



Feedlot industry leader in biosecurity



A DISEASE outbreak in the feedlot industry could be devastating for lot feeders and, depending on the disease, could shut down Australia's beef industry.

"There is always the risk of a disease outbreak in Australia and we have seen the impact it has had on livestock industries overseas", said Graham Flynn, chairman of the Australian Lot Feeders Association's animal health and welfare committee.

"The feedlot industry works hard to minimise the risk of such a disease outbreak and so biosecurity has become an increasingly important part of our operations."

"In recognition of this, ALFA initiated the development of third party audited biosecurity standards for the feedlot industry. It is a first, I believe, for the livestock sector," Mr Flynn said.

ALFA also worked with Animal Health Australia to develop a DVD to assist feedlot managers and their staff to better understand these standards and achieve compliance.

"The development of the standards and feedlot biosecurity DVD demonstrates the lot feeding industry's proactive approach and commitment to

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minimising the risk of disease outbreak," Mr Flynn said.

Feedlots are faced with constant challenges, particularly in relation to managing the high density of livestock that is typical in an intensive production system.

But with a highly skilled workforce that continually monitors the health of the cattle, and the ability to rapidly administer medicines and other treatments efficiently, feedlots can quickly respond to potential incursions.

"No matter the size or location of the operation, an outbreak in one feedlot could potentially affect trade nationwide and shut down Australia's export markets.

"The point is to reduce the risks as much as possible," he said.

The biosecurity standards are now an integral part of the National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS).

They are assessed and audited as part of the feedlots' annual NFAS audit. The standards serve to minimise the risk of an outbreak of a serious animal disease or of an endemic disease reaching critical levels.

They also provide assurances to feedlot domestic and international markets of the high quality of Australian grainfed beef.

The new standards mean that some adjustments may have to be made by lot feeders in order to meet NFAS audit requirements. Feedlots must now document their biosecurity management procedures as part of their accreditation.

To achieve compliance, accredited feedlots must have the biosecurity standards incorporated into their daily operations.

Staff and contractors must be appropriately trained in biosecurity measures, and standard operating procedures must include biosecurity practices in line

with the requirements.

"But for many feedlots, most of the activities and recording already occur as part of normal daily operations. In most cases a few tweaks will be all that is required for compliance," Mr Flynn said.

The DVD explains what changes are required and is an ideal training tool for the management and staff of any size feedlot. It uses practical lot feeder experience to systematically work through all of the components of the NFAS biosecurity standards.

One lot feeder featured on the DVD, Helen Severin, said that incorporating the biosecurity measures, required by the NFAS standards, was straightforward and the obvious path to take their business into the future.

"The feedlot is my livelihood and supports me and my family, so it is important to me that we minimise risks as much as possible. We're only a small business so if there was a disease outbreak - that would wipe us out," Mrs Severin said.

"The issue of biosecurity is basic common sense. We have movement of

cattle coming in and out, and movement of people coming in and out every day.

"It just made sense that we put more emphasis on biosecurity so our business remains viable.

"The existing NFAS standards were already in place and working well, so the extra biosecurity aspects fitted in really easily. I actually didn't make up any new protocols for our feedlot - I just slotted them into our existing practices," she said.

"We came up with a system that works for us and we are pretty happy with it."

Helen and her husband Bruce own Flaxvale feedlot in New South Wales.

If you spot anything unusual in your feedlot call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888. All NFAS accredited feedlots will be provided with a free copy of the Feedlot Biosecurity DVD being distributed over the next few weeks.

● For further inquiries, contact Robert Taylor at AUS-MEAT on (07) 3361-9200 or email Robert.Taylor@ausmeat.com.au

Farm biosecurity ... simple fixes for common risks

P EOPLE, livestock and products are constantly on the move around the country and the world.

This movement opens up new challenges for agriculture but also increases the risk of livestock exposure to disease.

Good on-farm biosecurity is critical to protecting livestock health and farm incomes but you can decide what works best for you.

Assess your property in relation to these five risk areas and think about how you can reduce some of the risks to your business.

- **People movement.** People can unintentionally carry

diseases, pests and weeds and transfer them without even realising. This means anyone entering your property is a potential risk. Take into account their clothing, boots/shoes and whether they have had recent contact with other livestock etc.

You have the right to refuse entry to anyone who does not wish to comply with your biosecurity measures.

- **Product movement.** The movement of anything onto, around and off your property increases the risk of transferring diseases, pests and weeds and allowing them to spread. This means that every time you

move livestock, crops, plant materials, or anything that could harbour diseases, pests or weeds, you should consider the risks involved. Consider whether livestock have been exposed to disease, feed contains weed seeds or you are purchasing from a reliable source etc.

- **Equipment and vehicles.** Equipment and vehicles can carry disease and weed seed laden dirt and faecal matter and can distribute them. Vehicles should be kept away from livestock thoroughfares and parked in one designated area. It is important to maintain an adequate level of equipment hygiene and ensure all vehicles that visit your

property are clean.

- **Feed and water.** There is a high potential for diseases to be carried in feed and water supplies, for weed seeds to be distributed in fodder or through water streams and for pests to access feed supplies or contaminate water sources. Feed should be fit for purpose and stored safely and water sources checked regularly.

- **Pests and weeds.** Pests can bring disease or damage or interfere with livestock and plant products so an effective pest control program is important. A weed control program should also be considered for the control of weeds,

particularly those that are toxic to animals or inhibit farm production.

If you see any unusual signs of disease in your livestock call the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

The Farm Biosecurity program is a joint initiative of Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia.

For further information about farm biosecurity visit www.farmbiosecurity.com.au. The website includes information about disease risks, and how to go about reducing them. You can also subscribe to the Farm Biosecurity newsletter for regular updates.

farmbiosecurity

secure your farm: secure your future

Good farm biosecurity practices on your property will protect your livestock and plants from diseases, pests and weeds. Consider these risk areas on your property and what you can do to minimise them:

Product movement

People movement

Vehicles and equipment

Feed and water

Pests and weeds

Spotted anything unusual?

EXOTIC PLANT PEST HOTLINE
1800 084 881

EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE WATCH HOTLINE
1800 675 888

For further information visit www.farmbiosecurity.com.au