

AHA Strategic Plan 2020–2025

**FIVE YEARS OF
IMPACT AND INNOVATION**



© Australian Animal Health Council Ltd 2025
ACN 071 890 956

PO Box 998, Dickson ACT 2602
+61 2 6232 5522
aha@animalhealthaustralia.com.au
animalhealthaustralia.com.au

Design by Animal Health Australia

Photography All images are from Animal Health Australia or AgriShots unless credited otherwise

 AnimalHealthAustralia

 animalhealthAUS

 Animal Health Australia



Contents

Celebrating success, shaping the future: 2020-2025	2
Journey from 2020–2025: Strengthening Australia’s biosecurity future	3
Navigating complexity and change	6
Insights driving our next chapter	7
Strategic Priority 1: Prepared and ready to respond	8
Strategic Priority 2: Better health and biosecurity practices	12
Strategic Priority 3: Connecting systems for stronger biosecurity	16
From 2020–2025 to 2025–2030: Evolving with purpose	20

Celebrating success, shaping the future: 2020–2025

Over the past five years, Animal Health Australia (AHA) has worked shoulder-to-shoulder with its members to deliver on the goals set out in the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan. Built around three key priorities — prepared and ready to respond, promoting better health and biosecurity practices, and connecting systems for a stronger, more unified biosecurity network — this plan guided our efforts through some of the most eventful years in recent memory.

While we started with a solid strategy and clear direction, none of us could have predicted the level of disruption that was just around the corner. The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped how we work and connect. At the same time, we faced significant biosecurity challenges, including outbreaks of avian influenza, as well as the looming threats of lumpy skin disease (LSD) and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

Despite it all, the results speak for themselves: in collaboration with our members, we stayed the course, adapted when necessary, and made significant progress across all three strategic priorities. The collaboration and commitment from our members and stakeholders were the cornerstone of our collective success.

To track our progress, we established a simple but effective monitoring and evaluation framework in 2020.

While its main purpose was to keep us accountable and learning as we went, it also helped us tell the story of our journey — celebrating the wins and understanding the challenges.

Over the five years, we checked in regularly on how things were going — internally, through our Annual Reflections Workshop, and externally, via our Annual Reports and engagement with our members. Whether we hit the mark, went above and beyond, or identified areas that needed a rethink, we approached everything with a mindset of transparency and continuous improvement.

This final report looks back on the whole five-year period and captures the big picture: what we set out to do, what we achieved, what we learned, and how far we've come. It's a celebration of a shared journey — and a springboard into the 2025–30 Strategic Plan.



Journey from 2020–2025: Strengthening Australia's biosecurity future

Working closely with our members, AHA delivered important outcomes that helped strengthen the animal health and biosecurity system.

2020–21

Collaboration and adaptability

- Successful avian influenza eradication supported by Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN).
- Published EADRA Version 21 and welcomed a new signatory - Australian Duck Meat Association.
- Conducted Exercise Argonaut to strengthen emergency animal disease (EAD) response readiness.
- Delivered Trust in Australian Wool campaign with WoolProducers Australia (WPA).
- Co-led development of National Animal Health Surveillance Plan 2020–25.
- Developed a virtual reality sheep carcass tool with the SA Government.
- In conjunction with the Australian Government, delivered the inaugural *Animal Health in Australia System Report*.
- Hosted virtual Animal Biosecurity RD&E Showcase with 100+ participants.

2021–22

Strengthening preparedness and partnerships

- Delivered national EAD and surveillance response exercises (Razorback, Gammalite, Tiliqua).
- Launched ParaBoss digital platform with industry and university partners.
- Joined the National Biosecurity Strategy writing group, helping drive momentum.
- Released updated National Pork Biosecurity Manual.
- Co-hosted 2nd Australian Biosecurity Symposium and launched the Decade of Biosecurity.

