



Preparing your business to survive an emergency animal disease outbreak

About this document

Although the likelihood of an emergency animal disease (EAD) outbreak such as foot-and-mouth disease and bluetongue is low, the consequences would be significant to your business. An EAD outbreak may result in immediate cessation of export markets, movement restrictions at a national or local level and livestock may be culled to help stop the spread of disease. Would your business survive if there was an EAD outbreak?

This planning tool has been designed to assist you in developing a practical EAD survival plan for your livestock business. Thirty minutes spent completing this plan could improve the resilience of your business if an EAD occurs. You may even discover some useful ideas for improving the every-day operation of your business.

To create your EAD survival plan, follow the four steps in this document. A more detailed guide on risk management planning for an EAD is available [here](#)). Additional resources which may also assist you in developing your plan include industry biosecurity plans, AUSVETPLAN manuals and Department websites.

A group of white sheep with red ear tags are standing in a line in front of a row of trees with green leaves. The scene is outdoors, likely in a farm or rural setting.

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STEP

1

Think about your business

An EAD could disrupt your trade and the people, organisations and businesses that you depend on. Find out what areas of your business are most vulnerable by completing the following table.

1	What products do you produce and who do you sell these products to? <i>For example: are you a sheepmeat producer who sells directly to abattoirs or are you a wool grower who sells your wool at auction through a wool broker?</i>	Products		
	1.	2.	3.	
	Customers			
	1.	2.	3.	
2	What are your key inputs and who are the suppliers that you rely on? <i>For example: what supplementary feed do you purchase in and who do you purchase it from? Do you have staff or contractors that you rely on? Where do you source your fuel and veterinary supplies from? Who is your power service supplier?</i>	Inputs		
	1.			
	2.			
	3.			
	Suppliers (include a primary contact number)			
	1.		Phone no:	
	2.		Phone no:	
	3.		Phone no:	
3	What are the key support services your business utilises and who provides these services? <i>For example: does your business utilise any consultants, agents, veterinarians, mechanics, accountants, financial institutions, IT support or insurance brokers? Who do you use to transport your livestock? Do you have any industry organisation affiliations?</i>	Support services and contact person		
	1.	Primary contact:	Phone no:	
	2.	Primary contact:	Phone no:	
	3.	Primary contact:	Phone no:	
	4..	Primary contact:	Phone no:	
	5.	Primary contact:	Phone no:	
4	Who are the key regulators of your livestock business? <i>For example: What local council area is your livestock business located in? Does your business have any significant regulation by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI or equivalent) or the Environment Protection Authority (EPA)?</i>	Local council area?		Phone no:
	Department of Primary Industries/Agriculture region:			
	Local office phone no:			

A photograph of two sheep in a grassy field. The sheep in the foreground is white with a blue ear tag and a yellow tag. The sheep behind it is also white with a blue ear tag. They are both looking towards the camera.

STEP 2

Understand the risks

Following the detection and confirmation of an EAD, a range of movement restrictions will be implemented. These restrictions may be widespread (e.g. a national livestock standstill with foot and mouth disease (FMD)) or more localised in the form of declared areas (restricted areas) around infected and at-risk premises.

A national livestock standstill is a publicly announced ban on all movement of FMD-susceptible animals in the event of an FMD outbreak. This type of standstill is declared by authorities to allow them to trace where the disease already is, without the situation getting worse through continuing movements.

Individual premises may also be placed in quarantine¹ by government authorities. The restrictions may affect a producer's ability to sell or move livestock, products, feed and supplies. It is a criminal offence to move stock during a livestock standstill. Property visits by people and vehicles may be restricted or may require strict biosecurity protocols to be observed (e.g. use of personal protective equipment or vehicle wash downs).

Depending on the type of disease and the response policy, livestock from affected or at-risk properties may also be subjected to humane culling operations for which compensation would be paid according to the provisions in the AUSVETPLAN Valuation and Compensation Manual. Alternatively, livestock may require emergency vaccination.

