

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



Wednesday, 26 July 2023

VISITING TIMORESE VETS LEARN VALUABLE BIOSECURITY SKILLS

To prepare them to combat animal diseases and biosecurity threats back home, the Andrews Labor Government is training veterinarians from Timor-Leste at Victoria's world-class AgriBio research facilities.

Minister for Agriculture Gayle Tierney announced three Timorese vets from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries were visiting Victoria to broaden their epidemiology, pathology, and bacteriology skills.

These skills will support Timor-Leste's animal health and biosecurity initiatives, ensuring the nation can respond to potential disease outbreaks.

Their visit is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which has funded Agriculture Victoria with \$3.5 million to extend biosecurity training to scientists, technicians, and farmers in Timor-Leste.

This will build on significant work undertaken by the Victorian Government in Timor-Leste following the 2019 outbreak of African Swine Fever, where veterinary team members supported the response and formed ongoing partnerships.

Since then, the Government's Research team has continued to train local veterinarians to use diagnostic tools, including a real-time method for detecting different microbial agents in animal samples, and a portable test for pathogenic viruses.

This support has enabled Timor-Leste to diagnose and control disease outbreaks, which may have otherwise cost the Timorese agriculture industry up to an estimated \$90 million.

Protecting the state's biosecurity is a top priority for the Labor Government, investing \$17.5 million to emergency animal disease preparedness in the Victorian Budget 2023-24, taking the total investment over the past 12 months to \$43 million.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Agriculture Ingrid Stitt

"We are proud to share Agriculture Victoria's world-class research capabilities with our close neighbours from Timor-Leste, helping to build skills that strengthen the agricultural industry and protect it from biosecurity threats."

"Thanks to our partnership with Timor-Leste, our researchers have also gained valuable skills in exotic disease surveillance and diagnosis, so we are better prepared if there is an outbreak in Australia."