# National Biosecurity Forum

Day 4 Session 1

12 November 2020

## Introduction

This is the transcript the National Biosecurity Forum, presented by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.

## Transcript

[Webinar begins]

Nick Housego: Good morning. My name is Nick Housego. I've been facilitating the National Biosecurity Forum for the last three days. Today's our fourth day and final day. We have two sessions on today. I want to welcome those who have stuck with us throughout the week. And to those who are new to the session for today, you're most welcome. I'll start the session by doing an acknowledgement of country. I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians on the lands on which we are hosting this meeting at the moment, which is the Ngunnawal out of the Canberra region, and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. And for any Torres Strait and Aboriginal people who are on today's hook up, you're most welcome. And we pay our respects to you and hope that you have a fantastic session. It's also NAIDOC Week.

Nick Housego: So we're coming to the close of that. That'll be finishing on Friday, which is tomorrow. And we're looking forward to this session where we're going to meet the award winners and go through. We've got with us quite a few of the award winners of the 2020 Australian Biosecurity Awards. They'll be telling us a little bit about their work and how they felt when they got the awards, what the impact it may have, and how important it is to get that level of recognition. To kick us off, we have Andrew Tung, the head of the Australian Biosecurity from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and the CEOs of both Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia. Sarah Corcoran from Plant Health Australia and Kathleen Plowman from Animal Health Australia. So I'm going to get us started by handing over to Andrew and get him to kick off. He also opened the session. So it's quite fitting that on the final day, he's here to do that closure. And welcome Andrew, you're on.

Andrew: Thanks very much, Nick. And Good morning everybody in particularly for those of you over in Western Australia, at kind of 6 AM, that is a level of commitment to biosecurity. Look, we present the Australian Biosecurity Awards each year to try and acknowledge all the work that happens across the country. So awards improving and maintaining our biosecurity status. We present Australia to the world as clean and green. And it is an important selling point for us. But as everybody Joining us this morning knows, that we only maintain that clean, green image and status by incredibly hard work. And incredibly hard work by people across government and industry and the community and all over the country. So the ABAs are an attempt to acknowledge and recognise that biosecurity is a shared responsibility.

Andrew: In looking at all the submissions for awards, the thing that struck me is just how incredibly clever and hardworking Australians are. We probably as a nation don't often enough stand back and celebrate just some of the excellence that we have, and the shared commitments that we make to one another. And thinking about the award winners this time around, this round two this year my sense is, yes, it's personal. Yes, you got to have an internal motivation. But there is something bigger there. There is this sense that biosecurity is important and it matters and it's kind of fundamental to both Australia making its way in the world which is incredibly important, but also to Australia's image of itself. So congratulations to all the award winners and to acknowledge everybody involved in biosecurity, it is an enormous national enterprise. Okay, in that regard, I really do have to acknowledge Sarah Corcoran from Plant Health Australia and Kathleen Plowman from Animal Health Australia.

Andrew: They've got a difficult job in working across government and with industry and with community to deliver capability for biosecurity and of course, Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia, we present the farm Producer of the Year award jointly with them, so it's great to have them here. You don't want to listen to me because I've had 35 years of practise in front of Senate estimates committee so I can talk all day and not say very much. So without further ado, I'll hand back to you, Nick. Thank you.

Nick Housego: Thank you, Andrew. All right, I'm going to hand over to Sarah, and then Kathleen, just to get a bit of an insight from you guys, as to the importance of these awards in your space.

Sarah Corcoran: Thank you, Nick. It's really great to be here today and acknowledge our wonderful producers and I'd like to congratulate citrus and wine grape growers KW Orchards for winning the farm biosecurity producer of the year award this year. And these guys have experienced the devastating impacts of exotic pests and diseases previously in their growing careers when they were impacted by cucumber green model mosaic virus on their property in Katherine. So they understand the impact on the livelihood of what can happen when there is a biosecurity incursion. And they also understand the vulnerabilities of agricultural producers to exotic pests and diseases. And they've taken these learnings and they've applied them to protect their most valuable asset. The management team at KW Orchards, they not only take all of the necessary steps to protect their property from pests and diseases before they become a problem.

Sarah Corcoran: But they're also sharing their knowledge in the community and amongst other growers, and they're encouraging others to do the same. And they're setting a great standard for others to follow. So whether that's from the arrival of the planting material on their property to ensuring that their machinery is clean, and is fit for purpose on their property to contractors and visitors making sure that they're signing in and understand what's required of them when they're on property. So I think it's a magnificent opportunity for us to really acknowledge all of our primary producers here today in this session. And I just like to say a few other words that farm biosecurity is something that has a strong commitment from the members of Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia. And they're instrumental to this programme as our partners.

