

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Friday, 17 May 2024

PROTECTING AGRICULTURE FROM ANIMAL DISEASE THREATS

The Allan Labor Government is protecting Victoria's thriving \$20 billion agriculture industry – by strengthening the state's biosecurity practices and preparedness to quickly and effectively respond to emerging animal diseases.

Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence today released the new *State Emergency Animal Disease Response Plan* which builds on the first plan published in 2022 and sets out how the Government will respond to any threats.

Australia faces heightened risk of biosecurity incursions due to recent detections of emerging animal diseases in neighboring countries - which is why Victoria needs the most up-to-date response to protect our agriculture industry.

The emergency animal diseases response plan will help to eradicate a disease outbreak in the shortest time possible while minimising the social, environmental, welfare and economic impacts on the Victorian community.

The updated plan builds on ongoing work to prepare for an emergency animal disease outbreak by setting out how the Government and agencies will respond to an emergency and outlining the action required to protect our agriculture industry.

The plan outlines step-by-step the mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery arrangements for a large-scale emergency animal disease outbreak.

The updates include improving and streamlining emergency response structures and clarifying roles and responsibilities – to ensure a quick and strong response to any outbreaks.

It also creates a more robust overview of relief and recovery – outlining agency responsibilities across Government and ensuring all agencies have clear emergency responsibilities that can be activated quickly and seamlessly when required.

This plan builds on the existing work to train staff across government, with more than 750 people having completed essential training required to be deployed in an emergency animal disease emergency.

Since 2022, the Labor Government has invested \$43 million to deliver the dedicated emergency animal disease preparedness program - this was reinforced in the *Victorian Budget 2024/25* with \$15.8 million invested to better identify and respond to biosecurity emergencies.

To learn more about emergency animal disease preparedness and the new response plan, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/ead.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"Protecting our agricultural industry is vitally important, this updated plan is the next step in our work to prepare for any potential animal disease threats."

"Having up-to-date, and fit-for-purpose plans in place are crucial in the event of all emergencies - and animal disease outbreaks are absolutely no different."

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