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Decade of Biosecurity Bulletin November 2023

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

This is another jam-packed edition of biosecurity updates from around the country. We celebrate the eradication of red imported fire ants in WA but at the same time commiserate their arrival in NSW. We find out more about South Australia's 10-year strategic plan for deer eradication and the Great Cane Toad Bust! We meet some new biosecurity champions and there are some timely reminders on parthenium weed and preparing your farm for the long, dry summer.

A reminder that survey responses to the review of the Marine Pest Plan 2018-2023 and submissions to the senate inquiry into red imported fire ants close on **1 December 2023** and feedback to the draft updated feral cat threat abatement plan by **11 December 2023.**

It has been an exciting couple of months for the Decade of Biosecurity, culminating in the launch of the Parliamentary Friends of Biosecurity group, which the Decade of Biosecurity partners championed the formation of. The launch event was held on 18 October 2023 at Parliament House, Canberra and starred the detector dogs. The Parliamentary Friends group will act as an important platform to elevate biosecurity issues and for parliamentarians to hear from stakeholders about their biosecurity challenges. For those that missed the special bulletin about this event you can catch up here.

I also interviewed project partner, Sal Milici from Freight and Trade Alliance about FTA's involvement in the Decade of Biosecurity and why their members should get behind the Decade of Biosecurity initiative. This featured in Across Borders magazine (page 10). Make sure you have a read and view Sal's video message below.

We continue to seek further investors, leads and partners to work with us on delivery of priority projects from the Decade of Biosecurity Implementation Plan that will transform and strengthen the national biosecurity system. Please get in touch to explore opportunities to be involved: hello@biosecurity2030.org.au.

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

Emily Mellor
Coordinator, Decade of Biosecurity

Sal Milici, General Manager Trade Policy and Operations talks about why FTA are involved in the Decade of Biosecurity and what they are excited about seeing implemented through this initiative.

WA celebrates red imported fire ant eradication…..

Western Australia has been declared free of red imported fire ant (RIFA) thanks to a 2-year comprehensive eradication program undertaken by the WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

RIFA is one of the worst invasive ant pests in the world and was first detected in WA at the Fremantle Ports in November 2019 as part of surveillance being undertaken for the National Browsing Ant Eradication Program.

Successful eradication of RIFA requires detecting all ant colonies as early as possible, destroying the colonies and preventing the spread to new areas through the movement of soil, mulch, plants and fodder.

As part the response, DPIRD undertook 6 rounds of visual surveillance involving hand collection, lures, pitfall traps, and the use of specifically trained odour detection dogs from Queensland on two occasions.

More than 3,500 premises were inspected, including container and ferry terminals, industrial properties, fishing wharves, parks and residential properties, with over 14,000 samples collected for identification.

Support and co-operation from the local community, Fremantle Port and the City of Fremantle was crucial to the success of the program.

If RIFA had become established in WA, it could have severely impacted the State agriculture and horticultural industries, as well as having a significant impact on the environment and WA's outdoor lifestyle.

Further information on the red imported fire is available on the DPIRD webpage.

Some of DPIRD's invertebrate pest team with Queensland detector dogs and their handler at Fremantle port.

…while fire ants are detected in NSW!

While WA celebrates the eradication of RIFA in their state three fire ant nests have been found for the first time in NSW in Murwillumbah, 13 km south of the Queensland border.

NSW DPI and the National Fire Ant Eradication Program are working together in response to the detection, which was called in by a member of the public.

Members of the public are asked to be vigilant and report any suspicious sightings on 1800 680 244 and visit DPI NSW Fire Ants for further information.

Invasive Species Council and National Farmers' Federation have called for an urgent review of funding for fire ant eradication and immediate action in response to this alarming news.

Hundreds of ants will come out of a nest if disturbed. NSW DPI © State of New South Wales.

Strengthening Victoria's biosecurity system

Victoria's new Biosecurity Strategy was launched on 22 November 2023.

The strategy includes five goals and twenty actions to safeguard against pests and diseases, taking a collaborative approach to tackling the big biosecurity issues in Victoria.

