

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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BIOSECURITY KEY PRIORITY IN FMD PREPAREDNESS

The Andrews Labor Government is taking action to ensure Victoria is prepared for any biosecurity risks from emergency animal disease (EAD) such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), with extensive measures already underway.

The Labor Government will establish an Emergency Animal Disease Taskforce to begin planning for a rapid response if an outbreak were to occur in Victoria.

The plan will focus on bolstering the workforce of Agriculture Victoria to manage the potential social, economic and environmental threat of FMD.

The Taskforce will be co-chaired by Agriculture Victoria Chief Executive Officer Matt Lowe and the Emergency Management Commissioner Andrew Crisp, in line with the State Emergency Management Plan, taking advice from Victoria Chief Vet Graeme Cooke.

The Government is working in partnership with the Commonwealth, doing everything it can to keep Australia FMD-free and more than 300 dedicated Agriculture Victoria biosecurity staff are currently undertaking FMD-specific training, scenario planning, and emergency exercises.

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.

On average there are 10.5 million sheep tags purchased by Victorian producers per year and Victorian cattle producers purchase 2.5 million cattle tags per year.

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.

Biosecurity measures on farms are commonplace in Victoria, and Agriculture Victoria will continue to support farmers and ensure appropriate individual plans are in place.

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.”

“Risk assessment and preparedness is key in ensuring we’re best placed to respond if there is a positive detection in livestock in Victoria – and we’re doing the work now to protect our industry.”

Quote attributable to Victoria Chief Vet Dr Graeme Cooke

“Foot-and-mouth disease is not yet in Australia – and we all need to keep it that way by having robust measures protecting Australia’s border – however it is necessary to have plans in place which continue to be worked on in case they are ever needed.”

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