Sarah Corcoran: I'm really pleased to be able to recognise the efforts of Australian primary producers, and that's particularly in this year of the International Year of Plant Health. And this is the third year that Plant Health Australia and Animal Health Australia have partnered with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment to deliver this award. And we're really committed to raising awareness for the importance of minimising biosecurity risks on farm into the future. And our winners from this round of the awards and don't forget the first round of awards in March this year, which was Queensland Templeton Ginger, I should be congratulated for protecting their farms and their futures from pests and diseases both endemic and exotic. And if you need further information, we'd like to explore a little more around farm biosecurity, you can also visit our farmbiosecurity.com.au web page.

Sarah Corcoran: And it's a hub of farm information that's produced by Animal Health Australia, Plant Health Australia and its members. And it's designed to assist producers understand the disease, pest and weed risks and what they can do to reduce those risks. So in summary, we'd like to congratulate all of the biosecurity award recipients here for 2020. And we're really proud to be able to deliver this award and I'll hand over to my colleague, Kathleen Plowman, the CEO from Animal Health Australia.

Kathleen Plowman: Okay, thanks, Sarah. Wow, there's been some outstanding nominations for farm biosecurity of award. And we had those award winners also in March. So my heartfelt congratulations go to the business, Kia Ora. They're producers of Merino wool, and they've been awarded a farm biosecurity producer of the year. Now their commitment to sustainable ethical and responsible livestock production, it's just inspiring. Guys, I really I encourage you to go and check out their website. They have the outstanding award winners across a range of initiatives that they've undertaken on their farm. And what really stands out for me is that they high standards of farm biosecurity and traceability makes them industry leaders. They're setting an example not just for their neighbours and their region but for industry. In fact, they're setting an example for all of us to follow. I also just take a moment to congratulate our March award winners, the Northern Australian corn farmers, the Seafarm groups.

Kathleen Plowman: Farm biosecurity extends through all sectors, whether it's plants, livestock, aquatics, they all intercept. So whatever is happening in the plant world also affects the livestock world as well. I liked how Andrew captured biosecurity as a national enterprise, because when I look at Kia Ora I see a farm, a business enterprise that has biosecurity at the heart of what they do. And actually they're living proof of how we can create change by showing that biosecurity value adds and improves their business resilience. The farm biosecurity programme, and it's an awareness and practise Change programme, and the Australian National Biosecurity Awards really showcase excellence in biosecurity. It's been a joint initiative of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia, on behalf of all our members. It's been 10 years running, and it promotes the best practise in disease, pest and weed management across livestock and plant enterprises.

Kathleen Plowman: As I said, it showcases producers are quite champions. They're the people who are our leaders, and inspire us to do better of what we're currently doing. And what a difference these producers have made to not just their own businesses, but their local communities, and the sustainability of Australian agriculture into the future. Congratulations to all of you and I look forward to seeing what else you do in the near future. Thank you.

Nick Housego: Fantastic, thank you both very good encapsulation of the situation. During the week, a press release came out from the honourable David Littleproud, the Minister for Agriculture, and he just put a bit of a statistic on how much biosecurity is worth. The Australian biosecurity system is valued at $314 billion. And the Australian Government collaborated with the University of Melbourne Centre for Excellence for Biosecurity Risk Analysis to put the dollar value on Australia's biosecurity system. When modelled over 50 years, the value of the biosecurity system is $314 billion with protecting assets valued at over $5.7 trillion. So the work that we're doing with biosecurity is very, very important and that comes through with that press release.

Nick Housego: I'd like to start this with Dr. Ron Glanville and go through the process. He's been the recipient of the David Banks Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award. What better place to start than with you Ron? How has biosecurity changed in the years that you've seen it from early in the career moving through to now, the early 2020s?

Dr. Ron Glanville: Certainly it suddenly changed incredibly, my early career I suppose, was dominated by things such as brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication. So the big focus was on controlling endemic diseases, whereas the focus these days is more on preventing exotic pests and diseases coming into Australia and what we can do to prevent that and making sure we got some good systems in place to ensure that we do it. The other big change has been the integration of biosecurity, it was back in the old days was animal health and plant health was a poor cousin and then it was great. In 2007, I was involved in formation of Biosecurity Queensland, the first integrated biosecurity agency in Australia. And that's really, yeah, as we say a much more integrated approach these days.

Nick Housego: And if you notice much in the way of change in terms of the people coming through, a lot more enthusiasm, much more awareness to be involved, rather than just doing the straight science.

Dr. Ron Glanville: There is a lot more diversity now, and I think, yeah, we've got the science is still important, but we're bringing in other sorts of disciplines now such as social science and applying that sort of science to biosecurity so that we can actually influence what people do. I suppose the big aspect that I'm particularly keen on is developing more collaborative approaches with stakeholders in terms of how we manage biosecurity risk.

