

NAMP TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING RECORD OF MEETING – DRAFT

Tuesday 24th – Tuesday 31st August 2021 | Teleconference

In attendance:

- **ACDP** – Debbie Eagles, Tristan Reid
- **AHA** – Ian Langstaff (Chair), Kathy Gibson (24th-25th exercise only), Emily Sears, Mikhaila Nye (24th-25th), Gianna Magnocavallo (24th-25th exercise only), Sam Allan (24th exercise only)
- **Australian Dairy Farmers** – Justin Toohey (24th-25th exercise only)
- **DAWE** – Adam Robinson, Cara McNally
- **LiveCorp** – Katie Hallatt, Wayne Collier (24th), Imogen Goode (24th-25th)
- **NAQS** – Skye Fruean, Glenn Bellis, Anna Genge, Charlotte Burgoyne
- **NSW** – Deb Finlaison, Peter Kirkland, Peter Gillespie, Birgit Loecker
- **NT** – Peter Saville, Kitman Dyrting (24th)
- **Qld** – Bruce Hill, Allison Crook (24th-25th exercise only) Leanne Nelson (25th, 31st)
- **SA** – Trent Scholz
- **Tas** – Deb Groll (24th-25th)
- **Vic** – Karen Moore, Berwyn Squire
- **WA** – Marion Seymour

Tuesday 24 August 2021 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm AEST

1 Exercise Tiliqua Part 1

- *An exercise report will be developed separately*

Wednesday 25 August 2021 10:30 am – 4:00 pm AEST

2.1 Progress on 2020 TC meeting action list – M Nye (AHA)

- M Nye spoke to the paper.
- Action 5 – *D Finlaison/P Kirkland to provide final report on the EHDV study* under Agenda Item 4.2.
- Action 6 – *R Stutchbury to send samples to G Bellis in propylene glycol to determine if the morphology is affected and if the samples can still be tested by PCR, and report back to the Committee* is in progress. DNA analysis and mounting is pending.
- All other actions are complete.

Conclusion

Update on action items accepted as written.

2.2 Virology and entomology reports – Coordinators

- All Coordinators spoke to their reports.
- A Genge noted that some jurisdictional data is missing from the budget reports.
- A Genge will be taking over the NT and WA entomology while G Bellis is on leave.

- Discussion on vector distribution in the NT, noting there is a defined range. Further details will be added to the NT annual report.
- Discussion around light trap supply and the types of traps used.
- B Loecker proposed adding cleaning instructions to collaborator information to assist with trap care and maintenance. B Squire commented that field staff in Vic usually collect the traps at the end of the season and this year will get them sent in for cleaning and servicing.
- Discussion on current spare light trap numbers stored at NSW DPI. G Bellis can access new traps. Agreement that old traps should be replaced with new ones when they are brought in for repair. AHA confirmed that the cost of purchasing new traps is paid for by NAMP.
- K Moore advised the committee that B Squire will be taking over as the Vic coordinator in Oct 2021.
- Discussion around SA Cordillo Downs site and single *C. brevitarsis* detection. B Loecker to add a comment in corresponding NAMP data (small possibility of false positive) to provide context to refer to in future years.
- AHA notified of duplicate data appearing in the NAMP interactive map.
- ACDP provided an update on NextStrain project, and request that more isolate samples be sent to ACDP for the project.
- Discussion on creating a reference collection with DNA and mounted specimens from the southern states.
- The entomology training workshop has been postponed due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- Discussion on projects at BVL and ACDP related to vector competence and distribution of horse biting *Culicoides* in Australia – discussed range of trapping methods and also relevance of Akabane serology to determine distribution of horse-feeding *Culicoides*.

Conclusion

The Committee accepted the virology and entomology reports as read, with the request for additional information on vectors to be added to the NT report.

Action

1. AHA to investigate issue with sites not showing in budget reports.
2. A Genge to add further details to NT report around vector range.
3. B Hill to send BTV 15 samples to ACDP.
4. B Loecker to update procedure documents around trap care and the number of new traps required.
5. B Loecker to add a comment in NAMP data for the single *C. brevitarsis* to provide context to refer to in future years.
6. AHA to resolve interactive map duplication issue.

2.3 Activities summary – M Nye (AHA)

- M Nye spoke to the activities summary on the NAMP wiki.

Conclusion

NAMP 2020-21 Activity Summary to be reviewed by the Technical Committee out of session.

