

Vetcommuniqué Volume 10, Issue 2
May 2010

Animal Health Committee 17 Face-to-Face, 4-6 May 2010

Welcome to the Animal Health Committee (AHC) newsletter for animal industry bodies. The aim of Vetcommuniqué is to provide a communication link between AHC and client industry bodies.

AHC membership comprises the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the Commonwealth, States, and Territories, and representatives from Biosecurity Australia and CSIRO. Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), Animal Health Australia (AHA) and the New Zealand CVO attend AHC as participants. AHC also meets with industry representatives on specific items from time to time.

Dr Brian Radunz is the Northern Territory Chief Veterinary Officer and AHC Chair for 2010. AHC next meets 19-21 October 2010 in Melbourne. Dr Andrew Cameron, Victorian Deputy CVO will be AHC Chair for 2011.

Further information on the structure of AHC can be found on the DAFF website at: <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/animal/committees/ahc>

Key outcomes from AHC17 Face-to-Face

Industry involvement at AHC17 face-to-face

The industry session at AHC17 was attended by the Animal Health Australia Livestock Industry Forum Executive (represented by Australian Pork Ltd. and Cattle Council of Australia), Wool Producers Australia, Sheepmeat Council of Australia, AusVet Animal Health Services, South Australian Cattle Advisory Group, South Australian Sheep Advisory Group and the Barramundi Association.

Issues discussed included:

- Peak council/ state member organisations interaction
- National Animal Health System Performance Standards
- Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre replacement and Vector-borne disease Cooperative Research Centre bid
- Ovine Johnes Disease
- Standards and guidelines
- Foot and Mouth Disease Symposium
- Animal Health Committee Surveillance workshop
- Traceability

Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre (AB-CRC) ending and Vector-borne Disease CRC bid

Industry noted that, with the ending of the AB-CRC, a bid had been planned for a Vector-borne Disease CRC. With the withdrawal of the support of the Health Department this bid will not go ahead. Instead, planning is in progress for a Vector-borne Animal Disease CRC bid for round 14 (2011). Other initiatives are also under development.

AHC Surveillance workshop

An AHC workshop was held on 25-26 March 2010 to build a national animal disease surveillance plan. A report on outcomes and actions following this workshop was presented to AHC members for consideration. A number of projects have been identified and will be undertaken as a result of the workshop.

FMD Symposium

AHC considered the outcomes of the FMD Symposium (held in Melbourne 12-14 April) and associated simulation exercise. It noted the associated announcement of the commencement of the Australian FMD Vulnerabilities Project. AHC congratulated the Symposium organising committee on their effort producing an extremely well run event.

ABIN

Joanne Banyer, CEO, ABIN, presented an overview of the initiative including a history, organisational arrangements, challenges and proof of concept projects. There are 60 agencies involved in ABIN indicating the recognition of a common requirement across sectors. There is an enormous amount of untapped data that could be linked via the ABIN infrastructure initiative. The vision of ABIN is "a strong connected biosecurity community". ABIN is being developed through the development of core IT infrastructure, a tool delivery platform and demonstration through proof of concept projects.

National Significant Disease Investigation Program

AHC endorsed an expansion of the scope of the National Significant Disease Investigation (SDI) Program to include wildlife disease events.

The National SDI Program aims to increase and promote Australia's capacity for the early detection of emergency and emerging animal diseases by providing funding as an incentive for private practitioners to undertake the initial field investigation and clinical evaluation of cases that meet state/territory government animal health authority judgement of significance.

National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement exercise

The National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) was drafted to fill a gap in national emergency response arrangements from biosecurity incidents which primarily affect the environment and/or social amenity. AHC participated in an exercise designed to lead members through the process outlined in the NEBRA. Overall AHC felt that the animal health sector had systems in place and the capability and capacity to identify an outbreak and successfully perform the actions required in the NEBRA.

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