

# Biosecurity - Surveillance for pests and diseases of animals

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## 1. Purpose

This policy describes what surveillance activities the New South Wales Government will do in relation to significant pests and diseases of animals that pose a risk to economy, community and environment of New South Wales.

These surveillance activities aim to:

- detect and exclude prohibited matter, other notifiable, and significant emerging pests and diseases of animals before they spread
- report property, district, region and state-wide disease statuses for market access
- effectively evaluate progress of disease control programs, and
- provide field, laboratory and research services.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), an office within the NSW Department of Industry, and Local and Services (LLS) implementing activities in their roles as authorised officers under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the overarching policy 'Principles for management of animal biosecurity and welfare in NSW'.

The policy applies to disease surveillance activities of government veterinarians and other staff who are authorised to investigate outbreaks of suspected notifiable pests and diseases of animals under the:

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- *Local Lands Services Act 2013*
- *Veterinary Practice Act 2003*.

The policy does not apply to private-benefit investigations normally done by private veterinarians.

## 3. Safety requirements

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI and LLS) as a person conducting a business or undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this policy must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NSW DPI and LLS will work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this policy.

## 4. Outcomes

**4.1 Surveillance activities in NSW are prioritised according to a consistent, robust and systematic decision-making process.**

- a. Risk assessment is a tool used to determine which pests and diseases move into and out of a notifiable disease classification, and surveillance priorities are targeted accordingly
- b. Risk assessment identifies risks to the surveillance system from other sources, including risks from community behaviour e.g. non-reporting, and risks from organisational sources e.g. poor data recording
- c. National (i.e. Commonwealth) and international (i.e. World Organisation for Animal Health – OIE) agreed priorities are taken into account when prioritising animal health surveillance activities in NSW.

#### **4.1.1 Activities**

- NSW DPI regularly reviews the list of notifiable pests and diseases of animals in NSW using risk assessment and NSW contributes to the biennial review of the National Agreed List of Notifiable Animal Diseases. The NSW list contains all of the nationally notifiable pests and diseases of animals as its minimum (4.1a)
- NSW DPI and LLS identify risks to the surveillance program from other sources by conducting an annual risk assessment and appropriate treatments are incorporated into the Surveillance section of the NSW Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan (4.1b)
- NSW DPI reports to the Commonwealth to support national animal health surveillance (4.1c)
- NSW DPI ensures that the interests of the NSW livestock industries are considered in the development of national animal health surveillance plans and programs (4.1c).

#### **4.2 NSW DPI and LLS implement a pests and diseases of animals Surveillance Program to minimise the incidence and impact of notifiable and significant pests and diseases of animals in NSW**

- a. Classification of certain pests and diseases of animals as notifiable, reporting provisions relating to notifiable pests and diseases of animals and powers of Authorised Officers are underpinned by current legislation
- b. Surveillance activities in NSW are consistent with Australia's obligations to the World Animal Health Organisation contained in the *OIE Terrestrial Code*
- c. NSW has a documented pests and diseases of animals Surveillance Program that integrates field investigation, reporting, laboratory and research components and, through its quality system, aims to demonstrate that NSW meets or exceeds *OIE*, national, NSW DPI and LLS standards for pests and diseases of animals surveillance
- d. Improved epidemiological understanding of priority pests and diseases is achieved by active surveillance where appropriate
- e. Incidents and outbreaks of suspected notifiable and emerging pests and diseases of animals in NSW are rapidly detected and accurately investigated by authorised officers and nongovernment veterinarians
- f. The field investigations component of the surveillance program are based on LLS regions to facilitate:
  - effective risk-based allocation of resources and business continuity
  - rapid response by an authorised officer, proportionate to geographic and enterprise risk rankings
  - local sharing of responsibilities for surveillance with stakeholders
  - development of surveillance skills in authorised officers relevant to the pests and diseases of animals likely to occur in that LLS region
- g. Information management systems on disease surveillance support market access, livestock traceability, and Surveillance Program evaluation
- h. National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) accredited veterinary laboratory services support the official surveillance system with accurate laboratory diagnoses and confirmation of the presence or absence of pests and diseases of animals

- i. Surveillance activities are enhanced through the development of new technology and further research that improves animal biosecurity and farm profitability.