Action

7. Coordinators to provide any outstanding data and comments on the activity summary to AHA.

3 Exercise Tiliqua Part 2

- An exercise report will be developed separately

Tuesday 31 August 2021 10:30 am – 3:00 pm AEST

4.1 Requirements of current trading partners and for access to new markets – A Robinson (DAWE)

- A Robinson spoke to the paper, noting that there were challenges in obtaining the trade statistics remotely, however these can be circulated at a later date if requested.
- NAMP has functioned as required to support and strengthen existing markets over the last 12 months. Flexibility to respond to requests and enquiries with China's General Administration of Customs of the Peoples Republic of China (GACC) Working Group was noted as a strength of NAMP.

Conclusion

The Australian Government report was noted by the Technical Committee.

Action

8. A Robinson to confirm a presenter for the DAWE paper at the SC meeting in October.

4.2 EHDV Transmission Distribution Study Report – D Finlaison (NSW)

- D Finlaison outlined the findings of the retrospective serological study of epizootic haemorrhagic disease virus on end of season samples in NSW from 2008 to 2018. Results were broadly analogous with Simbu group transmission and the known range of *C. brevitarsis*.
- It was noted that the results will help discussions with trading partners regarding EHDV. It is a challenge to know how much precision and ongoing monitoring is required.

Conclusion

The Technical Committee noted the EHDV report.

Action

9. A Robinson to review the paper provided and provide any comments to the group.

4.3 Southern species *Culicoides* key – G Bellis (NAQS)

- G Bellis outlined the need for an identification key for midges in southeastern Australia. The current dichotomous key covers species within NT, SA, and WA.
- The committee supported the development of a more comprehensive resource to assist in identification of all species that NAMP is likely to collect.
- A lucid key was agreed as the preferred way as it allows for variation and interpretation based on different characters. It was suggested that the starting point would be well understood fauna such as the northern Australia key, with other taxa from southern regions to be added progressively over time.
- The key would be developed in a licenced software but can then be housed publicly on a website with a browser plugin. AHA's website was the suggested location for this.

Conclusion

The Committee supported the need for an identification key, and agreed to progress work on developing a lucid key.

Action

10. G Bellis to prepare a written proposal for the development of a lucid key for Australian *Culicoides* spp.

4.4 NAMP Strategy Discussion – all

- The committee confirmed that there were no important changes in the distribution of viruses and vectors, epidemiology of BTV in Australia, nor any new information about the competency of Australian vectors as part of the strategy discussion.
- S Fruean updated the committee on a project seeking to determine the species of *Culicoides* spp. that are most likely to act as vectors of AHSV in northern Australia (contact is Jenny Baird, DAWE). Some trapping data from this project is in NAMP-Info. I Langstaff queried if there would be benefit for the project in using NAMP-Info to follow the surveillance work being undertaken. It was suggested that co-operator submission forms could potentially be updated to include information on the host species near traps.
- G Bellis invited the committee to provide blood fed midge specimens obtained from locations near horses.
- In considering the technical strategy of NAMP their members expressed that criteria and protocols for the follow-up of routine and non-routine detections were being tested as part of Exercise Tiliqua.
- In considering the technical strategy it was noted that the buffer area is often in very remote areas and while every effort to source age-appropriate homebred animals in these areas is made, sometimes animals may be outside of the preferred age range.
- Discussion of monitoring plans and the number and location of activities occurred under Item 6.

Conclusion

The Committee considered its technical strategy, and agreed that the current monitoring activities are sufficient within the allocated budget.

Action

11. S Fruean to discuss internally to determine if DAWE would like to house the AHSV project data in NAMP-Info
12. States and territories to send samples of vectors that have potentially bitten horses to NAQS via Berrimah.

5.1 Review of risk register – I Langstaff (AHA)

- I Langstaff requested the committee consider any required changes to the risk register.
- The committee discussed challenges with maintaining sentinel herds in remote pastoral areas. It was agreed that the risk and mitigation through the coordinators reflected the risk adequately. Where sentinel bleeds have not been undertaken as planned, serosurveys can be used to assist in filling gaps.

Conclusion

The Committee agreed that the risk register accurately captured current risks to the program.

Action

13. All coordinators to review the risk register and providing any further feedback or recommendations to the Steering Committee.

