

Question on Notice

No. 165

Asked on 9 March 2021

MS C LUI ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline the role the government is playing to support producers to be protected against African Swine Fever?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

To address the biosecurity risk to Queensland posed by the ongoing international spread of African swine fever (ASF), a \$2.7 million dedicated prevention and preparedness project has been established. This will strengthen Queensland's prevention activities and enhance preparedness for an emergency response. Industry is involved in the project through an external stakeholder reference group, including representatives from Pork Queensland Inc., the Sunpork Group, University of Queensland and the Australian Pig Veterinarians. This group provides a forum to address enhancement of ASF prevention awareness as well as early detection networks and provision of training to veterinarians and para-veterinarians.

The project also includes feral pig monitoring and control strategies. For example: market research is being undertaken to inform extension and engagement materials for improved feral pig management; enhanced feral pig surveillance and modelling using aerial thermal imaging and surveys to define ranging behaviour and habitat use; and, spatial analytics of feral pig distributions that will contribute additional Queensland-specific data to the Australian Animal Disease Spread (AADIS) model to enable more effective modelling of potential ASF spread within and between domestic and feral pig populations.

Research is also being undertaken into whether natural carcass decomposition effectively inactivates the ASF virus under Australian conditions. If proven, significant savings in carcass management during an ASF outbreak or other emergency animal disease could be realised.

The project will also enhance laboratory capacity and capability for ASF and other high-priority emergency animal disease responses in the Queensland Government Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory.

In partnership with other states, territories and the Australian Government, Biosecurity Queensland has developed extensive plans for an emergency animal disease response if ASF was detected in Australia. Biosecurity Queensland has also contributed significantly to Exercise Razorback - a national emergency animal disease response exercise.

Biosecurity Queensland is also:

- training a dedicated team of Biosecurity Officers in feral pig aerial surveillance;
- developing response readiness just-in-time training packages; and
- conducting a virtual incident response exercise using an ASF scenario.

Through this investment, the Palaszczuk Government is demonstrating a strong commitment to the pig industry in Queensland. The Palaszczuk Government will continue to support this priority work to protect producers from the ongoing risk of ASF and other emergency animal diseases.