

NSDIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL MEETING 2020

RECORD OF MEETING

Thursday 10 September 2020 | Videoconference

In attendance: Emily Sears (AHA – Chair), Mikhaila Nye (AHA – record), Ian Langstaff (AHA), Rhyl Vallis (Aus. Gov.), Claire Harrison (NSW), Elizabeth Stedman (NT), Janine Barrett (Qld), Jane Owens (SA), Mary Lou Conway (Tas.), Sue Martin (Tas.), Karen Moore (Vic.), Bruce Twentyman (WA), Nicole Tan (WA), Tiggy Grillo (WHA), Verity Price (ALFA, *Industry Forum representative*)

Apologies: Janene Kingston (Aus. Gov.), Melanie Latter (AVA), Keren Cox-Witton (WHA)

Objectives of meeting

1. Brief committee members on program deliverables, achievements, issues and expenditure.
2. Receive and discuss urgent program matters.
3. Discuss the NSDIP Business Plan for 2019 – 2022.

Welcome and introductions (E Sears)

- The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting, noted apologies, and outlined the objectives of program along with the objectives for the meeting.
- The Chair advised of the change to the WA Coordinator and welcomed B Twentyman to the committee.
- The Chair outlined the agenda and requested any changes and additional items. No changes or additions were requested.

1. 2019-20 in review

1.1 Update on 2019 action items (M Nye)

- Spoke to the action register and noted the status of all action items.
- All action items completed, noting Item #5 was superseded following a role change within NSW.

Conclusion

All action items accepted as per the report. No actions.

1.2 Program Status Report (E Sears)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Noted that the 2019-20 expenditure was within budget. State and territory member service delivery reported an under expenditure due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions preventing face to face training activities. Accruals from the prior year also impacted the coordination figures.
- Table 1- *Deliverables and performance*, noted that the deliverable around disease investigation training for non-government veterinarians was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. All other deliverables were completed.
- Table 2 – *Key achievements and operational issues*, correction to the dates to be 2019-20. Noted good utilisation of the program from all states and territories.
- Figure 2 – *Number of NSDIP livestock and wildlife disease event investigations*, discussion that all wildlife and feral animal disease investigations under NSDIP should be done in consultation with the state or territory WHA Coordinator and WHA (Who administers the national budget for the wildlife NSDIP).
- Figure 6 – *Number of NSDIP investigations reported by syndrome and species*, correction to the date to be 2019-20.
- Table 3 – *NNDI exclusions by disease/syndrome*, action item from last year.

- Discussion by the Committee about the application of funding from the program between jurisdictions. The spatial maps of investigations show increased coverage and highlighted the different application of the program across jurisdictions.
- The NSDIP budget is a small component of funding towards significant disease investigation work and while there is a base amount available to all jurisdictions, the budget is applied flexibly to complement other systems. Some jurisdictions use additional funding from sources external to the NSDI program to cross subsidise investigations reported to the program, while others apply the budget to fully fund a small number of cases and additional cases are not reported to NSDIP.
- Vic and Qld noted that they select cases that are representative to highlight work and those that generate public value national notifiable disease exclusion data. Acknowledge that data is also reported through the other reporting mechanisms.

Conclusion

Program status report accepted, noting the required amendment to the date range for Table 2 and Figure 6.

Action

- i. AHA to amend date range for Table 2 and Figure 6 and recirculate the program status report.

2. Reports 2019-20**2.1 Coordinator reports****WA (B Twentyman)**

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Noted funding through the NSDIP covers 8% of significant disease investigation work in WA. The budget is applied to fully fund investigations until it is expended.
- Noted that COVID-19 has disrupted the ability to hold regional meetings with private vets. Ongoing regular active engagement with private veterinarians is a focus for the regional government field veterinarians.
- The Committee discussed the difficulty in increasing funding to make a meaningful difference and to meet the needs of the jurisdictions. The funding of NSDIP is only a small portion of what is spent on significant disease investigations.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee.

Tas (ML Conway)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Noted that the program assists with communications with private practitioners and encourages producers to have disease events more thoroughly investigated.
- Concern over the corporatisation of veterinary practices which is pushing focus away from livestock services and into small animals. There is one corporate entity that manages several practices that is specifically large animal focused in Tas and some other practices are looking to restructure to address the gap.
- Noted rewording in the workbook is needed to clarify the reporting of the accounting figures.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee, noting clarifications required for the workbook.

Action

- ii. AHA to revise of the work sheet to ensure a clear guide and consistency of what is being reported in the accounting fields.