6.1 – Zone change retraction proposal Pilliga – D Finlaison (NSW)

- D Finlaison spoke to the paper provided, proposing a zone change retraction at Pilliga.
- The committee supported a retraction of the zone that ran north to south over Narrabri and noted that having a sentinel herd at Bingara or Barraba would assist in supporting any further retractions of the zone.

Conclusion

The Technical Committee endorsed the zone change retraction, with the amendment on the location of the buffer zone.

Action

14. D Finlaison, I Langstaff and M Nye to finalise zone change for Pilliga on the interactive map.

6.2 Changes to the Operations Plan – B Loecker (NSW)

- B Loecker outlined a series of proposed changes in the NAMP Operations Plan around entomology practices to better align with the processes and practices being implemented.
- The committee agreed to update the plan to list a range of ethanol of 70-100%, with the purer ethanol providing a higher success rate in DNA analysis of entomology samples.
- The committee discussed updating the instruction around sample handling to add further options for transport e.g. 'road transport only'. Challenges in remote regions of northern WA and Queensland around guaranteeing road transport for all of the journey were noted. Alternatives have included reducing the volume of ethanol and the use of propylene glycol.
- The committee discussed the use of propylene glycol (40%) for trapping and transport, noting that this was simpler to meet CASA and IATA requirements, however it is unsure if specimens submerged in propylene glycol for extended periods of time (e.g. >3 months) would be suitable for molecular analysis. The committee agreed that samples submerged in propylene glycol, particularly those that may be routinely delayed in being submitted, should be tested to ensure they remain suitable for molecular analysis.
- The committee agreed that the appendix covering trapping instructions to co-operators be updated to reflect that samples should be sent as soon as possible after the collection event to avoid the deterioration of specimens.
- The committee agreed to updates under responding to target and non-target vectors to reflect that the detection situations outlined may require additional verification (which may include consultation with the NAMP Reference entomologist and the use of additional diagnostics) for vectors within the transmission zone and limit of known seasonal distribution. Only detections identified outside of known seasonal distribution and the transmission zone will require notification to the technical committee.

Conclusion

The Committee agreed to the suggested updates to the Operations Plan.

Action

15. L Nelson to provide samples that have been submerged in propylene glycol for more than 3 months and less than one month to G Bellis to test if samples remain suitable for molecular analysis.
16. I Langstaff and M Nye to action the agreed updates to the Operations Plan.

6.3 Recommendations and proposed changes for monitoring in 2021-22 – all

- K Moore outlined that one of the existing Vic trapping co-operators wished to withdraw from the program. The committee discussed the best replacement option and agreed that it would be beneficial to move trapping to the region near Bairnsdale, given the diversity in trap catches of the two coastal Vic sites.
- T Scholz recommended an additional entomology site in the northeast of SA following the single *C. brevitarsis* detection this year. The committee supported this and suggested that it would be ideal for this to be placed at Innamincka as the existing sentinel herd could provide timely information on virus activity. In addition, the committee considered and supported an opportunistic serosurvey near Pandie Pandie Station if the opportunity arises during 2021-22.
- B Hill commented that there is a reliance on opportunistic serosurveys in south-west Qld following several drought years. The additional monitoring in SA may also provide information to inform the activity in this area.
- D Finlaison noted that NSW may look to relocate a sentinel herd to help support surveillance near Bingara and Barraba as discussed under Item 6.1.
- The committee discussed a potential gap in surveillance in southern WA, with no activity from Bunbury across to the SA border. It was noted that this area is important for trade and while there had not been specific enquiries a site would help to provide information in the event of an aberrant result.

Conclusion

The Committee agreed to the suggested updates to trapping for the 2021-22 season, and identified a potential surveillance gap in WA.

Action

17. K Moore to update recommendation to move the Echuca (V067) site to the Bairnsdale region and identify a co-operator.
18. T Scholz to update SA recommendations to include an additional opportunistic serosurvey site near Pandie Pandie and an additional budgeted entomology site near Innamincka.
19. M Seymour to update recommendations to include a brief on the additional ongoing site near Esperance.

6.4 Forecast/propose any changes to activities for 2022-23 – all

- The Technical Committee considered activities for the 2022-23 year and were comfortable with the draft plan, noting that this would be reviewed during the 2021-22 season.

Conclusion

No changes were forecast for the 2022-23 year.

