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Decade of Biosecurity Bulletin
February 2024

Welcome to the February 2024 edition of the Decade of Biosecurity Bulletin and the first one for 2024!

This edition is bursting with biosecurity updates from around the country along with access to some great free resources including the new National Biosecurity Training Hub, Bee Pest Blitz stakeholder pack and the revised Get Ready for Arrival checklist for commercial vessel operators and shipping agents.

A reminder to stay vigilant with an alert diver detecting Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG) in South Australia. We find out about new rules to stop the spread of fire ants into NSW and how to keep your birds safe from bird flu.

We are getting excited about the 3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium which will be held at Seaworld Resort on the Gold Coast, 27 - 29 August 2024! Abstract submissions close **31 March 2024** so get them in!

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

New Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel Announced

On 28 February 2024 federal Agriculture Minister Murray Watt announced the formation of a new Sustainable Biosecurity Funding Advisory Panel. This panel will give stakeholders greater input into biosecurity priorities and improve transparency for biosecurity funding.

Decade of Biosecurity partners Invasive Species Council, Freight and Trade Alliance (FTA) Pty Ltd, National Farmers' Federation, Plant Health Australia's Industry Forum and Animal Health Australia's Industry Forum have been invited to be part of this panel.

“As one of the broader goals of the Decade of Biosecurity 2030 project plan is to ensure sustainable investment mechanisms are in place by 2030, this announcement is a step in the right direction,” said Andrew Cox, Invasive Species Council CEO and chair of the Decade of Biosecurity Steering Group.

“By bringing key producer and trade representatives together, it reinforces the message that these goals are not mutually exclusive and provides Australia with a unique opportunity to be a global leader of biosecurity best practice underpinned by long-term sustainable funding,” said Sal Milici, General Manager, Trade Policy and Operations at Freight and Trade Alliance.

The 3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium is making waves!

The 3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium will be held at Seaworld Resort on the Gold Coast from 27 - 29 August 2024. The tagline ***Innovative, Immersive, Inclusive*** embodies the essence of our event.

As Australia’s premier biosecurity event, this symposium serves as a perfect platform to explore transformative approaches for Australia’s biosecurity systems that will safeguard our economy and food security, preserve our environment and protect our way of life.

We invite abstracts for presentations that promote the exchange of knowledge and ideas across the biosecurity spectrum - from agriculture to wildlife, aquatic humans and the environment.

Abstract submissions close Sunday 31 March 2024 so don't miss the boat!

Early bird registrations are currently open with discounted tickets for community NGO, charity, self-employed and group bookings. A range of exciting sponsorship and exhibition opportunities are also available!

The last two Symposiums have been a resounding success, and we are thrilled to welcome back TV personality, educator, Decade of Biosecurity Ambassador and all-round biosecurity champion, Costa Georgiadis to MC the event.

Your hosts, the Biosecurity Collective, comprising of Animal Health Australia, Invasive Species Council, Centre for Invasive Species Solutions and Plant Health Australia can't wait to SEA you there!

Visit www.biosym.com.au for more information.

ABC Landline segment on emergency animal disease preparedness

The ABC Landline segment on emergency animal disease preparedness aired on Sunday 18 February.

The Agriculture Victoria staff, district vets, animal health and laboratory staff

took part in a **mock** response to foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) entering Australia. This dress-rehearsal is an important part of Australia's preparedness for FMD and other animal health emergencies.

A real-life outbreak of a disease such as FMD would paralyse Australia's multi-billion dollar livestock industries almost overnight. Economic modelling has calculated the economic cost would be about $80 billion over 10 years.

Click here to watch the Landline episode on ABC iView or here to access the online story.

Veterinarians train to be on the front foot for an EAD outbreak in Australia (ABC Landline: Tim Lee)

Sterile fruit flies' important role

South Australia acts as an important geographic buffer between two of horticulture's most destructive pests -- Mediterranean fruit fly, or Medfly (*Ceratitis capitata*) endemic to Western Australia, and Queensland fruit fly, or Qfly (*Bactrocera tryoni*) endemic to the eastern states.

As the only mainland state able to claim 'fruit fly free' status, with no established populations, SA's current eradication effort against long-running and complex Qfly outbreaks in its Riverland region is being closely watched by domestic and international trading partners.

Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) is an essential part of the eradication response program, and the National SIT production facility in Port Augusta, managed by SA's Department of Primary Industries and Regions (PIRSA), recently reached the

milestone of supplying the more than 1 billion sterile Qfly released over the Riverland since outbreaks began in December 2020.

Production has doubled from 20 million a week to 40 million since a $3 million expansion in 2023, funded under the Federal Government's $30 million Building Resilience to Manage Fruit Fly package with additional contributions from PIRSA and Citrus SA.

Meanwhile, through February and March 2024 PIRSA is taking preventative action against Medfly following the detection of a single wild fly in an Adelaide suburb in November 2023. Pupae sourced from Western Australia's Medfly SIT facility in South Perth will be reared out (grown to adult flies) locally, then released from a low-flying plane over metropolitan Adelaide, at a rate of 6 million a week for six weeks.

Learn more here.

SIT Queensland fruit fly (credits: PIRSA)

Tasmania's inaugural Biosecurity Awards

Nic Hansen and Robyn Lewis have been named as the winners of the first ever Tasmanian Biosecurity Awards at a ceremony on 6 December 2023 at Parliament House.

The Tasmanian Biosecurity Awards were developed to honour individuals within industries and communities that have made a significant contribution to the state's

biosecurity with two categories up for grabs, the Tasmanian Community Biosecurity Award and the Tasmanian Industry Biosecurity Award.

Robyn Lewis was the winner of the Tasmanian Community Biosecurity Award for her significant involvement in the management and conservation of the Milford Forest.

Over the years Robyn has successfully implemented strong biosecurity measures on the Milford Forest property. Among other things including surveys, research and conservation work, Robyn has worked with many external contractors, researchers, tourists and other visitors, to educate those who access the property on good biosecurity practices.

Nic Hansen was the winner of the Tasmanian Industry Biosecurity Award for his avid support of the development and improvement of biosecurity in Tasmania.

Nic has worked closely with Horticulture Australia and the National Fruit Fly Council on biosecurity matters and regulation as well as being involved in the 2018 fruit fly emergency response in Tasmania.

Congratulations Nic and Robyn! You are true biosecurity champions!

Read the full media release here.

Tasmania's inaugural Biosecurity Award winners - Nic Hansen and Robyn Lewis (credits: NRE Tasmania)

National workshop on aerial shooting of vertebrate pest animals

The national workshop on aerial shooting for vertebrate pest animals (donkeys, camels, goats, deer, pigs, horses) was attended by 75 people from all states and territories on 20 - 21 February 2024.

The workshop attendees learnt about programs, challenges, best practice and emerging methods and technologies (especially thermal technologies) from across the country. Particular interest was around training, building cross-country capacity in the face of future emergency responses, and building best practice operations, as well as better ways to engage communities and share the load.

The event was hosted by WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, SA Department of Primary Industries and Regions, and the National Feral Deer and Feral Pig Coordinator Programs (both funded by the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry).

Visit the following websites for further information:
Deer: feraldeerplan.org.au
Pigs: feralpigs.com.au
Wild dogs: wilddogplan.org.au

Participants at the at the National Vertebrate Pest Aerial Shooting Workshop (credits: PIRSA)

Farm-level adoption of biosecurity management – behavioural analysis

AgriFutures recently published report, "Farm-level adoption of biosecurity management – behavioural analysis", examines the motivators and barriers for adoption of biosecurity practices by primary producers, including an assessment of current biosecurity information sources and extension approaches to support on-farm adoption.

There are several key findings from the study that provide significant insight into our biosecurity system, including the extent of biosecurity awareness among producers, the role of trusted sources in extending biosecurity information, challenges with skills and capacity, the role of language and communication, the impact of biosecurity on individual producer wellbeing and an increasing interest in the role of technology. The insights presented offer a roadmap for enhancing the resilience and sustainability of Australia's primary industries in the face of evolving biosecurity challenges.

Explore the findings and recommendations here.

ALERTS

AVG detected in South Australia

Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis has been confirmed in wild abalone in waters south of Port MacDonnell in South Australia's south east. A control area has been put in place to stop the possible transfer of the disease by human activity to abalone in other areas currently not affected.

On 21 February 2024, a commercial abalone fisher reported finding dead and dying abalone at Breaksea Reef off Port MacDonnell, and submitted samples to South Australia's Department of Primary Industries and Regions for testing.

