliance with prohibitions on the feeding or supplying of restricted animal material to ruminants.

## South Australia

- [Livestock disease surveillance program](#) – aims to provide laboratory data to support proof of animal disease freedom, enabling trade in livestock and livestock products internationally, and assists in early detection or exclusion of emergency animal diseases. This program links to the NSDI program.
- [Ovine brucellosis-free accreditation scheme](#) – aims to protect flocks from ovine brucellosis (OB), promote flocks that are OB-free and make OB-free accredited rams available.
- [Sheep lice program](#) – aims to minimise the spread of lice through saleyards and to increase awareness about lice detection, control and eradication.
- [Footrot program](#) – aims to diagnose, control and eradicate footrot from herds/flocks in South Australia. The program is targeted at producers.

## Tasmania

- [Ovine brucellosis-free accreditation scheme](#) – aims to control ovine brucellosis in Tasmanian flocks. Approved private veterinary practitioners carry out the accreditation assessments including testing and farm assessment and accredited flock owners manage the biosecurity risks to maintain their flock's status.
- [Livestock health monitoring network](#) – brings together service providers such as private veterinarians, stock agents, rural merchandisers and shearing contractors to conduct livestock health monitoring during their time spent on-farm, especially those properties with sheep.

## Victoria

- [Significant Disease Investigation program](#) – SDI links to the NSDIP and aims to boost Victoria's capacity for the early detection of such diseases in livestock and wildlife by increasing the participation of veterinarians and subsidising the cost of investigating significant diseases.
- [Saleyards and abattoirs surveillance project](#) – provides a sample of the diseases present in the Victorian sheep and goat flock by examining those animals found not fit for purpose at sale yards and abattoirs.



## Western Australia

- [Significant Disease Investigation \(SDI\) program](#) – the SDI links to the NSDIP and aims to boost Western Australia’s capacity for early detection of such diseases by subsidising the cost of investigating diseases with specific signs. This encourages veterinarians and producers to carry out a thorough investigation to obtain an early diagnosis.
- [Avian influenza and Newcastle disease surveillance](#) – focuses on surveillance within poultry flocks. Western Australian commercial poultry owners must comply with surveillance, reporting and biosecurity requirements in order to reduce the risk of Newcastle disease being introduced to their flocks and to ensure the disease is quickly eradicated if it occurs. Long-life chickens (layers and breeders) in flocks of more than 1000 birds must also be vaccinated against Newcastle disease.
- [Ewe abortion and newborn lamb deaths surveillance](#) – helps sheep producers identify the cause of abortions and newborn lamb losses in their flocks through free testing at Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Diagnostic Laboratory Services.
- [Bovine anaemia due to Theileria orientalis group](#) – assists Western Australian cattle producers and veterinarians in the Lower Great Southern to obtain a correct diagnosis by providing subsidised testing for producers and sampling kits for vets.
- [Great southern cattle surveillance network](#) – aims for early detection of new, emerging or exotic diseases while also improving on-farm production. The network offers the chance for producers to share and receive information across the region to strengthen disease surveillance and production as a whole.