Nick Housego: Okay, Zoran, I'm going to get to you next because you've picked up the custom brokers and forwarders Council of Australia. That's where you from, the individual industry award winner. So I'd be very interested to get some insights into the importance of that award for yourself and for the organisation and to be recognising the amount of work that you're doing in this space.

Zoran: Thank you Nick, the customs brokers and forwarders council of Australia merged with another body and first of July we became international forwarders and customs brokers Association. Just as a background, our members play a vital role in biosecurity, particularly at the border, we are mainly involved in the imports programme, which is significant. And when you look at the risks with the inputs programme, our members contribute significantly with the assessment on behalf of importers and exporters that facilitate trade. Often they are not well recognised by even importers themselves and the role and the complexity that is required to assist documentation not only for biosecurity but also for the border, and also working with other regulatory agency.

Zoran: So a lot of our role is around education. We continue biosecurity competence, because it's a requirement for training. So our members are trained at a level that your assessment officers of the department's different offices are, or even more because at the end of the day, these are members with the clients the importers that understand their products, they understand the documents they have control of the supply chain, and operate and approve the arrangement. So most of my work and the passion is to educate our members to be able to think like biosecurity officers because we are an extension to the biosecurity business and helping to clear cargo at the border. I've had the privilege of working also in the early days in my career, face to face in the Old World Trade Centre in Melbourne. We bought quarantine offices back then looking at the manifest assessing documents so we'll do a good relationship back then was a good thing.

Zoran: Now we have electronics and the way we interface with the apartment is a bit of room for improvement. And members feel that we've lost touch with the regulator on a face to face sort of environment, but it's something we're going to work through and have been involved heavily with the BICON testing when before BICON was introduced is a very important database to understand all of the input conditions that are very complex. So I had the privilege to work through that and for many years working for food in order I managed to prove arrangements, I was actively involved in the import food Cargo Consultative Committee, adding value there and today continue to be represented on the Department Cargo Consultative Committee and other working groups. We've also been very active in running conferences, events, running boss security awareness session for our members as part of the training. So that is where the value is in. That explains it how from an industry perspective I myself and the association contribute to that programme.

Nick Housego: Zoran well done congratulations on the award. That's a fantastic overview for us. They don't always work at the ports and the import areas, giving you an insight as to what's going on. Andrew Harris, I'd like to move to yourself next and get a sense of what it is the Tasmanian Department of Education and the department's revitalising the school farms initiative and Hagley Farm. How important is it to get into the schools and be driving the biosecurity message to the young ones.

Andrew Harris: Yeah. Very important Nick, I think we've been on a journey of improvement here in Tasmania for agricultural education for five or six years now. It's been a priority of the current state government and being delivered through the Department of Education. Everything we do around agricultural education, and this has been the case for as I said, five or six years now is guided by the Tasmanian Agricultural Education Framework. Now we're very fortunate in Tassie to have that framework, which guides everything we do. And it really, I guess, it's the mantra that I live by in my role. One of the priorities of that framework is stakeholder partnerships. I think what we've been doing, not just in biosecurity, but in a lot of areas of food and fibre production in improving agricultural education and food and fibre production in schools is underpinned by important stakeholder partnerships, particularly between government departments, particularly between industries, and the general community, producers, etc, as well.

Andrew Harris: So what we've done in biosecurity is a classic example of that. We've had fantastic support from the Department of Primary Industries here in Tazzy, particularly through Dr. Ryan Wilkinson, who's the industry collaboration manager for biosecurity, Tasmania. And Ryan reached out to me early in 2019, in his role, which was new at the time about what we could do to improve the education and understanding and awareness of biosecurity among schools and school aged students. So we began that collaboration. The Hagley Farm school and Visitor Centre has been a crucial stakeholder in that partnership, because they are our field study centre. I won't go into too much detail now about what all those field study centres are and how they operate in Tassie.

Andrew Harris: But needless to say, they are a centre that provides experiential learning opportunities, potentially to every student in Tasmania. Now the average is around 5000 students that visit that centre each year. And they've now embedded biosecurity into the experiences they offer to the visiting students, but also into the practise on the other fully operational school farm that's there and Hagley School. So they've been an important stakeholder. My role is a little broader than, I work with all schools and particularly the 15 schools with a farm that are resource through the revitalising school farms initiative. And biosecurity has been a key part of that. But I guess the key message about it from my point of view is that it's collaboration.

Andrew Harris: Collaboration from the experts, those in biosecurity Tassie you can provide us with what we need to know as teachers, then we bring the educational lens to it and how it can be best presented to students. And then we've got an entity like Hagley, which can put it into practise and give students some hands on experiences with biosecurity. That's a fantastic collaboration around this industry.

