



**CATTLE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO THE  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT ON BIOSECURITY REVIEW DRAFT REPORT  
(dated December 2016)**

**Summary Comments**

Overall, the Review Panel has conducted a thorough analysis of the current Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) and delivered an in-depth and thoughtful set of Draft Recommendations. Given this study was commissioned by the National Biosecurity Committee, Cattle Council compliments the Panel on its degree of industry and community consultations throughout the review process and the extent to which the Panel has striven to aggregate the wide variety of suggestions made to it through submissions and meetings.

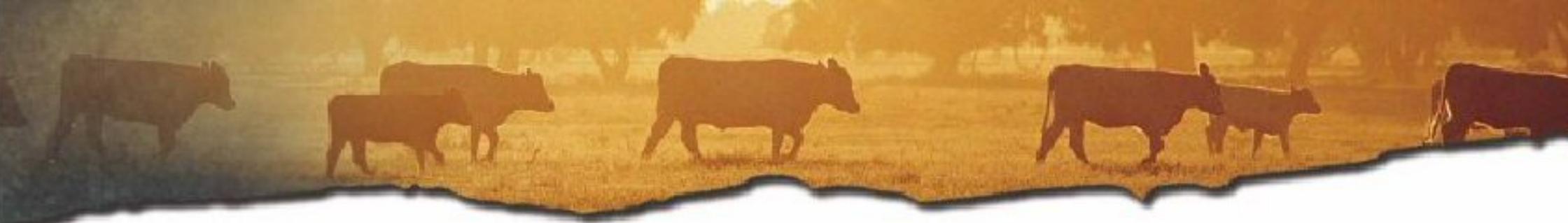
Cattle Council supports the general direction proposed by the Panel, which supports greater 'nationalisation' of biosecurity related policy development and expenditure.

In summary, Cattle Council of Australia believes the Panel has recognised through its draft report many of the issues of concern to industry at present in terms shortfalls in Australia's biosecurity and disease-preparedness systems. Cattle Council strongly supports the IGAB framework developed in 2012, seeing it as central to past developments involving governments; the Panel is right in recommending its revision to reflect future needs, particularly regarding greater involvement for industry.

With greater industry involvement comes increased industry responsibility. Cattle Council supports the Panel's recommendations for stronger links between governments and industry policy makers and acknowledges the additional workload this will bring for industry if it is to provide meaningful and sustained input to the process of 'shared responsibility'.

At the heart of any such adjustment must be recognition of industry's past and ongoing contribution or potential contribution towards caring for their animals and the land. For a number of important joint animal-health and surveillance programs, jurisdictions have been recognised formally as providing 'in-kind' contributions that have been counted towards jurisdictional funding; it's time recognition – preferably financial recognition through the tax system or similar – is given to the passive (and at times active) biosecurity activities of livestock producers.

In maintaining its focus on financial aspects, Cattle Council considers the Draft Recommendations on efficient allocation of funds (#27-32) and revising the patchwork of levies (#35) as the most fundamental of the Panel's 40 draft recommendations.

