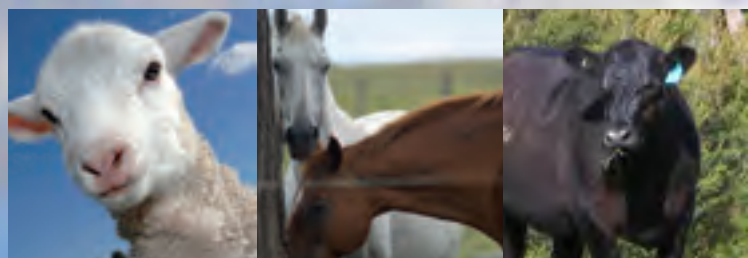




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2010



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Feedback

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FOREWORD

This fourteenth volume in the *Animal Health in Australia* series of annual reports presents a comprehensive summary of Australia's animal health status and system in 2010. It includes reports from ongoing programs, status reports on nationally significant terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases, and descriptions of new initiatives introduced during the year.

In 2010, a further two independent assessment reports (which included the final report) were provided to our minister on the Australian Government's response to the actions arising from the Callinan Inquiry on the 2007 equine influenza outbreak. The final report concluded that the government has ensured that all of the recommendations of the Callinan Inquiry related to new and improved quarantine procedures were met and implemented to a high standard. The independent assessor recognised the strong commitment towards improvements to manage imported horses at the pre-export and post-entry stages. I would like to acknowledge the significant collaborative effort within and outside the Australian Government in bringing these improvements into effect.

The National Biosecurity Committee (NBC), established in 2008 to provide strategic leadership in managing national approaches to emerging and ongoing biosecurity policy issues across jurisdictions and sectors, has also progressed some key national approaches to enhance Australia's biosecurity system. In 2010, as part of its broad work program, the NBC focused on important areas linked to emergency animal diseases including consideration of approaches to filling gaps in Australia's national emergency response arrangements and strengthening national consultative committee arrangements for the biosecurity system. The latter committees manage the technical aspects of a pest or disease outbreak in Australia. These reforms will enhance Australia's emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

This year also saw the commencement of a four-year program between the governments of Indonesia and Australia to strengthen Indonesian Government veterinary services in the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases. The AusAID-funded Australia Indonesia Partnership for Emerging Infectious Diseases (AIP-EID) will be delivered by Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) technical advisors working with the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture in Jakarta and

Sulawesi. The AIP-EID program, led by the Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer (OCVO), will build on the positive outcomes of the previous program on avian influenza, and assist Indonesia in strengthening its animal health institutions by linking with the World Organisation for Animal Health's (OIE) Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway. I am pleased with Indonesia's ongoing commitment to work in partnership with Australia to strengthen biosecurity in the region.

Another focus in 2010 was the annual training exercise for the national Rapid Response Team. Exercise Red Feather was hosted by the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) and included three discussion workshops based on an avian influenza scenario. These workshops provided good insights to improve emergency management practices, not only within the jurisdiction, but across our Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) documents. This year, AUSVETPLAN updates on disease strategies for bee diseases and pests, Newcastle disease and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) were published. A major review of the AUSVETPLAN disease strategy manual for FMD has also started, and will take into account improved international understanding of the virus, vaccines and technologies.

Another major focus was a Hendra virus incident in a Queensland horse in May 2010. Fortunately, people involved with this incident were not infected. Awareness documents on Hendra virus are available from the DEEDI website, and I recommend maintaining awareness to ensure we take appropriate biosecurity precautions.

In 2010, the OIE recognised wildlife diseases as an emerging priority, and a global network of wildlife focal points was developed. The Chair of the Australian Wildlife Health Network (AWHN) was appointed as Australia's wildlife focal point to provide declarations to the OIE of notifiable diseases affecting Australian wildlife, and to coordinate comments on proposed new animal health standards addressing wildlife diseases. AWHN is also an experienced network of wildlife health expertise and surveillance resources, and undertakes many activities for Australia that are outlined in the focal point terms of reference endorsed by the OIE. With this appointment, I consider that Australia is able to play a key leadership role on wildlife animal health in the region.

