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Decade of Biosecurity Bulletin
July 2023

Welcome to the July 2023 edition of the Decade of Biosecurity Bulletin.

In this edition we check in on the NSW varroa mite response 12 months on, the feral pig eradication efforts on Kangaroo Island and congratulate the winners of the Froggatt Awards 2022. We also share plenty of great resources including some to get the kids in your life involved in biosecurity!

Thanks to all the project partners who have contributed to this bumper edition!

It has been a busy couple of months and progress has been made on a number of important initiatives under the Decade of Biosecurity including:

- seeking support for the creation of a Parliamentary Friends group for Biosecurity;
- gathering support for the creation of a national biosecurity week
- progressing the biosecurity champions and ambassadors program; and
- pursuing project partners, leads and investors.

We continue to seek further investors, leads and partners to deliver these projects that will transform and strengthen the national biosecurity system. Please get in touch to explore opportunities to be involved: hello@biosecurity2030.org.au

Towards the end of August 2023 I plan to attend the Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital symposium in New Zealand to learn more about their national Ko Tātou, This Is Us program and the Biosecurity Business Pledge system New Zealand have established. I look forward to bringing these lessons back to Australia and seeing how these can be reflected in the Decade of Biosecurity.

Let’s continue to work together to transform our system and protect our future.

Emily Mellor
Coordinator, Decade of Biosecurity

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12 months on, Varroa response is going strong

On 22 June 2022 in a sentinel hive in Newcastle NSW Department of Primary Industries confirmed the first ever NSW detection of the invasive honeybee parasite Varroa destructor, known as Varroa mite. A National Emergency Response was stood up within days, one of the largest biosecurity responses Australia has ever experienced.

One year on, the world leading response continues to have strong support from industry and all government jurisdictions to keep on fighting to save Australia's beekeeping and pollination reliant industries.

The collaborative multi-agency response has involved an estimated 2,148 staff from NSW Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services, NSW Rural Fire Service, industry groups, beekeepers and volunteers who collectively have contributed more than 451,000 hours towards fighting the Varroa mite.

Over the course of the first year, response teams have tested more 130,000 beehives, taken over 10,000 calls for assistance, hosted and attended almost 100 community meetings and distributed $19.7 million in reimbursement costs.

The goal of the Varroa mite National Emergency Response is full eradication of the mite and the job is far from over. However, this Response so far has achieved more than any other country in the world impacted by this devastating pest.

To find out more about the Varroa mite response go to dpi.nsw.gov.au/varroa

Want to learn more about how to protect your hives?

Visit BeeAware, a hub of information for beekeepers and growers about honey bee biosecurity, including an online learning course that commercial beekeeper with over 50 hives can register for.

Online biosecurity course for beekeepers

Biosecurity win on Kangaroo Island

Disaster sowed the seeds of opportunity on Kangaroo Island after the 2019-20 bushfires, with the resulting reduced feral pigs numbers opening the door to a winning approach to eradication.

Led by the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), the project has been a highly successful collaboration between PIRSA, the Kangaroo Island Landscape Board, farmers, landholders, National Parks and Wildlife Service, and other local stakeholders.

So successful, in fact, that in April the project received a 2022 Australian Biosecurity Award and as of 30 June 2023 only two boars are known to remain at large.

Project lead Matt Korcz, PIRSA's Kangaroo Island Feral Pig Control Coordinator, said that the devastating fires reduced feral pig numbers from around 5,000 to fewer than 1,000.

"With a decimated population and the fires creating a much more accessible landscape, a unique opportunity appeared to work efficiently to eradicate them," said Matt.

"We set up Australia's largest network of AI 4G cameras to detect pigs and alert the team in real time and used a combination of thermal-assisted aerial culling (TAAC), baiting, trapping and ground shooting.

"With the 2023 TAAC now complete, 56,080 kilometres have been flown over Kangaroo Island, equivalent to 1.4 times the circumference of the earth.

"Thanks to all involved and their incredible collaboration to get the job done, we've killed a total of 875 feral pigs since the program began in September 2020, with the final two firmly in our sights."

The project has been funded through the South Australian and Australian Government National Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and Local Economic Recovery Program.

Kangaroo Island's Feral Pig Control Team with SA Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development Clare Scriven, and PIRSA Executive Director Biosecurity SA, Nathan Rhodes

2022 Froggatt Awards Announced

Quite often biosecurity heroes fly under the radar. That's why the Invasive Species Council established the annual Froggatt Awards to recognise the outstanding efforts of people on the frontline of invasive species management or making a big difference in other ways.

Congratulations to our 2022 Froggatt Award winners – Friends of the Fitzroy and Steve Taylor!

