

Managing Biosecurity Risk



By the HON. DAVID LITTLEPROUD MP, Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Biosecurity has never been as important as it is today. Dealing with biosecurity risks is becoming more challenging, with trade volumes and passenger movements forecast to double by 2025.

Australia's enviable pest and disease free status is no fluke.

Thanks to our strict biosecurity conditions, Australia remains free from many pests and diseases that are present in other countries and have the potential to devastate our \$60 billion agriculture industries, the environment, plant, animal and human health.

There is much more at stake. Our biosecurity system also safeguards:

- \$6 trillion in environmental assets;
- \$48 billion in agricultural exports;
- \$38 billion in inbound tourism; and
- 1.6 million jobs across the supply chain.

As biosecurity risks become more challenging and the landscape changes, Australia must evolve to effectively manage new threats.

Industry is one of our most important partners in this work.

Working with industry at the border is key in protecting our country from biosecurity risk.

We continue to strengthen our biosecurity systems and policies, working closely with industry.

The Australian Government recognised the importance of continuing to invest in Australia's biosecurity system with a number of funding announcements in the 2018-19 Budget. This has seen \$313 million over the next five years committed to strengthening Australia's biosecurity effort, most of which is ongoing funding that will provide a sustained boost to our capacity.

A model that we are increasingly applying across the board has been moving the biosecurity risks offshore where possible and increasing the range of biosecurity activities that can be performed by industry under an approved arrangement.

We are investing in innovative biosecurity technologies such as new X-ray and sensing technologies to improve pest detection and to support modern, seamless border clearance processes.

Industry is at the frontline of Australia's biosecurity system. To help stevedores and other sea and air port workers know what to do if they notice anything unusual, we have released a new cargo pest education video and pocket-sized pest guide.

The video and guide are designed to encourage reporting of any biosecurity risk material such as bugs, snails, birds, bees, moths, soil and plant matter. The message is simple See. Secure. Report.

You are critical to success in helping protect our country from biosecurity risks. I encourage you to view the video and download the guide at <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/arrival/pests>, and to share them with your colleagues.

My department's stronger measures to keep Australia free from brown marmorated stink bugs (BMSB) and the key role of industry is a good example of this.

A BMSB outbreak would be devastating for Australia. This pest would severely damage fruit and vegetable crops, making them unsaleable or reducing production yields.

Adult BMSB would also enter vehicles, homes and factories in large numbers to shelter over winter. Some people can suffer an allergic reaction from contact with BMSB.

Due to the spread of the pest across Europe and detection in goods previously considered low risk, the measures this season were

extended beyond Italy and the USA to seven other European countries, with increased surveillance of vessels from Japan.

Our success to date is largely due to our work with industry, including shippers, port authorities, customs brokers, transport logistics providers and manufacturers.

During this year's BMSB season, industry has supported our efforts by helping to identify high-risk cargo, lodging cargo reports and declarations, and conducting inspections.

I would also like to particularly acknowledge Freight & Trade Alliance (FTA) who led the advocacy calling for independent review of BMSB. Supporting this position, the Inspector General Biosecurity will be engaging with stakeholders in formulating reforms to deal with the BMSB threat whilst facilitating the movement of international freight in the years ahead.

In the 2018-19 Budget the Australian Government also announced a new Biosecurity Imports Levy on all containers and non-containerised cargo transported to Australia by sea to help fund the government's \$313 million biosecurity package. This will help provide cutting edge technologies and better biosecurity data, analytics and intelligence.

The levy is aimed at reducing the biosecurity risks created by containers and non-containerised cargo entering Australia by sea. The levy will also help to create a more effective way of doing business by expediting the process at the border.

After receiving feedback from FTA and other industry representatives, potential changes to the levy design and implementation are being explored with industry. I welcome further ideas from all industry sectors on the best approach to the sustainable and equitable support of Australia's vital biosecurity systems and our improved trade environment.

I am extremely proud of the way industry and the Australian Government are working together to help keep Australia free of biosecurity risks, and I look forward to continuing our partnership as we move into the future.

I thank FTA and the broader industry for their efforts to date. It's important we continue to work together to keep biosecurity risks out of our country.

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