

# Statement of Biosecurity Policies and Programs for New South Wales

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This is a statement for the purpose of the Government and Livestock Industry Cost Sharing Deed. It describes biosecurity policies and procedures relevant to prevention and control of emergency animal diseases.

The New South Wales government has a thirteen-point strategy to protect animal populations from transmissible infectious agents.

## **PROVISION OF AN ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL AND ERADICATION SYSTEM**

The NSW government provides an animal health infrastructure through NSW Agriculture, Rural Lands Protection Boards and the Veterinary Surgeon's Board. The lead agency for emergency animal health management is NSW Agriculture<sup>(1)</sup>. The Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the Environment Protection Agency, the Department of Local Government, Safefood NSW, State Forests and the Department of Fisheries support it.

NSW is sub-divided into 48 Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) districts. Each RLPB implements an animal health plan to manage diseases of significance in its region<sup>(2)</sup>. NSW Agriculture and the State Council of RLPBs ensure district animal health plans are consistent with national and state policies<sup>(3)</sup> and that they are adequately resourced.

Along with policy/procedure documents, NSW delivers a broad range of technical and practical information for stakeholders by means of AgFacts and AgNotes, short courses, accredited training, and extension programs<sup>(4)</sup>.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH DISEASE CONTROL MEASURES**

A disease outbreak may result in the NSW government ordering compliance with disease control measures under the Stock Diseases Act (1923) and the Exotic Diseases in Animals Acts (1991). These orders apply to the government's own agencies, including national parks and forests. They underpin control programs for Newcastle disease, footrot, tuberculosis and brucellosis and all notifiable diseases<sup>(6)</sup>. Ovine Johne's disease diagnoses and anthrax incidents regularly test the implementation of disease control measures.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF FERAL ANIMAL CONTROL**

Legislation to require compliance with feral animal control measures in the event of an emergency disease is found in the Rural Lands Protection Act<sup>(5)</sup>.

## **COMPULSORY BIOSECURITY PROCEDURES FOR NSW AGRICULTURE OWNED PROPERTIES**

Policy and procedures apply to the management of animals on all research stations and teaching colleges with particular reference to prevention of importation of disease<sup>(7)</sup>.

## **PREVENTION OF DISEASE TRANSFER IN EFFLUENT/BIOSOLIDS**

The 1997 EPA Environmental Guideline on the Use and Disposal of Biosolids products provide rules for application of human and other effluent to pastures and for withholding periods to minimise the risks of disease transmission.

## **PREVENTION OF DISEASE TRANSMISSION THROUGH FEEDSTUFFS**

Emergency disease prevention is enhanced through enforcement and monitoring of swill feeding laws and laws to control the use of meat meal as a stock food. These are contained in the Stock Diseases Act 1923 and the Stock Foods Act 1940.

## **PREVENTION OF DISEASE TRANSFER IN INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES**

Planning regulations prevent development consents for intensive industries being granted without due management of disease transmission risks<sup>(8)</sup>.

## **MAINTENANCE OF AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE FRAMEWORK**

The risk of emergency disease transmission is minimised by the implementation of a whole-of-government response under the State Emergency Management Act. Within NSW Agriculture there is a comprehensive staff training program<sup>(9)</sup>, competency assessment program<sup>(10)</sup> and teams on stand-by to respond according to AUSVETPLAN<sup>(11)</sup>.

## **EARLY WARNING OF A DISEASE OUTBREAK**

The NSW government provides NSW Agriculture with laboratory resources and funding to ensure any suspect emergency disease is rapidly diagnosed. Risks of system failure are addressed in the annual disease surveillance planning cycle<sup>(12)</sup>.

## **MAXIMUM TRACEABILITY OF INFECTED OR SUSPECT STOCK**

All people moving cattle and pigs are required by law to identify their stock appropriately<sup>(13)</sup>. Monitoring and corrective action is implemented at saleyards and abattoirs. The National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) and National Flock Identification Scheme (NFIS) are being progressively implemented in NSW in line with nationally agreed timetables, underpinned by amended legislation and Government financial support.

## **SURVEILLANCE OF WILDLIFE DISEASES**

The possibility of wildlife silently spreading livestock emergency diseases is minimised by NSW participation in the National Arbovirus Monitoring Program. As well, NSW manages its major zoos under government veterinary supervision and provides a base for the wildlife health information network. NSW Agriculture has procedures for the monitoring of bat lyssaviruses.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY**

Safefood Production NSW is the lead agency ensuring food safety in this State<sup>(14)</sup> and has legislative control over food processing. At present, NSW Health is responsible for food safety on the retail sector, though a recent review<sup>(15)</sup> has recommended that this function be transferred to SafeFood. A memorandum of understanding is being developed between NSW Agriculture and SafeFood with respect to, amongst other things, emergency animal diseases that may present a risk to public health through food.

NSW Agriculture and NSW Health liaise regularly over issues of common interest, including exotic zoonoses, and have closely collaborated during incidents such as Hendra virus and Menangle virus.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

NSW Agriculture uses the National Animal Health System Performance Standards, version 2, to ensure its disease control systems are working and implements corrective actions when necessary.

## **RENATA BROOKS**

### **CHIEF**

### **DIVISION OF ANIMAL INDUSTRIES**

#### References

- 1) See various publications at [www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au) – corporate information.
- 2) Animal health plans for each district are kept at State Council of RLPBs, Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW 2800.
- 3) Animal Industries policy and procedure circulars are available from Program Leader, Health Management, NSW Agriculture, Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW 2800
- 4) See [www.agric.nsw.gov.au](http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au) – animals
- 5) As approved by the national animal health committee (formerly Veterinary Committee).
- 6) All legislation may be viewed at [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)
- 7) NSW Agriculture circular 1999/090 and “Guidelines for Animal Health Policies on NSW Agriculture Research Stations and Colleges”.
- 8) Planning regulations in NSW are established by the environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 administered by Planning NSW.
- 9) Copies available from Program Leader, Health Management, NSW Agriculture, Locked Bag 21, Orange, NSW 2800.