



National Biosecurity Forum 2019 report

Overview

The 2019 National Biosecurity Forum was held in Canberra on Wednesday 27 November 2019 at the National Museum of Australia. It was hosted by the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) and the Department of Agriculture.

The themes for the 2019 [state and territory roundtables](#) and national forum were developed with the NBC and included:

- traceability
- general surveillance
- partnerships.

Minister for Agriculture, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, also discussed the following:

- Australian Government's commitment to strong biosecurity settings to support Australia's exports, local producers and our international reputation.
- establishment of [Biosecurity Futures group](#) to provide industry intelligence, advice and ideas on biosecurity matters directly to government.

Over 140 stakeholders attended at the venue or through online access via a live feed. Attendees included industry, federal and state government, producers and environmental community members.

Event Summary

Agenda item 1: opening

The Forum opened with an official Welcome to Country by Ngunnawal Elder, Wally Bell. Head of Biosecurity, Lyn O'Connell, then welcomed everyone to the event.

Agenda item 2: agriculture, fisheries and forestry in 2030

Daryl Quinlivan, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, presented the department's vision for agriculture, fisheries and forestry in 2030, including:

- a taskforce to meet the ambitious target of a \$100 billion agriculture industry by 2030
- ensuring farmers have resilient production and supply systems, supported by best practice logistics and investments to meet these challenges
- the importance of trade in meeting the 2030 goal.

Agenda item 3: customs and border modernisation

Australian Border Force Assistant Secretary, Christie Sawczuk, discussed the need for government and industry to invest in a secure and modern international trade and travel system by leveraging technologies to streamline trade and travel, enhance intelligence-led risk management, and ensure our border integrity.

Agenda item 4: the world's smallest quantitative mass spectrometer

Ross Farrell of Iugotec discussed Iugotec's next generation autonomous real-time sensors, which use machine vision and gas sensors. "Moli 2.0" is a portable mass spectrometer which can be used by non-technical operators, operate continuously, give real time quantitative data, and measuring a broad range of compounds. Iugotec are working with the department to continue to develop the hardware and software.

Agenda item 6: using senses - airport detector dogs and Cybernose biosensor

Alisha Anderson of CSIRO gave an overview of the Cybernose biosensor, which can detect the presence of multiple chemicals in 10 minutes or less. The next step is to build a mechanism that allows detections at the border.

Jeff Smith of the Department of Agriculture introduced the department's biosecurity detector dog program.

Agenda item 7: a supply chain approach to managing integrity - eNVD app for grain-fed beef supply chain

Maria Crawford and Stephen Rennie from National Livestock, Coles, provided an overview of Coles' eNVD app. Developed by working with a supply base, the app builds on systems that are already in place, gaining implementation efficiencies. Coles collaborated broadly with state departments, police, Integrity Systems Company and Meat and Livestock Australia producers and technical suppliers, ensuring it came at no cost to vendors. The app is available offline and online, user friendly and easy to update. There has been strong uptake after some initial resistance followed by favourable feedback.

Agenda item 8: panel session - progress in traceability across the supply chain

Ms O'Connell chaired the panel session looking at current progress in the traceability space from across the supply chain. The session covered the following speakers and topics:

- Ram Akella, Woolworths Food Group, described food safety as a key focus for Woolworths, including food authenticity and traceability.
- Malcolm Letts, Deputy Director-General and Chief Biosecurity Officer from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is a member of the working group for the national traceability framework and discussed the importance of good assurance in making traceability effective.

- Hermione Parsons, Director of the Centre for Supply Chain Logistics Deakin University, discussed Australia's export competitiveness as an important driver of agricultural profitability.
- Jane Kellock, Kellock Farming, described how traceability on their sheep farm has varied over the last 20 years with the introduction of property identification codes and other traceability measures.
- Mark Hedley, research leader of supply chain integrity, discussed CSIRO's research on food provenance and supply chain integrity to improve market access bolstered by trust.
- Benjamin Wash, Freshcare, discussed their on-farm assurance food safety and quality standard, with a user friendly certification based on evidence and good agricultural practice leading to Freshcare being recognised by [GlobalG.A.P.](#)

Agenda item 9: understanding general surveillance for biosecurity as a system

ABARES scientists Marwan El-Hassan provided an overview of an ABARES general surveillance research project, and discussed how general surveillance is underutilised despite its value to plant, animal and human health.

The outcomes of the project will be set of guidelines and recommendations on designing, implementing and managing general surveillance initiatives in multiple biosecurity contexts and fostering partnerships between different actors.

Agenda item 10: New Zealand marine biosecurity surveillance program

Brendan Gould, manager of Biosecurity Surveillance and Incursion Investigation at Biosecurity New Zealand discussed his introduction of a marine biosecurity program initiated over twenty years ago. The program was later integrated with New Zealand's terrestrial animal and plant focused biosecurity system to reduce marine pest threats to New Zealand's economic, environmental, social and cultural values.

Agenda item 11: Indigenous staff and community contributions to biosecurity in northern Australia

Wayne See Kee of the Department of Agriculture, discussed the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS). NAQS:

- is an integrated program of scientific surveys, community engagement measures, engagement with neighbouring countries, and delivery of regulatory functions across northern Australia
- delivers inspections and survey activities including 50,000 air movements, and 50,000 units of vessels and cargo engagement including traditional trade movements
- has developed meaningful relationships with Indigenous ranger groups to deliver biosecurity surveillance.

Agenda item 12: panel session - climate impacts on established and exotic biosecurity pests and diseases

Matthew Koval, First Assistant Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, opened the panel session, which included the following speakers and topics:

- Ian Thompson, Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer, addressed environmental biosecurity and the challenges controlling emerging pest and disease risks.
- Professor Howden, Australian National University Climate Change Institute, discussed the relationship between climate change and biosecurity as it impacts on species, spatial distribution and severity, and response to incursions.
- Threatened Species Commissioner Sally Box discussed the decline of Australia's biodiversity and the impacts of habitat loss, fragmentation, fire regime, invasive pests and climate change. Potential solutions include rebuilding resilient native species distribution.
- Dr Box and Mr Thompson discussed reducing the cost of managing invasive species, including use of new tools and systems supported by research and innovation, education, and being proactive rather than reactive.

Agenda item 13: national priority list of exotic environmental pests and diseases

Mr Thompson and ABARES scientist Jess Evans discussed the history and purpose of the [national priority list of exotic environmental pests and diseases](#).

Agenda item 14: campaign lessons – illegal wildlife trafficking

Adam Kay, Biosecurity Manager, High Risk Invasive Animals, Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, discussed the Trafficked, Traded and Traumatized campaign, which:

- was developed in collaboration with Agriculture Victoria, the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and Crime Stoppers Victoria.
- aims to disrupt the escalation of the illegal wildlife trade
- used a mix of traditional and social media to reach stakeholders.

Future engagement

The Department of Agriculture will host the National Biosecurity Forum in November 2020.

More information can be found at:

- [National Biosecurity Forum](#)
- [state and territory biosecurity roundtables](#)
- [National Biosecurity Committee](#)

Or email us at biosecurityroundtable@agriculture.gov.au.