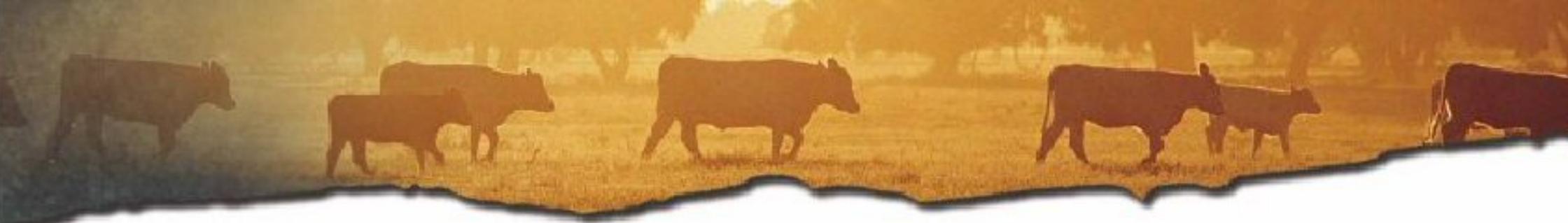


**Specific Responses**

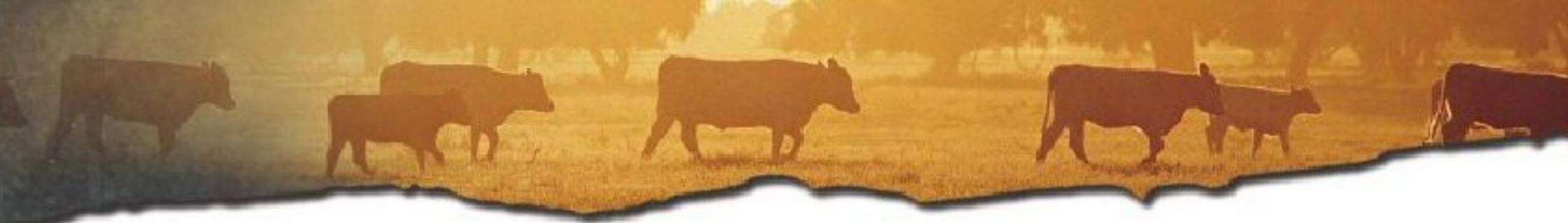
<b>FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) &amp; DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)</b>		<b>CCA RESPONSE</b>
<b>FR1</b>	<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<p>The concept of ‘shared responsibility’, originally coined in the 1996 Nairn Review and repeated in the 2008 Beale Review, the 2011 Matthews Assessment and the various disease-response exercises in between, has relevance for governments <i>and</i> industry.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the recent increase in governments handing more responsibility for disease management and extension services to industry is being seen as a government response to the erosion of their coffers rather than any true recognition of a partnership in biosecurity. The Panel has recommended that a more strategic, inclusive approach to risk abatement be taken in the future; if adopted, this should help overcome this perception of government ‘cost shifting’.</p> <p>The Panel acknowledges, “that all parties will have some, but not an equal, level of responsibility” (p. 9). Cattle Council agrees and therefore supports the Panel’s definition of ‘shared responsibility’:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Shared responsibility means everyone takes responsibility for biosecurity matters under their control. Everyone has an obligation to take action to protect Australia from pests and diseases (p. 9).</i></p> <p>Cattle Council also agrees that more work is needed to raise awareness among industry participants regarding their roles in a national biosecurity system; co-operation with governments will contribute to meeting this challenge. Cattle Council appreciates the Panel’s acknowledgment of the Council’s Livestock Biosecurity Network initiative (p. 12) and appeals to all governments to support and utilise this model as their contribution to our collective efforts in leveraging scarce resources for raising industry awareness.</p> <p>Cattle Council agrees with the Panel’s suggestion that the terms ‘risk creators’ and ‘beneficiaries’ be dropped from the biosecurity vernacular in favour of ‘system participants’ (p. 10); however, it is reasonable to assume that certain individuals pose a greater risk to biosecurity than to do others, and programs designed to reduce biosecurity risks must reflect this.</p> <p>The Review Panel states that, “While governments will have a responsibility to assist in encouraging and involving other system participants, consideration of public and private benefits will need to be made where funding is an issue” (p. 10). This is so; however, as stated by Cattle Council in its earlier submission (July 2016), benefits accrue in three, not just two, ways: to the general public (taxpayer), to the industry public (levy payer) and to private operators (fee payers). It’s important this be considered when discussing future funding models.</p>