2022–23

Building capability and systems

- Commenced EADRA five-year review and released new guidance document.
- Published EADRA Version 22 with new intellectual property clause.
- Launched AUSVETPLAN Edition 5.
- AUSVETPLAN team delivered Exercise Lumpy Skin Disease 2.
- Delivered 25 training workshops for EAD response roles.
- Released Farm Biosecurity Strategy 2022–25.
- Completed key projects: Sheep Pneumonia Survey, Goat Pain Relief Review, and Northern Beef Biosecurity.
- Delivered two identification workshops for Australian entomologists: screw-worm fly and *Culicoides* species (biting midges).

2023–24

Responding, leading and learning

- Endorsed the EADRA five-year review report and commenced implementation of recommendations.
- Published EADRA Version 23 including new hyperlinks to improve navigation.
- Activated EADRA for three avian influenza responses.
- AUSVETPLAN team delivered Exercise Milky Way.
- Renewed the National Biosecurity Response Team (NBRT) program for four years.
- Launched Liaison Livestock Industry (LLI) e-learning course and contributed to National Biosecurity Training Hub.
- Renewed offshore FMD vaccine bank contract.
- Inspected 12 million sheep under the National Sheep Health Monitoring Project.
- Updated the Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook.
- Improved animal health data standards.

2024–25

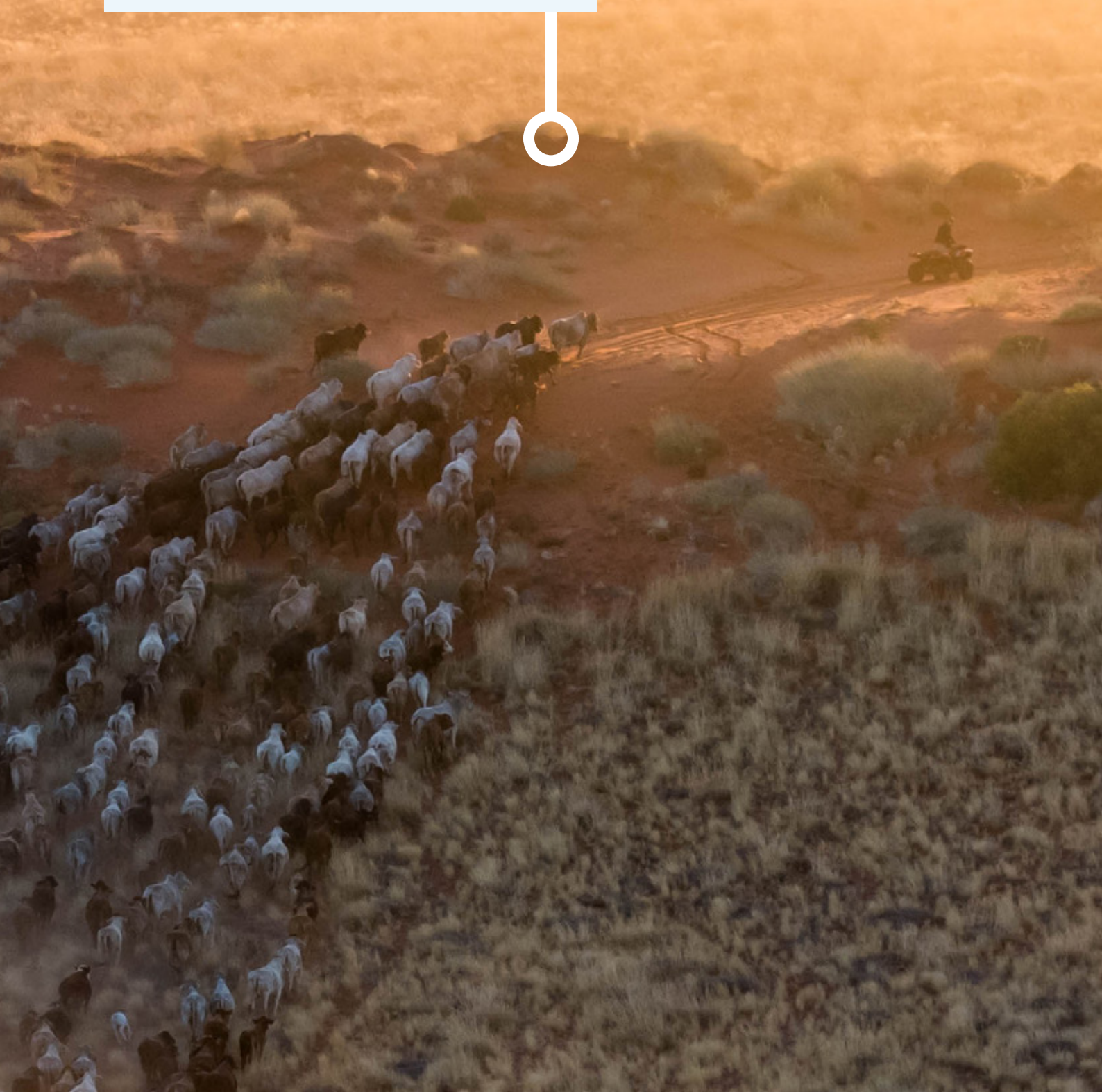
Preparing for the future

- Published EADRA Version 24 and new Transition to Management guidance document.
- Delivered Exercise Audiatur with the Victorian Government.
- AUSVETPLAN strategic planning meeting held to discuss AUSVETPLAN-related issues and agree on the direction for 2025–2030.
- Supported a new NBRT cohort with induction and training.
- Supported the development of a key for identification of female *Culicoides* species – the first in the southern hemisphere.
- Completed National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) five-year review.
- Integrated the Fit to Lamb database into the Endemic Disease Information System.
- Continued collaboration on the development of a new Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.
- Partnered again with the 3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium and the first Biosecurity Youth Summit.

ALL YEARS

- Delivered *Animal Health Surveillance Quarterly*, *Animal Health in Australia* and *NAMP Annual Report* to support market access.
- Updated AUSVETPLAN manuals informed by risk assessment.
- Delivered annual continuing education roadshows and quarterly histopathology testing for animal pathologists.
- Supported the Commonwealth with trade delegations.

