

Question on Notice

No. 927

Asked on 31 August 2022

MR R SKELTON ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the threat of Emergency Animal Diseases— Will the Minister advise how the Palaszczuk Government is protecting Queensland's agriculture industries?

ANSWER:

Although Australia remains free of diseases like foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), lumpy skin disease (LSD), and African swine fever (ASF), there is no room for complacency.

The Queensland Government is taking the current biosecurity threat of FMD entering Australia extremely seriously and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) has increased its emergency animal disease (EAD) preparedness for FMD and other priority biosecurity threats.

This has been demonstrated by the recent announcement of \$22 million of Queensland Government funding over five years to boost preparedness for biosecurity emergencies including FMD, LSD and ASF.

Key initiatives from this funding include:

- employing at least 10 additional frontline biosecurity officers across rural and regional Queensland
- increased support for our emergency animal disease preparedness team
- providing communications, engagement and training support to industry to ensure uptake of preparedness strategies
- boosting Queensland's coordinated feral pig control capability.

This work builds on many years of awareness and preparedness activities that all levels of government and industry have been active in developing.

Queensland has a strong and tested biosecurity framework including robust legislation, agreed national plans and cost sharing arrangements and a strong policy position for emergency animal diseases. Other Queensland Government prevention and preparedness activities include:

- industry partnerships including a joint Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness Taskforce
 - with a focus on FMD and LSD
 - involving all levels of government and the livestock industry supply chain
 - provides strategic coordination for prevention and preparedness activities
 - Western Australia and Northern Territory colleagues join the Taskforce meeting every month to ensure the jurisdictions on the northern frontline work together on LSD and FMD activities.
- response ready workforce – government and industry response training
 - Biosecurity inspectors undertaking EAD preparedness refresher training across the state

- DAF facilitated Liaison Livestock Industry training delivered by Animal Health Australia to key livestock industry representatives including beef, dairy, lot feeders, pork, meat processor, egg, and chicken meat. The training prepares industry representatives to participate in an EAD response in the Livestock Liaison Officer role
- over 1 000 DAF staff across Queensland have completed Biosecurity Emergency Response training modules
- staff from across DAF have participated in virtual control centre exercises to build DAF's virtual biosecurity response capability.
- disaster management arrangements ready for activation for a biosecurity outbreak
 - EAD information packs have been sent to the State Disaster Coordination Centre at Kedron and a briefing has been provided to District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) Executive Officers and Chairpersons which included information to assist DDMGs and Local Disaster Management Groups to prepare for biosecurity outbreaks.
- enhanced diagnostic capacity and capability in Queensland laboratories.
- comprehensive awareness-raising for early detection and improved on-farm biosecurity.
 - a number of face-to-face and online presentations and events have been and are continuing to be facilitated across the state.
- launch of an online portal Livestock Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness eHub, which brings together the latest information about FMD and LSD. This is an important resource to provide awareness to our valuable livestock industry and can be found at: <https://daf.engagementhub.com.au/animal-disease-preparedness>.

All Queensland livestock properties should be registered as biosecurity entities and have biosecurity plans in place to help protect their businesses. Livestock owners need to know what FMD and LSD look like and should check their animals regularly and report immediately if they are concerned. If any emergency animal disease is suspected, it must be reported to the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

The Queensland Government continues to work with industry and government colleagues at a local, interstate and federal level to ensure the Queensland livestock industry is protected against, and prepared for, these serious biosecurity threats.