Transcript

**Environmental Biosecurity Webinar of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Intergration supported by technology, research and data via Catalysing Australia’s Biosecurity (CAB)**

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Intergration supported by technology, research and data via Catalysing Australia’s Biosecurity (CAB)**

Presented in December 2023

**Presented by:**

**Richard Keane**

[*Opening visual of slide with text saying, ‘Integration supported by technology, research and data via Catalysing Australia’s Biosecurity (CAB)*,’ *‘Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, ‘Webinar 6 – Overview’, ‘December 2023’*]

**Richard:**

I am going to present today on integration supported by technology, research, and data. We're going to look at a bit of a case study of how DAFF supports research and development by working with partners such as CSIRO and Catalysing Australia's Biosecurity project or CAB.

Emerging threats and risks brought about by increasing trade and other challenges at the border, whether that be through cargo, maritime trips as well as aviation, have a massive impact at the border.

We have a lot of other opportunities there to be able to make changes and to address these risks. But we can't do it all at the one time. It's a massive piece and we do have some guiding areas of work around Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030. We have the National Biosecurity Strategy that is the key plank on how we want to try and address these emerging threats and risks.

Probably underpinning that and I should also have up there is the, you know, the fiscal spend and the investment, especially in biosecurity research, to be able to sort of move and address those challenges through the RD & E or the research, development, and extension pathways. But a number of reviews to date have identified that while we have done a very good job, key capabilities will be stretched.

There will be a focus on response and recovery as opposed to prevention, which obviously does cost a lot more money and has a massive impact on trade. Collaboration and engagement will be low because we'll be too busy dealing with our responses, and technology, most importantly, will be unaligned and fragmented rather than strategic and helping to be channelled through into operational responses.

So, sort of setting the scene there. And as I said, there's a whole lot of roadmaps there. The key ones from a DAFF perspective are CB 2030. And obviously the National Biosecurity Strategy. These are the key planks that will help us address that risk-based approach using science and technology to help protect Australia's people, economy, and environment from the threats of the future.

And so, science and technology has a key role to play in terms of channelling our investments in this space. And that's why the CAB has come about, or Catalysing Australia's Biosecurity initiative has been set up and hopefully we can we can work towards a number of these key priorities. And there we go, probably the first item there I draw to your attention, and obviously noting it's a massive piece around research, development, innovation and implementation, but that the CAB is a partnership that has CSIRO, DAFF, but also all of the other key partners in the biosecurity ecosystem.

So that could be RDC'S, that involves your research institutions, that involves your state and territory partners and the Draft Goal only, we haven't gone live yet. I'll talk about that in a minute. Is around improving the long-term national biosecurity outcomes by delivering innovative technologies, digital systems and capabilities that can help us transform our performance by 2030 and beyond.

The research that we're looking to focus on, especially here, is not just in one particular area. If you look at the slide before, we've tried to focus on pre-border, at the Australian border and also those post-border activities, especially where we think we're going to get most value for money. And a key element to all of this work is partnerships.

We can't do this alone. While DAFF has primary responsibility for biosecurity risk matter at the border, we can't do that without key partners and getting everyone together to provide better coordination and better investment in this space. So there highlights a number of the key partners, the jurisdictions, as well as a number of the other public private partnerships that are already in existence that can be leveraged off, their experience and expertise to help us, whether it be in diagnostics, whether it be in general surveillance or taxonomy, for example.

Some of the other partners, and that's not limited by what's on the screen there includes Plant Health Australia, Animal Health Australia, and a number of others. And also noting now that there's a strong Indigenous theme running through all of this work. So, leveraging off the experience and the network that the Biosecurity Rangers, for example have.

Some of the guiding principles that we've got in this very busy space. As you can see there, it's about providing that coordinated and consistent approach to biosecurity research. I'll talk a little bit in a second about how we're actually going to do that and shift the dial quite early in the piece rather than just have these grandiose claims. But talking about sustainable investments as well, using a data driven or an evidence-based approach.

We are aligning obviously against the 2030 roadmap and then through a set of priority focal areas, which we'll show in a second. And the idea will identify where we're going to get best bang for our investment to be able to try and address these challenges and where we need to implement them. It doesn't matter whether it might be leveraging off networks and our relationships before the Australian border, whether we do it at Australian ports, for example, at the Australian border or post the Australian border.

In terms of our responses, we might be addressing things like Varroa or some other things as well, so that there's plenty of opportunities and plenty of wicked challenges to be involved with here. And technology is one of the key components that will help us deliver that effect. And that's not just new technology, that's also existing technology that might be partway through the RD and E pathway. I mentioned about the priority focal areas and here's the main focus for us at the moment it's around detection diagnostics, intelligence gathering platforms, trying to identify emerging threats and risks at the Australian Border, intervention technology, decision support systems, social economic governance and of course performance insurance or baking in that core program management approach to how we will address and work in this space.

So, what could we achieve? Responsible, innovation led and co-delivered transformational biosecurity technology, digital service solutions that are applicable not only for the federal government but also for industry or for states and territories or overseas as well, especially if we want to push and shift that threat offshore.

Accelerate technology operationalisation. We've got a couple of good cases that have already gone through in terms of 3D X-rays, and environmental DNA. But some of those did involve quite fixed investments and a concerted effort to push through to implementation. But some of those new areas we think, with further investment, and this co-design approach can speed up the approach and make better effect at the Australian border.

Attracting private sector innovation, co-investment partners. I mentioned the RDC's and others as well, as well as also looking for those opportunities. I mentioned our Indigenous colleagues before, but there's a lot of work that already is being done out in remote and rural Australia, but there are further opportunities to combine that into this approach in how we manage and sustain a strong national biosecurity system.

In terms of where we're up to so far, you can see from the planning stages where we've got to. I can't believe we're at the end of the 2023 calendar year, almost Christmas, but the CAB initiative is going through the process to seek the formal launch of the mission, and that's due to take place in March 2024.

While we are doing that, you'll see some of those other elements. It's about getting out and doing that engagement and drawing people's attention to these opportunities and the work that we're doing in this space. And if you are interested in how, you can be involved, and I know that Bertie did say there's opportunities for questions after, but you will have our contact details as well.

Now, just I want to quickly draw your attention, we're not just talking about the future, not just talking about stretch goals, what are some of the things we're doing? I mentioned national biosecurity strategy. I mentioned the Commonwealth Biosecurity 2030, but there's about 25 to 30 different biosecurity strategies floating around in this space, and they are focused on sectorial versus some broader strategies.

But we're starting to already try and map where these aligned, whether it be with data broadly, one health, taxonomy, surveillance, traceability, and movement control, and then trying to feed that into a system that will help us identify where our best investments are being made. Where there's opportunities for collaboration, co-investment in this space. So, trying to take that data driven type of approach to help drive us towards those 2030 goals and beyond.

What does success look like? Reduced incidence of emerging threats, suite of next gen biosecurity tech platforms, better adoption, co-design, engagement across the sector to link up the RD & E side of this work and empowered by Indigenous Biosecurity Rangers and other businesses.

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