The strategy is the result of extensive engagement with over 450 people in regional workshops and deep dive sessions in 2022-23, and over 1000 stakeholders since 2019. Following public consultation on the draft Biosecurity Strategy through Engage Victoria, the engagement summary report is also now available.

Better pests and weeds control the focus of the new Biosecurity Commissioner Bill

On 19 October 2023 the NSW Government delivered on a key election commitment with the introduction of a landmark bill into Parliament that will amend the Biosecurity Act 2015 to establish NSW's first independent Biosecurity Commissioner.

The Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity Commissioner) Bill 2023 has been developed following extensive consultation and will strengthen the impact and accountability of biosecurity programs for pests and weeds in NSW.

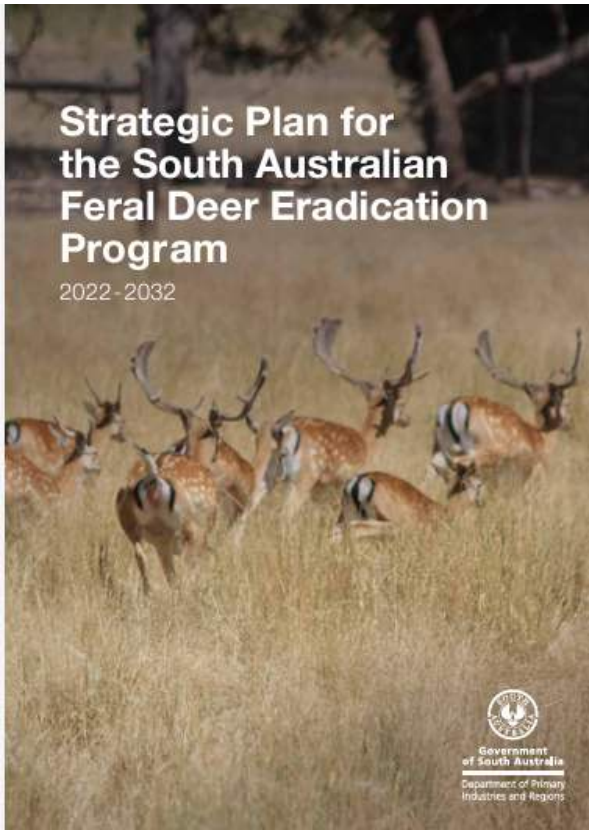
Learn more

NSW Government allows aerial shooting to reduce feral horse numbers in Kosci

The NSW Government has adopted an amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan, which authorises aerial shooting as an approved method of reducing the number of wild horses in the park. The change is essential to protecting the park's threatened native wildlife and ecosystems.

Click here to read the media release or here to learn more about the amendment.

Strategic plan for the 10-year South Australian Feral Deer Eradication Program.



The South Australian government has released a Strategic Plan for the South Australian Feral Deer Eradication Program 2022-32, which aligns with the National Feral Deer Management Plan released in August. This strategic plan has been developed to guide eradication efforts, and to better manage farmed deer within the state.

Regarded as one of Australia's worst pest animals in both rural and peri-urban areas, feral deer cost South Australian primary producers an estimated $36 million indirect productivity losses last year, along with significant impacts on the environment and road safety.

Click here to read the media release.

Bolstering food safety with strong traceability

The first ever National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023 to 2033 has been released, paving the way for a vibrant future in Australian agriculture!

Strong traceability systems help us to maintain trust domestically and internationally as providers of high-quality, safe, and sustainable food and fibre products.

Traceability shows consumers and the countries we export to that our products are safe, clean, and sustainable from the farm gate to the plate.

Unleashing a decade-long plan, the strategy propels a synchronised national endeavour, boosting agricultural traceability to safeguard our biosecurity and bolster food safety responses.

PHA has four new National Biosecurity Response Team Cadets

Plant Health Australia's (PHA) Luke McKee, Mandy Jarvis, Emily Sears, and Niki Sheperd recently attended the latest National Biosecurity Response Team (NBRT) Cadet training program, held 12-13 October in Canberra.

