



Priority Pest and Disease Planning and Response

Strengthening Australia's ability to prepare for priority pest and disease incursions is a key outcome for us, building on the Australian Government's \$200 million investment through the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. This measure helps to reduce the likelihood of an exotic pest or disease entering Australia and mitigates the impacts of any that succeed in breaching our borders. This covers:

- Developing national action plans for Australia's priority pests and diseases and innovative diagnostic tools and approaches to improve surveillance techniques. In line with a key finding from the 2017 report, *Priorities for Australia's biosecurity system*, a particular focus will be on pests and diseases with the potential to significantly impact export market access and/or the environment.
- Initiatives to maintain and build on recent investment in offshore intelligence gathering, surveillance and capacity building in neighbouring countries for pest and disease control.
- Improving Australia's diagnostic capacity for emergency pests and diseases. This includes additional investment in the Australian Animal Health Laboratory for two years.
- Funding in 2019–20 to meet our obligations to the Australian foot and mouth disease vaccine bank (for 2020–2025), which mitigates one of Australia's most significant animal disease risks.
- Increasing our response capacity and capabilities.

Why is this important?

- To protect Australia's production sector, environment and the community from the negative impacts of exotic pests and diseases.
- To grow Australia's regional agriculture and food production hubs, as well as our forestry and marine industries, into global leaders with a major export focus.
- To protect Australian agriculture's critical competitive advantage.
- To deliver important improvements to our national biosecurity system.

Who will benefit?

All will benefit from reduced biosecurity risk. Australian taxpayers will not incur the higher costs of responding reactively to biosecurity risks. Costs will be reduced by being able to respond rapidly.

Pest and disease incursions affect agricultural, forestry and marine industries, Australian consumers and downstream businesses financially, with losses to farm-gate profits, high-paying regional jobs and reduced access to high-value export markets. There can also be significant human health and social costs from diseases of animals that infect humans. Incursions can cause extensive environmental and ecosystem damage. Improving our planning for our highest risk pests and diseases is essential to prevent and respond to known threats. These include *Xylella*, a plant pathogen that is currently devastating the olive industry in Italy and is known to affect native species, and rabies which is endemic in parts of Indonesia and kills almost 60,000 people each year worldwide.

What will this cost?