

Statement of Animal Biosecurity Policies and Programs for South Australia

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. ANIMAL DISEASE PREVENTION AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMS	3
2.1 Prevention	3
2.2 Surveillance Programs	4
2.3 Livestock Identification Programs	4
3. ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS	4
4. LEGISLATION	6
5. PUBLIC HEALTH	6
5.1 Food Safety	6
5.2 Surveillance for Zoonotic Pathogens	7
6. ENVIRONMENTAL	7
6.1 Pollution Control	7
6.2 Use of Effluent on Grazing Pastures	8
6.3 Bird Control	8

1. INTRODUCTION

The South Australian Government, through the Department of Primary Industries & Resources (PIRSA), has in place comprehensive biosecurity policies, programs and procedures aimed at maintaining South Australia's freedom from pests and diseases that could adversely impact on trade, public health and food safety, market access, the rural economy and the environment.

The Government maintains infrastructure and provides resources to prevent, detect, manage and respond to serious animal diseases. South Australia also has in place an emergency management framework that ensures an effective whole-of-government response to outbreaks of emergency diseases that have evaded Australia's quarantine barrier or are newly emerged.

Biosecurity programs are underpinned by contemporary legislation which has been assessed against nationally agreed critical success factors, and shown to provide an appropriate range of specific and general legislative measures and powers to deal with prevention, monitoring, control and eradication of pests and diseases, and the management of feral and other pest animals.

Animal biosecurity programs for animal diseases are managed by the Animal Health Group of the Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Division of PIRSA. The Animal Health Group is responsible for the development of policy and the delivery of systems, standards and services to South Australia's agriculture sector, which protect and enhance market access, market development and consumer confidence. The key strategy used by the Animal Health Group in the development and delivery of these services is risk management.

The Group's policies and operational activities are aimed at supporting a sustainable and internationally competitive South Australian agriculture industry.

The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation (WALABIC) has policy interpretation and legislative responsibility for the animals listed under the *Animal and Plant Control (Agricultural Protection and Other Purposes) Act, 1986* and coordinates the implementation of the Government's pest animal management programs. These programs are delivered through the direct management of public and private lands and through the provision of behavioural change programs (extension and enforcement).

Operational management of the parks estate is carried out by the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH).

WALABIC's aim of managing pest animals is to minimise their impact on State's natural assets, its social values and productive capacity of its land and waters. Native species that may at times cause problems on either public or private lands, are managed by DEH and on-ground land managers to the extent needed to meet sustainable land management and biodiversity objectives.

2. ANIMAL DISEASE PREVENTION AND SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMS

2.1 Prevention

Specific emergency disease prevention programs operate in South Australia. The two most important of these involve compliance programs for swill feeding of pigs, and for the TSE-related ruminant feed ban.

Swill Feeding

South Australia has strict legislation prohibiting the feeding to pigs of mammalian-derived material such as food wastes etc. Compliance activities and regular audits are undertaken by field animal health staff in all regions. Awareness and education programs also operate.

Prosecutions are mounted where non-compliance is detected.

Ruminant Feed Ban

Compliance with the ruminant feed ban is an on-going activity of the State's animal health services, demonstrated by extensive and on-going audits.

Recent enhanced levels of activity include:

- (i) *Stock Food Manufacturers, Renderers, Wholesalers and Retailers*
A fact sheet has been sent to all stock food businesses advising of the amended feed ban. An ongoing program of extensive audits of stockfood manufacturers, renderers, wholesalers and retailers has commenced. These entities have been audited and no evidence found of restricted animal materials being incorporated into ruminant feed stuffs or being fed to ruminants. A strategy of improved communication with the stock feed manufacturing industry is under development.

The process of audit is ongoing and the number audited covers all stock feed manufacturers and renderers in South Australia.

- (ii) *End Users*
Feedlots and dairy producers are those most likely to use compounded rations. There are few feedlots in South Australia and most have been audited and were aware of the ruminant feed ban and found to be in compliance with it.