Vic (K Moore)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- NSDIP only supports a small portion of investigations, funding from Victorian sheep and cattle industry compensation funds has been utilised by Vic when available.
- The NSDIP has proven to be a good way to get engagement between private vets and district vets and ensuring diseases get investigated properly. Having a national program provides leverage to include exclusion testing as part of disease investigations.
- Spoke to the equine disease investigation report provided. Outlined that the program was established to specifically engage with horse industry veterinarians. Vic will continue to support and encourage the equine industry in submitting investigations through the normal significant disease investigation program.
- Outlined that a gap in significant disease investigations with the poultry industry and is looking to better engage them going forward.
- DAWE commented on the importance of the SEDIS project and work with the equine industry particularly with the movement of AHS into Asia and the need for continued engagement.
- Qld and AHA requested access to a copy of the Vic Pig Significant Disease Investigation Guide.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee, noting the need for continued engagement with the equine industry.

Action

- iii. K Moore to share the Vic Pig Significant Disease Investigation Guide with Qld and AHA.

SA (J Owens)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Fully fund investigations with both laboratory and veterinary subsidies. Once NSDIP budget is expended the same model is used however SA government funding is applied.
- Noted difficulties in obtaining invoices from private vets has resulted in the switch to an online system in SA. Invoices and case reports are submitted by veterinarians through an online form which has improved timeliness of reporting. The committee requested circulation of the details of the new submission system.
- Changed communications with private vets to reduce confusion around where funding comes from (nationally funded program vs SA funded programs) which has resulted in an increase in the number of claims.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee, noting the improvements to SA reporting system.

Action

- iv. J Owens to share information to the committee around online reporting and simplified messaging for vets.

NT (E Stedman)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Noted that additional funding through NABS has supported veterinarians undertaking disease investigations on pastoral and remote cattle properties and will continue for a further 3 years. The NSDIP has been used for more peri-urban disease investigations this year given the NABS focus on remote properties.
- The training planned for 2019-20 did not go ahead, with funding diverted to additional investigations. Assessing internal options to deliver training for 2020-21.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee.

NSW (C Harrison)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Utilisation of funding has been beneficial in allowing more thorough investigation of cases and better collaborations with the laboratory.
- Outlined 2020-21 training proposal to conduct additional webinars to add to the existing series targeted to regional and remote veterinarians but open to all. AHA noted a focus for professional development support for private vets in isolated areas for the year ahead. The committee supported the NSW proposal.
- The committee discussed the possibility of running national webinars to engage with veterinarians. Technology and facilities could allow streamlined resources, with additional state specific modules as additions. Interest in this was expressed by NT, SA, Vic. and WA. The committee requested access to the NSW webinar series.
- Noted that an online series could be a way to help with the continuity of the program in the event of unforeseen circumstances that prevent travel.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee. The 2020-21 NSW training proposal was supported by the committee.

Action

- v. C Harrison to provide additional details of spread of attendance from the 2019-20 training to AHA.
- vi. C Harrison to share the link to NSW webinars with the Committee.
- vii. AHA to assess potential options for national training webinars.

Qld (J Barrett)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Noted training has been carried over from the 2019-20 year to 2020-21 due to COVID-19.
- Up the development of the Qld Enhanced Passive Surveillance System, this will increase the number of national notifiable disease exclusions from Qld and increase the public value of data from investigations.
- Queried if the committee should look at expanding the criteria for NSDIP funding in the future to include a requirement that the private practitioners provide the opportunity to perform at least one national notifiable disease exclusion for cases to be considered as eligible for funding.
- Emphasised Qld's support of NSDIP in allowing for opportunities to increase quality and knowledge of private veterinarians undertaking disease investigations and WHAs management of feral and wildlife investigations.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee

WHA (T Grillo)

- Spoke to the paper provided.
- Reminder to the Committee that wildlife and feral animal investigations should be undertaken through jurisdictional WHA Coordinators and WHA.
- The program has been improving communications between private veterinarians and WHA Coordinators and expanded the network beyond the current WHA surveillance participants.

Conclusion

Report accepted by the Committee.

