

NFF COVID-19 UPDATE

2 April 2020

Welcome to today's edition of the NFF COVID-19 update, collating recent updates and information relevant to the agrifood supply chain.

We strongly encourage you to forward this brief through your networks. We have expanded the mailing list to include NFF Committees but would like to get this update circulated throughout our networks and your assistance is appreciated.

In addition to this regular brief, we are also maintaining pages on FarmHub with information relevant to farm businesses. Follow the links below to view those pages.

FarmHub COVID-19 Resources

[Key Information and FAQs](#)

[Border Control Information](#)

[Assistance and Support](#)

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CLARIFICATION ON MEMBER MEETINGS

We apologise for a technical glitch yesterday which caused some confusion about our regular weekly briefing with the Department of Agriculture. This meeting has been rescheduled **for this week only** and will go ahead at 3.30pm AEDT tomorrow (Friday).

To clarify, the NFF is hosting four standing weekly meetings on COVID-19, as follows:

- **NFF Members + Industry Stakeholders** | 3.30pm AEDT, Wednesdays (rescheduled to Friday this week)
- **NFF Partners** | 4.30pm AEDT, Wednesdays (rescheduled to Friday this week)
- **NFF Member Communications Staff** | 4.00pm AEDT, Thursdays
- **NFF Member CEOs** | last held yesterday afternoon, next weekly meeting TBC

Details to join relevant meetings will be in your calendar, but please contact me with any queries.

FIRST REGIONAL RESPIRATORY HEALTH CLINIC OPENS DOORS

The Federal Government has allocated over \$200 million to establish 100 GP-led respiratory health clinics, including in rural and regional areas in each state and territory. Yesterday the first regional clinic – located in Emerald, Queensland – opened its doors.

Clinics are set to be rolled out across regional Australia, including in the Riverina, Gippsland, Central Victoria, NSW North Coast, Western Queensland, Darling Downs as well as NT, SA, TAS and WA. The clinics will assess patients with mild to moderate COVID-19-like symptoms, to minimise the risk of community infection and take pressure off existing health services.

Australians living in regional and remote areas have older populations and higher prevalence of chronic conditions, meaning that they are more vulnerable to serious illness with COVID-19. The respiratory clinics are part of a range of measures to ensure regional health services are ready to respond.

Further information on clinic locations, and an online booking service, will be made available at [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au).

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – ACCESS TO DESIGNATED BIOSECURITY AREAS

- Date yet to be confirmed.
- New restrictions for [access to designated regions in Western Australia](#) under the *Commonwealth Biosecurity Act*. Access to the Kimberley has been restricted. The designated biosecurity area map is available [here](#).
- Any persons who is outside the designated area and seeking to enter into the region must:
 - be providing essential services or supplies;
 - have been quarantined from the general public for the previous 14 days;
 - be a returning residents who self-isolates for 14 days; or
 - qualify for a special exemption (including mining and food production) and adheres to strict conditions that minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread.
- An [Entry into Designated Biosecurity Areas form](#) **must be filled** to enter (page 3 is relevant).

Further information is available [here](#).

The above information has been updated on the [Border Control Information page on FarmHub](#).

ACCC ALLOWS TELCO COOPERATION AND NBN LAUNCHES SKY MUSTER ENHANCEMENTS

Yesterday the ACCC granted interim authorisation allowing NBN Co and Australia's five largest retail service providers (Telstra, Optus, Vodafone Hutchinson, TPG and Vocus) to work together to take necessary measures to keep telecommunications networks operating effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic. NBN Co and the five RSPs have committed to share information and coordinate efforts to manage congestion and the increases in demand as large numbers of people now work and access education from home.

Yesterday enhancements to NBN Co's Sky Muster Plus product took effect – several months ahead of schedule – meaning that all traffic will be unmetered (including videoconferencing tools, education and health platforms, web browsing and software updates), except for video streaming and traffic via a VPN. This followed the introduction of 45GB data download limit increases for standard Sky Muster services on 31 March.

NBN Co is meeting regularly with the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition to provide updates on network changes and seek feedback on user experiences and needs. To date the feedback has been positive, and regional services appear to be keeping up with increased demand.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Key Messages

The NFF encourages stakeholders to align where possible with the cross-industry messaging below.

- Australia is one of the most food secure countries in the world, exporting 75% of what we produce.
- The impact of COVID-19 on Australian agriculture is an evolving situation, but it's largely business as usual for farmers and the food supply chain.
- Panic buying by consumers is not necessary, and it's not helpful. There is plenty of food to go around. We just need to shop sensibly.
- The NFF is in ongoing contact with all levels of government, and helping to coordinate the flow of information to and from industry.
- It is critical that all levels of Government collectively recognise agriculture as an essential service, that there is consistency in the recognition and enforcement of ag and the supply chain and there is no restriction on the flow of inputs or raw products through the supply chain.

COMMODITY BRIEFS

RDCs and industry associations are releasing tailored information on COVID19 developments relevant to specific commodities. Links to these are below. Please let us know of others that can be added.

- [Dairy Australia](#)
- [Red Meat Advisory Council](#)
- [Wool Industry – Shearing Operations: Protocols in response to COVID19 – Operations Document](#)

KEY CONTACTS AND CONSULTATION FORUMS

NFF is participating in the COVID19 forums listed below. Please forward any questions you would like us to raise in these forums to the following staff:

- **Overall coordination:** Tony Mahar – (tmahar@nff.org.au)
- **Labour and workplace issues:** Ben Rogers (brogers@nff.org.au)
- **Border Controls:** Warwick Ragg (wragg@nff.org.au)
- **Stimulus packages and trade:** Pru Gordon (pgordon@nff.org.au)
- **Farm inputs:** Adrienne Ryan (aryan@nff.org.au)
- **FarmHub:** Heidi Reid (hereid@nff.org.au)
- **Communications and media:** Laureta Wallace (lwallace@nff.org.au) or Charlie Thomas (cthomas@nff.org.au)

Forum	Convener	Time/day
NFF/DAWE Coronavirus Teleconference	NFF	Friday, 3.30 - 4.00 pm <i>Note change of day for this week.</i>
NFF Partner Briefing	NFF	Friday, 4.30 – 5.00 pm <i>Note change of day for this week.</i>
Member Communications Group	NFF	Thursdays, 4 - 5pm
NFF Member CEOs Meeting	NFF	Weekly, time TBC
Business Liaison Group (other attendees are ACCI, BCA, AIG ABA, and COSBA)	The Prime Minister and Treasurer	Tuesday, 31 March 2020
Food and Grocery Sector Group	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Mondays 10.30-11.30am
The Agriculture Ministers' Forum (AGMIN)	Council of Australian Governments	Friday, 3 April 2020
Labour Forum	Attorney General's Department	
Coronavirus – Industry Consultation	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Wednesdays, 2.00 - 3.00pm
Coronavirus – Industry Consultation	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Next TBC

