

FOR INFORMATION

NSDIP Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting Oct 2024

Agenda Item 2.1

Last updated: **9 October 2024**

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NSDIP COORDINATOR REPORT 2023-24 - QUEENSLAND

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the NSDIP Advisory Committee NOTE:
 - a. The activities undertaken, and use of funds provided, against the National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP) during the 2023-24 financial year in Queensland (Qld).
 - b. As of February 2023, Stephanie Grimmett is Queensland's Wildlife Health Australia (WHA) jurisdictional coordinator and contact for information/applications/eWHIS reporting for NSDIP funding of wildlife cases.

BACKGROUND

2. The Qld government subsidises the cost of laboratory testing of all disease incidents in commercial production animal species, with non-government veterinary practitioners (and in-turn, producers) incurring no laboratory fees to investigate clinical disease in these species at the Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory (BSL). NSDIP funding contributes towards a small portion the cost of this testing in cases meeting the criteria of 'significance'.
3. Laboratory investigations of significant disease incidents in Qld wildlife are also subsidised by the Qld government. This is occasionally supported by NSDIP funding. Application for NSDIP funds for eligible wildlife submissions is facilitated through Qld's WHA coordinator with administration provided by Wildlife Health Australia (WHA).
4. A large portion of Qld's 2022-23 NSDIP budget is allocated to support the delivery of bi-annual Animal Disease Investigation (ADI) training of private veterinarians to increase their knowledge, skills and confidence in investigating and reporting on significant disease events in livestock.

DISCUSSION

1. Application of the NSDIP in Qld for the 2023-24 financial year supported the state's animal disease surveillance capacity via financial contribution to the comprehensive suite of laboratory testing for eligible significant disease incidents submitted by non-government veterinary practitioners from across the state.
2. During 2023-24, Queensland's jurisdictional laboratory, Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory conducted testing for 2000 disease investigations in production animal species, of which 1890 (95%) were submitted by non-government veterinary practitioners. Submission numbers from the top 5 submitter types are displayed in Figure 1. Submissions from cattle (1237) comprised the majority of these, with fewer submissions for investigation of disease incidents in horses (472), pigs (91), goats (51), sheep (48), poultry (62), and camelids (17).

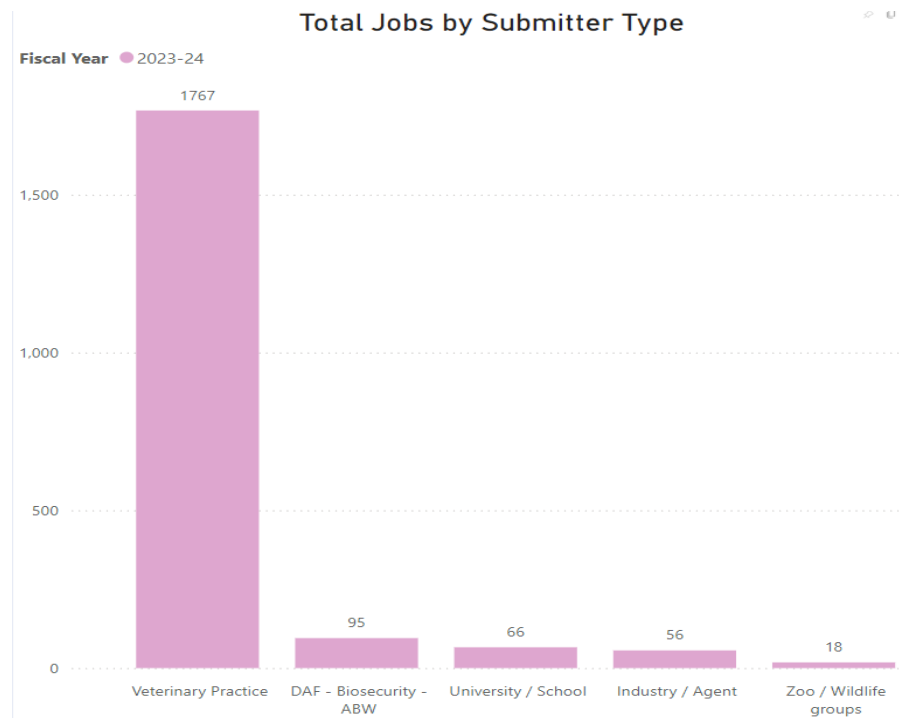


Figure 1 – Total number of production animal species disease investigations by submitter type

