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National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program (SEQ) Steering Committee
Tuesday 22 November 2022
Teleconference
(AEST) 2.00pm – 3.00pm

ATTENDANCE

Attendees	Wendy Craik, Chair Jo Laduzko, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth) Scott Charlton, Department of Primary Industries (NSW) Nigel Ainsworth, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (VIC) Marcelle O'Brien, Department of Natural Resources and Environment (TAS) Claire Morton, Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade (NT) Mike Richards, External Financial Consultant Miles Dixon, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (ACT) Malcolm Letts, Deputy Director-General/Chief Biosecurity Officer, Biosecurity Queensland, (DAF) John van Schagen, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA) Rae Burrows, Department of Natural Resources and Environment (TAS)
Observers	Lance Perry, Program Executive, NRIFAEP Eddie Jebreen, Director, FAST
Secretariat	Heather Jablonski, Policy Officer, Biosecurity Queensland
Apologies	Elissa Van Oosterhout, Department of Primary Industries (NSW) Nathan Rhodes, Department of Primary Industries and Regions (SA)

The meeting opened at 2.03pm (AEST).



MAIN DISCUSSION

The Chair welcomed members to the extraordinary Steering Committee meeting, noting apologies from Nathan Rhodes and Elissa Van Oosterhout.

The minutes from the extraordinary Steering Committee 5/2022 were endorsed by the members with no changes.

The agenda was confirmed to discuss the feedback on the Eradication Strategy and Governance arrangements, noting the Compliance document will be discussed at tomorrow's Steering Committee meeting.

The Chair opened the floor for members to provide feedback on the documents and suggested that the Eradication Strategy be provided to the Risk Management Sub-Committee for their review. Given the uncertainty within the Program regarding the scale up, remote sensing surveillance and compliance, having KPIs in place to review at the end of the first year will provide jurisdictions with reassurance on those measures in the future.

Members discussed the updating of indicative figures within the Eradication Strategy. Mike Richards recommended the Program make contact with Queensland Treasury through Corporate FAM to utilise the state government CPI figure and wage multiplication tools to ensure accuracy.

Jo Laduzko requested a document detailing the options being proposed by the Program and at which points the Program hoped to achieve these.

Further discussions were held in relation to the Remote Sensing Surveillance (RSS) review currently being undertaken by the Program. Lance Perry advised that once the internal review had been completed and peer reviewed, it would be provided to the supplier for a chance to respond to the findings prior to being submitted to the Steering Committee. Members questioned the reasoning for the review and were advised that some data provided didn't correlate with predictions within the remote sensing equipment. The review will be canvassing the absences of correlations to determine if the discrepancies are due to uncertainties in ground movement, the delay in surveillance being undertaken and reports provided, artificial intelligence training or anomalies caused by a misunderstanding of the data sets. The review will analyse several key components and investigate updates to the technology that may be able to assist the Program.

Lance advised members that the review should be able to be provided to the Steering Committee members by February 2023. Members raised concerns around the timing given that most jurisdictions will be preparing their budget submissions around this time.

The Proof of Freedom Strategy will provide members with further detail regarding the statistical simulation models used to gather the data, triggering the review of the remote sensing surveillance. The Proof of Freedom Strategy is currently being completed by the Program and will be provided to members Out-of-Session for their feedback. Members suggested that the Proof of Freedom Strategy should also be peer reviewed.



Members discussed the funding for FAST which currently ends in 2027. Eddie Jebreen advised members that the FAST strategies are around self-management and assisting the community to establish the ability to conduct regular fire ant treatment and surveillance on their properties. The FAST strategies are detailed in the draft FAST Plan which is currently with the Program for internal review. Work is continuing on the monitoring and evaluation road map and FAST are on track to deliver the draft Plan by the

December 2022 timeframe. Further details regarding the FAST will be provided at the Steering Committee scheduled for tomorrow.

Changes to the regulations and General Biosecurity Obligations were discussed. Scott Charlton requested further discussions around the risks and advantages around the implementation of self-treatment as a regulation be held at the Steering Committee meeting tomorrow

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and reminded members of the Steering Committee Meeting tomorrow, Wednesday 23 November 2022. Minister Mark Furner (Queensland), Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities may attend the Steering Committee Meeting during the course of the day.

The meeting closed at 3:05pm.

The Steering Committee:

DISCUSSED the Eradication Strategy, Governance Arrangements and the Proof of Freedom Strategy.

NOTED the review of the Remote Sensing Surveillance currently being undertaken by the Program.