The Dairy Authority of South Australia (DASA) oversees quality assurance programs on most dairy farms and feed ban restrictions are being incorporated into these QA programs. Several dairy producers have also been audited.

2.2 Surveillance Programs

Early detection is essential to ensure the impacts from outbreaks of disease are minimised. PIRSA operates animal health field services, which form part of PIRSA's Food and Fibre Division's core business. PIRSA also contracts the official veterinary laboratory VETLAB to an approved private operator. These services protect and improve market access, market development, and consumer confidence in South Australian food and agriculture.

Disease surveillance programs are delivered by 4 PIRSA field veterinary staff supported by 12 animal health officers. It is planned to increase the number of veterinary staff by 7 with an extra 2 animal health officers by June 2005. Accredited private veterinary practitioners are extensively utilised for the delivery of disease control and surveillance programs. Training courses for practitioners are held with a focus on early detection of disease, and state and national disease reporting and response arrangements.

An electronic recording system known as Primary Industries Information Management System (PIIMS) is being developed to assist with tracing movement of animals and recording disease histories on livestock properties.

2.3 Livestock Identification Programs

Traceability of livestock is fundamental to the integrity of a biosecurity system for the livestock industries.

The South Australian Government is highly committed to electronic information systems, integrated with electronic, whole of life livestock identification and movement recording. All cattle in South Australia must be identified with an approved device before leaving the property for sale for slaughter.

The integrated nature of the pig industry, combined with a legislated requirement that pigs be identified with an official tattoo brand, assists the effective tracing of pigs in South Australia.

The integrity of property identification registers and databases is critical to effective tracing systems. As part of PIIMS, South Australia has commenced a process to remove obsolete, disbanded and otherwise inactive records from the cattle and pig property registers.

3. ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS

The South Australian Government through PIRSA has an excellent emergency management capability developed through it being the hazard custodian for emergency animal and plant disease outbreaks.

A high level of preparedness exists, key elements of which include:

- Detailed pre-agreed response plans are in place to enable an immediate coordinated response to an FMD outbreak. AUSVETPLAN is a coordinated national response plan for the control and eradication of emergency animal diseases such as FMD. AUSVETPLAN comprises a series of strategies for diseases, and a series of operational and management manuals providing a uniform national approach to control and eradication of emergency disease.
- The State of South Australia is a signatory to nationally agreed arrangements to share the costs of an emergency response, thereby ensuring that debate about funding issues does not occur to delay an effective response.
- South Australia has the necessary legislation in place to affect the necessary disease control measures to deal with an outbreak.
- South Australian emergency management arrangements ensure a multi-agency response involving all relevant agencies (such as SES, Police and local government).
- PIRSA animal health staff are trained in emergency animal disease recognition and response:
 - most veterinary staff have attended the AAHL training course on recognition of emergency diseases in animals;
 - all animal health staff participate in training to meet agreed national competency standards in Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness (EADP);
 - many staff have direct experience in handling emergency diseases responses arising from interstate outbreaks of anthrax, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, and FMD(UK);
 - animal health staff are available to immediately investigate any suspicion of an emergency animal disease.
- PIRSA has a strong frontline veterinary diagnostic capability within VETLAB and its contracted laboratory supplier, with the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (Geelong) available for rapid referral of suspect samples for specialised emergency disease diagnosis.
- PIRSA and the Australian Veterinary Association SA Rural Practitioners Branch have pre-agreed employment contracts in place for rapid employment of private veterinary practitioners to assist in an emergency disease response.

4. LEGISLATION

South Australia has comprehensive, contemporary legislation that underpins biosecurity policies, programs and procedures aimed at maintaining freedom from significant pests and diseases.

The *Livestock Act (1997)* provides a broad range of specific and general measures and powers to deal with the prevention, monitoring and eradication of emergency animal diseases. The legislation was reviewed as comprehensively delivering the "16 critical success factors" identified by SCARM as essential to mounting an effective emergency animal disease response. Appropriate powers for search, entry, decontamination, destruction and compensation are provided.