Like many of Australia's most disastrous weeds, the flowers of the rubbervine are annoyingly pretty – flashy striking white flowers to lure pollinators to spread its seed.

But that didn't deter Friends of the Fitzroy. They found an innovative way to exploit the weed's big, beautiful flowers, ultimately leading to its near eradication from the Fitzroy River in WA.

Friends of the Fitzroy aren't the only ones innovating their way out of a weed-filled future, though.

Back in 2009, Steve Taylor from the ACT Parks and Conservation Service realised that poor mapping was one of the main reasons plant control projects failed. Work

went unrecorded, paper maps were lost, errors sprouted up as data was processed and stored.

So, as manager for the Invasive Plants Control Program, Steve set about fixing this mess.

Usually, tireless efforts like those of Steve Taylor and Friends of the Fitzroy pass by under the radar. But it is these sustained, community efforts that turn the tide against the continental-level damage wrought by invasive species.

Read more about their stories or find out more about the awards here.

Steve Taylor and Friends of the Fitzroy - 2022 Froggatt Award winners

Minjerribah fire ant detection

The Decade of Biosecurity is about active engaging all Australians to play their part in our biosecurity system including actively looking for pests and diseases and reporting anything unusual.

That is why we love this story about Lawrie McGrath, a local resident and oyster farmer on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) who recognised an unusual ant nest and alerted the National Fire Ant Eradication Program who partnered with the rangers from Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) and conducted an extensive fire ant surveillance and treatment of the area.

Thanks to Lawrie, QYAC and the island residents for being true biosecurity champions working to protect the island and the rest of Australia from fire ants.

Video credits: Biosecurity Queensland

Fire ants could devastate our environment, economy and the outdoor way of life we know and love. Together we can eradicate them and protect our Australian lifestyle.

The National Fire Ant Eradication Program website has loads of fantastic resources to educate the community on how to recognise and response to fire ants including online learning courses to support general residents, community groups, tradespeople who work outdoors, school staff and primary producers in learning more about fire ants and how to manage them. While you are there subscribe to Fire Ant News to keep informed.

DoB Steering Committee member flying the flag at international workshop

The draft International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPMs) and draft recommendations of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM), including the much-anticipated recommendation 6 (Sea Containers R-06), has been released for consultation.

Decade of Biosecurity Steering Committee member and General Manager, Trade Policy & Operations for the Freight and Trade Alliance, Sal Milici, had the privilege of representing the views of the Global Shippers Forum (GSF) as the Chair of the GSF Container Cleanliness Working Group at the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) International workshop on Pest risk mitigation of sea containers and their cargoes and the facilitation of international trade held in Brisbane on 17 - 19 July 2023.

In response to overwhelming feedback from GSF, Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) and Australian Peak Shippers Australia (APSA) members, the key recommendations include:

- custodial responsibility be extended to all parties in the supply chain, including carriage by sea, even where the risk of contamination is low;
- general support for the principles set out in the Safeguarding Continuum concept;
- avoid creating additional bureaucratic processes without real benefits to National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) and industry;
- explore incentives to reward highly compliant supply chains;
- stakeholders dependent on manual labour need to provide individuals the means, skills, authority and facilities to comply;
- any new and expanded responsibilities require a focused “informed compliance” program with guides, awareness and training tools;
- stakeholders utilising automated facilities should embrace existing and emerging technologies to comply; and
- aim for global standards to avoid / minimise a myriad of global compliance regimes.

Other recommendations include the need for further clarity around who will oversee and manage these processes, the role (or roles) NPPOs will play and details of any obligations, liabilities and sanctions.

The key to meaningful reform is extensive industry consultation across all stakeholder groups and you are encouraged to access the draft measures and provide your feedback through your NPPO.

The draft measures can be accessed here along with further information on how to submit your feedback. Consultation is open until 30 September 2023.

Presentations from the IPPC Brisbane workshop can be accessed here.

Nominations open for Tasmania's inaugural Biosecurity Awards

This year Biosecurity Tasmania is hosting the inaugural Tasmanian Biosecurity Awards. The awards will recognise individuals, groups and organisations that have shown a strong commitment to supporting and promoting biosecurity in Tasmania, and the systems that underpin Tasmanian biosecurity. This is an opportunity to recognise those in our communities and industries who have gone above and beyond to help protect our future.

Tasmania has some of the world's most stringent biosecurity regulations to protect the State's environment and primary industries from introduced pests and diseases - from both overseas and from mainland Australia.