Together, these achievements have strengthened Australia's animal health and biosecurity system, enhanced member capability, and laid the foundation for the next chapter of the AHA Strategic Plan 2025–2030.



Navigating complexity and change

While the period from 2020 to 2025 was marked by success, it also tested AHA's resilience and agility, reinforcing the importance of collaboration and forward thinking in an evolving biosecurity landscape.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The pandemic transformed how we operate, requiring rapid adaptation to ensure strategic priorities continued to be delivered.

MULTIPLE EAD RESPONSES

Frequent biosecurity emergencies, including avian influenza outbreaks across multiple jurisdictions, tested our capacity while reinforcing national coordination.

CONTRACTING INVESTMENT

In the face of limited funding and competing member and partner priorities, AHA responded with innovative strategies to achieve meaningful outcomes despite resource constraints.

GLOBAL TRENDS

Sustainability, international partnerships, trade growth, alternative protein and fibre products, and rapid technology advances demanded that AHA remain agile in a rapidly evolving biosecurity landscape.

SHIFTING CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

Growing demand for ethically produced and sustainable animal products required that AHA and its members remain responsive to these changing expectations.

CHANGING CLIMATE AND NATURAL DISASTERS

As climate variability and extreme weather events intensify, new risks to livestock biosecurity are emerging. AHA is proactively strengthening its preparedness, resilience, and adaptive strategies to meet these evolving challenges.

While these challenges persist, AHA is well-positioned to advance a national biosecurity system that supports the success of Australian agriculture at home and overseas.



Insights driving our next chapter

The past five years have provided valuable lessons and insights that are guiding AHA's work into the next Strategic Plan. These learnings help us adapt, collaborate and continue delivering real value to our members while strengthening Australia's biosecurity system.

2020–25 Lessons and insights



Trusted response partner: AHA plays a key role in national EAD responses, which was not clearly reflected in the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan. The 2025–2030 Plan better recognises and measures this important contribution.



Collaboration in action: Collaborative efforts continue to be highly valuable, contributing positively to AHA's outcomes and strengthening the broader biosecurity system.