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
		Finally, Table 1 of the Panel’s draft report is an excellent depiction/summary of roles and responsibilities for all sectors. Having said this, the role and alignment of the crop and livestock protection sectors within the table is unclear. Development, availability and regulation of insecticides, herbicides, veterinary chemicals and vaccines are essential for outbreaks and ongoing management of biosecurity matters.
<b>DR1</b>	National Statement of Intent	Cattle Council supports the concept of a National Statement of Intent, with the Roles and Responsibilities for each organisation/sector, as set out in the Panel’s Table 1 and agreed by all signatories, an important adjunct.
<b>FR2</b>	<b>Jurisdictions’ efforts at declaring area freedom</b>	Governments are best equipped to provide a technical and financial response to this feedback request. From a general perspective, Cattle Council notes that, on animal-health matters, jurisdictional governments, preferably in consultation with their respective industry bodies, hold sovereignty over the extent to which they pursue/maintain area freedom. Western Australia’s stance on maintaining a regulated area for bovine Johne’s disease freedom is a case in point: WA believes ongoing regulation is fundamental to its continued access for its cattle to Asia whereas the rest of Australia has committed to a deregulated model; WA’s stance may prove relatively expensive but its producers are willing to provide funding, even though a recent economic analysis of continuing its regulated approach proved inconclusive.
<b>DR2</b>	DAWR/Industry engagement for agreed priority setting process	Cattle Council supports enhanced government engagement with industry for assessing trade risks and setting priorities commensurate with the risks.
<b>DR3</b>	IGAB2 market access requirements for NBC	In the event of an interstate trade restriction being challenged, an improved Dispute Resolution Framework should be included in IGAB2, but for use only after it is clear the dispute is destined for the courts. In other words, the Framework should be seen as a means to head off an inevitable court case rather than a first resort where parties have evidently been non-committal to any outcome.
<b>DR4</b>	Jurisdictions’ surveillance to target greatest threats to export markets	
<b>DR5</b>	Utilisation of 2012 dispute resolution process	
<b>DR6</b>	Roles and responsibilities	



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
	regarding market access	
<b>DR7</b>	Jurisdictions' financial support to decisions agreed under NEBRA	<p>Federal and jurisdictional governments' roles in environmental biosecurity are best left to them for comment. Having said this, there appears scope for greater co-operation and co-ordination between agencies than exists currently.</p> <p>Industry has a role, but only when a clear case has been made that it, or part of it, will benefit from such involvement. (This was the case with <i>Striga asiatica</i> where the funding for eradication has been justifiably drawn from affected agricultural sectors, including the grass-fed cattle sector.)</p>
<b>DR8</b>	Formal arrangements between jurisdictional agencies and an MoU between federal agencies	
<b>DR9</b>	Commitments to environmental biosecurity	
<b>DR10</b>	Creation of Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer	
<b>DR11</b>	Establishment of an Environmental Biosecurity Committee within NBC	
<b>DR12</b>	Greater roles for AHA and PHA in environmental biosecurity	