3. Of the 2000 production animal submissions received from non-government veterinarians, 57 cases (2.85%) were claimed against NSDIP funding. The count of NSDIP jobs by animal species and the number for which one or more notifiable disease was excluded (47% of jobs) are presented below (Figure 2). There were further potentially eligible cases which were funded solely by the Queensland government and not represented here.

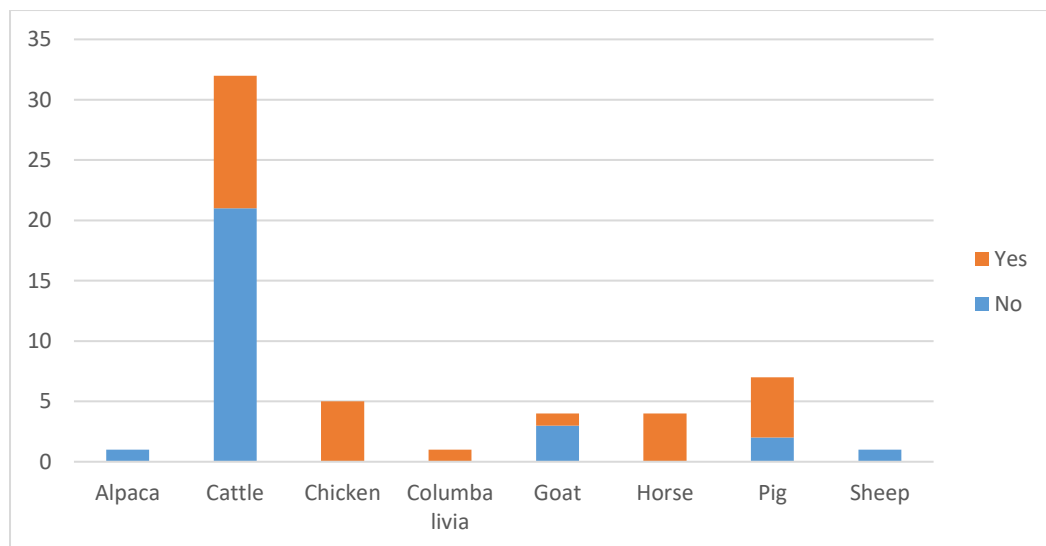


Figure 2 – Number of claimed NSDIP jobs by animal species and proportion with notifiable disease exclusions testing (orange)

4. During 2023-24, a single significant disease investigation in black flying-foxes was eligible under the NSDIP. Please refer to WHA's report for further details. Queensland thanks WHA for their continued support of this program for events in Queensland wildlife.

5. Qld undertook two private veterinary practitioner (PVP) workshops in August 2023 (SE Qld) and March 2024 (North Qld) with a final report (Attachment A) summarising the activities and learnings submitted to AHA for circulation to the committee in June 2024.
6. Following Phase 1 of an ICT reporting enhancement project (to improve extraction of surveillance data from our Laboratory Information Management System) that occurred in 2022-23, additional review and refinement of this work occurred during 2023-24 in preparation to moving NAHIP reporting to AUSPestCheck.
7. Following feedback from BSL pathologists, updated criteria for NSDIP case eligibility were circulated and a system implemented at BSL for the receiving pathologist to assign potentially eligible cases for review by the NSDIP coordinator. Together with the ICT enhancements, this has led to a reduction in time spent by the NSDIP coordinator in assessing and reporting of eligible cases.
8. Examining disease investigation submissions to confirm eligibility for NSDIP was delayed due to competing priorities. Approval to carry over \$5,755.62 (ex GST) of unclaimed funds from the 2023-24 budget into 2024-25 was granted, with invoicing and uploading of Q3 and Q4 2023-24 NSDIP data to NAHIS to be completed in Q1 2024-25.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. As per the 2022-25 NSDIP Business Plan, Qld's funding allocation for 2023-24 was \$48,314.00 (ex GST). Invoices submitted against Qld's budget (as detailed below) totalled \$42,558.38, with a balance of \$5,755.62 to be carried over into 2024-25.
 - a. \$12,250.00 = Q1 laboratory testing expenditure
 - b. \$14,400.00 = Q2 laboratory testing expenditure
 - c. \$9,368.39 = PVP workshop 1 (August 2023)
 - d. \$6,539.99 = PVP workshop 2 (March 2024)