What are the risks an EAD outbreak poses to your business? Could your business survive the following:

Risk 1	An EAD outbreak on your property requiring all of your livestock to be culled?
Risk 2	A cessation of export markets and the loss of income, staff and suppliers?
Risk 3	Movement restrictions placed on your livestock, products, fodder, vehicles and equipment?
Risk 4	Emergency disease control activities (such as vaccination or culling) requiring your time, equipment and other resources?
Risk 5	Increased workload (e.g. for livestock that cannot be moved but still need to be cared for, and meeting human resourcing, environmental and local government requirements)?

¹ Note in some jurisdictions this may be referred to as a Biosecurity Direction or other term.

Depending on your location, ongoing disease control and eradication arrangements may constrain or restrict your business activities for days, weeks, months or even years.





STEP 3

Identify actions to take

The following tables have been designed for you to record actions that you can adopt within your business to address the risks identified in Step 2. You may already have implemented some of these actions, however others may be worthwhile integrating into your business because they will help improve your resilience, regardless of an EAD outbreak.

Look through the list to identify and record any actions that could potentially minimise the impact of an EAD on your business. The list may prompt you to think of other steps you could take and you can write these down in the space provided.

Risk 1: Infection of livestock

The best way to minimise the impact of any disease is to avoid infection in the first place by practising good biosecurity. However, if your livestock are already infected with a disease, the immediate goal will be to prevent further spread with the assistance of animal health authorities. Remember that you have a legal obligation to report suspicions of notifiable diseases.² This can be done by calling:

1. the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888
2. your local veterinarian, or
3. your nearest Department of Primary Industries or Agriculture office

Early detection and reporting of disease is essential to minimise the impact of an EAD. Your staff are a big asset – remember to teach staff about the appropriate reporting process if they suspect an EAD.

Links to online industry biosecurity manuals are at the end of this document.

	Actions for addressing Risk 1: Infection of livestock	Priority for your business?
Before an outbreak		
1	Train staff in disease recognition, biosecurity and hygiene, including procedures for reporting suspect notifiable diseases. If there is ever any doubt, immediately contact your local private or government veterinarian. The Farm Biosecurity website has a section (at farmbiosecurity.com.au/livestock) on livestock that may assist with training. Develop systems that reward good biosecurity practice and make it part of the workplace culture.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Adopt your industry standards for biosecurity to protect both your herd/flock and your business. Regularly review farm biosecurity (around animal, people, fodder and vehicle movements, and boundary fences) and consider getting the assistance of a veterinarian or biosecurity expert to develop, implement or upgrade biosecurity plans. Hint: you can set a reminder in your phone calendar, or write a reminder in your farm diary, to remind you to review your biosecurity plan annually– why not do it just prior to the end of the financial year? Assess whether visitors present a risk and manage their contact with your animals. It is a good idea to keep a visitor register (e.g. in the front of your farm diary. A visitor log is available on the Farm Biosecurity website .	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

² A list of notifiable animal diseases is available at: www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/notifiable

	Actions for addressing Risk 1: Infection of livestock	Priority for your business?
3	Train staff so they understand the farm biosecurity plan and follow best practice for hygiene measures. It is a good idea to get staff involved in reviewing the Farm Biosecurity Plan annually, this gives staff the opportunity to ask questions and allows you to identify areas of upskilling that may be beneficial.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Ensure your biosecurity plan makes someone responsible for regular review of disease information and keeping up-to-date with industry biosecurity plans.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Record and keep displayed or saved in your phone (for fast access) the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline number (1800 675 888) and the number of your local private and district veterinarian (or equivalent).	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Display wall maps of the property and surrounding areas including important geographical landmarks, such as the main office, wash down areas, quarantine areas, handling facilities, rubbish tips, etc.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Assess whether facilities for handling and restraining animals—for close inspection and sampling (to detect disease)—are adequate to permit efficient processing of stock and make any necessary improvements. Animals must be able to be adequately restrained to avoid injury to the animal and handlers.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Assess whether infrastructure and equipment for cleaning and disinfection of equipment, materials, vehicles and buildings are adequate or need improvement and take action. It is helpful to have spare parts for cleaning equipment (pressure washers, etc.) on hand. Consult the AUSVETPLAN manual on decontamination for information on requirements for different diseases. This manual can be accessed via the Operational Manuals link on the AUSVETPLAN website .	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Think about how you source and access disease information. It is beneficial to subscribe to health news alerts for early warning of disease outbreaks. One website that provides alerts of animal disease outbreaks near you is www.outbreak.gov.au	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Bookmark the AUSVETPLAN website where you can quickly access a whole suite of disease management materials providing advice on individual animal diseases and on procedures for valuation and compensation, humane destruction and disposal, wild animal control, and decontamination. Consider, in addition, keeping hard copies or saved files of these documents (noting they are periodically updated).	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