South Australia's emergency management legislation (*State Disaster Act 1980*) aims to ensure that prevention, response and recovery phases of an emergency disease response are organised within a structure that facilitates planning, preparedness, operational coordination and community participation.

The *Animal And Plant Control (Agricultural Protection And Other Purposes) Act 1994* provides a range of general and specific measures to control the impact of the rabbit, fox, wild dog, feral pig, feral goat and feral deer on agriculture and the environment.

5. PUBLIC HEALTH

5.1 Food Safety

Under the *Meat Hygiene Act 1994*, the Minister, through PIRSA, must ensure meat processors operate to approved processing programs that ensure South Australian meat products are wholesome and safe. Abattoirs, slaughterhouses, poultry processors, pet meat processors, smallgoods manufacturers, wholesale & boning operations, transport & storage, game meat processing and wholesale meat processing are accredited under the Act.

A significant proportion of the revenue from accreditation fees is used to fund PIRSA operations in respect of the Act.

PIRSA's Meat Hygiene Unit has worked extensively with industry to ensure that all sectors of the industry comply with relevant Australian standards pertaining to meat hygiene, including ante and post mortem inspection.

The Minister through PIRSA contracts an external 3rd party auditor to audit accredited operators' approved HACCP-based quality assurance programs meet Australian standards.

5.2 Surveillance for Zoonotic Pathogens

Arrangements exist between PIRSA and the Communicable Disease Control Branch of the Department of Human Services for medical practitioners to arrange for bats to be submitted to the State veterinary laboratory whenever an incident occurs where a person is bitten or scratched by a bat.

PIRSA also has arrangements with the SA museum for sick bats and bats found dead to be submitted for laboratory examination. Private veterinarians are also in a similar cooperative arrangement through key AVA wildlife practitioner contacts.

PIRSA has arranged to receive advice through the Department of Environment and Heritage when bat surveys are being undertaken so that bats can be screened where available.

Bats submitted are tested for lyssa virus as well as the major known animal pathogens.

Flying foxes are not resident in South Australia except for some very small transient colonies of the little red flying fox in the South East. There are some captive flying foxes, which have either been tested for Hendra (and lyssa) virus or they are under quarantine. Due to the absence of flying foxes in South Australia, advice is not provided to industry on Hendra virus or Menangle virus except on request.

Information on zoonotic pathogens in animals in South Australia is largely derived from the aggregation of passive data collected from diagnostic samples submitted to the veterinary diagnostic laboratory in Adelaide. Some information is also obtained from the Salmonella Reference Laboratory managed by IMVS and from the Communicable Disease Control Branch of the Department of Human Services.

Currently there is no targeted surveillance for zoonotic pathogens in any animal group – companion, livestock, feral or wildlife.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL

6.1 Pollution Control

South Australia has extensive requirements under planning requirements where pollution of the environment may be a risk. While local government is the prime organisation regulating planning, they work to guidelines developed by government and industry to prevent pollution resulting from intensive animal keeping. For instance there are published documents on the development of beef cattle feedlots and intensive piggeries and a web site, that provides advice to potential developers as to planning guidelines.

As with planning regulations, the guidelines address the risk of environmental pollution affecting third parties such as neighbouring houses, parks or townships.

PIRSA is currently concluding a National Heritage Trust project that will detail all aspects of the spreading of agricultural wastes in an environmentally sustainable manner.

6.2 Use of Effluent on Grazing Pastures

This is controlled by the *Livestock Act 1997* under the section relating to the "Feeding of products that may cause livestock to become affected with a notifiable condition" and a further general prohibition on the feeding of faeces (including human) to livestock.

This has been used to control use of human sewage effluent through permits but there have been no requests for the use of night soils.

6.3 Bird Control

No specific control or prevention program is in place for bird control other than input to planning applications where assistance or advice is requested and general advice to producers.