Animal Health Australia (AHA) partnered with the ACT government to present the training program to 26 nominated individuals from across the biosecurity spectrum in the ACT, including PHA, the Department of Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPPSD), Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), Icon Water, and Suburban Land Agency.

Since its formation in 2017, the NBRT has been developing and maintaining a pool of response-ready personnel across Australia that can be accessed by a jurisdiction's biosecurity agency when responding to a biosecurity incident. The goal of the program is to elevate biosecurity emergency preparedness and response capabilities in each jurisdiction. By maintaining a critical mass of cross-sectoral response-ready personnel, the initiative supports national efforts and assists jurisdictional preparedness, ensuring a robust and well-coordinated response to future biosecurity challenges.

Learn more

Biosecurity champions recognised in SA

Ellen Arney, Inverbrackie Stud with Travis Tobin, Livestock SA CEO and Joe Keynes, Livestock SA Chair

Livestock SA announced the winner of their inaugural On-Farm Biosecurity Award at the Livestock SA Industry dinner on 15 November 2023.

Ellen Arney from Inverbrackie Stud was selected as the winner by the Livestock SA Biosecurity, Animal Health and Welfare Committee.

Ellen and her family demonstrated excellent on-farm biosecurity practices, going above and beyond to ensure they have top biosecurity on the property and prevent the spread of weeds and diseases on and off their farm.

Tom Bradman from Nomad Farm was awarded as the runner-up for the award.

At SA's Regional Showcase Awards, the Kangaroo Island's Feral Cat Eradication Project took out the People's Choice Award. This project saw 80 per cent of the feral cat population removed from the island via trapping, cameras and fencing.

Congratulations to Ellen, Tom and the KI Feral Cat Eradication Project!

Feral Cat Field Officers Emily Reynolds and Nathan Lennane accepted the award.

Join the Great Cane Toad Bust

Cane Toads are infamous in Australia, causing significant declines in native wildlife populations, poisoning domestic pets, and impacting local agriculture. With over two billion toads in Australia and an ever-expanding range, it's time to make a difference!

The Great Cane Toad Bust is Australia's only national toad bust! The Bust will be held from 13 - 21 January 2024 and is hosted by Gold Coast based not-for-profit, Watergum. With a uniquely Australian spirit, this competition encourages communities to take action on cane toads!

Effective cane toad control targets every life stage. Toad busting involves catching and removing adult toads, while tadpole trapping breaks the breeding cycle. This is critical, as cane toads can live for more than 10 years and produce up to 35,000 eggs each time they breed!

Every cane toad counts, and together we can have a massive impact. During previous Great Cane Toad Busts, we removed more than 50,000 cane toads!

Head to Great Cane Toad Bust for more information and to find out how you can be involved.

Watergum is a member group of Queensland Water and Land Carers and part of Decade of Biosecurity Collective member organisation, the National Landcare Network.

ALERTS

Grain harvest parthenium alert

With grain harvest starting last month, people bringing harvesting machinery into NSW from Queensland are reminded they are required by law to ensure machinery crossing the border is free of the devastating parthenium weed and its seeds.

All harvesting machinery, equipment and vehicles which have been in Queensland must be properly cleaned and inspected before entering the state.

It is illegal to bring grain harvesters and comb trailers from Queensland into NSW unless you have a Biosecurity Certificate issued by NSW DPI.

People in charge of harvesting equipment should contact NSW DPI inspection stations 24 hours prior to arrival at a border crossing site to minimise delays.

Machinery and equipment, including harvest field bins, augers and grain movers, trucks and low loaders carrying a header, harvest support and escort vehicles, mineral exploration drill rigs and vehicles transporting rigs must be cleaned to remove all plant material, dust, soil and accumulated grease or be treated with a seed sterilant.

Parthenium is the greatest weed threat to NSW. Contact with the plant or pollen can cause serious allergic reactions in people. It is dangerous to grazing animals, hosts crop viruses, prevents desirable plants from establishing and reduces crop and land values.