Laying the digital groundwork: Building a future-ready national animal health database takes time, collaboration, and clear direction. The work done so far lays a strong foundation for designing a system that's flexible, sustainable, and built to meet the evolving needs of the sector.



Growing through change: The pace of change and disruption impacted planned activities, but also strengthened AHA's ability to adapt, respond and find new opportunities.



Value that delivers: While familiar approaches can feel safe, it is important for AHA to regularly assess activities to ensure they deliver real value to members.



Connection with purpose: Tailored, timely communication remains critically important for AHA to meet the needs of its members and partners, ensuring project deliverables can be achieved.



Influence through partnerships: The practice of sustained influence and persistence by AHA has helped generate positive outcomes/progress.



Honest dialogue, real progress: Open, honest — and sometimes tough — conversations with members and partners are vital to making progress toward shared goals.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Prepared and ready to respond

Between 2020 and 2025, AHA made significant progress in strengthening Australia's ability to detect and respond to EAD outbreaks.

Efforts focused on maintaining national response arrangements, including the EADRA and AUSVETPLAN; enhancing emergency disease preparedness and response; conducting surveillance activities; supporting diagnostics; enabling early disease detection; and contributing to policy development.

1. EADRA proves its value during emergency animal disease responses

Over the last five years, the EADRA has demonstrated its enduring value as a cornerstone of Australia's biosecurity system. It has been activated to cost-share and coordinate national arrangements for emergency responses to several separate detections of H7 subtypes of highly pathogenic avian influenza. In each instance, the EADRA enabled a rapid, collaborative and effective response, reinforcing its critical role in Australia's EAD response system.

In March 2021, the Australian Duck Meat Association (ADMA) became an EADRA signatory. Representing a small but growing sector, ADMA's proactive commitment to emergency preparedness sets a strong precedent for other small or emerging industries.

Throughout the strategic plan period, AHA has worked to maintain the integrity and relevance of the EADRA. This included facilitating four revisions of the Deed, with all Parties signing off; completing the fourth five-year review of the Deed; and leading efforts to implement review recommendations to ensure the Deed remains nationally supported, contemporary, and legally binding.



2. AUSVETPLAN enters a new era

The past five years have marked a significant chapter in AUSVETPLAN's history, with a refreshed management approach and an increase in cross-sectoral collaboration. During this time, Australia's suite of government- and industry-endorsed, evidence-based EAD policy resources has guided decision-making and underpinned nationally agreed, cost-shared response plans for avian influenza, as well as provided important information for EAD response preparedness.

Since 2020, more than 30 manuals have been reviewed, updated or newly published, including multiple updates to manuals for high-priority diseases such as FMD, LSD, African swine fever and avian influenza.

The three key operational manuals for *Destruction of animals*, *Disposal*, and *Decontamination* have all undergone major revision since 2023. Lessons learned from the recent responses to high pathogenicity avian influenza have been incorporated into extensive updates to the AUSVETPLAN *Response strategy: Avian influenza*.



The AUSVETPLAN Technical Review Group meet regularly to discuss and prioritise AUSVETPLAN manual reviews.

3. Emergency animal disease training builds response capability

AHA has planned and delivered numerous training workshops and exercises to test national response arrangements and enhance the capability of responders, cementing itself as a leader in developing and providing EAD response training.

Over 30 Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (CCEAD), National Management Group, LLI, NBRT and other EAD training courses have been held over the past five years, helping to improve member understanding of the purpose and function of national EAD response roles and national arrangements.

AHA has also assisted or taken a lead role in organising a number of training exercises to help build response capability and preparedness. Examples include Exercise Argonaut, which brought

“ Fab event! A great way to connect with industry, govt and AHA as well as learn about this critical topic. ”

– CCEAD participant



together 33 representatives from the wool industry and government agencies virtually to explore wool-related EAD response roles and responsibilities, and Exercise Gammalite, where 60 participants from national horse industry organisations, state jurisdictions and the Commonwealth responded to a theoretical outbreak of equine influenza. In November 2022, AHA led Exercise Lumpy Skin Disease 2 (Exercise LSD2), bringing together 28 participants from government and cattle industries to test four elements of the AUSVETPLAN *Response strategy: Lumpy skin disease*. The following year, 48 government and industry participants and observers took part in Exercise Milky Way, testing the AUSVETPLAN *Response strategy: Food-and-mouth disease* movement controls that would apply to milk movements in an FMD response.

