

MEETING REPORT

African Swine Fever Stakeholder Teleconference

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Organisation/Committee:	African Swine Fever Stakeholder Teleconference
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Item #	Item Name	Discussion summary	Major outcomes, recommendations, actions
1.	APL CEO Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APL is responding to increased industry concern following the confirmation of ASF in East Timor. We have focussed our resources on addressing ASF-related preparedness. • There is an opportunity during 'peacetime' for industry to prepare and get on the same page as a whole supply chain. • This teleconference aims to bring industry together, and it will be held regularly on Fridays for the time being. • We are a national industry and we are working to ensure that any ASF response plans acknowledge that pigs and pork frequently cross borders, and could be in transit at the time of any notification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APL has appointed a temporary full-time ASF coordinator • APL will convene weekly ASF teleconference updates
2.	Biosecurity at the border	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Robyn Martin and Dean Merrilees from the federal Department of Agriculture, provided an update on measures at the border to prevent an ASF incursion. • There had been greatly increased scrutiny of passengers and parcels arriving from ASF-affected countries, with a heavy focus on China. • Shoes of passengers that reported having visited a farm were being checked. • There was increased biosecurity messaging at airports. • These measures were in force at all Australian airports. • Australian officials were also 'intervening' at regional transit hubs, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, to intercept passengers on indirect flights from ASF-affected countries. This included recommending against the sale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stakeholders to re-emphasise the ban on swill-feeding during any public communications. • All messaging to re-emphasise compliance by producers /processors to ensure good biosecurity practice.

		<p>of pork products inside airports with connecting flights to Australia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border officials reported a significant increase in the number of incoming passengers, especially Chinese passengers, voluntarily declaring prohibited pork products in their luggage. • Government estimated the ‘leakage rate’ (i.e. the percentage of pork making it through quarantine without being intercepted) as ‘much less than 1%’ and considerably lower than other biosecurity risk material. • Samples were collected for a third round of ASF testing September and sent for testing. • Importation of risky pork products from Belgium had been stopped. • Government was engaging with Australian embassies overseas, international students, migration agents, e-commerce platforms, airlines, airports and more, in efforts to raise awareness of the ASF risk. • Enforcement and penalty measures had been strengthened. 	
3.	East Timor and Northern Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny had been increased on people and packages from East Timor following the outbreak there. • However, government estimated the flow of passengers between East Timor and Darwin to be around 20,000 per year, mostly fly-in, fly-out workers, which were assessed as ‘low risk’. • Government has been funding projects to raise awareness of serious animal diseases in our northern neighbours, including East Timor, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. This will help local authorities to quickly identify, report and contain outbreaks. • Department of Agriculture is making plans for responses in the event that ASF appears in the northern feral pig populations. • Government is working with northern states and territories, including with Torres Strait local officials. • In the Torres Strait, there was a largely unregulated flow of people and animals moving for ‘cultural purposes’ between south PNG and North Queensland. This was identified as a risk, and government was aware of it. The Department was in touch 	

		with its local biosecurity officers on Thursday Island and preparing localised information and messages to raise awareness.	
4.	Domestic Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of an outbreak, there is a process in place to determine what actions will be taken. A draft plan will be formulated at the local level where the outbreak occurred, then referred to the State established animal disease emergency response CCEAD/NMG Committee for decision. • A phone call would be made to senior decision makers responsible for the affected premise to advise of the government's planned response. • A national standstill for all pig movements was NOT mandatory under the existing plan for an ASF outbreak. But it was not ruled out, either. The shape of any standstill, which might be state-wide, for example, would need to be decided according to the circumstances of the outbreak. • Under the existing plans, only FMD and Equine Influenza warranted a mandatory national standstill on affected animals. • This was true also for product recalls. The necessity and scale of a product recall would be decided by the CCEAD/NMG Committee. • The CCEAD/NMG Committee would participate in an outbreak scenario exercise in December this year, and then in a bigger exercise during 2020 that would also involve supply chain and other stakeholders. Participants stated December, let alone 2020, was too far away, and that preparations needed to be underway much sooner. • South Australia's 'Exercise Rapid Strike' identified some critical gaps and held important lessons for all stakeholders. It highlighted that state CVOs must coordinate, lead and own the response with industry support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister McKenzie will be asking Mark Coulton MP to write to all local governments recommending heightened vigilance and oversight around backyard pig operations, given the high biosecurity risk. • The Department will pass on industry concerns regarding the delay before government-led outbreak scenario exercises are held.
5.	Processing Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no uniform approach for plants to take in the event of an outbreak. Like for farms, the exact response would be dictated by the circumstances of the outbreak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APL's ASF coordinator will explore the issues with processors.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were many unanswered questions around how processors would be affected by and respond to an incursion. For example, renderers refusal to handle ASF positive by-products, how would these be disposed of? • At state level, there had been a lack of communication between authorities in charge of handling an outbreak and the processors. Abattoirs reported they had not been approached to have a discussion about ASF by their state officials. • Plants were in the dark with no idea what would happen in an outbreak. Hence their hieghtened concerns. 	
6.	Next Call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next teleconference will be held on Friday 11 October at 10am. Details will be circulated in due course. 	