

Australian Pork Limited

AUSTRALIAN
Pork™

NATIONAL BIOSECURITY STRATEGY – DRAFT CONSULTATION

MARCH 2022

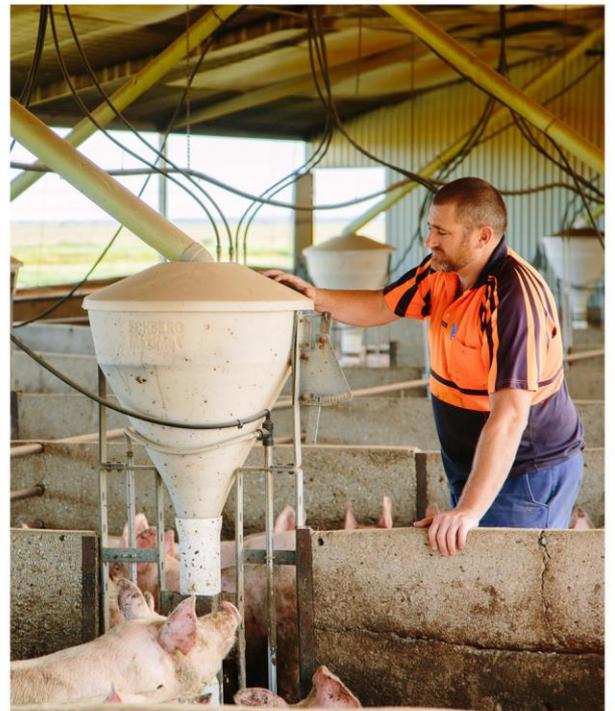
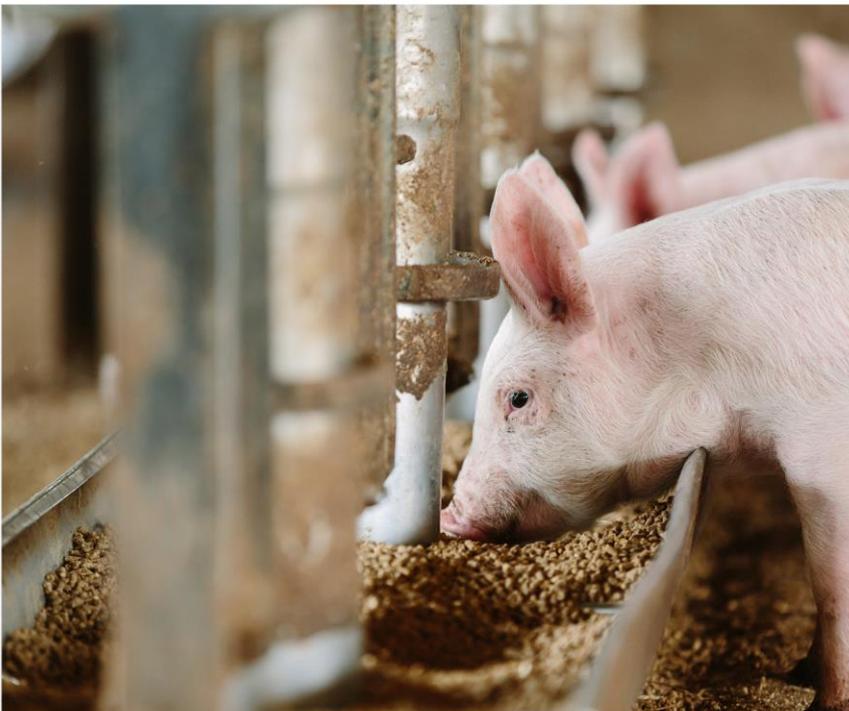


Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Key Recommendations	4
3. Australian Pork Limited	6
4. Contribution of the Pork Industry in Australia	6
5. Specific Recommendations	7

I. Executive Summary

Australia's biosecurity system is fundamental to the prosperity of all Australians. Sustainable and strategically aligned investment into this system not only safeguards our economy and the industries that power it, but our complex fabric of environmental, cultural, and social assets that define us as Australians. In an increasingly complex global environment where international trade and travel continues to grow, biosecurity outbreaks across human, agriculture, environment and marine health continue to rise in speed, volume, and complexity.

Learnings from the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak have demonstrated that biosecurity is no longer an agricultural and livestock issue but poses a significant threat to the broader community. Increasingly, zoonotic diseases and the concept of 'Disease X', are becoming a priority focus for government, industry, and the community alike requiring a 'One Health' approach, supported by 'One Biosecurity', to future proof Australia. These broader learnings have been reinforced by the current Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) response encompassing both human and animal health sectors respectively.

Driven by the need to respond to these challenges, APL has facilitated a cultural shift toward biosecurity leadership, fuelled by the principles of shared responsibility, partnership, and sustainable investment. Representatives from across our industry have joined with officials from all levels of government and the broader livestock sector to align and leverage strategies, investments, tools, and resources. Perhaps most importantly, this cultural shift has strengthened the human networks, from our piggeries through to our international borders and beyond, that are required to mitigate future biosecurity threats. This approach must now be expanded to incorporate other key sectors, including health, regional development, community services and tourism.