Contemporary training resources have also been developed to help members and partners access information to effectively perform their roles in an EAD response. In May 2024, AHA launched the LLI online learning course to support emergency response capability. This course is used as prerequisite training for LLI workshops, a general awareness tool for industry, and as a just-in-time resource for deployed LLI representatives.



Building a biosecurity ready workforce - government staff participate in the NBRT Cadet workshops in February 2023.

4. Driving a national force for biosecurity emergencies

The NBRT is a pivotal component of Australia's biosecurity preparedness and response framework. The aim of the 2020-2024 program was to develop and maintain a pool of response-ready personnel across Australia that could be accessed by a jurisdiction's biosecurity agency when responding to a biosecurity incident, with the 2024-2028 program focus shifting to building a skilled, cross-sectoral national workforce for biosecurity emergencies across different sectors by providing professional development opportunities to government response staff.

Over the past five years, AHA has hosted over 25 training activities across a range of biosecurity functions and incident management roles, offering NBRT members the chance to learn new response skills, practice in a safe environment, and build invaluable networks with colleagues from across the country as part of their deployment or involvement in professional development activities.

AHA project managed two NBRT arrangement periods prior to 2020. At the conclusion of the 2020-2024 arrangement, a successful review and evaluation resulted in additional National Biosecurity Committee funding to support the program into the 2024-28 arrangement period. Major recruitment rounds at the start of each period resulted in up to 70 new cross-sectoral response personnel being inducted onto the NBRT.

The launch of the NBRT Cadet Project was a key initiative delivered by AHA during the 2020-25 period, aimed at building response capacity among emerging biosecurity professionals. Designed to support foundational staff and complement the broader NBRT initiative, the program helped expand Australia's pool of trained personnel—creating a more agile and resilient emergency response workforce.



“

I appreciate all the hard work behind the scenes that have provided us all with the opportunities, networking and support through the NBRT.”

– NBRT member

”



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Better health and biosecurity practices



Key focus areas included strengthening on-farm and supply chain biosecurity, supporting positive animal health and welfare outcomes, delivering extension activities, advancing antimicrobial stewardship, applying a One Health approach, contributing to policy development, and interpreting data to inform better decision-making.

1. Boosting global trust in Australian wool

In 2021, WPA and AHA launched the Trust in Australian Wool campaign to share knowledge about the wool industry for the benefit of all. Australia produces some of the world's finest wool, prized for use in high-end apparel and luxury garments, and sought after globally for its exceptional quality. It is also produced with some of the world's best quality assurance, biosecurity, and traceability systems.

The campaign was a resounding success. It included the rollout of a range of digital assets, including a dedicated website, social media channels, and a handbook, which was also translated into several other languages, making it easier than ever to showcase and promote trust in Australian wool.





I have had many conversations with overseas colleagues, particularly from Europe and South Africa, where we are envied for having an organisation such as AHA at our side, supporting the voice of livestock production industries and providing the conduit between our livestock industries and governments to collaborate and invest in animal health, welfare and biosecurity initiatives. We need to be proud that AHA exists and ensure we continue to maximise on its services... undertaking our Trust in Australian Wool campaign this year is just one of the successful examples of this.

Jo Hall
WPA CEO



Owen and Brigid Price pictured receiving the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year Award from ex-Minister for Agriculture, Murray Watt, at the awards ceremony.

2. Driving awareness of farm biosecurity

The Farm Biosecurity Program has seen a productive five years, with key biosecurity resources updated and new initiatives underway. The Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook was refreshed for the first time in 13 years, a new National Ratite Biosecurity Manual was finalised, and a new Mosquito Management for Piggeries Manual was published, alongside an updated National Pork Biosecurity Manual.

