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NEW FMD REPORT HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

Animal Health Australia (AHA) has welcomed the findings of the Matthews Report and congratulated the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) for its leadership in commissioning the work.

AHA Chief Executive, Dr Mike Bond, said the report was a reminder that Australia had to keep working on preparedness arrangements for a national foot and mouth disease emergency.

“Mr Matthews’ findings were that ‘the general standard of prevention and preparedness in Australia is sound and reflects well on the many stakeholders who play their part’, but he also reminds us not to rest on our laurels,” said Dr Bond.

“As the business environment changes, so too must our ability to mount an effective response. This report has identified 11 areas that are key risks at present, and must be addressed if we are to minimise the risks of foot and mouth disease to our livestock.”

“The good news is that at AHA we have that same focus and through our existing government/industry consultative mechanisms, progress on some of these areas is already well advanced,” he said.

“Most notably, work on a national policy for vaccine use in a foot and mouth disease response is underway and on track to meet the deadline recommended in the report.”

Emergency response and preparedness is at the heart of much of Animal Health Australia’s work, which is well recognised by the company’s members.

AHA has been invited by DAFF to play an active role in the development of an action plan and implementation of the report’s various recommendations.

These recommendations are also broadly applicable across many emergency animal diseases and will be incorporated by AHA into other response plans as appropriate.

“We consider this work to be one of our highest priorities, and will be working with DAFF and our other members and stakeholders to facilitate appropriate consultation and provision of technical expertise.”

For further information and to arrange interviews:

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