Be prepared! Biosecurity, water and feed risks this summer

As summer approaches, the predicted dry and hot spell can pose significant challenges for livestock owners. Drought and fire can impact water and feed resources, potentially exposing livestock to various biosecurity risks.

Have a read of this article by Carley Lewis from AHA which sheds light on how to mitigate these risks and ensure the health and well-being of your animals amidst challenging weather conditions. Discover practical tips on managing water sources, buying feed, and more!

Agriculture Victoria also have some good resources for developing and implementing a fire preparedness plan to help you better prepare for, minimise losses and recover faster, should your property be affected by fire. The Fire Preparedness Toolkit can be

found here. They also have some handy advice on preparing for and responding to drought.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA) also have some useful tips on their website.

Are you travelling internationally this holiday season?

If you are travelling internationally over the holiday season you may notice the Australian Government's biosecurity awareness messaging on social media and online.

The awareness activity, developed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, aims to support compliance with Australia's biosecurity laws by educating Australians and those travelling to Australia about our biosecurity requirements, what needs to be done to avoid bringing risk items into Australia and the consequences for non-compliance at the Australian border. This builds on previous messaging about foot-and-mouth disease and what to do when travelling to Australia and complements existing communication activities that have already been deployed at Australia's border.

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility. We all have a part to play to protect Australia's economy, environment, industries and communities from biosecurity threats.

If you see a social media post from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, please consider sharing it within your networks to promote this important message and help protect Australia.

For more information visit Travelling to Australia - DAFF(agriculture.gov.au).

Click on the image to play video. This will open in Facebook and can be shared.

Have your say!

Review of Marine Pest Plan 2018-2023

Feedback sought until Friday 1 December 2023!

Marine Pest Plan 2018-2023 is Australia's first national strategic plan for marine pest biosecurity. The implementation period for Marine Pest Plan 2018-2023 concluded on 30 June 2023.

A formal review of Marine Pest Plan 2018-2023 is now underway to document the plan's achievements, identify strengths and weaknesses of its development and implementation, and guide approaches for the development of a possible successor strategy.

Please click here to complete the survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DG7KJKP
The survey consists of multiple-choice questions and some short answer questions and is estimated to take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is coordinating the review on behalf of participants and stakeholders of Marine Pest Plan 2018-2023.

Any questions? Email mpsc@aff.gov.au

Red Imported Fire Ant senate inquiry

Submissions close on 1 December 2023.

The Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee invites individuals and organisations to send in their opinions and proposals in writing to the senate inquiry into red imported fire ants.

The Inquiry will examine what the cost and impacts would be if red imported fire ants spread across Australia, including what that means for agriculture, the environment and human health, as well as adequacy of current response plans and funding.

For more information and to make a submission visit:
Rural_and_Regional_Affairs_and_Transport/FireAnts

Draft updated threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats

Submit your feedback by 4.00pm AEDT on 11 December 2023.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water is seeking your feedback on the draft updated threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats.

Feral cats kill over 1.5 billion native mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs, and 1.1 billion invertebrates each year in Australia. Predation by cats is a threat to over 200 nationally listed threatened species and they have been implicated in 28 mammal extinctions. They can also carry infectious diseases which can be transmitted to native animals, domestic livestock and humans.

Reducing the impact of this introduced predator on our native species will support their populations to recover. Threat abatement plans establish a national framework to guide and coordinate Australia's response to key threats, like feral cats, that impact on our threatened species and ecological communities.

Your feedback will be used to inform the final threat abatement plan. Access the consultation documents here then have your say via the survey.

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.

Farm biosecurity simplified with new animations

Livestock owners can brush up on their farm biosecurity knowledge using a series of easy-to-follow animations.