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
		WHA, funded by governments (i.e., taxpayers) and public donations and providing a direct conduit to environment groups and the community.
<b>DR13</b>	Systematic approach to determine and plan for pests and diseases	Cattle Council supports Draft Recommendations 13-15 but with one variation: a five-yearly review of the priority list seems too seldom. The Review Panel correctly points out the priority lists of pests and diseases “will not be static”, with attention needed for the inclusion of new items as they arise. Nevertheless, given the US Government reviews its priority lists every two years, it might be more appropriate for Australia to review its lists every, say, three years. This would more accurately reflect the Panel’s comment that, “...national priority animal, plant and environmental pests and diseases should continue to be revised in light of intelligence on present or emerging risks. The Review Panel recommends that the priority pest and disease lists be reviewed no less than every five years, noting that there may be some reasons to review these lists earlier (for example, identification of new pathways, hosts and treatments)” (p. 44). Either way, attempts should be made to time reviews with the planning cycles of relevant Research and Development Corporations and government agencies.
<b>DR14</b>	Five-yearly national-level risk prioritisation for risks and pathways	
<b>DR15</b>	Agreed set of National Biosecurity R&I priorities to be reviewed every five years	
<b>FR3</b>	<b>Options for a new entity for cross-sectoral biosecurity R&amp;I</b>	<p>The Panel offers two options for future cross-sectoral biosecurity Research and Innovation (R&amp;I) implementation: establishing a new stand-alone entity for cross-sectoral biosecurity R&amp;I; or, addressing cross-sectoral biosecurity R&amp;I within an existing RDC.</p> <p>Both options have their advantages and disadvantages.</p> <p>Adopting the first would clearly state the importance placed in all things biosecurity. Many current R&amp;D programs being undertaken by RDCs could be moved over to the new R&amp;I entity that, assuming ‘new money’ is to be used, would free up valuable financial resources for the pursuit of other priorities within each sector. The potential downside of this option lies in the difficulty with its implementation.</p> <p>The second option avoids the need to create something new; however, finding an existing single RDC to take on the responsibility for what would essentially be a huge portfolio with significant ‘political’ challenges will prove difficult. Having said this, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, given its charter, represents a potential home for such a cross-sectoral portfolio; funding, of course, would need to be sourced for this, or any such RDC, to prosecute its new role successfully.</p> <p>A third option would be a more refined and supercharged use of all existing RDCs, either by establishing a newly badged ‘collective’ with its own overarching strategy or through the current Biosecurity RD&amp;E</p>



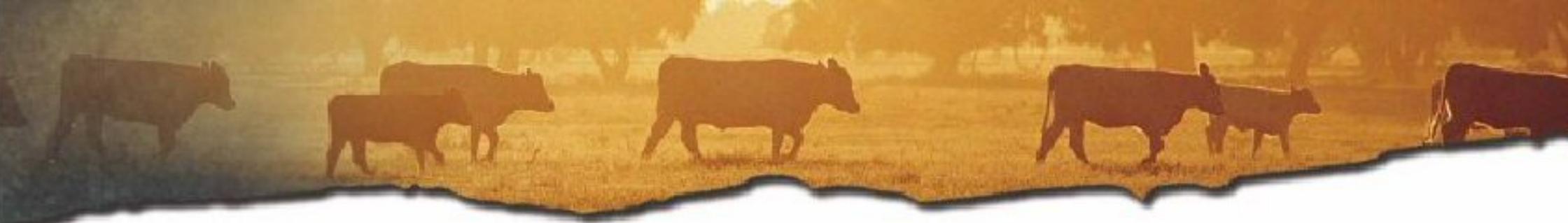
FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
		<p>Framework utilising its overarching strategy. Either way, it is important that each sector has the opportunity to pursue its particular biosecurity priorities through its relevant RDC should it so choose, preferably with the knowledge of, and agreement from, all other RDCs.</p> <p>As identified by the Panel, “the overall picture of strategies developed and in use across the national biosecurity system is overly complex, bordering on confusing” (p. 49); so, whatever option is preferred, it’s imperative that the current plethora of strategies for biosecurity is tidied up.</p>
<b>DR16</b>	IGAB2 to remain an agreement between First Ministers	Agree.
<b>DR17</b>	First Ministers to identify lead Ministers, with supporting arrangements	
<b>DR18</b>	NBC’s ToR to be established in IGAB2	
<b>DR19</b>	NBC to include Local Government Association rep and invite NZ Government rep	On the matter of NBC membership, Cattle Council understands AHA and PHA will be seeking full membership rights; if so, such a concept is supported, noting that AHA nor PHA are considered representative bodies of industry.
<b>FR4</b>	<b>Proposed Terms of Reference for the NBC</b>	<p>In proposing NBC Terms of Reference (Box 9), the Panel has omitted any mention of the NBC being required to work equally with industry. Given the Panel’s consistent comments in its report around the need for NBC and IGAB2 to become more embracing of the ‘shared responsibility’ concept, this is obviously an oversight that requires correction.</p> <p>Cattle Council’s only additional comment on the proposed ToR is that some sunset or review date (say, after five years) be included.</p>
<b>DR20</b>	NBC subcommittee structure to align with IGAB	No comment.



