

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References

Answers to questions on notice

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

Inquiry: Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness

Question No: IQ22-000013

Hearing Date: 10 August 2022

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategy and Reform Division (BSRD)

Topic: Craik review recommendations

Hansard Page: 17

Question Date: 10 August 2022

Question Type: Spoken

Senator Ciccone asked:

Senator CICCONE: Why haven't all the recommendations of the Craik review been implemented? It was a fairly comprehensive review.

Mr Metcalfe: Unfortunately, the head of our publicity division is unwell today so I will take that on notice—

Senator CICCONE: Okay.

Mr Metcalfe: and we'll come back to you on that.

Answer:

1. Of the 42 recommendations made by the Craik review (*Priorities for Australia's biosecurity system: an independent review of the capacity of the national biosecurity system and its underpinning intergovernmental agreement*), the Commonwealth is responsible, or has assumed leadership, for ten recommendations (9, 12, 14, 15, 30, 31, 34, 36, 40, 41).
 - a. four recommendations are complete or require no further action (9, 31, 36, 40), with implementation of the further six underway or ongoing (12, 14, 15, 30, 34, 41).
2. The remaining recommendations are either the responsibility of all governments or are the responsibility of state and territory governments.

As at 15 August 2022:

Status	No. of recommendations (Cth lead)
Complete	17 (2)
Requiring enduring effort	12 (4)
In progress	8 (2)
No Further Action	4 (2)
On hold	1 (0)

3. As noted above, a number of recommendations are multi-jurisdictional and can involve significant change (in policy and/or operational arrangements), require consultation with a range of stakeholders, including industry, and/or further decisions by government. As a result, implementation can occur over an extended period.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

Inquiry: Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness

Question No: IQ22-000015

Hearing Date: 10 August 2022

Division/Agency: National Animal Disease Preparedness Coordinator

Topic: FMD risk profile for the past 12 months

Hansard Page: 18

Question Date: 10 August 2022

Question Type: Spoken

Senator McDonald asked:

Senator McDONALD: Thank you very much Chair, and thank you to the department and officials for waiting. Just to go back: I put a question on notice with regard to the list of foods. I want to add another question on notice, about the FMD risk profile and its changes over time—say, over the last 12 months to now—for different countries. We've spoken about there being foot-and-mouth disease in India, I believe in Vietnam and now Indonesia—and specifically Bali. I'm keen to understand that mix of risk profiles and for different vectors and pathways: more field and foot traffic, and weather. Would it be possible for that to be provided, please?

Mr Metcalfe: We'll endeavour to give you the most detail that we can. Whether it's able to be broken down in exactly that way, we'll need to check with our experts. But I'll take that on notice.

Senator McDONALD: Thank you—

Dr Locke: Sorry, Senator: I think in answer to a couple of the questions we've had that we should provide a more detailed chronology that talked about the step-up in measures that happened both with the Indonesia detection and also the Bali detection. We can list those out for you.

Senator McDONALD: Thank you, I'd appreciate that. I think there's a clear understanding that the move from Indonesia to Bali was a real trigger for heightened alertness. I'm just trying to understand the change in risk profile as well as for those other countries where we were already aware about foot-and-mouth—

Mr Metcalfe: Thanks, Senator. Dr Parker outlined that the expert assessment that Dr Cookson outlined was one of a number of areas that went into the department changing its view of risk and changing advice as to what measures should be in place.

Senator McDONALD: Thank you.

Answer:

Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is endemic in many countries and outbreaks are common in Asia, the Middle East, South America and parts of Africa.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry routinely undertakes science- and evidence-based evaluations to support the management of animal biosecurity risks, including FMD, and implements appropriate risk management measures to meet Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP). Biosecurity measures are applied offshore, at the border and onshore.

The department monitors the movement and spread of animal diseases globally and adjusts risk management measures appropriately.

There was a high level of activity across a number of areas in response to this development. A chronology of major events and departmental actions since the FMD detection in Indonesia is provided below.

March 2022	
2 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia notifies the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) of an outbreak of lumpy skin disease (LSD) in Riau province, Sumatra Island
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia writes to Australia Indonesia Health Security Partnership (AIHSP – a DFAT funded development program) seeking general assistance with LSD outbreak
3 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia removed from the department’s LSD-free Country List and associated import permits suspended or varied
15 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Chief Veterinary Officer (ACVO) virtual meeting with Indonesia Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
16 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The department appoints a Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer (DCVO) to focus on biosecurity threats in northern Australia and enhance engagement in Southeast Asia as they manage increasing animal disease risks
23 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACVO visit to Indonesia
30 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental LSD taskforce officially commenced (this taskforce later took on the role of FMD coordination and became the Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness Taskforce)
April 2022	
7 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFAT (AIHSP) letter to Indonesia offering to purchase vaccine and provide communications support
May 2022	
6 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal reports of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Indonesia, department made necessary notifications including to the Minister’s Office (MO), Animal Health Committee (AHC), the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC), Australian livestock industries and the CVOs of Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft National LSD Action Plan provided to stakeholders (this was followed by a series of workshops to further develop the plan)
9 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia officially notifies WOA of the FMD outbreak • Minister and Shadow Minister for Agriculture briefed by the department • Department published a media release on FMD in Indonesia • Department commenced daily updates to the MO • Increase in biosecurity measures at the Australian border, in response to confirmation that FMD has reached Bali. Since 9 May 2022, the department progressively introduced new measures including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhancement of traveller screening and inspections ○ The re-location of biosecurity detector dogs in Darwin and Cairns Airports, ○ Additional signage and the distribution of flyers at major airports, informing travellers of FMD risk and precautions, ○ Expanded social media campaigns, informing travellers of their biosecurity responsibilities, ○ Additional training of airport biosecurity staff, ○ Enhancement of mail inspections