For the inaugural Tasmanian Biosecurity Awards there are two award categories:

- Community
- Industry

In addition, all finalists in each category will be recognised as 'Biosecurity Champions' and join a prestigious network of biosecurity advocates in Tasmania.

The awards will be judged by an independent Awards Committee made up of representatives from the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Fruit Growers Tasmania, the Biosecurity Advisory Committee and Biosecurity Tasmania.

Nominations are open to any individual, group or organisation making a positive contribution to protecting Tasmania from pests and diseases, and close at 11:55 pm 31 August 2023, with winners to be announced later in the year.

Access the nomination form online.

Protect man's best friend from the brown dog tick

Are you escaping winter and heading north with your best friend? Make sure you are aware of the risk of the brown dog tick. A bite from a brown dog tick can give your dog a disease called ehrlichiosis which can be fatal.

Speak to your local vet and make sure your dog is up to date with its tick treatment before heading north and check your dog for ticks every day you are away.

Head here to find out everything you need to know to keep your best friend safe and make sure you spread the word to others travelling with their dogs while you are away.

Have a pawsome holiday and remember, when it comes to ehrlichiosis the best protection is prevention!

Ehrlichiosis in dogs - DAFF (agriculture.gov.au)

Victorian Biosecurity Strategy Consultation

A new Biosecurity Strategy is being developed for Victoria. The strategy is building off Victoria's Biosecurity Statement endorsed by the Victorian Government in 2022. The purpose in developing the Biosecurity Strategy is to turn the vision from the Biosecurity Statement into clear priorities.

To ensure this strategy is relevant to all Victorians, consultation is being run to gain insights from key groups and the public about how the biosecurity system can be strengthened in Victoria.

Consultation closes midnight **Wednesday 16 August 2023.** To find out how to have your say visit Victorian Biosecurity Strategy Consultation | Engage Victoria

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Resources and training

We would love to help promote and share your biosecurity resources, training and events. Please get in touch at hello@biosecurity2030.org.au if you would like to promote something through our newsletter.

Agriculture Victoria Backyard Biosecurity Campaign

Biosecurity begins in your backyard!

Agriculture Victoria has a range of information for small landholders that can help keep your animals safe.

With increased risk of emergency animal diseases (EAD) such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) entering Australia, Agriculture Victoria's Backyard Biosecurity page is your go-to destination for everything related to keeping your beloved livestock safe and farms thriving.

Here you can access case studies, order EAD resources such as fact sheets, brochures, postcards and posters to help you talk about disease, biosecurity and preparedness and even undertake free e-learning modules to will enable you and your staff to recognise key threats and implement safe biosecurity practices.

While there sign up for the Backyard Biosecurity newsletter. Each edition will focus on a different topic, with practical tips about how to implement good biosecurity practices.

There are plenty of small steps you can take to keep your animals free from disease.

To find out more, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/backyardbiosecurity

Get the kids involved in biosecurity!

Are you looking for some free and educational activities for your kids these school holidays? Well, here are some ideas!

Biosecurity for growing minds

Everyone can play a role in helping to protect our country and keep our animals and plants safe, including primary school-aged children.

They can become a junior biosecurity officer, under a new initiative by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

The Junior Biosecurity Officer webpage includes a number of resources, which are regularly being added to, including word searches, activity pages, colouring in pages and a maze. The page also includes helpful information about pests and diseases and how they could get into Australia, as well as how we protect Australia including information about our biosecurity dogs. This is complemented by other resources including a travel kit which was piloted earlier this year.

In addition to this, a separate section of the website allows you to quickly tap into key videos and animations designed specifically to help those new to biosecurity to understand Australia's biosecurity system.

Give it a go today and help your children become junior biosecurity officers.