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

1. Consultation with DAF ICT staff on improvements in extracting NSDIP investigations data from our Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) is occurring in association with work on improving retrieval of data for all NAHIP programs and preparation to moving NAHIP reporting to AUSPestCheck.
2. Review of Qld's [NSDIP webpage](#) was conducted in June 2023 with changes made to provide clearer communication on how NSDIP funds are utilised within Qld and to include WHA's new link to their webpage on disease investigation funding.

NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS

1. A further two PVP workshops are planned for 2024-25. Qld's training proposal document (Attachment B) and request to use \$28,000 of Qld's NSDIP budget for this activity was submitted to the advisory committee in June 2024, with subsequent approval granted.
2. Refinement of the proposal on the future application of the NSDIP in Queensland, including the assessment of the proportionality of funds to PVP training vs. reimbursement of laboratory expenses is continuing.

Attachment A: *Significant Disease Investigation Training Queensland 2023/2024 - Queensland Private Veterinary Practitioner Significant Disease Investigation Refresher Training Workshop Report*

Attachment B: *Queensland NSDIP 2024/2025 PVP Training Proposal - Queensland Private Veterinary Practitioner Significant Disease Investigation Refresher Training*

FEEDBACK

2. Qld provides the following responses to the questions below to assess the performance of the NSDIP over the 2022–23 year and to offer feedback and suggested changes for continual improvement:

Q1 My organisation's needs and expectations of the NSDIP are being met.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes: NSDIP contributes towards the delivery of a fully subsidised animal disease surveillance system, with funding going towards those disease investigations deemed 'significant'. It is noted that while the goals of the program are clearly articulated in the NSDIP Business Plan, there is sufficient room for the jurisdictions to deliver the program in a flexible manner.				

Q2 The National Significant Disease Investigation Program has provided opportunities to private veterinarians for gaining the necessary knowledge and skills to investigate and report on disease events.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes: The availability of funds to support PVP training activities provides meaningful opportunities to build relationships between government and private veterinarians and to develop the skills of veterinarians to improve the quality of disease investigations submissions.				

Q3 The National Significant Disease Investigation Program has helped to improve the level of notifiable disease investigations through effective engagement with private veterinarians and assisting in funding investigations that may not have progressed otherwise.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please explain your answer, including any suggested changes: The Queensland government fully subsidises the cost of laboratory testing of all disease incidents in commercial production animal species, with non-government veterinary practitioners (and in-turn, producers) incurring no laboratory fees to investigate clinical disease in these species. As the program is currently applied in Qld, limited NSDIP funding contributes towards the cost of this laboratory testing, it does not further incentivise the producer or private veterinarian to undertake such investigations. The use of the NSDIP funding to provide training for PVPs is well received by PVPs and the veterinary industry, however, this does not appear to be reflected by an increase in the number of notifiable investigations submissions in Queensland. The 'quality' of submissions is currently unable to be accurately assessed and Qld is considering approaches on how to assess this. It should be noted that the availability of funding support for significant disease investigations in wildlife does result in submissions for laboratory testing and an increased range of laboratory testing that may otherwise not occur.				