



A stronger biosecurity system

Good biosecurity makes good business sense—protecting Australia's reputation for quality, safe produce is critical to our competitiveness

Australia has an enviable animal and plant health status, which is underpinned by our strong biosecurity system. As a result, Australia has access to overseas markets which are not available to some of our competitor countries, generating better returns for farmers and export dollars for the economy.

A strong biosecurity system opens markets, lowers production costs, protects the environment and safeguards our health.

Biosecurity risks are on the rise. More global trade, changing regional prevalence of pests and diseases, and the development of northern Australia, all mean better surveillance and intelligence are needed so we can combat increased biosecurity risks.

Australia needs a stronger biosecurity system to respond to these challenges. The Government is investing in efforts to reduce the risk of entry of exotic pests and diseases and effectively managing outbreaks when they occur.

Surveillance and analysis

Prevention is better than cure. The costs of an incursion can be very high for farmers, industry, the community, and the economy. For example, it is estimated that if there were an outbreak of foot and mouth disease it would cost \$50 billion over a decade in lost markets and eradication efforts.

The Government is investing **an additional \$200 million over four years to improve biosecurity surveillance and analysis capability**. This adds to the substantial investment already made by the Government in protecting our borders.

Surveillance helps us to better detect and manage biosecurity risks early. Stamping out a new incursion is far easier than managing an ongoing—and expensive—problem. Better systems and information will help us target the risks that matter most for farmers and to safeguard our produce and markets. It will also help us to facilitate the flow of goods that are lower risk, lowering the costs of doing business.

An expansion of agriculture in northern Australia is important to our nation's growth, but it will create additional biosecurity risks. This is due to the proximity of neighbouring countries and the different climate and environment in the north. We will ensure biosecurity is well managed to reduce the risk of entry, establishment and spread of exotic pests and diseases.

Traceability

Our trading partners want to know that Australian produce is high-quality, safe and free of pests, weeds and diseases. Customers in overseas markets expect robust traceability systems that verify product integrity throughout the supply chain. And when there is a trade incident, we must be able to act quickly: good traceability supports fast responses.

That’s why we are investing **\$12.4 million over four years to strengthen Australia’s traceability arrangements.**

Example

In August 2013, New Zealand reported the possible presence of botulism in whey protein powder exported to Australia and other countries. The whey protein was further processed in Australia for export, so significant potential existed for Australian dairy exports to be adversely affected.

Effective trace-back procedures enabled potentially contaminated product to be quickly identified and withdrawn from the market. This safeguarded consumers and protected trade in Australian dairy products. The additional funding will enhance our capacity to respond to incidents involving Australian products in the future.

Delivering on our commitments

The Government is delivering on our 2013 commitment to strengthen Australia’s biosecurity system. We will build a stronger biosecurity system through the following initiatives.

- Delivering **new, modern biosecurity legislation** to replace the outdated *Quarantine Act 1908*. This change supports the risk-based approach to biosecurity, reduces regulation and improves compliance—saving businesses more than \$6.9 million a year in red tape.
- Establishing a **Trusted Trader Programme** to cut red tape for trusted exporters, cutting regulatory costs by \$24 million a year.
- Investing in **world-class biosecurity**, including:
 - a new post-entry quarantine facility;
 - \$20 million to help with faster, more effective responses to incursions— which, among other things is helping our northern banana farmers fight the incursion of Panama disease; and
 - biosecurity research, development and extension that protects farmers’ profits and supports innovation.

Further Information

- agwhitepaper.agriculture.gov.au