Our industry's learnings over the recent years of facing the combined threats of African swine fever (ASF), COVID-19 and now JEV, illustrate just how fragile our biosecurity systems are, but also present the proposition for all Australians to become biosecurity leaders and safeguard our way of life. The challenge, and unique opportunity, for the National Biosecurity Strategy is delivery of genuine cultural change that facilitates a once in a lifetime 'One Health' / 'One Biosecurity' approach to futureproof Australia across all commodities.

This submission should be read in conjunction with the APL submission provided into the National Biosecurity Strategy Initial Consultation (December 2021). APL reaffirms the recommendations provided in the initial submission, below.

2. Key Recommendations

Recommendation 1: To support the call to action for shared responsibility and partnership, the biosecurity system must be re-defined to ensure it is contemporary, innovative, and transformative, and demonstrates the critical role it plays in safeguarding the environmental, cultural, and social assets that define us as Australians.

Recommendation 2: The National Biosecurity Strategy must facilitate ownership, and define roles and responsibilities, among a diverse array of stakeholders, including:

- multiple portfolios across all levels of government, including health, tourism, community services and regional development
- critical industry sectors
- indigenous communities
- community groups

Recommendation 3: To ensure success of the National Biosecurity Strategy, the following must be provided:

- a dedicated and appropriately resourced secretariat, preferably maintained within the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- clear requirements for monitoring, evaluation, and public reporting, underpinned by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- an annual review cycle overseen by a Steering Committee that comprises of representatives of the stakeholders (identified in Recommendation 2)
- direction to respond to seminal biosecurity systems reviews and their relevant recommendations, including, but not limited to, reports from the Inspector-General for Biosecurity, Australian National Audit Office

Recommendation 4: To ensure the broader success of the biosecurity system, establish a sustainable and strategically aligned biosecurity funding solution which is:

- independent of political cycles
- representative of the entire biosecurity system
- funded by both risk generators and risk bearers
- prioritised by risk assessment

Recommendation 5: To manage the threat posed by Emergency Animal Diseases to Australia, industry, government, and Animal Health Australia must maintain a collaborative and innovative partnership approach to pre-existing EAD preparedness and response arrangements under the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement which is appropriately resourced by all signatories.

Recommendation 6: To support strategic biosecurity workforce planning, implement a nationally consistent biosecurity capability framework under the National Agricultural Workforce Strategy, informed by a biosecurity capability review and skills audit.

Recommendation 7: To support a collaborative, co-ordinated and robust national diagnostic and surveillance system, facilitate a review of opportunities to harmonise methodologies, enhance uptake of technology, and increase capability and capacity via private networks, using the National Animal Health Diagnostics Business Plan and National Animal Health Surveillance Business Plan.

Recommendation 8

To support the sharing of data and a collaborative approach to analysis, develop a national legislative data framework that protects the privacy, security and confidentiality of individuals and their data, supported by the appropriate investment into infrastructure and resourcing to encourage data sharing.

3. Australian Pork Limited

APL is the peak national representative body for Australian pork producers. It is a producer-owned company combining marketing, export development, research and innovation, and strategic policy development to assist in securing a profitable and sustainable future for the Australian pork industry.

Our industry is proud of its achievements to date, positioning it as a leader in biosecurity, animal health and welfare, sustainable agriculture, and innovation. Our Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and new APL Sustainability Framework 2021-2030 set ambitious goals for more positive impact.

Biosecurity is a key priority for APL and each year we invest significant pork industry levy funds into biosecurity research and development (R&D), policy, communications, and extension, as highlighted in the 2020-21 APL Annual Report. Over recent years, faced with the ongoing threat of ASF, and now JEV, our industry has focused on strengthening biosecurity measures and awareness on-farm, developing tools and resources in partnership with government, and delivering innovative R&D aimed at pushing back international borders.

APL shares government's vision that enhancing biosecurity capacity and capability is key to delivering on industry growth and sustainability goals, including the Government's Ag2030 plan and the National Farmers' Federation target of \$100 billion by 2030. To support this vision, we welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to the National Biosecurity Strategy Consultation Draft.

4. Contribution of the Pork Industry in Australia

The Australian pork industry contributes about \$5.2 billion in gross domestic product to the Australian economy and supports around 36,000 jobs nationally. The industry is predominantly based in regional Australia, supporting the economic and social prosperity of our country towns. Australia's domestic sow herd numbers are around 279,000 and are housed across approximately 3,277 registered sites nationwide. In 2021, the Australian pork industry produced around 443,000 metric tonnes of pork and of this, about nine percent was exported, with a total value of \$173 million.

5. Specific Recommendations

GENERAL COMMENTS TO SUPPORT SPECIFIC QUESTIONS BELOW

APL welcomes the development of the National Biosecurity Strategy (the Strategy) to not only support the long-term prosperity and sustainability of the Australian pork industry, but to safeguard all Australians' environmental, cultural, and social assets.

