



Northern Territory Biosecurity Roundtable report

Thank you for attending the 2017 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable (Roundtable) held in Darwin, Northern Territory (NT) on 6 June 2017.

This event was hosted by the NBC, together with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the NT government. Roundtable events are being held in the capital city of each state/territory in 2017.

What we heard from participants

- As smaller industries increase in size and diversity so does the need to undertake risk assessment and management activities.
- There is increasing sophistication of biosecurity requirements from export markets, however there are also potential synergies between processes, such as, food safety requirements and biosecurity that could be explored further.
- Getting the biosecurity messages down to the grass roots level requires industry to set the tone – they have to be pro-active in investing in and prioritising biosecurity.
- In areas with a lot of transient workers (e.g. backpackers) there is a need to be more creative and innovative in how we convey biosecurity messaging.
- When resources are limited, good relationships between stakeholders and governments are crucial, particularly during response activities.

Following the official welcome and Acknowledgement of Country, the first session opened with updates from the NT government (Dr Michelle Rodan - Biosecurity and Animal Welfare), Australian government (Lyn O’Connell - Department of Agriculture and Water Resources), and industry representatives (Tom Ryan – NT Cattlemen’s Association, Stuart Kemp - Livestock Export Association, Mick Burns - Crocodile Farmer, Simon Smith - President Nursery & Garden Industry, Steven Pocock - Australian Agricultural Company, Bob Richards – Humpdy Doo Barramundi).

The updates provided an overarching view of the latest biosecurity developments at the national and state level, as well as snapshots of issues and challenges faced by different industries.

Sarah Corcoran from the Department of Primary Industry and Resources NT presented on plant biosecurity in the NT. Ms Corcoran spoke about the diversity and development opportunities for horticulture export, surveillance and response activities, as well as national cost shared programs such as the banana freckle eradication program.

Dr Kevin de Witte from the Department of Primary Industry and Resources NT government then presented on animal biosecurity in the NT. Dr de Witte spoke about limited resources in the NT and the reliance on good relationships between stakeholders and governments particularly during response activities. He also spoke about various programs the NT are involved in including National Arbovirus monitoring program and the Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow) disease program.

Glenn Schipp from the Department of Primary Industry and Resources NT then spoke about successful eradication activities in NT including black striped mussel and mosquito fish. NT has also



assisted Queensland with white spot syndrome virus response and worked with the Australian government to implement education and testing programs.

Belinda Townend from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, NT, spoke about responses, detections and eradications undertaken in the NT including rubber vine, parthenium discovery and the sagittaria plant response. Ms Townend emphasised the importance of shared responsibility in preventing weed spread.

Dr Yiheys Maru, social science researcher at the CSIRO, talked about the Rural Research and Development for Profit project. His presentation touched on CSIROs modelling for foot and mouth disease, explaining that there are a number of serotypes which we need to be ready for. The project includes four sub-projects:

- Farmer-led partnerships for improved surveillance.
- Rapid diagnostics and vaccination strategy preparedness.
- Decision support tools for use during outbreaks.
- Analytical tools to determine the path of farm-to-farm spread.

The final presentation for the Roundtable was by Josephine Laduzko from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. Ms Laduzko talked about surveillance and reporting in biosecurity, and the need to focus on drivers and incentives for reporting. She also highlighted ongoing challenges for biosecurity including increasingly sophisticated requirements of export receiving countries and resourcing pressures. Key questions considered by participants included:

- How are messages being conveyed, who is delivering them?
- Does messaging resonate with industry? And how can we encourage action before consequences (i.e. market access loss, incursions)?
- How do we build social licence and a 'trusted brand' that is immediately recognisable?

Following the final presentation, Ms Laduzko provided an event wrap-up.

Next steps...

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the NT government would like to thank everyone who participated in the Biosecurity Roundtable in NT for their time and contributions. The discussions and ideas from the Roundtable will feed into the agenda for the National Biosecurity Forum on 2 November 2017 as well as biosecurity governance and communication processes through the NBC and other avenues.

We value your feedback – if you have suggestions about this Roundtable or the Roundtable program please contact us at biosecurityroundtable@agriculture.gov.au.