PCR tests have confirmed Abalone Viral Ganglioneuritis (AVG) in the samples. AVG is

caused by a mollusc herpes virus that only infects abalone. It affects the abalone nervous system, causing weakness and eventually death.

AVG has no known effects on human health.

AVG is a notifiable disease in South Australia. If you see sick or dead abalone in South Australia please report immediately by calling the Fishwatch Hotline on 1800 065 522 or use the SA Fishing app. If you see sick or dead abalone in other states please call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

You must not dispose of any abalone shell or gut into the ocean or use it as bait. Dispose of abalone shell, meat and gut in household rubbish.

Help reduce the spread of abalone disease:

- Check: all vessels, fishing, diving and surfing equipment and remove anything including, water, sand or seaweed. Check your catch for signs of illness.
- Clean: boats at home or at a commercial car wash. Wash your wetsuits, fishing and diving equipment with fresh, soapy water.
- Dry: all boating, fishing and diving equipment completely before heading out into the water again.

PIRSA thanks the diver who did the right thing and reported suspicious abalone deaths immediately. This enabled prompt detection of the disease.

For more information visit www.pir.sa.gov.au/avg

Keeping your birds safe from bird flu

Avian influenza is a viral disease of birds and is found across the globe. Avian influenza virus strains are described as low pathogenicity (LPAI) or high pathogenicity (HPAI).

A strain of HPAI, is spreading globally, causing widescale outbreaks. This strain has not been detected in Australia, but there are concerns about the potential impacts on poultry and wildlife if it arrives on our shores.

If you keep birds at home, don’t let them mingle with wild birds. A freshly flown in visitor can bring diseases like avian influenza (AKA bird flu).

Keep your birds safe by installing protective netting to stop wild birds accessing feed and water supplies and clean up any food spills that might attract wild birds.

Click here to access more tips to help avoid bird flu from transmitting to your pets and poultry.

Credits: DAFF

New rules for turf industry to keep NSW fire ant free

Fire ants are not marching into NSW; they are being carried!

The current Biosecurity Emergency Order has been amended to strengthen treatment requirements for suppliers and installers sourcing turf from the high-risk fire ant infested area in Queensland.

Anyone bringing organic mulch, compost, growing media, manure, soil, hay, straw, chaff, silage, potted plants, turf, agricultural equipment, earth moving equipment, sand, gravel, chitters, coal fines, coal stone, overburden and decomposed granite into NSW from Queensland must comply with the current NSW Biosecurity (Fire Ant) Emergency Order.

Read the plain English guide to the current NSW DPI fire ant emergency order here.

Credits: DPI NSW

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.

New National Biosecurity Training Hub launched

Plant Health Australia (PHA), the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Agriculture Victoria, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, and Animal Health Australia, have partnered to create the National Biosecurity Training Hub - Australia's first one-stop shop for biosecurity training.

Biosecurity is a national priority to protect our food security, our agriculture industry, and the environment. The focus on preserving the Australian way of life continues to drive the demand for training resources to support biosecurity preparedness and response activities and ensure that the necessary skills and knowledge are in place to respond to and manage biosecurity incidents.

"Pressure on Australia's biosecurity system requires an increased need for governments and industry to work together to ensure we can meet the rising demand

for expertise and knowledge," said Dr Susanna Driessen, PHA's General Manager, Emergency Response.

"A collaborative approach necessitates the need for accessible online training resources to ensure we have the capacity and the capability to respond effectively."

The National Biosecurity Training Hub (the Hub) offers a central location with a database of biosecurity training resources to help reduce the duplication of effort and costs associated with developing and delivering biosecurity training.

The Hub unifies and streamlines training to facilitate national visibility of biosecurity-related training across government, industry and community in a single location. The Hub is a centralised platform that supports biosecurity prevention, preparedness, response and recovery by providing users with access to the latest biosecurity-related training materials and courses suited to different industries, levels and skill sets.

Designed with learners in mind, the Hub is easy to navigate with a library of plant, animal and aquatic biosecurity training that is searchable using a topic, keyword, location and preferred method of delivery. The quality assurance protocols ensure each course listed meets the required standard.

"Australia's biosecurity system is built on shared responsibility for shared benefit. This initiative demonstrates the power of partnerships in improving cross-sectoral national biosecurity capability and capacity to prepare us for future biosecurity risks" says PHA's CEO Sarah Corcoran.

