National Farmers Federation

Biosecurity Policy

Investment and partnerships needed to protect against damaging pests and diseases

Australia's biosecurity system is fundamental to the success of our agriculture industries; to the health of our natural environment and our society and economy at large. An adequately funded and well-resourced and effective system will be an essential part of industry achieving our goal of $100 billion in farm gate output by 2030.

The primary industry sector is a critical part of the nation's biosecurity continuum, contributing in-kind and financially to the national system through their own activities, levies and other fees that support emergency response arrangements, research, development, extension and adoption (RDE&A).

Australia's geographic isolation partnered with appropriate biosecurity practices along the pre-border, border and post-border, has ensured that Australia remains free of many damaging invasive species found elsewhere in the world. This brings many benefits. Not only are our environment, community and primary industries protected from the direct damaging impacts of these invasive species, but the status also provides a competitive advantage when marketing our produce domestically and overseas. Australia's favourable pest and disease status contribute to our products being both highly competitive and sought-after on the world market. Maintaining this status is central to industry growth ambitions.

The issue

In a complex global environment where international trade and travel continue to increase significantly, so does the risk of major biosecurity threats entering and establishing in Australia. Added to this challenge is a changing climate, which will increasingly affect the range, habitat, spread and impact of invasive species – both known and yet to be identified. Changing demographics and patterns of land use are also altering the biosecurity risk profile.

The issue of greatest concern is that resourcing of the national system – at a federal, state and territory level – is not keeping pace and that the system may not be fit for the challenges of the future. This concern has been substantiated by several recent expert reviews.

Key points

- A strong, well-resourced, efficient and innovative biosecurity system is paramount in the protection against invasive species and the ongoing international competitiveness of Australia's farm produce.
- A partnership approach is essential to deliver a modern system that successfully manages biosecurity risk.
- Agriculture must continue to improve biosecurity management and awareness, including by embedding biosecurity in industry assurance and certification programs across the supply chain.

The solution

To achieve the strong, well-resourced, efficient and innovative biosecurity system necessary for Australia to reap the benefits of our pest and disease-free status, we must place a strong emphasis on the concept of shared responsibility. All biosecurity system participants, including governments (federal, state, territory and local), industry, supply chains, the community, individual landowners and managers, play a role in reducing risk along the biosecurity continuum. While there is not a single action to achieve a perfect system, some focal areas are listed below:

Long term strategy: The system needs a national biosecurity strategy developed and implemented by governments, industry and community groups and supported by a long-term sustainable investment plan. A strategy should encompass the full biosecurity continuum - from offshore to on-farm, as well as research, development, extension and adoption.

Funding: Current funding arrangements for Australia's biosecurity system are complex. A successful biosecurity system relies on sustained levels of well-targeted investment, underpinned by nationally coordinated, consistently applied and well communicated funding principles and arrangements. Funding allocation should be linked to the growth of the biosecurity task, with priority given to the areas of greatest return on investment and high-risk pathways.

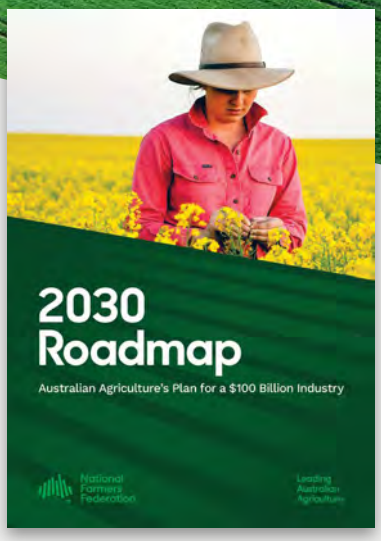
Research, development, extension and adoption: Commitment by governments and industry to ongoing investment and collaboration in RDE&A is needed to inform best practice and innovative approaches across the biosecurity continuum and to ensure Australia remains a world-leader in biosecurity management.

Compliance and enforcement: Regulatory compliance and enforcement tools, including civil penalties, criminal sanctions and visa cancellations, should be used appropriately by governments to manage biosecurity risk and encourage compliance with biosecurity requirements.

What can Governments do?

The NFF has identified the following immediate government priorities for achieving a strong national biosecurity system that is fit for the challenges of the future:

- Commitment to ensuring adequate long-term funding for the national biosecurity system.
- The implementation of a national biosecurity strategy developed by governments, industry and community groups and supported by a long-term sustainable investment plan for biosecurity. The strategy should encompass the full biosecurity continuum - from offshore to on-farm, as well as RDE&A.
- Prioritisation and adequate resourcing of the implementation of recommendations made by the Inspector General of Biosecurity.
- Governments and industry should commit to long-term funding collaboration of biosecurity RDE&A programs across the biosecurity continuum, including management of established pests and weeds.
- Government must engage industry in national biosecurity communications activities during and outside of biosecurity incidents, through the National Biosecurity Communications and Engagement Network.



The NFF has a goal for agriculture to be a $100 billion industry by 2030. The *2030 Roadmap* is a plan developed by the NFF to guide the sector to this goal.

Roadmap Aspiration 1.3

Australia has world-leading market access and the capacity to maximise the economic benefits.

Roadmap Aspiration

Public and private R&D efforts work seamlessly to translate world-class research into tools and services which give Australian agriculture a competitive edge.

National Farmers Federation

14-16 Brisbane Avenue
Barton ACT 2600
Locked Bag 9 Kingston ACT 2604

02 6269 5666
reception@nff.org.au
nff.org.au

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@NationalFarmers