Nick Housego: Well done. That's fantastic to do. Okay, Kia Ora Merino, we've had a little bit of an introduction from Kathleen about yourselves. But Susan, I'm going to ask you to give us a little bit of an insight as to how the business is running, why it's got such a strong focus on biosecurity, and congratulations on the award, if you could give us some indication of what receiving and getting that awards going to do for putting a bit more impact into the work that you do.

Susan: Hi, it's I'm Susan speaking, yes, from Kia Ora Merino. I'm a partner with my husband and son in the business. Winning the award is fantastic, it actually, it encourages us that we're on the right track. Being an old girl, we're handing our farm on a succession plan. So I wanted to make sure what we were doing was best practise so that my son doesn't look and think these two old fogies are on the wrong track. But I have a history in quality and risk management. So auditing that sort of stuff is a bit second nature to me. And probably the one thing we do that's a bit different is we integrate quality, risk, flock health, everything into one plan. So people don't really realise why we're doing some things. It's just it's part of our normal practise, so that's where we're at.

Nick Housego: And give us an insight as to the biosecurity practises at the farm. What do I do? Do I just drive up to the front gate and be allowed in? Is there security guide? Is there foot baths? Is there real practical stuff like that's on your property?

Susan: Yeah, there's all the usual stuff you would expect. We're in a really lucky situation that there's a wedding tree over a one way bridge. There's signage. We've got a solar gate that no one can open for some reason because I can't push the button. But we find people read the sign and ring. It's phenomenal how compliant people are. As far as we consider our front driveway dirty. And so anyone who comes in parks in the car park at the shed, and from there, we put them in our car, that sort of thing. It's usual biosecurity practises. As far as anything extra, I think the fact that we're self replacing flock makes us very lucky.

Susan: We can actually not buy in sheep or sheep go out. Young lambs are born. It just continues on. What we're sending out is wool. And probably the traceability, the stickers we have in our wool bells helps further down the line. So if there was ever an issue with something they can trace it back to the farm so that that helps our customers along the way.

Nick Housego: You might be interested in the newly released Rams movie. I don't know if you've seen it, but I saw it last week. Interesting, good to see.

Susan: Yeah. I'm very excited.

Nick Housego: Yes, and a New Zealand spin on it to a degree. Okay, what I'm going to do now David Abdo. I want to hear from you about the aquatic activities that you've been doing.

David Abdo: I suppose. Firstly, congratulations to all the winners. And this is definitely not just my doing, Justin is also a big part of this. Yeah, I suppose the vessel-check solution was born a few years ago through the then Department of Fisheries work in trying to get a better handle on the management of biofouling for WA, and has evolved to what it is now through a collaboration with DHR. Obviously contrary to maybe more recent times WA does like to work with the rest of Australia and not have that borders up. But we quickly realised when developing the new version of vessel-check that our other states and territories could benefit from the work that we've been doing to try and get a better handle on vessel biofouling and vessel biosecurity risks. So yeah, we've been pushing pretty hard to try and get this up and running as a solution that can form a national tool for a more cohesive I suppose biosecurity system to benefit the whole of Australia.

Nick Housego: Okay, Justin now the coffee's kicked in. Why don't you give us your insights as well.

Justin McDonald: I think Dave's just done a wonderful job. Coffee's kicked in, so I'm feeling Sparky. I've been in marine biosecurity for about 15 years now. So I guess it's best exemplified by when I first started, there was around 5000 vessels coming into Western Australia. Now there's around 30,000 vessel visits, we get the year.

Nick Housego: Wow.

Justin McDonald: I've got a team of about seven people to manage the entire West Australian coastline and all the interior sort of waterways. So you can imagine 30,000 vessels looking at the bottom of all of them for one muscle. It's fair bit of work. So we need an alternative to jumping in with your snorkel and risk assessing these vessels. So this is where vessel-check developed. And as the regulator, it allows us to, I guess, process a lot more of these vessels and assess their biofouling and biosecurity risks. So on the thing that's not commonly looked at, in terms of biosecurities, anything below that waterline, yeah.

Nick Housego: So it's quite a fundamental shift and through innovation that's been able to get you there.

Justin McDonald: Yes, most definitely. So the innovation, as you can imagine is essential, I mean team of six people, 5000 kilometres of coastline each

Nick Housego: So we're going to get so many more containers, so many more vessels coming through, it sounds like you've got a real pathway for your product to be happily grabbed and used by other states and territories.

Justin McDonald: Most definitely. It was developed for WH purposes originally. And then we saw the benefit of essentially a national tool because it allows the states jurisdiction and the Commonwealth to talk to each other, identify vessels that may become a risk. They could share that knowledge internally within the government departments. And so we can work together more cohesively so I think it's got a lot of potential.

Nick Housego: Okay, so congratulations on the award.