The Hub features 64 online training courses with plans for continuous expansion.

Organisations with biosecurity training packages and who are interested in contributing to the Hub are encouraged to make contact with PHA via nbth@phau.com.au.

Bee Pest Blitz stakeholder pack

The second annual Bee Pest Blitz is a month-long national campaign to increase awareness of the importance of bee biosecurity and encourage beekeepers to inspect their hives for high priority pests such as Varroa and Tropilaelaps mites.

This national month-long call-to-action campaign encourages beekeepers to conduct surveillance during the month of April.

By participating in the Bee Pest Blitz month, Australian beekeepers will fulfil their bee biosecurity obligations and one of the two inspection requirements under the Australian Honey Bee Industry Biosecurity Code of Practice.

To help you promote Bee Pest Blitz through your channels, we have prepared a stakeholder pack. Visit the website to download the stakeholder pack.

The Bee Pest Blitz website beepestblitz.com.au contains helpful resources to assist beekeepers to conduct surveillance on their hives and report their findings.

Bee Pest Blitz is an Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry funded initiative, led by Plant Health Australia, and supported by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council and all state and territory governments. Bee Pest Blitz will be supported by Bee Biosecurity Officers in each state under the National Bee Biosecurity Program, and engagement and networking with the National Bee Pest Surveillance Program.

Please contact media@phau.com.au for more information.

Aliens Amongst Us webinar series

The Aliens Amongst Us Q&A Sessions are online forums with special guest speakers explore the complex world of invasive species in Australia.

Previous sessions include such topics as:

- Feral horses from the perspective of a cultural historian
- NZ's Predator Free 2050
- Stopping Fire Ants before it is too late.

Revisit these and all the Aliens Amongst Us sessions here.

Join Invasive Species Council on **18 March 2024** for the next Aliens Among Us webinar featuring Guy Hull, author of The Ferals That Ate Australia.

In this book, Guy Hull details the history and toll of the numerous animal species that have contributed to the decimation of Australian species, their assault on land and agriculture, and the modern strategies that are - hopefully - reclaiming the country for our native fauna and its human population.

Register here

Get Ready For Arrival Checklist

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have revised their Get Ready for Arrival checklist - a simple and easy-to-use tool to help commercial vessel operators and shipping agents get ready for arrival in Australia, and prepare the vessel to meet Australia's biosecurity requirements.

To find out more and access the checklist here.

Landcarer online community platform

Why not join in the conversation and explore Landcarer.com.au; an online community for anyone involved or interested in conservation land management and agriculture.

Landcare Australia manages a free user generated website called Landcarer – it is the destination website for anyone interested in natural resource management and conservation activities.

Through its resources and tools for learning, volunteering, event management, engagement and interaction, Landcarer helps environmental organisations, landcare groups, landholders and environmental community groups amongst others, to share information and expand their knowledge, skills and resources across such areas of interest as invasive weeds and pests, climate change and impacts and First Nations knowledge and many more.

By using this easy to use, collaborative and open platform, you can further amplify, promote and share what you are doing with a broader national audience.

You need to register to post content but Landcarer.com.au assists you to:

- Promote your projects and campaigns
- List your events (1 in 5 Landcarer event listing appear in top 10 Google Search Results)
- Stream LIVE webinars
- List and manage Volunteer Opportunities
- Access, upload and download resources
- Exchange ideas, have a discussion or ask for help
- Post project outcomes and so much more!

With no login required to view information on the site, Landcarer.com.au allows you to reach a broad range of community participants and like-minded environmental champions.

Explore Today!

Events

The Annual Surveillance Workshop (ASW) 2024
20 - 21 March 2024
Twin Towns Conference Centre, Tweed Heads
Plant Surveillance Network Australasia-Pacific (PSNAP) Members can register to attend virtually by 8 March 2024.

3rd Australian Biosecurity Symposium
27 - 29 August 2024
Seaworld Resort, Gold Coast

Earlybird registrations, call for abstracts and sponsorship opportunities now open!

19th Australasian Vertebrate Pest Conference
29 July - 1 August 2024
Aerial UTS Function Centre, Sydney
Earlybird registrations and sponsorship opportunities now open!

Global Nature Positive Summit 2024
8 - 10 October 2024
International Convention Centre, Sydney
Click here for more information.

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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.

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DECADE OF BIOSECURITY 2021-2030

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