



## Western Australia Biosecurity Roundtable report

Thank you for attending the 2017 National Biosecurity Committee (NBC) Biosecurity Roundtable held in Perth, Western Australia (WA) on 18 October 2017.

This event was hosted by the NBC together with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

More than 40 participants attended the roundtable, representing a wide range of organisations including meat and horticulture industries; wildlife, educational, apiary, aquaculture, environmental, research and animal husbandry representatives; and state government.

### What we heard from participants

- The need for data evidence to provide proof of freedom is becoming more important in establishing and maintaining market access.
- There is an increasing challenge around how to resource biosecurity requirements when pathways are growing and becoming more complex.
- Biosecurity is not understood widely and the use of social science in this area may target this gap.

Ms Amber Parr from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources officially welcomed attendees to the Biosecurity Roundtable and provided an Acknowledgement of Country.

Morning presentations began with biosecurity updates from the Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, Harmony Agriculture and Food Company and the Western Australia Biosecurity Council. Ms Mia Carbon (Western Australia) spoke about Biosecurity achievements for 2016/17 including the launch of the WA Biosecurity Strategy and release of the Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-21.

Ms Carbon highlighted that through the formation of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (formerly Departments of Agriculture and Food; Fisheries and Regional Development) there are now more opportunities to strengthen biosecurity including market access and developing more effective industry engagement. Challenges for biosecurity in WA include increasing risk pathways, competition and 'requirement of evidence' (for example proof of freedom of pest and diseases) by trading partners.

Ms Josephine Laduzko (Department of Agriculture and Water Resources) spoke about the importance of shared responsibility and collaboration in the face of increasing passenger, cargo and mail movements; and the growing diversity of supply chains. She gave an overview of recent national investment and activities including implementation of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, the \$200 million allocated to biosecurity under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper, and the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement and Priorities for Australia's Biosecurity System (IGAB) reviews.

Mr Steve Meerwald (Harmony Agriculture and Food Company) spoke about biosecurity industry funding scheme. The scheme allows industry to determine its biosecurity priorities and to raise funds to address biosecurity issues. He explained that the benefits of the scheme include



encouraging collaboration and improving biosecurity amongst industry, and reluctance to contribute funds to the scheme by industry is a challenge.

Mr Kevin Goss (Western Australian Biosecurity Council) spoke about the Council's role providing advice to government on aspects of biosecurity in WA. Mr Goss spoke about the status of biosecurity in WA—one highlight included improvements to agency preparedness and inter-agency collaboration through leadership and training. Other work being done by the Council suggests a contemporary 'one biosecurity' organisation may be the most effective way to meet high level biosecurity requirements.

During the first workshop of the day, 'surveillance and reporting', participants highlighted a number of barriers to reporting. These included a lack of biosecurity knowledge and awareness, fear of potential financial cost and mistrusting government. Participants thought that possible solutions included providing incentives to report (financial or otherwise), using language that is widely understood by the community through education campaigns and investing in easy to report technology such as mobile phone applications.

Dr Marion Seymour (Western Australia) gave a presentation on 'How Western Australia feeds into the national animal health surveillance system' that highlighted the importance of surveillance in biosecurity and the impacts surveillance can have on market access. Dr Seymour spoke about plans to share disease surveillance data nationally to provide strong proof of freedom from pests and diseases to export markets.

Dr Rosalie McCauley (Western Australia) gave a presentation on 'Technology enabled surveillance and intelligence tools'. WA currently utilises identification and reporting tools such as mobile phone applications that comply with national data standards and national pest databanks – again backing up proof of freedom claims. Dr McCauley spoke about successfully encouraging reporting through field days, industry and community events and school programs.

The next workshop 'industry's role in biosecurity' focused on what stops industry members from having biosecurity plans. Participants suggested that barriers to having a plan included being time poor, not having a template to use, financial constraints and finding the process overwhelming. Suggestions on ways to increase the adoption of biosecurity plans included highlighting the increasing market demand, making it part of a business plan or accreditation plan, helping or assisting farmers to develop plans through provision of a template and education sessions.

#### **Next steps...**

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development would like to thank everyone who participated in the Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Biosecurity Roundtable for their time and contributions. The discussions and ideas from the Roundtable fed into the agenda for the National Biosecurity Forum and will feed into other 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](mailto:biosecurityroundtable@agriculture.gov.au)**