I have also continued to support the other work of the OIE, including the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania. During the year, I worked with the President of the Regional Commission, Dr Kawashima of Japan, as he led the development of an OIE Regional Plan to strengthen

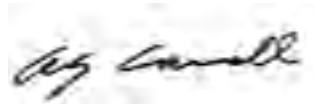
the region's effectiveness in the OIE. This plan will be provided to the Regional Commission for comment and adoption during 2011.

This year, the OCVO undertook an assignment with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to identify opportunities for greater collaboration between Australia's Biosecurity Services Group and the OCVO, and the FAO on animal health. Australia shares many common objectives with the FAO on emerging and emergency animal diseases, particularly for zoonotic diseases and high-impact diseases that threaten trade in animals and animal products (such as FMD). The OCVO is now working to strengthen Australia's engagement with FAO on global programs important to Australia's animal biosecurity. The investment in global animal health and capacity building programs through the FAO helps reduce risks to Australia by addressing diseases at their source in animals, and reducing the global prevalence of disease.

The formation of the International FMD Vaccine Strategic Reserves Network was also initiated this year between the Quadrilateral Group of countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States), the European Union, United Kingdom and Mexico. The concept for the network began as an OIE initiative in 2004, which recommended the creation of a network to contribute to the improved control of FMD worldwide. The network will primarily focus on sharing technical information and best practice principles on issues related to FMD vaccines and antigens (such as logistics, security, disposal, and vaccine dose requirements). Australia's participation in the network, through its DAFF and Animal Health Australia representatives, will strengthen

Australia's emergency preparedness for FMD. In addition to this initiative, Australia renewed its FMD vaccine bank in 2010.

This year's report reflects significant activities and developments within animal health in Australia. I commend this report to you. I also commend to you to join the celebrations for the 250th World Veterinary Year in 2011. This anniversary commemorates the opening of the world's first veterinary school in Lyon (France) and the long history of the veterinary profession. Australia is particularly looking forward to these celebrations.



Andy Carroll
Australian Chief Veterinary Officer



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OVERVIEW

The high standard of animal health in Australia is due to cooperative partnerships between Animal Health Australia and the Australian Government, state and territory governments, livestock industries, research organisations, animal health laboratories, universities and private veterinary practitioners. In addition, the Australian Wildlife Health Network provides a link between livestock health and the health of wild and feral animals.

This report describes Australia's animal health system and the current status of animal health in Australia. Significant events in 2010 are also described, and these are highlighted (by chapter) below.

Organisation of the animal health system

Chapter 1 describes the roles of participants in the national animal health system. It also describes SAFEMEAT, a partnership established by the peak red meat industry bodies and the Australian, state and territory governments. In 2010, SAFEMEAT instigated the Dairy Calf Supply Chain Trial, to manage the risks of residues throughout the supply chain, and demonstrate the welfare of bobby calves sent to slaughter. Management plans have been developed for lead and cadmium residues in livestock.

Australian Pork Limited's Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program has been revised and the new program (covering free-range, outdoor-bred and intensive systems) is being rolled out to producers.

Australian Egg Corporation Limited's Egg Corp Assured, the national quality assurance program for the egg industry, was reviewed and is now being written into a standard that will be launched in 2011.

The Australian Chicken Meat Federation produced and distributed a revised version of the *National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Chicken Growers*.

Terrestrial animal health

Chapter 2 describes Australia's status for nationally significant diseases of terrestrial animals, which include diseases that are notifiable to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), as well as other diseases of national significance. Details are given of the distribution and occurrence of endemic diseases of national significance in Australia during 2010, and the control programs that are in place for these diseases.

This chapter also describes the operation of the national reporting system for animal diseases in Australia, the National Animal Health Information System (NAHIS).

In 2010:

- Surveillance showed no further spread of cattle ticks that were detected in 2009 on some previously tick-free properties in the Northern Territory.
- Australia's dairy cattle herd was declared to be provisionally free from enzootic bovine leucosis.
- Progenitor, precursor or virulent Newcastle disease viruses have not been detected in Australia since 2002.
- Three cases of anthrax occurred in New South Wales and were managed according to the state's anthrax policy.