Several biosecurity champions have been recognised through the program's sponsorship of the Farm Biosecurity Producer of the Year awards at the annual Australian Biosecurity Awards. Messaging on the importance of biosecurity has also been shared through regular editions of the Farm Biosecurity newsletter, the Farm Biosecurity website and through the launch of National Biosecurity Week in 2024, which is now held in August each year.

3. ParaBoss Phase 3 takes parasite control to the next level

ParaBoss is the national authority for sheep, goat and cattle parasite control in Australia, providing information on parasites and their control through its suite of products – WormBoss, FlyBoss, LiceBoss and TickBoss. The program is owned by Australian Wool Innovation, Meat & Livestock Australia, and the University of New England, with contributions from AHA.

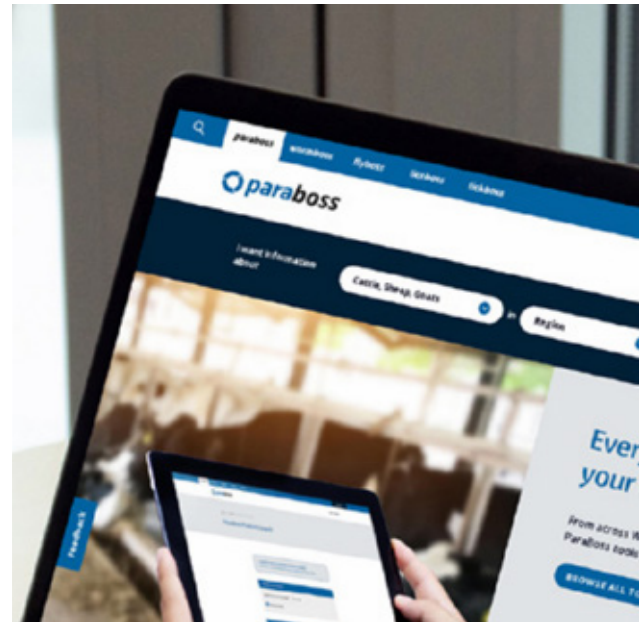
Phase 3 of the ParaBoss program (2021–2024) introduced a new, producer-friendly website that consolidated content from eight separate sites, making information easier to access and providing improved regional details. This phase also included an extension program featuring face-to-face workshops and a series of webinars specifically tailored for producers.

The program achieved impressive reach and resonated strongly with producers. Twenty-five webinars were held, with more than 2,300 attendees. Twenty-five newsletters were published and received 41,500 opens by the end of the phase.



**A goat webinar with some substance!
Good to see actual research synthesised and consideration into translational commentary for producers. There's a need for deep dive seminars for producers.**

– Producer feedback



4. Working in partnership with Indigenous producer groups

As part of the Northern Breeding Business (NB2) Strategic RDE&A Partnership, AHA partnered with Meat & Livestock Australia and the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation to upskill Indigenous property managers and staff working in cattle production, including biosecurity and EAD awareness.

The project developed innovative, immersive digital communication tools to support on-country learning and promote the adoption of biosecurity practices, in an effort to help maximise production outcomes for the northern breeder herd.

The project was a success, reinforcing the value of collaborative, co-designed initiatives.



Participants of NB2 Workshop at Calton Hills, near Mt Isa in November 2024.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Connecting systems for stronger biosecurity



AHA concentrated on delivering cross-sectoral outcomes that improved regional, state and national biosecurity systems, contributing to the protection of markets and the identification of new opportunities.

Priority areas included engaging across sectors; leveraging AHA's unique role to provide a whole-of-system perspective; leading the biosecurity collective, strengthening surveillance, traceability, and biosecurity arrangements; fostering greater integration between animal, plant, and environmental systems; advancing data and risk analysis; and contributing to policy development.

1. Supporting market access through key surveillance programs

Over the past five years, AHA has worked closely with its members to protect Australia's livestock from exotic animal diseases and safeguard market access. At the heart of this work is robust animal health surveillance, which enables the rapid detection of disease incursions and the production of trusted national reports to substantiate Australia's animal health status.

AHA led several important surveillance initiatives throughout 2020-25, including the development of the new National Animal Health Surveillance Plan 2020-2025 in conjunction with the Australian Government and the Animal Health Committee. This major undertaking aimed to transform how we approach surveillance nationally.



