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Dr Wendy Craik AM
Chair, IGAB Independent Review Panel
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Dear Dr Craik

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the capacity of Australia's biosecurity system and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB). On behalf of the members of the Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board I provide the following feedback to assist with your review.

Environmental biosecurity systems

While the delivery model is clear for the plant health and animal health sectors, it is not yet clear how environmental biosecurity systems are coordinated, funded and delivered, especially for emergency management situations of national significance. Further work is required to ensure the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement under the IGAB is being supported and implemented to its full intent.

Prioritising investment for established pests and diseases

Australia-wide we have an ongoing challenge with prioritising investment for established pests and diseases for which jurisdictions have misaligned goals and aims, e.g. fruit fly, wild dogs and buffel grass. In these situations it is difficult to determine what 'shared responsibility' means in practice. To protect primary production and biodiversity, new approaches are required for managing complex biosecurity issues associated with established pests and diseases.

Surveillance

Biosecurity surveillance systems for Australia require global partnerships to identify emerging threats and to target high risk pathways and vectors. Some examples where global partnerships will significantly improve our national surveillance systems are:

- undertaking targeted surveillance in ports and harbors based on global data and trends,
- determining the highest risk pathways for spreading pests and diseases via e-trade, and
- supporting international research partnerships to develop new technologies for detecting high risk pests and diseases.

The concept of using cost-share arrangements for surveillance programs is also worth exploring. The cost-share model used for eradication programs in Australia could be adapted to agreed surveillance priorities for pests and diseases. Cost-share arrangements might help overcome existing problems and gaps arising from the ad hoc approach being used for surveillance in the marine environment, on land and in aquatic ecosystems.

National export priorities

As global markets open-up and expand, Australia's export priorities change. Yet, arguably, state and territory-level biosecurity arrangements can be slow to respond to the changing needs of primary producers. An improved communication system on national export priorities could improve the flexibility and efficacy of the national biosecurity system.

Government and industry representation

The signatories to the IGAB are all representatives of governments, yet the agreement could include peak industry organisations and better delineate components of the biosecurity system which are led by industry. The process of engaging industry representatives at the highest level may also help clarify agreed roles and responsibilities.

Yours sincerely



Chris Daniels
PRESIDING MEMBER