



## **Victoria Biosecurity Roundtable report**

Thank you for attending the 2017 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable (Roundtable) held in Victoria on 2 May 2017.

This event was hosted by the NBC, together with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Agriculture Victoria. Roundtable events are being held in the capital city of each state/territory in 2017 (ACT combined with NSW).

### **What we heard from industry**

- Community understanding of biosecurity is lacking and a barrier to reporting.
- Harnessing new technologies is part of the solution to deal with increasing complexity within the biosecurity sector.
- It is important to establish a sense of ownership when it comes to biosecurity.
- Emergency plans, surveillance and prevention plans need to be promoted amongst industry to overcome barriers to reporting.
- Better engagement with peri-urban/small landholders would improve on-farm biosecurity.
- Template for preparedness plans that growers can draw on would help uptake.

### **Event summary**

Following the welcome and Acknowledgement of Country, the first session opened with an update from Agriculture Victoria (Beth Jones, Executive Director), the Australian Government (Lyn O'Connell, Deputy Secretary), and an industry representative (Jon Durham, National Fruit Fly Council) who shared a great example of collaboration between industry and government to implement the National Fruit Fly Strategy.

### **Q&A session with government and industry representatives**

Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith (Chief Plant Health Officer, Agriculture Victoria) and Dr Charles Milne (Chief Veterinary Officer, Agriculture Victoria) joined Beth Jones, Lyn O'Connell and Jon Durham on the panel for the Q&A session. A highlight of this session was the discussion on the future applications of technology in biosecurity, and how harnessing new technologies is part of the solution to deal with increasing complexity within the biosecurity sector. Some examples of harnessing new technologies included breeding more resistant plants and animals and developing alternative treatments like vaccinations and bacteria.

### **Industry's role in biosecurity**

This session got participants discussing their roles in biosecurity, where they get biosecurity information from and how they work with government. A number of barriers to good biosecurity practices were identified, including the lack of biosecurity awareness in the community. Some ideas raised to help increase community understanding of biosecurity



included campaigns amongst community and schools. Participants also discussed the benefits of engagement opportunities with government.

### **Industry's role in biosecurity emergency response**

In the next session, Dr Vivian-Smith and Dr Milne shared lessons learnt in recent biosecurity responses and how the approach to preparedness in Victoria is changing based on these lessons. Dr Vivian-Smith highlighted the key role industry plays in identifying affected businesses/properties and sharing information with them. Dr Milne shared his experience with the recent Victorian anthrax outbreak to explain the importance of proper biosecurity measures when moving animals from property to property.

Participants then shared their own lessons learnt and discussed their views on incursions and preparedness. This discussion revealed the importance of establishing a sense of ownership when it comes to biosecurity and that industry members should look out for each other.

### **Workshops: 'Surveillance and reporting' and 'On-farm Biosecurity'**

Participants discussed barriers that may stop people from reporting biosecurity incidents and what could be done to overcome them. One idea discussed was that some community members may not know they need to report and this could be resolved by targeted messaging using a range of communication tools. Additionally, participants suggested that promoting emergency plans, surveillance and prevention plans amongst industry would help overcome barriers to reporting.

During the final session, participants discussed industry and government's responsibilities regarding on-farm biosecurity. Some key suggestions for strengthening on farm biosecurity from this session included engaging with peri-urban/small landholders, and making templates for preparedness plans available to growers.

#### **What's next...?**

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Agriculture Victoria would like to thank everyone who participated in the Regional Biosecurity Roundtable in Victoria for their time and contributions. The discussions and ideas from the Roundtable will feed into the agenda for the National Biosecurity Forum later this year 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 programme please contact us at [biosecurityroundtabl@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:biosecurityroundtabl@agriculture.gov.au).**