#### **4.2.1 Activities**

- NSW DPI periodically reviews the Act and its subordinate legislation to ensure that the legislation which underpins the surveillance program remains current and contemporary (4.2a)
- NSW DPI and LLS consider the *OIE Terrestrial Code* when undertaking surveillance program planning and management activities to deliver official surveillance objectives at national, state and regional levels (4.2b)
- NSW DPI and LLS maintain a quality system for the surveillance program which is regularly evaluated and reviewed (4.2c)
- NSW DPI and LLS undertake active surveillance for priority pests and diseases of animals where appropriate. This may include active surveillance for emerging pest and disease threats (4.2d)
- NSW DPI and LLS support the training and development of authorised officers in surveillance and disease investigation activities (4.2e)(4.2f)
- NSW DPI and LLS develop key performance measures for relevant disease syndromes, for example, sudden death, as part of the Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Business Plan. These performance measures are used to evaluate the effectiveness of field investigations by authorised officers (4.2e)(4.2f)
- NSW DPI encourages nongovernment veterinarians to participate in the National Significant Disease Investigation Program to investigate significant disease incidents in livestock or wildlife (4.2e)
- NSW DPI and LLS provide animal biosecurity advice to the Livestock Health Management Systems (LHMS) database administrators to ensure the database is fit for purpose (4.2g)
- NSW DPI and LLS record information from disease investigations in LHMS to develop intelligence which supports surveillance program objectives including certification requirements (4.2g)
- NSW DPI and LLS contribute to the maintenance and improvement of systems such as the National Livestock Information System (NLIS) to rapidly trace all livestock and verify their disease status (4.2g)
- NSW DPI maintains the State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to provide high quality diagnostic support for the Surveillance Program and ensures that it has surge capacity for emergency response surveillance activities (4.2h)
- NSW DPI and LLS contribute to research on animal biosecurity problems relevant to disease surveillance, including the development diagnostic tests for pests and diseases of animals (4.2i).

#### **4.3 Stakeholders are empowered to support and implement best practice surveillance for significant and notifiable pests and diseases of animals**

- a. The community, including animal owners, managers and veterinarians, promptly report suspected notifiable pests and diseases of animals
- b. NSW Health, other agencies and industry make decisions about the management of significant endemic and zoonotic diseases based on accurate surveillance intelligence about pests and diseases of animals
- c. Stakeholders support and have confidence in the surveillance program.

##### **4.3.1 Activities:**

- NSW DPI develops and implements an animal biosecurity stakeholder engagement plan that includes Surveillance (4.3a)(4.3b)(4.3c)

- NSW LLS develop and implement regionally specific stakeholder engagement plans that include Surveillance (4.3a)(4.3b)(4.3c)
- NSW DPI and LLS provide information to stakeholders about the reporting requirements under the Act for suspected notifiable pests and diseases of animals and biosecurity events (4.3a)
- NSW DPI provides diagnostic support for suspected notifiable disease incidents, except in cases of clear private benefit, to remove disincentives to report (4.3a)(4.3c)
- NSW DPI and LLS regularly meet with NSW Health and other agencies to facilitate sharing of information and expertise (4.3b)
- NSW DPI and LLS provide epidemiological reports to industry stakeholders to assist them to manage pests and diseases of animals control programs (4.3b)(4.3c)
- NSW DPI and LLS improve best practice for pests and diseases of animals surveillance through contribution to scientific publications and participation in scientific conferences (4.3c).

## 5. Related procedures

Procedure – Biosecurity - Export certification

Procedure – Biosecurity - Notifiable pests and diseases of animals – listing and de-listing

Procedure – Biosecurity - Reporting notifiable pests and diseases of animals

Procedure – Biosecurity - Surveillance

Procedure - Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies Freedom Assurance Program

Procedure – Biosecurity - Wildlife- management of pests and diseases

Procedure – Biosecurity - Collection, use and disclosure if information

## 6. Definitions and acronyms

LHMS	Livestock Health Management System
LLS	Local Land Services
NAHIS	National Animal Health Information System
NATA	National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia
NSW DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health

## 7. Legislation

*Animal Research Act 1985*

*Biosecurity Act 2015*

*Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986*

*Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*

*Government Sector Employment Act 2013*

*Local Land Services Act 2013*

*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*

*State Records Act 1998*

*Veterinary Practice Act 2003*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

## 8. Other related documents

Policy – Biosecurity - Principles for management of animal biosecurity and welfare in NSW

Policy – Biosecurity - Prohibited matter exotic pests and diseases of animals

Policy – Biosecurity - Prohibited matter sporadic pests and diseases of animals

Policy – Biosecurity - Endemic pests and diseases of animals

Policy – Biosecurity - Chemically affected food-producing animals, animal food commodities and stock food

Policy – Biosecurity - Animal welfare (under development)

Policy – Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure if information

Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)

Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)

Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)

Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)

LHMS data entry manual  
 Guidelines for purchasing laboratory test information  
 Guidelines for auditing the surveillance program (*under development*)  
 OIE Terrestrial Code  
 NAHIS Business Plan – Animal Health Australia  
 National Significant Disease Investigation Program – Animal Health Australia  
 National Arbovirus Monitoring Program – Animal Health Australia  
 National Animal Disease Surveillance Strategy and Business Plans  
 Primefact – Notifiable pests, diseases and biosecurity events in NSW

## 9. Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	01/07/2017	New policy developed in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare

## 10. Contact

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