

For Immediate Release

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ANIMAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA WELCOMES BUDGET BOOST TO BIOSECURITY

Animal Health Australia (AHA) today welcomed the \$20 million boost to biosecurity included in a total \$150 million package for agriculture announced yesterday in the 2014 Australian Government Budget.

Welcoming the measures, Ms Kathleen Plowman, CEO of AHA said the government's investment is recognition that biosecurity is integral to food security, agricultural competitiveness and market access.

"Protecting these integral aspects of the Australian agricultural economy generates income which benefits all Australians and contributes to the overall prosperity of Australia," Ms Plowman said.

"Obviously, the better resourced Australia is to combat an outbreak of disease, the quicker we can control it and reduce the impact on producers and rural communities as well as livestock industries and consumers."

Ms Plowman said AHA actively manages national arrangements that keep Australia prepared and ready to respond in the event of an emergency animal disease such as foot and mouth (FMD). It also contributes to Australia's preparedness by managing the national FMD and anthrax vaccine banks.

"We also manage the internationally recognised Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) framework," Ms Plowman said.

The EADRA deed is acknowledged as a world-first response model that brings animal industries and Australian governments together in cooperative partnerships. It sets out what happens when a suspected animal disease is reported, enabling a swift and decisive response.

"This biosecurity partnership provides a unique and effective post-border biosecurity system," Ms Plowman said.

In a media release on his parliamentary website, Agriculture Minister Mr Barnaby Joyce said the government's agriculture package aims to strengthen the sector and drive farm gate profitability.

The announcement includes \$20 million specifically earmarked to "build a stronger biosecurity and quarantine system, building on Australia's existing preparedness and response capabilities as part of a national approach to biosecurity". This includes funding for improving preparedness and ensuring there are resources immediately available to respond to and reduce the impact of pest and disease incursions on producers and their livelihoods.

AHA is a not-for-profit member-funded company which works to protect and improve animal health within Australia. It does this through its partnerships with industries and governments, which help keep Australia disease free, builds the sustainability of our livestock industries and promotes the humane use of animals for food, companionship, recreation and sport.

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