To ensure the Strategy provides the clarity and call to action required to deliver this important outcome, the Strategy document requires a clearer structure and reduction of content within each section. As discussed in the answers below, key components of the document, including roles and responsibilities, priorities of the strategy, actions, etc, are repeated in numerous areas of the document. If the Strategy is to be successful in bringing a large number of stakeholders together in an increasingly complex and ambiguous biosecurity network, it must be clear and concise and provide greater direction on how stakeholders reading the document can participate, engage and respond.

SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

- **Do the proposed vision and purpose reflect what we want to achieve and how we want to evolve our system into the future?**
 - **Vision:** *Connected, Resilient, Shared. A biosecurity system that protects Australia's way of life*
 - **Shared purpose:** *A risk-based system underpinned by science that protects Australia's people, our environment and economy from the biosecurity threats of today and tomorrow*

APL strongly supports the inclusion of mitigating future biosecurity threats of tomorrow, increasingly referred to as Disease 'X', within the Shared purpose. To emphasise the importance of this concept, the Executive Summary should be expanded to include greater reference to this issue.

Further, greater acknowledgement of trade and market access resilience and support should be included within the broader scope of the Strategy. The proactive work being undertaken to protect international trade agreements is vital to market access, especially in the prevention of disease incursions, which once they occur, make it difficult to recover trade.

ROLES WITHIN THE BIOSECURITY SYSTEM

- **Can you see your current role within the biosecurity system reflected in the consultation draft?**
- **Do you think the 'How our biosecurity system works' diagram (page 15) reflects your role and responsibilities in the biosecurity system? If not, what amendments should be made?**
- **How do you see your own and others' roles changing into the future?**

The current role of all stakeholders remains unclear in the consultation draft.

The Strategy attempts to define roles and responsibilities in several areas, including:

- Page 15 – Australia's Biosecurity System
- Page 16 – 17 – Our Biosecurity System in Action

- Page 28 – It’s time to evolve how we work together
- Page 34 – Our way forward – driving collaborative action
- Appendix – identifying and detailing the roles of stakeholders to varying levels.

While the concept of collaboration and partnership are identified in various parts of the Strategy, they are not clearly defined in any area, resulting in ambiguity and impacting the ability of biosecurity stakeholders to engage with and deliver the Strategy.

The diagram used on page 15 not only duplicates the role of industry but appears to undermine the importance of ‘on the ground’ stakeholders. Many of the organisations and individuals that would identify with this primary responsibility are critical to leadership and coordination, awareness and information, research and capacity building and components of regulatory functions. Currently, this diagram suggests a top-down approach to biosecurity, which is unlikely to result in success.

APL understands that the scope of the Strategy is limited to the agricultural sector, however it is vital that the Strategy can interact with other sectors in order to support the future focus of ‘One Health’ and ‘One Biosecurity’. The present responses to COVID-19 and JEV provide real-time examples of why this approach is critical. Increasingly, the provision of knowledge about agricultural supply chains by the agricultural sector will be vital for the health sector when dealing with zoonotic incursions. Therefore, this Strategy must support the development of great partnership and collaboration across multiple sectors, not just between the agriculture industry and government.

The Strategy must also include greater clarity on implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting, as this will require participation by all stakeholders to ensure transparency, accountability and, most importantly, success.

BIOSECURITY RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Are there any key risks and opportunities not captured in the consultation draft?**

There is opportunity to celebrate the outcomes of collaboration already being achieved by existing collaborative partnerships. For example, the progressive approach to collaboration within the livestock sector that has evolved through partnership between the Commonwealth led AnimalPLAN, Animal Health Committee and the Industry Forum Working Group (Emergency Animal Disease).

ACTIONS

- **What are your views on the proposed initial actions?**
- **What other actions should be included to deliver our 6 priority areas, address biosecurity risks and capitalise on our opportunities for change?**
- **How can you contribute to achieving our 6 priority areas?**

APL supports the broad and ambitious nature of the actions, however, believes there is a requirement of the actions to be SMART – Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. The inclusion of SMART actions should be supported by clearly identified roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, and governance of the Strategy itself.

Further, identification of priorities, actions and delivery could be streamlined to provide clarity. Examples of repetition which adversely impact the flow of the document include:

- priority areas and actions on page 7-9, 26-27, 30-33
- actions already being taken, for example case studies on pages 13, 18-19, 23-25
- methods for delivering actions 28-29, 34, appendix

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- **What mechanisms should be established to ensure stakeholders are involved in the further development of actions and implementation planning?**
- **How regularly should the strategy be reviewed?**
- **How should we monitor and evaluate the success of the national strategy and implementation plans?**

The Strategy must provide detail on the Implementation Plan that supports monitoring, evaluation, and public reporting, underpinned by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Strategy should be monitored using an annual review cycle overseen by a Steering Committee that comprises of representatives of all biosecurity stakeholders, including government, industry and community groups representing various sectors.

Implementation and review of the Strategy can only be delivered if the Strategy itself is appropriately funded and resourced and has an agreed custodian that provides secretariat support. This funding and resourcing requirement is separate to the requirements of the agreed actions within the Strategy.



PO Box 4746 Kingston ACT 2604 Australia
T: 02 6270 8814 | F: 02 6285 2288
www.australianpork.com.au

ABN 83 092 783 278