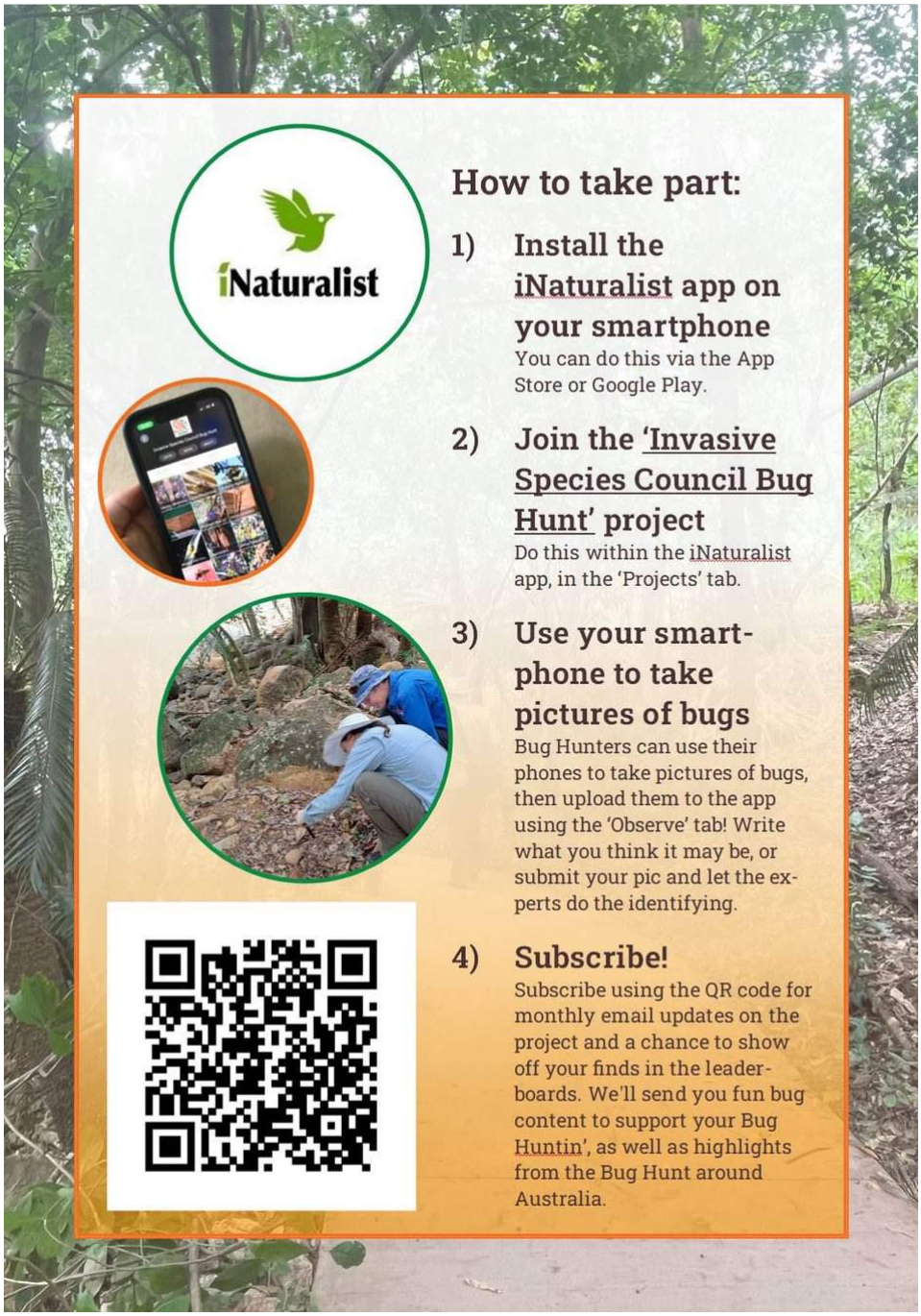
Join the Bug Hunt!

Ever wondered what bugs are living in your garden or hanging out on a hike?

Invertebrates (animals without backbones—think ladybugs, snails, worms, spiders, and more), are one of the most diverse and abundant groups of animals in the world. We have hundreds of thousand species of native invertebrate species, busy across Australia, pollinating, nutrient cycling, ecosystem engineering, and providing food for other native animals. Unfortunately, there are also invertebrate species that have entered Australia from overseas; some of which are wreaking havoc on our biodiversity, natural landscape, communities, and agriculture – we call these ones 'invasive' and we really want to find these before they become a problem.

When you take part in the Invasive Species Council's Bug Hunt you can satisfy your curiosity, be entertained, and learn along the way, and you don't have to be an expert at all to identify your bugs!

After uploading your bug pics to the iNaturalist app, a clever photo identification algorithm and a community of experts and passionate bug-ologists (entomologists) will check out your uploads and identify what you've snapped – for FREE! Joining the Bug Hunt helps Australia by enhancing our surveillance capability and potentially acting as an early warning system if you happen to upload a picture of a damaging pest.



Feral Cat and Fox Management on-line forum videos

The team at the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions (CISS) are excited to let you know the Feral Cat and Fox Management on-line forums that were ran in May and June 2023 are now available on the CISS youtube channel.

The list of forum topics included:

1. Urban Fox management – What can be done?
2. Managing feral cats and foxes: Landcare and community groups in action.
3. The value of positive community engagement in invasive species management.

4. Feral cat management – Introduction to tools, techniques and strategies.
5. How to control a fox – Introduction to best practice management techniques.
6. Feral Cat and Fox Strategic Management and Planning.

The forums were a big success with over 500 people joining the webinars or workshops over the past few months.