3. Australian Government report**3.1 Australian Government report (R Vallis)**

- Provided a verbal update.
- Updated the Committee on the new training modules from the University of Melbourne for online EAD training, including a module on sudden death in pigs and one on small animal emergency disease.
- It was noted that since NABSnet was formed in 2018 there has been a tenfold increase in the number of significant disease investigations in Northern Australia. Discussed the importance of mentoring in the success of the NABSnet program, where a veterinary advisor was available to discuss cases with.
- Discussed the potential for mentoring systems in other jurisdictions, noting that the NSDIP was originally designed to have government veterinarians in contact to provide that mentoring. Further assessment into current mentoring programs and networks in each jurisdiction is needed, with the suggestion to assess if the current systems are sufficient including through private practitioner feedback and discussing this through a teleconference later in the year.
- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment continues to see value in the NSDIP program. AHS and lumpy skin are current diseases of focus, with a push for further awareness and testing for these diseases.
- Provided an update on the EAD field guide (Blue Book). The Committee noted that there have been numerous requests for hard copies, with some jurisdictions printing copies. Further suggestions and feedback from the Committee to be provided to R Vallis via email.
- Discussion on increasing communications and targeting priority diseases. Suggested that guidance on priority diseases and communications to practitioners to be alert for specific conditions of interest. Noted the importance of consistency and reliability in messaging to private veterinarians. The committee agreed that it would be better to communicate diseases of interest and to encourage investigations of relevant syndromes aligning with diseases of interest, rather than being a limitation to testing. Discussed that formalisation of priority diseases and clarity to direct surveillance for conditions of interest more broadly from the Australian Government would be beneficial.

Conclusion

The Committee noted the update. Further discussion around mentoring to be discussed at a future meeting. Members noted that the surveillance system more broadly would benefit from the greater direction and clarity of priority diseases for surveillance from the Australian Government and ACVO.

Action

- viii. Coordinators to assess current mentoring programs and networks and report back to the Committee for further discussion.
- ix. Committee to provide feedback on the EAD Field Guide (Blue Book) to R Vallis.
- x. R Vallis to share (with the Commonwealth NAHIP representative) the request for greater clarity and direction of priority diseases for surveillance from the ACVO.

4. Business Plan**4.1 Business Plan 2019-22**

- Noted updates to the budget to reflect the agreed funding from members as developed through the AHA Annual Operating Plan. Feedback requested on the implementation of the base amount in relevant jurisdictions.

- The Committee agreed to review the business plan out of session, with particular focus on the risk register, including considering the risk of corporatisation of private practices and potential gap in the delivery of large animal services.

Action

- xi. The committee to review the business plan and provide comments to AHA.

5. Other business**5.1 Any other business****Industry update (V Price)**

- Expressed concerns around inconsistencies of the NSDIP and what is needed to add value or share nationally. Members responded that the NSDIP delivers excellent value, but limitations in the budget prevent extending the program further, particularly for smaller jurisdictions. The program supports jurisdictions in motivating improvements in programs and has addressed gaps in training and poor-quality disease investigation submissions. It also allows a national forum to discuss private practitioner involvement in the broader surveillance system.
- Informed the committee of an online training platform from the feedlot sector with modules on conducting necropsies, collecting, and labelling samples. The modules had input from veterinarians involved in the feedlot sector across different states. The Committee requested the link to be circulated.

Action

- xii. V Price to circulate link to training modules to Committee.

5.2 Date of next meeting: TBA

Meeting close: 12:54pm

NSDIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL MEETING ACTION REGISTER

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#	ACTION	WHO	BY	STATUS
i.	AHA to amend date range for Table 2 and Figure 6 and recirculate the program status report.	M Nye	October 2020	Complete
ii.	AHA to revise of the work sheet to ensure a clear guide and consistency of what is being reported in the accounting fields.	AHA	October 2020	
iii.	K Moore to share the Vic Pig Significant Disease Investigation Guide with Qld and AHA.	K Moore	October 2020	
iv.	J Owens to share information to the committee around online reporting and simplified messaging for vets.	J Owens	October 2020	Complete
v.	C Harrison to provide additional details of spread of attendance from the 2019-20 training to AHA.	C Harrison	October 2020	Complete
vi.	C Harrison to share the link to NSW webinars with the Committee.	C Harrison	October 2020	
vii.	AHA to assess potential options for national training webinars.	AHA	December 2020	
viii.	Coordinators to assess current mentoring programs and networks and report back to the Committee for further discussion.	All	December 2020	
ix.	Committee to provide feedback on the EAD Field Guide (Blue Book) to R Vallis.	All	October 2020	
x.	R Vallis to share (with the Commonwealth NAHIP representative) the request for greater clarity and direction of priority diseases for surveillance from the ACVO.	R Vallis	November 2020	
xi.	The committee to review the business plan and provide comments to AHA.	All	November 2020	
xii.	V Price to circulate link to training modules to Committee.	V Price	October 2020	