11 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from ACVO to Indonesia MoA offering support • Indonesia removed from the department's FMD-free Country list and associated import permits suspended or varied between 13 and 17 May • The department issues import advisory notice announcing changes to import conditions for relevant commodities
12 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary phone call with Indonesian Ambassador
16 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Minister Littleproud to Indonesian Minister Limpo.
29 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACVO/DCVO visit Indonesia
June 2022	
1 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister Watt sworn in, Incoming Government Brief delivered including briefing on biosecurity issues
2 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACVO provides briefing to Minister Watt on FMD/LSD threats and outcomes of visit to Indonesia
6 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister in Indonesia for leaders meeting • Communique notes "Leaders agreed to deepen cooperation in food safety" • Prime Minister Albanese committed Australian support, including for vaccines and technical expertise, to respond to the recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease in Indonesia • DCVO briefed Minister Watt on recent Indonesia visit • A/g ACVO letter to Indonesia confirming expert for vaccines and offer deployment of Australian vets
29 June	
July 2022	
4 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation of FMD in Bali
6 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial media release FMD in Bali • ACVO letter to Indonesia confirming details of vaccines
7 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister hosted roundtables with the Biosecurity Advisory Panel Meeting in the morning and Industry FMD roundtable in the evening • Biosecurity officers commence boarding planes on arrival and playing a new biosecurity message on all inbound flights from Indonesia
13-15 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister in Indonesia
14 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Indonesia confirming acceptance of FMD vaccine expert and in principle acceptance vaccines • Announcement of \$1.5 million to support Indonesia's response to the recent outbreak of FMD, including provision of at least 1 million FMD doses for Indonesia's vaccination program
15 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement of \$14 million biosecurity package to bolster Australia's frontline defense and provide more technical support for countries currently battling FMD and LSD • ACVO met with the Minister
19 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACVO briefed Minister for Tourism and Trade
20 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture Ministers' Meeting – focus on FMD.
21 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACVO and departmental officials briefed the Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Agriculture Minister on FMD
22 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Biosecurity made a determination declaring Biosecurity Response Zones (BRZs) at international airports receiving direct flights from Indonesia • National Coordination Mechanism meeting held to provide an update on the FMD situation to the states and territories.
25 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing by the Secretary and ACVO of full Ministry on current measures to strengthen our biosecurity system
26 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Indonesia confirming requirements for acceptance of 1 million doses FMD vaccines

August 2022	
5 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint inter-agency Exotic Animal Disease Preparedness Taskforce established
9 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inaugural National Biosecurity Strategy released• \$10 million biosecurity cooperation package to assist Indonesia announced
11 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting between Minister for Agriculture and his New Zealand counterpart to discuss FMD

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Answers to questions on notice

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

Inquiry: Adequacy of Australia's biosecurity measures and response preparedness

Question No: IQ22-000018

Hearing Date: 10 August 2022

Division/Agency: Australian Chief Veterinary Office

Topic: Lumpy skin and FMD vaccine programs

Hansard Page: 19

Question Date: 10 August 2022

Question Type: Spoken

Senator McDonald asked:

Senator McDONALD: I want to come back to vaccines again. You touched on the lumpy skin disease program. I am interested to understand how they can be better tied together, because it seems we are vaccinating the herd up there with a greater rate with the foot-and-mouth, but the lumpy skin is slower to get out. I wonder if you could assist me to know if there are any plans to link those vaccination programs together so that animals would be given both vaccines at once, if that is possible.

Dr Cookson: I might need to take on notice the precise technical advice that has been provided on that. Certainly the Australian government provided 435,000 doses of the lumpy skin disease vaccine earlier, after the outbreak was announced in Indonesia, and there have been several discussions that I am aware of about linking those vaccination programs. Understandably the Indonesian government is very focused on the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak given how rapidly it has spread through the population. I was aware that through the Australia Indonesia Health Security Partnership further technical advice was being sought about the effect of administering both vaccines, so I will take that on notice and provide a more current response.

Answer:

The Indonesian Government is vaccinating livestock in accordance with its disease control program. The Australian Animal Health Committee Vaccine Expert Advisory Group has provided technical advice to the Indonesian Government to support that program. We understand the Indonesian Government has considered options to deliver lumpy skin disease and foot-and-mouth disease vaccines concurrently where appropriate. Ultimately the delivery of the disease control program is a matter for the Indonesian Government.