Image credits Dion Thompson (supplied by CISS)

Online Industry Liaison Officer Training

Plant Health Australia (PHA) recently launched an enhanced Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) e-learning course and redesigned training workshop designed to improve response readiness of industry representatives that may be called on to work in the incident management structure during a response, and to understand their roles and responsibilities.

ILOs contribute to decision-making by providing the affected industry's perspective on aspects of the operational response. Their experience and knowledge of their respective industries allow them to provide advice on potential impacts of response strategies and actions. ILOs are also important links to support industry communication and engagement during response activities.

The enhanced e-learning course, hosted on PHA's Biosecurity Online Training platform (BOLT) is a prerequisite to the face-to-face workshop but also acts as just-in-time and refresher training.

The workshop is delivered in collaboration with the state government or territory where it is being held and includes training on the role and responsibilities of response functional areas, such as Public Information, Planning, and the Incident Controller.

“Access to e-Learning is free and available to anyone who is interested, and it should only take 60 minutes to complete,” said Dr Susanna Driessen, General Manager Emergency Response. “Learners receive a certificate of completion for both e-learning and the workshop, which may be recognised by employees as professional development.”

Over the next two years, one-day ILO workshops will be held in each state and territory. If you are interested in the ILO role and attending a workshop, discuss with your peak industry body and submit an EOI to training@phau.com.au or visit the BOLT platform for more information.

Stay informed with the Three Chiefs newsletter

The latest edition of the Three Chiefs newsletter is available now!

This quarterly newsletter highlights the broad range of activities of Australia’s Chief Plant Protection Officer, Chief Veterinary Officer and the Chief Environment Biosecurity Officer.

In this issue you can read about some important advances in pest and weed management, international engagement at the World Organization for Animal Health’s recent general session and a roundup of the 12 May International Day of Plant Health Science Exchange.

Read the stories here: https://www.agriculture.gov.au/about/news/three-chiefs-newsletter

Subscribe to get Three Chiefs delivered directly to your inbox! Just make sure you tick the Three Chiefs newsletter box: https://subscribe.agriculture.gov.au/subscribe

Access biosecurity webinars and podcasts online

Did you know the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website features a range of educational biosecurity resources located all in one easy-to-find location?

Deepen your understanding of key biosecurity issues by visiting the public awareness and education section and exploring our webinars, podcasts and other educational materials.

The Australian Biosecurity Webinar series features presentations and Q&As with some of Australia's leading experts in bee biosecurity, hitchhiker pests, plant protection, and foot and mouth disease.

If you know of someone who is planning to study in Australia, the international student webinar provides some great tips on what not pack from front-line biosecurity officers.

Looking for something to listen to on the commute to work or while out in the field? Our Detect and Protect podcast series offers an insiders' glimpse into the world of biosecurity. Deep dive with our experts to find out more about Australia's most unwanted pests, our Post Entry Quarantine facility, or the department's detector dog program.

Visit the webpage today and see what you can discover.

Behind the scenes of the DAFF webinar series

Events

7-13 August 2023
Landcare Week: Be inspired, be empowered, be a landcarer

Landcare Week is an annual celebration of landcare held during the first week of August to acknowledge the Australians who are actively restoring, enhancing and protecting the natural environment in their community.

Campaign assets are available here.

31 August 2023
Mount Maunganui, New Zealand
Tauranga Moana Biosecurity Capital Biosecurity Excellence Symposium Generational Change: working together to strengthen biosecurity for generations to come.

Register: https://events.humanitix.com/tmbc-biosecurity-excellence-symposium-or-generational-change

26 – 27 October 2023
Canberra, Australia
National Farmers Federation 2023 National Conference
NFF National Conference(nffconference.com.au)

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The Decade of Biosecurity is now on Facebook! Follow us at facebook.com/DoB2030 or visit our website.

About the Decade of Biosecurity

The Decade of Biosecurity is a partnership between industry, business, community and government to elevate the importance of biosecurity and improve the biosecurity system's effectiveness during the 2020s. The partnership seeks to engage all Australians with building a stronger biosecurity system and connect leaders and influencers across sectors to share and leverage their learnings and approaches.

The Decade of Biosecurity coordination is hosted by the Invasive Species Council on behalf of the Decade of Biosecurity partners: Invasive Species Council, Animal Health Australia, Centre for Invasives Species Solutions, Plant Health Australia, National Farmers' Federation, Freight and Trade Alliance, National Landcare Network, Landcare Australia, NRM Regions Australia, federal, state and territory biosecurity agencies.

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DECADE OF BIOSECURITY 2021-2030

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