

FOR INFORMATION

NSDIP Advisory Committee Annual Meeting 2023

Agenda Item 9.1

Last updated: **1 June 2023**

Prepared by A.Kabaila

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT UPDATE**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the NSDIP Advisory Committee NOTE the relevant Commonwealth activities influencing significant disease investigation and training:
 - a. Scoping of a Southern Australia Biosecurity Surveillance Network

BACKGROUND

2. At the annual NSDIP Advisory Committee meeting in 2021, the Commonwealth noted that options would be explored for the development of a Southern Australia Biosecurity Network (SABSnet) to boost Australia's preparedness and surveillance capabilities, noting the success of NABSnet.

DISCUSSION**Scoping of a Southern Australia Biosecurity Network (SABSnet)**

1. Under a previous initiative of the Australian Government, a formal network of veterinarians, government officers and animal owners was established in northern Australia – the Northern Australia Biosecurity Surveillance Network (NABSnet), with positive outcomes. NABSnet provides access to enhanced subsidies, information, mentoring, support, and training on investigation of disease events and sampling for EADs.
2. The Commonwealth undertook to assess stakeholder needs for increased disease surveillance in southern Australia, including a possible southern Australia Biosecurity Network (SABSnet).
3. A consultant was engaged to:
 - Collate stakeholder views and preferences (including state and territory governments, veterinarians, and industry groups).
 - Review the existing surveillance system and identify gaps.
 - Present options for improvement.
4. The consultants (Biosecurity Advisory Service) delivered the final report in May 2023, '*Scoping of a Southern Australia Biosecurity Surveillance Network for Significant Disease Investigations*'.
5. The Commonwealth is now considering the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. No funding is required through the NSDIP.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

7. The consultants undertook a stakeholder needs analysis with a range of stakeholders including:
 - Chief Veterinary Officers.

- Relevant Agriculture Departments' staff, for example, field veterinarians, epidemiologists, pathologists and surveillance managers. In NSW, this included Local Land Services (LLS) staff.
- Private veterinarians with a focus on those working in remote or isolated areas.
- Personnel involved in the NABSnet program and the coordinator of the Tasmanian Livestock Health Monitoring Network.
- Livestock industry organisations (particularly cattle and sheep) at state and national levels.
- Animal Health Australia (AHA) personnel managing the National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP) and the Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Freedom Assurance Program (TSEFAP).
- Wildlife Health Australia.
- The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) at state and national levels.
- Other relevant consultants and veterinary academic staff working in this area.

NEXT STEPS/ACTIONS

1. The Commonwealth is currently considering the independent report '*Scoping of a Southern Australia Biosecurity Surveillance Network*' to determine next steps
2. The implementation of a southern Australia network will be an option considered by the Commonwealth.

FEEDBACK

Q1 My organisation's needs and expectations of the NSDIP are being met.				
Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The program continues to support disease investigations either through training or funding support, which helps Australia's passive surveillance. The Commonwealth continues to support this approach. The Commonwealth would welcome information on the 2022-2023 period, including numbers of significant disease investigations and trends. The Commonwealth would be grateful if the 2019-2022 business plan could be provided again (if it has already been provided), noting there has been significant change and restructure in the responsible work area within the Commonwealth, and noting the previous action item from the last meeting: • <i>Updates to the Business Plan accepted. AHA to further update the business plan and circulate to the committee for comment OOS in the first half of 2022.</i> • <i>Action- AHA to implement updates to the NSDIP Business Plan for 2023-25 and circulate to the committee by mid-2022 for comment.</i> The NAQS program consider that continued discussion and work needs to be done on setting both clinical and surveillance case definitions for animal diseases.				

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

The Commonwealth agrees that NSDIP provides these opportunities, noting however that the way the NSDIP is used and implemented appears to vary between jurisdictions. Jurisdictional representatives are best placed to report on implementation and utility of the NSDIP.

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
The Commonwealth agrees that NSDIP provides these opportunities, noting however that the way the NSDIP is used and implemented appears to vary between jurisdictions. Jurisdictional representatives are best placed to report on implementation and utility of the NSDIP.				