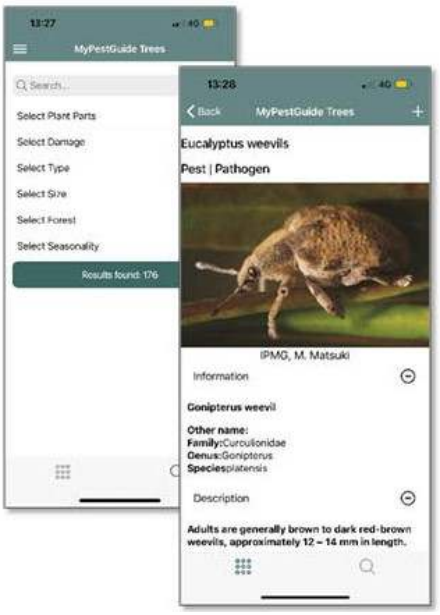
Agriculture Victoria has released a series of new animated videos, highlighting a range of important biosecurity information in a simple format.

Topics covered in the animations include basic farm biosecurity, farm and visitor hygiene, introducing new livestock and important information about prohibited pig feed and ruminant feed bans.

Having good biosecurity practices in place helps protect your livestock, your neighbour’s livestock and the entire agriculture industry from the threats of disease.

The five animations can be viewed on the Agriculture Victoria YouTube channel, Agriculture Victoria website, social media feeds and online training resources and webinars.

New mobile app to record tree pests



A new mobile app, MyPestGuide® TREES, is now available to industry, government, and citizen scientists, empowering them to mitigate the impact of invasive pests and diseases on our forests.

The MyPestGuide® TREES application is designed to promote, encourage, and make it easy for everyone to get involved in reporting new pest sightings in high-risk areas such as air and sea ports, and cargo inspection areas as well as public spaces such as botanic gardens and tourist attractions.

The MyPestGuide® TREES app for Apple® and Android™ is free to download via the Apple App Store® or Google Play™ as well as a web-based version.

Learn more

Industry Liaison Officer Training

Plant Health Australia (PHA) has delivered Industry Liaison Officer (ILO) training workshops across Australia throughout the year. Workshops in Brisbane, Tasmania, Perth, and Adelaide attracted 79 participants from 14 industries across a number of different sectors including broadacre, forestry, horticulture and honeybees. The face-to-face workshops were delivered in collaboration with biosecurity agencies from the host states.

PHA's ILO training aims to equip ILO's with an understanding of the knowledge and tasks they will need to work in a control centre during a plant biosecurity response. ILOs learn how they would work alongside the incident management team to provide an industry perspective on response activities and to support their industry.

Feedback from participants has been very positive with many indicating that the practical activities and examples, ability to ask questions and networking with other industries as highlights of the workshop. Participants also felt they improved their confidence to perform the ILO role.

Planning for next year's workshops is underway and a calendar of dates will be available shortly.

Nominated ILOs are encouraged to attend the workshops and to register your interest please email training@phau.com.au.

Rabies awareness training

Australia is one of the few countries in the world to remain rabies-free.

But with rabies on our doorstep, an online course has been launched to educate and inform veterinarians and people who work with animals about the signs, transmission and diagnosis of the disease, and the procedure to follow if rabies is suspected.

Although rabies is a vaccine-preventable zoonotic disease, it is virtually 100% fatal in both animals and people once clinical signs appear.

It is essential that we all know about rabies, can recognise it quickly, and take immediate action before it can establish itself within Australia's borders.

This free 4-module course will take around an hour to complete and is hosted on the Animal Health Australia (AHA) eLearning platform.

Rabies is a reportable disease, so if you suspect an animal is infected contact the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Events

SAVE THE DATE & CALL FOR ABSTRACTS OPEN!
3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium
27-29 August 2024
Seaworld Resort, Gold Coast

SAVE THE DATE & CALL FOR ABSTRACTS OPEN!
19TH AUSTRALASIAN VERTEBRATE PEST CONFERENCE
29 July - 1 August 2024
Sydney, NSW

Connect with us!

If you were forwarded this Bulletin by someone else please scan the QR code to sign up and receive news and updates direct to your inbox.

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.

Provide feedback on this Bulletin

DECADE OF BIOSECURITY 2021-2030

Sign up today to show your support

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