Terrestrial animal disease surveillance and monitoring

Disease surveillance and monitoring programs, an important component of the animal health system, are described in Chapter 3. They include programs managed by Animal Health Australia, the Australian



Clint Scholz

Wildlife Health Network and the Australian, state and territory governments. In 2010, The Animal Health Committee started developing a national general surveillance business plan that will result in more consistent allocation of resources based on surveillance risks.

Six major Australian zoos are taking part in a 12-month pilot project for wildlife disease surveillance. Zoo veterinarians will report disease events in free-ranging and rehabilitation wildlife directly into the National Wildlife Health Information System.

In terms of disease:

- no cases of bovine tuberculosis were detected during the Australian Bovine Tuberculosis Surveillance Project 2007–2010
- surveillance in wild birds and investigation of wild bird mortalities did not detect any highly pathogenic avian influenza in Australia
- in response to outbreaks of Hendra virus in horses and people in Queensland, the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation has prepared material for veterinary practitioners to promote the management of zoonoses, and conducts training sessions on the use of personal protective equipment in Hendra virus investigations.

Managing animal health emergencies

Chapter 4 describes arrangements that are in place for Australia to prepare for and respond to emergency animal diseases (EADs), including planning, training and communication. The chapter also describes EAD responses during 2010.

The Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) sets out the policies, roles and responsibilities to be followed in an EAD response. A new, modular approach to AUSVETPLAN manuals is being developed by industry and government. In 2010, disease strategies for bee diseases and pests, Newcastle disease and foot-and-mouth (FMD) disease were updated and published, as well as the operational manual for destruction and the enterprise manual for feedlots. Animal Health Australia is managing a major review of the AUSVETPLAN disease strategy manual for FMD, taking into account improved international understanding of the virus, vaccines and technologies. Training under the EAD Response Preparedness and Capability Enhancement Program was broadened to include AUSVETPLAN role-specific training and training on functions during a disease response.

In 2010, work continued on ensuring that Australia is well prepared for any incursion of avian influenza:

- the Avian Influenza Surveillance Taskforce published the *National AI Surveillance Dossier*, which reviews existing avian influenza surveillance activities across all sectors of the Australian poultry industry
- the fourth annual Government–Industry Biosecurity Forum was held to discuss avian influenza, with a focus on national vaccine policy in the event of a disease outbreak in poultry
- the annual training exercise for the national Rapid Response Team, Exercise Red Feather, was held in Queensland, using a scenario based on avian influenza.

A horse in Queensland was infected with Hendra virus (and subsequently euthanased), but no people were infected. The Australian, state and territory governments are funding a trial to develop a Hendra virus vaccine for horses. The Queensland Government has established the Queensland Centre for Emerging Infectious Diseases to strengthen capacity to predict, detect, prevent and manage emerging diseases such as Hendra virus.

Aquatic animal health

Chapter 5 provides details of the status in Australia of aquatic animal diseases of national significance, and the system for responding to aquatic animal disease events and preparing for such events. In 2010, AQUAPLAN 2005–2010, Australia's national strategic plan for aquatic animal health, concluded and is now being reviewed.

The Australian Aquatic Veterinary Emergency Plan (AQUAVETPLAN) is a series of technical response plans that describe the proposed Australian approach to an aquatic EAD event. In 2010, the AQUAVETPLAN disease strategy manuals for white spot disease and viral haemorrhagic septicaemia were revised.

Diseases reported in 2010 and their management are described in Chapter 5, including reports on *Edwardsiella ictaluri*, abalone viral ganglioneuritis and a syndrome of increased mortality of Pacific oysters.

Imports and exports

Biosecurity Australia and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) help maintain Australia's animal health status by managing pest and disease threats from imports. They also provide technical input for the export of agricultural produce. Chapter 6 describes these activities.