6.5 NAMP-Info database management system issues and development requirements – all

- Committee members commented that the interactive map can be very slow to load but reflected that this is likely a combination of the system, amount of data and internet speeds.
- G Bellis confirmed that the report issue outlined last week had been resolved.
- B Loecker queried if it was possible for the maps to use a single small marker to enable coordinators to be able to provide additional symbols and layers on top outside of the system.
- The committee noted that there may be some errors in historical records and should be

mindful of this if data is shared externally to the program. E Sears responded that if coordinators are aware of incorrect data, then AHA can assist with correcting historic data in the system. It was agreed that the current information was sufficiently accurate for the purposes of zone mapping and that an extensive data validation is not currently warranted.

Conclusion

No major issues with the database system were identified. The Committee to contact AHA with any further issues or queries.

Action

20. M Nye and E Sears to explore interactive map request with B Loecker.

7.1 Draft management report to Steering Committee – I Langstaff (AHA)

- I Langstaff spoke to the paper, noting that data would be updated prior to the Steering Committee meeting.
- E Sears clarified that the report would include the under activity, over activity and recommendations sections of the coordinator reports.
- The committee discussed the increase in the database costs for the year ahead, with it being clarified that the arrangement had shifted to a pay as you go type agreement and included an increase in costs. It was noted that if the NAHIS database is transitioned to AUSPestCheck then the cost to NAMP to operate the underlying system would increase, as two programs rather than three would be supporting this.

Conclusion

The Technical Committee supported the draft management report, noting that the data would be updated prior to being sent to the Steering Committee.

Action

21. All coordinators to update annual report over and under activity sections to provide commentary against any variations in activity of 10% or greater.

8.1 Next Meeting

- I Langstaff thanked K Moore for her work with the program.
- Tentative dates for the 2022 Annual Meeting are the 23-24 August, location TBC.

Meeting close: 3:10 PM.

NAMP TECHNICAL COMMITTEE – ACTION REGISTER

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#	ACTION	WHO	BY	STATUS
1	Investigate issue with sites not showing in budget reports.	AHA	15 Sep 2021	Complete
2	Add further details to NT report around vector range.	A Genge	20 Sep 2021	
3	Send BTV 15 samples to ACDP.	B Hill	30 Oct 2021	
4	Update procedure documents around trap care and the number of new traps required.	B Loecker	15 Oct 2021	In progress
5	Add a comment in NAMP data for the single <i>C. brevitarsis</i> to provide context to refer to in future years.	B Loecker	20 Sep 2021	Complete
6	Resolve interactive map duplication issue.	AHA	20 Sep 2021	In progress
7	Provide any outstanding data and comments on the activity summary to AHA.	Coordinators	20 Sep 2021	Complete
8	Confirm a presenter for the DAWE paper at the SC meeting in October.	A Robinson	20 Sep 2021	
9	Review the EHDV paper provided and provide any comments to the group.	A Robinson	29 Oct 2021	
10	Prepare a written proposal for the development of a lucid key for Australian <i>Culicoides</i> spp.	G Bellis	27 Sep 2021	
11	Discuss internally to determine if DAWE would like to house the AHSV project data in NAMP-Info.	S Fruean	5 Oct 2021	Complete
12	Send samples of vectors that have potentially bitten horses to NAQS via Berrimah.	Coordinators	30 Nov 2021	
13	Review the risk register and providing any further feedback or recommendations to the Steering Committee.	Coordinators	27 Sep 2021	
14	Finalise zone change for Pilllga on the interactive map.	D Finlaison and AHA	15 Sep 2021	Complete
15	Provide samples that have been submerged in propylene glycol for more than 3 months and less than one month to G Bellis to test if samples remain suitable for molecular analysis.	L Nelson and G Bellis	31 Jan 2021	
16	Action the agreed updates to the Operations Plan.	AHA	30 Sep 2021	
17	Update recommendation to move the Echuca (V067) site to the Bairnsdale region and identify a co-operator.	K Moore	20 Sep 2021	
18	Update SA recommendations to include an additional opportunistic serosurvey site near Pandie Pandie and an additional budgeted entomology site near Innamincka.	T Shultz	20 Sep 2021	
19	Update recommendations to include a brief on the additional ongoing site near Esperance.	M Seymour	20 Sep 2021	
20	Explore interactive map request with B Loecker.	AHA and B Loecker	30 Sep 2021	
21	Update annual report over and under activity sections to provide commentary against any variations in activity of 10% or greater.	Coordinators	20 Sep 2021	