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
<b>DR21</b>	NBC's public profile	
<b>DR22</b>	AGSOC as overseer of IGAB Evaluation Program	
<b>DR23</b>	Jurisdictions' core commitments for IGAB Evaluation Program	
<b>DR24</b>	NBC to report annually to AGMIN and publish work program and annual report thereafter	Some requirement for NBC to report, formally or otherwise, to industry would serve as a reminder for IGAB members that, while they are beholden to AGMIN and AGSOC, industry remains an important part of the biosecurity 'troika' (Federal Government, State/Territory governments and industry).
<b>DR25</b>	Establish an Industry and Community Advisory Committee (I&CAC)	Cattle Council's 'gold standard' for government/industry/RDC interface on biosecurity matters is via the creation of a stand-alone Biosecurity Consultative Council; the Panel's suggestion for an I&CAC, in combination with an annual roundtable, is seen as step in the right direction, albeit for the immediate term.
<b>DR26</b>	NBC to convene an annual biosecurity roundtable for AHA & PHA members' input	<p>The Panel was commissioned by NBC to review biosecurity arrangements; as such, it's understandable why any proposed model for the future would fall within the NBC structure. From industry's perspective, the proposed I&amp;CAC (with roundtable) risks perpetuating the master-and-servant relationship that has operated between NBC and industry until now.</p> <p>For this to be seen as a stepping stone to something more inclusive in the future, Cattle Council requests three things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the name be changed to omit the concept of the Committee being 'advisory' to NBC (perhaps Industry and Community <i>Consultative</i> Committee?);</li> <li>2. further reasons be given as to why a broader perspective has been put aside in favour of this narrower approach for now; and</li> <li>3. a recommendation be added such that a broader model (such as the Biosecurity Consultative Council concept adopted as policy for the Beale Review by the National Farmers' Federation, Cattle Council of Australia, Red Meat Advisory Council and AHA's Industry Forum and others) be given appropriate consideration when IGAB2 is reviewed, if not before.</li> </ol>



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
DR27	Funding the new biosecurity system, including government and industry investment stocktakes	<p>Cattle Council strongly supports the three-tiered approach to funding as recommended to the NSW Local Land Services by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal when reviewing its funding model in 2013 (as cited by the Panel on p. 76f). This three-tiered approach (comprising public funding – community (taxes); public funding – industry (levies); and private funding – individuals/enterprises (fees)) is consistent with the model proposed by industry to the NBC’s 2015 <i>Modernising Australia’s Approach to established pests and diseases of national significance</i>, and appropriately reflects funding responsibilities under the Generalised Invasion Curve.</p> <p>The Panel has cited the following comment made by the Federal Government: “The Australian Government submission to this Review highlighted the need to reconsider allocation of resources in light of the results of the biosecurity stocktake, but emphasised it would be difficult to generate support for directing funding away from the right-hand [industry benefit] side of the curve” (p. 77). Is that it then? Because it would be difficult to generate support means we shouldn’t try?</p> <p>This comment more than many highlights the weakness in the current government/industry partnership. If our collective moneys can be better spent by reallocating sectoral funding to different parts of the Generalised Invasive Curve than at present, then let’s combine in making the case to those who provide the funds: the taxpayers, levy payers and fee payers. In other words, Cattle Council supports the Panels comment:</p> <p><i>The Review Panel acknowledges that some traditional patterns of investment can be driven by industry and political imperatives. However, the Panel hopes that the recommendations here will assist jurisdictions, and facilitate the decision-making process as to where to invest their limited taxpayer funds. Hopefully this will be into areas where the returns to producers, the industry and community are greatest (p. 77).</i></p>
DR28		
DR29		
DR30		
DR31		
DR32		
FR5	<b>Options for cost sharing to ensure a rapid response to incursions</b>	<p>Cattle Council is satisfied with the current response arrangements as set out in the EADRA and sees little justification in modifying the Agreement along the lines of either options.</p> <p>The Queensland Department’s submission is cited in the Panel’s report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“...in practice, technical requirements around feasibility of eradication and the delay between the Incident Definition phase and agreement to a response plan leave state governments bearing costs and risks” (p. 82).</li> </ol> <p>The gap between ‘incident definition’ and ‘response plan’ phases can be shortened with prompt</p>