Justin McDonald: Thank you.

Nick Housego: I'm going to move now to Dr. Justin McDonald's.

Justin McDonald: That was me.

Nick Housego: Oh yeah, that was you. Sorry about that.

Justin McDonald: You don't want to hear from me again.

Nick Housego: Well, it was pretty good. Excellent. Dr. Geoff Pegg. We're going to move there on environmental biosecurity and individual winner of that for the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Geoff Pegg: It's an incredible honour to receive this award. I've had a pretty long career I guess in biosecurity, starting my career, at the borders of the old aqueous days, and then moving more into the forestry production industry side of things. But then with Myrtle rust rising in Australia, I've spent the last 10 years researching the impacts of myrtle rust and the different ecosystems. And then the reality is it's been pretty depressing at times to watch Forest Landscapes change, species disappearing so rapidly, and it's really raised my awareness of how vulnerable our native ecosystems are to invasive diseases.

Geoff Pegg: I've had the privilege of working with some pretty incredible people over the years and creating new networks and I guess creating better awareness of biology of environmental biosecurity within the different ecological groups within some of our world heritage groups. And then most recently, I've had the privilege of working with the Butchulla land and sea Rangers and I think yesterday, Tilly Davis, reported a little bit on that work. That's been an absolutely amazing experience. And really, I guess, promoting the understanding of what trees mean from a cultural, environmental and social perspective to try and educate and spread that message of the importance of environmental biosecurity and just how vulnerable we are when these invasive pests and disease come in.

Geoff Pegg: In comparison, I guess to industries where you've got management options of looking at breeding strategies and that sort of thing. Once these things come in, they become established, they are really quite vulnerable and the changes can be quite dramatic. So this obviously creates an opportunity where we can spread that message further, and just increase our capacity for people to do understand biosecurity and help reporting to take things from perspective that'll be great benefits.

Nick Housego: Geoff, how do you deal with the resilience needed when it's just a very small team looking at very large problems? And those problems have the ability to escalate. And you've still got to be the public face, you're talking positively, you're talking optimistically about where change needs to happen and things like that. But inwardly you must be thinking, goodness, this is a very, very big problem, can we tackle it.

Geoff Pegg: At times it's been extremely overwhelming and it has been depressing, but along the way, you do meet these different people who've got different ideas about how we can integrate, I guess, different solutions to things. Because it's a matter of just finding good networks and I think we've been successful in building those networks. But we have to build a lot more from what we've got at this stage. And really expand that message out there. There's a lot of work to do, we're only really scratching the surface. So hopefully this can sort of help get a little bit more momentum in that space, and create different groups that are pushing this environmental biosecurity barrows.

Nick Housego: Thank you. Fantastic insights and congratulations on the award. Scott Charlton, I'm going to move to you next from New South Wales DPI. What will be the impact of winning this award have on your colleagues and others around you in terms of keeping that biosecurity message strong?

Scott Charlton: Well, I think it's a very powerful and valuable tool. I think, primarily, it's about recognition of good behaviour, not my good behaviour, but essentially the value is in recognise community participation, stakeholder participation, and I suppose the true sense that shared responsibility aspect of it. So in our particular case, we had everything could have gone wrong with our particular project our response. We had a site which was notoriously there controversial in terms of it was the birthplace of the environmental movement. So there was a lot of potential backlash from anti-vaxxers to the potential treatments we would use for the ants. We had issues with the baits not taking filters from technical issues that we've had to resolve as well, but they potentially could have blown up into bigger issues.

Scott Charlton: That's very high profile, the nature of the sites were that they were right in a prominent place in town. So our success or failure was really, really scrutinised. And there's a lot of media attention as well. So yeah, one aspect of it, we did some really innovative things to deal with those issues. But I think the community support about the programme is really critical and the actual willingness for them to be involved. And the diversity in the people who were involved was really important. And that's what we really need to recognise. So this award is great in terms of not only agency partners, but also the community good behaviour. The initial report was a member of the public too. So I think that's a really fundamental part of biosecurity, getting people interested and engaged enough that they're going to report some really obscure threat.

Scott Charlton: So I think in terms of our role, our responsibility as government, we have a clear responsibility to be able to facilitate these groups and enable people to actually help the whole biosecurity shared responsibility part of it, but actually sort of be confident enough to hand it over to people to do their role in the system as well. And that's what happened really, quite clearly. There's more, I think, more and more like the challenge for me is like future challenge I suppose is that, we as governments have often have an easy route into promoting biosecurity, sort of keeping things out. We can throw money at promotion of biosecurity practises. But when it comes down to actually enabling the public and other stakeholders to do their role, that's where the challenge is and providing those solutions for them to treat these things, they're actually here and present and actually represent a big impact for the environmental reduction.

