

Media Release

The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Training and Skills

Minister for Higher Education

Minister for Agriculture



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PREPARATIONS RAMP UP TO PREVENT FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

Agriculture Victoria is ensuring staff are ready to respond to any biosecurity threats after fragments of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and African Swine Fever (ASF) were detected in pork products at a Melbourne retail outlet yesterday.

While the fragments are not transmissible, the detection shows how easily diseases and pests could enter Australia and served as a strong reminder to never feed food scraps containing meat to pigs.

Preparing for a potential FMD detection is the number one priority for Agriculture Victoria and the team is working hand in glove with the Commonwealth doing everything it can to keep Australia FMD-free.

The livestock industry and peak bodies are key partners that are regularly briefed to ensure they understand their responsibilities and know what to do to manage the threat of FMD.

Agriculture Victoria staff are undertaking FMD-specific training, scenario planning, and participating in emergency exercises to ensure they're ready to respond quickly if there is a positive detection in livestock.

New on-farm biosecurity methods regarding the safe disposal of animals in the instance of an outbreak are also being trialed, as well as investigation of potential suspect cases on the ground.

There are over 300 dedicated biosecurity staff within the 1200 strong team at Agriculture Victoria. There is also a team of experts and scientists at AgriBio who test suspect animal and plant samples and are continually improving test accuracy and efficiency.

Victoria is also the only jurisdiction to have a mandatory electronic National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) for sheep and goats, supporting rapid traceability, which is critical in a livestock biosecurity response.

FMD and ASF are notifiable exotic diseases and any suspected or confirmed cases must be reported to Agriculture Victoria on the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline 1800 675 888.

The most significant risk of entry of FMD into Australia is through illegal meat and dairy products infected with the FMD virus being fed to pigs.

For more information about FMD, its signs and actions to reduce its spread as well as what to do if you suspect it, visit the Agriculture Victoria website – agriculture.vic.gov.au/fmd.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney

"Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility, and we all need to help protect our agriculture, our economy and our unique natural environment."

"Agriculture Victoria continues to work hard to ensure its staff are prepared for any biosecurity risks from exotic disease such as foot-and-mouth."

Media contact: Anthony Templeton 0475 256 383 anthony.templeton@minstaff.vic.gov.au