Twenty participants from across Australia came together in Orange, NSW to focus on the identification of *Culicoides* species biting midges, as part of NAMP.



Entomologists associated with the Screw Worm Fly Surveillance and Preparedness Program and NAMP were trained how to identify key insect vectors. NAMP also supported two overseas trade delegations reviewing bluetongue virus control in Australia.

In consultation with Members, AHA led a substantial upgrade of the data reporting projects that underpin several national animal health surveillance programs, including reporting on national notifiable diseases of terrestrial animals. This has led to more streamlined and standardised reporting, which reflects contemporary trade requirements.

AHA also managed the transformation of the *Animal Health in Australia* report. These reliable reports underpin sound policy, informed decision-making, and international trade by providing clear, evidence-based proof of Australia's animal health status.

2. Australian Biosecurity Symposium drives collective action on biosecurity threats

Building on the momentum achieved at the first Australian Biosecurity Symposium in 2019, the second and third symposia (in 2022 and 2024, respectively) saw more than 400 delegates come together at each event to help build a stronger biosecurity system.

Hosted by AHA, the Invasive Species Council, the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions and Plant Health Australia, the events brought together stakeholders from across the community, industry, government and business within a range of sectors, such as animal, plant, invasives and aquatics, to discuss the direction of Australia's biosecurity system towards 2030.

At the 2024 Symposium, AHA partnered with the Queensland Government to deliver the first Youth Biosecurity Summit. Nearly 40 Year 10 high school students from across Queensland were funded to attend the event, helping to ensure the next generation of agricultural leaders understand the importance of biosecurity to Australia's economy, environment and way of life.

This was by far the best conference I have attended. It was not only inspiring but also thought provoking.

– 2024 Delegate.



Costa Georgiadis, MC of the Australian Biosecurity Symposium, addresses over 400 participants at the 2024 event.



3. Driving member engagement and collaboration

Through strong collaboration with its members and partners, AHA has made meaningful progress in strengthening the animal health and biosecurity system over the last five years.

To drive this collaboration, AHA strengthened its member engagement, providing members with greater opportunities to be informed about and discuss key animal health and biosecurity issues. In particular, AHA revitalised its Member Engagement Weeks to ensure members could engage in robust conversations for the betterment of the biosecurity system.

Through dedicated Industry, Member and Government Forums, AHA has provided a platform for stakeholders to come together and have open, collegiate, challenging and wide-ranging discussions about biosecurity and animal health matters.



AHA members showing up in full force for Member Engagement Week.

Attendance has been invaluable. It not only allows us to meet with other members, but it enables us to meet with other poultry signatories to have key discussions. The funding lets us have a voice at Industry and Member forums and allows us to meet with AHA staff and talk about key issues impacting our sector.

*Melinda Hashimoto
Egg Farmers of Australia CEO*

4. Australia launches first National Biosecurity Strategy

The release of Australia's first National Biosecurity Strategy by Minister Watt completed the first step of the Biosecurity Collective's five-point plan, and AHA was pleased to play a major role in the development of this strategy as part of the writing group and consultation processes.

The release of the strategy in 2022 was a big step towards ensuring the biosecurity system is optimised, particularly as several large-scale pest and disease threats with viable transmission pathways are close to Australia's border.

The strategy will guide the work of government, industry and community for the next decade and beyond.





From 2020–2025 to 2025–2030: Evolving with purpose

As we close the chapter on the AHA 2020–2025 Strategic Plan, we recognise the challenges faced, the achievements made, and the lessons learned.

Each has shaped the development of our new Strategic Plan 2025–2030 — strengthening our focus, partnerships and commitment to delivering value for our members and safeguarding Australia’s animal health and biosecurity system.



Strategic Plan

2025-2030





© Australian Animal Health Council Ltd 2025

ACN 071 890 956

PO Box 998, Dickson ACT 2602

+61 2 6232 5522

aha@animalhealthaustralia.com.au

animalhealthaustralia.com.au