Nick Housego: Yeah, we've got a question here that's popped in for you, Scott. How did they train the detected dogs, to sniff out jumping ants when jumping ants sting the dogs and start putting socks on the dog might be one option, but the dogs must get to really hate those jumping ants.

Scott Charlton: It's a big threat in terms of the dog becoming averse to actually getting bitten and or getting formic acid on them. So they do, I can't give them the technical details of those. But that is part of the process to pull them back. So they actually stand off the answer that they're encouraged to train to not actually engage the approach to the stand back. So they actually limit that exposure to it, because it's counterproductive, because it's such a strong driver in the dog, look, find the answer. And they could, you will never know sometimes if the dog became soiled in terms of then having a fear of it.

Nick Housego: One other question for you, Scott, you mentioned back in your report, a few minutes ago, you touched upon innovation. There were some innovation practises that went on that we took on. I'd be happy to tease out a little bit more about the innovation that went on and just find out and how you went about doing that? Because we've got a strong focus here in the department around innovation and the importance of it. Examples of that in the field, and how you've gone about doing things differently to improve outcomes, happy to hear.

Scott Charlton: Okay, so there's really, two things I'll hit on and one is the goal itself. But we're actually approached by a koala sniffing dog owner, who has leapt over the fence basically and approached us and said, I've got the sniffer dog because koalas can use it. And we thought, I don't know, how do we do this? Is not part of a larger programme having facilities, but it turned out it was quite achievable. He was simply re-imprinted with the centre of the ants and this consultant basically took over that whole aspect of the project. So I think in terms of getting consultants in their role, that was innovative in terms of we use really quickly, like if in a week that dog was imprinted with your crazy ants and could do normal work of koalas.

Scott Charlton: Next thing, it's like detect crazy ants in the local community, fully accessible. It was just it was sort of painless, I think we had a lot of innovations in terms of using consultants locally, who were really, I think government tends to not give credit to private industry often, and they try to be hands on and sort of say that government does things best. But I think you almost go sort of relax a little bit and sort of to be really to do justice, the shared responsibility thing is about sort of handing over control and understanding your own role as government. One of the technical innovations I suppose is largely to Ben Hoffman, who was using sugar-based ant bait, which essentially water crystals and fipronil and sugar. So that technique was a bit of a godsend, because we were having a terrible time with the commercially available baits which were protein based bands the ants were just not dying, they weren't interested.

Scott Charlton: And like I said, it was right in the middle of the town square, really prominent success or failure, the media conferences are held basically next to the tree, where the ants still thriving and going up and down. So Ben suggested using this bait, and the whole permit process have to be done that essentially they love the sugar based baits and we had a real turnaround in the programme, then we're able to be quite successful in a few days that are, yeah, those technologies. So I think you have to be open-minded to things, trial and things. But I think we also need to be a lot more flexible as government and how we look at those new innovations that we don't have the innovation, and then we also share the controls as well.

Nick Housego: Okay, before I get to Brendon Rodoni I'm going to ask Andrew Tang and the two CEOs sitting back there and Plant Health and Animal Health to start thinking up some questions because here's an opportunity for you to direct questions to this fairly esteemed panel. So it's an opportunity here to give some thought to that. Brendon, you've won what is Kim Reedman Award for the first time it's been issued. How much of a tribute and how much of an importance is it stepping into the shoes of such a good scientist as Kim?

Brendon Rodoni: Yeah, it's an absolute honour in stepping into the shoes of someone like Kim, but you can certainly learn from him. And he was a great scientist, he is a great motivator and incredibly front foot person. I think that's, if I'm having a bad day or feeling sorry for myself, just think of Kim and I just get on with it. Yeah, that I think that's one of the long lasting memories I'll have of Kim. But yeah, it's a hell of an honour and also to be nominated by peers as well. I think he's somewhat humbling and known mark for 30 years. And he's clearly taught other people that I've known for a long time, work with. So there are people out there help you ties up a bit, he's quiet. Yes, like I said, it's quite humbling.

Brendon Rodoni: But just picking up on some of the things that Andrew and Kathleen and Sarah spoke about, we do have a very good biosecurity system, but we're also providing that system to sound the best farmers in the world. Our primary producers are world class, and we have that vision of $100 billion export by 2030. Why not? But they're going to need a very good system to help them get to that target, and stripe benefits from pristine environments and biosecurity plays a massive role in that and economically, our tourist industry benefits. So that's what this award is, you're laying back and think, what is our space in that whole system? I think we do have a big role to play and perhaps is one of the great things about these awards is to let us stop and have a think about where we fit. But I think the other thing I would say to around biosecurity is I actually think as a science has matured a lot in the last 25 years.