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
		<p>action from the jurisdictional government(s); indeed, with cost sharing formalised at the point of acceptance of the Response Plan, incentive exists for its delivery by the relevant jurisdictional government(s) to be expedited.</p> <p>2. “[For] incidents which fall outside the current deed arrangements, [they] require collective agreement between national partners to navigate a cost sharing approach ... The absence of an agreed process to triage and rapidly resolve such incidents is again a concern for state governments” (p. 82).</p> <p>Cattle Council has some sympathy on this matter. Its experience involving QDAF has been with the <i>Striga asiatica</i> (Red Witchweed) incursion, where it took an unacceptably long time to determine a funding formula agreeable to most; this detrimentally affected the producers involved.</p> <p>However, Cattle Council believes matters of this kind should be dealt with through the newly formed Weed Deed, which is currently being drafted, not through the alteration of the existing EADRA, unless all signatories agree.</p>
<b>DR33</b>	Emergency response deeds for aquatic animals and exotic production weeds to be finalised	Agreed. The proposed Weed Deed is likely to involve some form of industry inclusion in funding formulae, which will be triggered in the event of an incursion. As such, consultation with, and involvement of, industry organisations in the drafting process need to be very thorough; evidence of this is lacking so far.
<b>DR34</b>	Jurisdictions to review their cost-recovery arrangements for consistency and transparency	Agreed. ‘National consistency’ is the catch cry of national organisations such as Cattle Council of Australia; consistency with cost-recovery arrangements is no exception. Importantly, governments must recognise their funding as being on behalf of their taxpayers who, one can safely say, are beneficiaries of the many programs being funded by governments. In other words, not all government expenditure can or should be recovered from industry.
<b>DR35</b>	All governments review biosecurity levies and ensure consistency with cost-sharing principles that should also be reviewed	<p>Strongly agree. There currently exists a hotchpotch of biosecurity levies around the country. The amounts and the methods by which they are collected differ markedly, with a number of States and the Territories having no levy at all (other than national levies).</p> <p>While in some cases jurisdictional levies may be justified and supported by producers within their borders, the existence of such levies makes raising of national levies to fund essential national biosecurity programs so much more difficult if not impossible.</p>



FEEDBACK REQUESTS (FR) & DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (DR)		CCA RESPONSE
		To be consistent with the theme throughout the Panel's report, taking a national, all-in approach to biosecurity policy development and funding would assist in 'cleaning up' the levy raising and spending system.
<b>DR36</b>	Measuring system performance and sharing data and knowledge	Cattle Council supports these draft recommendations.  One additional item relevant to performance and data sharing is the need for NBC to oversee a 'meta-analysis' of the various FMD-response exercises conducted over the past few years, summarise what lessons have been learned and make appropriate recommendations to governments and relevant industries as to how their roles in preparedness can be improved. Cattle Council is aware of, and in some cases been involved in, numerous exercises such as Minotaur, Diva, Odysseus, Slapstick and Apollo; each has been for a different purpose and each has yielded important information concerning this country's and/or regional preparedness for an incursion, yet the sharing of this information is potted at best.
<b>DR37</b>		
<b>DR38</b>		
<b>DR39</b>		
<b>DR40</b>	Amend IGAB in line with proposed revisions	Agreed, taking into account accepted points from this second round of submission.