	Actions for addressing Risk 1: Infection of livestock	Priority for your business?
10	Bookmark the AUSVETPLAN website where you can quickly access a whole suite of disease management materials providing advice on individual animal diseases and on procedures for valuation and compensation, humane destruction and disposal, wild animal control, and decontamination. Consider, in addition, keeping hard copies or saved files of these documents (noting they are periodically updated).	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Establish and use effective quarantine (isolation) facilities on the farm for newly- arrived or sick livestock. Isolation facilities don't have to be complex, just a separate area that has adequate shelter, water and accessibility for you and your staff to feed and monitor the livestock regularly.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
During an outbreak		
12	Check the website www.outbreak.gov.au for the latest official information and monitor the location of the outbreak through reports.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Talk to your neighbours, local community groups and family for support.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Remain alert to updates via the media, local vets and government officers.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
15	Other?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

Risk 2: Overseas export market closures and the loss of income and staff

EAD outbreaks often cause market closures, which can have a huge ripple effect financially and socially on grazing enterprises and related businesses (even those located a long distance from the outbreak). Actions taken to prepare for an EAD outbreak can mean the difference between whether your business survives or not.

Actions for addressing Risk 2: Market closures, loss of income and staff		Priority for your business?
Before an outbreak		
1	Think about your cash flow and financial reserves and investigate ways of accessing finance if an emergency did arise.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Strengthen working relationships with your bank or other financial institutions, and accounting and legal firms, including making them aware that you have considered risk management planning processes, including those targeting EADs.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Talk to your suppliers so they understand there could be a delay in payments if an emergency such as an EAD occurred. If possible, negotiate arrangements for payment during a business shock (such as that from a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak).	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Introduce labour-saving devices and technologies to improve business efficiency and your ability to cope with the additional livestock handling and decontamination requirements imposed by an EAD outbreak.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Through training develop a multi-skilled, self-reliant workforce able to cope with stress and able to perform multiple roles in an emergency. For more assistance with training or available courses, contact your industry body, or view information online at: animalhealthaustralia.com.au/online-training-courses	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Review staff contracts. Do the terms allow for additional hours in the case of an emergency? Do clauses restrict your ability to lay-off staff temporarily or in the event of exceptional circumstances?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Develop a plan for orderly staff lay-offs and for re-employment once the outbreak ends and your business returns to normal.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Maintain links with industry organisations and local community as their support will be invaluable during an EAD outbreak.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

	Actions for addressing Risk 2: Market closures, loss of income and staff	Priority for your business?
9	Review your property's insurance and lease agreements to determine the implications of an EAD outbreak for these and to ensure policies are up to date.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Know your neighbours, customers, suppliers, and suppliers of suppliers (so you can better predict the impact of an outbreak on these business stakeholders– which will in turn affect your business).	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
During an outbreak		
11	Use rosters to avoid staff burn-out for those assisting with response efforts.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Be prepared to perform alternative off-farm work to maintain cash flow.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
13	If requested, be prepared to assist authorities responsible for controlling the spread of the EAD.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Other?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

Risk 3: Movement restrictions and feed shortages

A major principle of eradicating an EAD is stopping the movements of people, animals and things that could spread the disease. Depending on proximity to the outbreak, farms may be placed under movement restrictions for months, making it very difficult to manage the supply of feed to livestock and to move products such as wool from the farm.