Brendon Rodoni: When you look at the literature, I can actually see the word biosecurity written before 1993. And that was in New Zealand where they had the biosecurity act so. I think what it's done from the GATT agreement, and things like that, it's not only to keep things out and protect, but it's actually helping us think about how do we get product to market? How do we land? How do we brace that $100 billion goal. I think that's where a lot of our thinking is maturing. So yeah, I'm greatly honoured to be the first means a lot on you Kim. Yeah, I'm really, really proud of myself to get there.

Nick Housego: Well done. Congratulations to all. I'm going to start with Sarah, what question have you got for anyone all of the panel?

Sarah Corcoran: Scott, congratulations, really well done. You must be very proud to receive the award. One thing you talked about was giving that control to private enterprise and government understanding that they can step back and let private industry lead the way and be a part of sharing that responsibility. What does that look like to you? How would we achieve that?

Scott Charlton: I think it's providing the tools, the ability to utilise people effectively, and having the rigour as well around it, that you can report and get that sort of data that's, you can sort of rely on as well. So I mean, one of the biggest fear in a government led programme is losing control of information and giving that proof of freedoms, the evidence in the day. One of the example we probably used in that situation was we utilised people pretty much off the street, people who were librarians came into this programme for surveillance activity. So there were a mixed bag of local government, county council people, national parks, people who were unfamiliar with biosecurity. It could be quickly trained to be able to do surveillance activities and to deliver louvers all sorts of things in a short amount of time.

Scott Charlton: So with a good briefing process with people who are very good at engaging you can actually get that attention to detail in place. And in the case of Lismore, we also used a fairly quick off the shelf system to get real time data into the system as well. So each team was equipped with an iPad or a phone, they could actually log that data and within a day We had 800 properties inspected over that whole area. So they went out, they visited the property, they set amount of louvers, they lay those louvers, they talked to the people, have a look around, they left, they came back and collect the louvers... processed. And that reader in the system was there. Because you can see online that louvers going out coming back in we it was all documented so that, I suppose that's a system in place, I suppose for government to have those really good systems in, they can utilise people better, who are untrained.

Scott Charlton: So everyone affected when it comes to biosecurity. I think that's something we got to get used to is as government, we have limited resources. We can't tap into those groups, like volunteer organisations like SES and RFS and community groups Lancair. We can't utilise those resources. It's very, very limiting and I think it's not thinking outside the box.

Nick Housego: Scott, thank you. I'm going to move to Kathleen now.

Kathleen Plowman: Thanks, Nick. So, Geoff, I was listening to you talk about, you have a small team and you're looking at very large problems. And I'd suggest it kind of follows on from what Scott was talking about too but you also mentioned the real need to build networks. So how do we do that? What would be the first thing that we really need to do to start building these networks, regionally and nationally?

Geoff Pegg: Well, that's a very large question and probably a little bit dependent on individual activities at the time, but because obviously, when you're dealing with different things, you've got to identify different groups associated with what it is you're trying to solve. And in the case of myrtle rust, obviously it's got that broader ecological impact and my skills lie in the fact that I can identify the disease and what it's doing. And from a individual tree side of things, look at the impact, but I don't understand that ecological flow or to fix the a tree death or loss of a species might have. So in that case, we're trying to identify those right people. But it's all about promoting, I guess the importance of what we're doing to the right people to get those people engaged.

Geoff Pegg: From from the work that I've done so far with the forest and tree side things. And working with the rangers with the butchulla ranges, what we've tried to do is make people look at trees differently, stop and think about what is the significance of a tree? I mean, we all we hear about the environment, we hear about the the animal side of things. I mean, it's quite common, but we don't so much look and say, well, his tree or his species of tree, what does this mean from a cultural, social, environmental perspective? We've got sites where we've got probably five, 6000 dead trees, and yet we had five or 6000 dead trees, or dead animals in that paddock who would raise awareness.

Geoff Pegg: But yeah, so it's creating those networks and trying to, I guess increase the profile of what we're doing, which will then increase the flow on effects of people engaging, and we're getting better outcomes in that way. I don't think there's a right and wrong way of developing those networks. I think it's, as I said, it's really dependent on the circumstances you're dealing with at the time. Hopefully that answers your question.

Nick Housego: Kathleen, thank you, Sarah, thank you. Andrew, do you have a question you'd like to put to the panel?

Andrew: Thanks, Nick. I'd like to go back out on the ground to Kia Ora Merino and seek advice really. Part of the challenge of the next decade is preparedness. The biosecurity challenge for the country is getting tougher, not easier. And the thing that strikes me about Australian farm producers, they are the most innovative in the world. They're one part of the Australian economy that is fully exposed to global competition. And as a country, we export 70-75% of what we produce. For the future though, we need more Kia Ora Merino's. We need on-farm biosecurity as if you like the final protective layer in our system, because we have to plan for the worst and hope for the best. So I'd be interested in advice on how those of us that work in and around biosecurity, work with the people that we serve on the ground, how do we encourage on-farm biosecurity of a high standard like Kia Ora?