Department of Primary Industries Victoria

In 2010, the Australian Government continued to undertake biosecurity reforms in a number of areas to build a better biosecurity system that fosters partnerships, improves governance structures and targets risks. Some reforms were that:

- the Biosecurity Advisory Council was established to provide independent advice to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on biosecurity policies and activities
- AQIS began risk-based intervention trials at the border
- amendments to legislation for imported food came into effect on 17 February 2010, enabling AQIS to enter into compliance agreements with importers and formally recognise their food safety management systems
- there was continued development of new biosecurity legislation to replace the *Quarantine Act 1908* and other relevant pieces of legislation.

In 2010, the Animal Biosecurity branch finalised three import risk analyses (IRAs): horses from approved countries; prawns and prawn products; and freshwater ornamental finfish, and commenced the IRA on beef and beef products.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations – Australia – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement began on 1 January 2010, improving trade opportunities for Australian producers.

Consumer protection

Activities to ensure that locally produced foods are safe for consumers are described in Chapter 7. Protective measures involve surveillance for communicable diseases and foodborne disease; monitoring for residues of agricultural and veterinary chemicals, and other contaminants; and inspection of meat. AQIS also inspects and certifies meat, dairy products, seafood and eggs for export.

Australia continued to play a strong leadership role in developing international science-based food standards through the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and its subsidiary bodies. Australia chaired the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems, which finalised the *Principles and Guidelines for the Conduct of Assessment of Foreign Official Inspection and Certification Systems* that were adopted by Codex in July 2010.

In February, Australia, in partnership with the United States, hosted an Australia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Export Certification Roundtable, at which APEC member economies discussed requirements for export certificates for food in international trade.

Also in 2010, Food Standards Australia New Zealand began developing a primary production and processing standard for meat to replace the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS4696).



Department of Primary Industries Victoria

Animal welfare

The Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS) — developed jointly by the Australian Government, state and territory governments, industry bodies and community organisations — provides a national framework so all stakeholders can work together and improve animal welfare outcomes. In 2010, the AAWS was revised to set the policy objectives for its second phase, from 2010–11 to 2013–14, and identify activities under the revised National Implementation Plan.

Chapter 8 reports on Australia's animal welfare activities, including those under the AAWS. In 2010:

- the Consultative Forum on the Live Export Industry was established
- the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock were revised
- development continued on Australian animal welfare standards and guidelines for cattle, sheep, dogs, cats and exhibited animals (zoo animals, wildlife parks)
- states and territories prepared to regulate livestock welfare (pigs and land transport) in their legislation
- scientific studies were completed to assist in setting Australian animal welfare standards and guidelines for the transport of dairy calves and spent hens.

Chapter 8 also reviews Australia's contribution to international animal welfare initiatives. In 2010, the OIE endorsed the implementation plan for the Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for Asia, the Far East and Oceania, and the strategy's work plan progressed. Australia also participated in OIE ad hoc working groups to develop welfare guidelines for broilers and beef cattle.

Regional animal health initiatives

Australia assists countries in the Asia–Pacific region and Africa with improving the health of their livestock through aid (through AusAID — the Australian Agency for International Development) and research (through ACIAR — the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research). Chapter 9 describes Australia's main areas of activity in terrestrial animal health in these regions.

The four-year Pandemics and Emerging Infectious Diseases Initiative, funded by AusAID, concluded in 2010. A review found that Australia had significantly improved the response to pandemics and emerging infectious diseases in Asia. Australia developed a new framework that will guide the Australian Government's international development assistance to 2015.

The ACIAR Animal Health program supports research organisations in Australia and partner countries to work in a multidisciplinary approach to solve problems in animal production and health. There are currently five subprograms: avian influenza in Indonesia; policies and systems for better management of animal disease in Indonesia; improving health and production of village pigs and cattle in Lao PDR; income generation and better nutrition through agricultural diversification in Cambodia; and strengthening of surveillance systems to monitor and respond to livestock diseases in Papua New Guinea.

Research and development

Chapter 10 summarises Australian research in livestock health during 2010, and Appendix 4 lists some of the research projects. Research relating to livestock health is conducted by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, cooperative research centres, university veterinary science faculties or schools, and industry-based research and development corporations.





Animal Health Australia