Susan: Well, I wouldn't be one to give advice. I don't think, Andrew. Just from our personal perspective, we found that being accredited for different wool quality schemes and the European standards, while some of them were a bit confronting when they're talking about what you do with dead stock and mortality records, things like that, we actually realised a lot of what we do, we just do it. And we had some unexpected lamb deaths. There were three day old lambs, no reason for them to die. We took them down to the MacKinnon project, and had them autopsied, and they had a subacute iodine deficiency.

Susan: So really, it could have been something worse it wasn't. But what I'm sort of saying is, but being proactive and working with best practise groups, I think integrating biosecurity into best practise. We're not leaders in the field of... We don't consider ourselves leaders. But I think that that top 20%, top 10% drags the wrist. I do think our industry bodies need to, but I think the quality is games, they're coming out of Europe, like responsible wool standard, and their expectations on wool growers are a lot higher and I think that are my drivers.

Andrew: I'll let you manage that baby. Thank you. Thank you for that. Certainly what our counsellors overseas tell us is particularly the Europeans, demanding more and more of us, basically, but we anticipate that we'll see that approach taken up in other parts of the world. And the questions of traceability, quality, expectations about animal and crop management are about how we manage on-farm processes, and then down the whole supply chain are just going to increase. So I think we're at the start of a journey there. So thank you very much for that, Susan. Appreciate that. Back to you Nick.

Nick Housego: Okay, fantastic. I've just got a question that's popped in here. And it's again, for Ron Glanville. Looking forward over the next five to seven years, you've done reports in that space, looking to see what's going to be happening, particularly in the far north. What is your vision for what needs to happen to make sure it's secured in the next 5, 7, 10 years? What's our behaviour problems that we need to address?

Dr. Ron Glanville: Thanks for that. Yeah, the project that prompted my nomination for this award was some work I did in Torres Strait, looking at improving biosecurity systems up there. And we actually did something quite revolutionary. I think when we started this project, we actually asked the locals what they thought. And that's pretty fundamental. That's been a theme that's come through a lot of the talks today. And I'll just give you an example of that. We traditionally think of Torres Strait as a bit of a gateway to Northern Australia. And that's we treat it as a buffer zone between Papua New Guinea and the Australian mainland. The thing, the revelation that came out of our initial sort of consultation up there was that the locals recognise that, they recognise that they play that important part of protecting mainland, Australia.

Dr. Ron Glanville: But then I said, "Well, did you know that most of the biosecurity issues that we deal with have actually come from mainland Australia?" But they haven't come from Papa New Guinea, they've come from mainland Australia. So it's about listening to local communities and it's the same as whether you're working with an industry or a local community or whatever. It's this collaborative approach listening to people, developing a strategy based on what drives them. So yeah, the question before about how to how to get farmers to implement on farm biosecurity. We've got to explore more of what actually drives them to implement the same, so when it comes and it's no different when we are dealing with indigenous communities. We need to find out what drives them and out of all that work, we develop the biosecurity strategy for Torres Strait and the whole theme of that was how do we make biosecurity more meaningful for indigenous communities.

Dr. Ron Glanville: So I guess probably that's somewhere in their lives the answer to your question, and how do you make biosecurity more meaningful to people, whatever life they're in.

Nick Housego: All right, I want to thank you all and congratulate you all for your awards and your perseverance in doing fantastic work in the biosecurity space. It just shows the breadth of coverage that we've got in there, those checking out the biofouling is an example of great innovation, taking the diver with the snorkel out of the system and putting in the robots. Who knows where artificial intelligence is going to go. Andrew Tang was talking to the team some months ago about automatic sniffing systems that are coming in. There's a real big range of change that's happening, and you guys are at the forefront of it.

Nick Housego: So very, very appreciative of your efforts and your time that you put into this. So thank you, and cherish your awards, they're very special. If you'd like to learn more about the awards, you can pick that up by visiting the awe.gov.au/aba space in the website. And Andrew, would you like to say anything and final exit from here from this session as we close down because we're about to shut.

Andrew: Look just very quickly to congratulate the award winners and to thank them for their contribution to biosecurity. We all can come to work every day and go through the motions or we can challenge ourselves to bring our best selves to work. And our award winners are bringing their best selves to work and they're making a contribution not just to biosecurity but to the nation and our natural world and our productive assets. So I just think that's a really important mission. And I'm with you Nick, the awards are important and important recognition by peers effectively of contribution. So congratulations and thank you for your hard work.

Nick Housego: Thanking you all once again, and closing down here in Canberra.

[Webinar ends]