	Actions for addressing Risk 3: Movement restrictions and feed shortages	Priority for your business?
Before an outbreak		
1	Make plans to deal with a backlog of stock and/or wool on your farm, including performing orderly disposal, if required.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Consider options to deal with feed shortages (such as increasing storage and reserves through silos, haysheds and silage), identify options for obtaining feed locally if needed (e.g. local grain or hay producers). Keep a list of local suppliers and their contact details with your Farm Biosecurity Plan.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Save state and territory government livestock authority contact details in your phone or write them in your diary so that you can promptly apply for permits to move livestock if a national livestock standstill is declared.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Develop a plan for staying fully informed about movement restrictions during an EAD.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Provide negotiation training for senior managers so they are better prepared for potentially difficult conversations with suppliers, customers, neighbours and other business stakeholders.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Preserve valuable genetics by harvesting and freezing semen and/or embryos.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
During an outbreak		
7	Consult your local DPI to obtain advice on the routine movement of product while minimising the spread of disease.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Consult state authorities for advice on how to manage the essential movements of the herd between different sections of the property during a livestock standstill as restrictions may apply.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Other?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

Risk 4: Managing disease control activities

Eradication of an EAD requires cooperation with animal health authorities to conduct surveillance, tracing, vaccination, valuation, animal destruction, carcass disposal, pest control, cleaning and disinfection. The ability of your farm to comply and assist with these disease control activities during an EAD will have some influence on the time it will take to return to normal business—for you, the community and the industry.

	Actions for addressing Risk 4: Managing disease control activities	Priority for your business?
Before an outbreak		
General		
1	Identify a senior staff member to oversee any actions required by the veterinary team responding to an EAD.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
For surveillance, tracing and handling/vaccination		
2	Plan the provision of biosecurity facilities (e.g. wash-down sites) for staff and surveillance teams.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Ensure facilities for inspecting, handling and vaccinating animals are adequate.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Provide staff training in low-stress animal handling.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Ensure record keeping/information systems permit rapid retrieval and reporting of livestock health, movements and numbers, and include systems for sending data off-site without having to physically leave the property.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Save the Emergency Animal Disease hotline number (1800 675 888) in your mobile phone and ensure it is also prominently displayed in common work areas.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Ensure efficient traceability systems are in place. (i.e. do you have enough approved NLIS devices on farm and do you have an NLIS account ?)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

Actions for addressing Risk 4: Managing disease control activities		Priority for your business?
For valuation and compensation		
8	If practical, install weighing scales.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Keep good records of purchases and sales.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Ensure financial systems allow retrieval of relevant data.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Take video footage or pictures of the premises, infrastructure, equipment, livestock, landscape and other assets to support valuation.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
For animal destruction and disposal		
12	Consider where burial, composting and/or incineration sites could be located on your property. Consider the depth of the water table. Consult with your local EPA if you have more specific questions.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Have a control plan for feral and scavenging animals.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Implement best practice policies for workplace safety. Advice and training resources for developing policy are available from state and territory workplace safety bodies.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
For feral animal control		
15	Monitor and control feral animal populations using humane and legal means.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
16	Rodent-proof feed storages.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
17	Manage dead-animal pits to prevent scavenging.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

Actions for addressing Risk 4: Managing disease control activities		Priority for your business?
For decontamination		
18	Ensure cleanliness and tidiness of the premises to facilitate rapid decontamination.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
19	Ensure the layout and design of premises and wash-down sites are convenient and provide for rapid cleaning with minimal damage to infrastructure. Consider where the run off ends up.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
20	Have reserve water storage capacity in place to meet the increased clean water requirements of decontamination.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
21	Plan for isolation and decontamination of potentially infected animal products on site e.g. wool bales.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
22	Consider where and how you could decontaminate heavy equipment (e.g. trucks) on your property. Mark these location(s) on your wall maps.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
During an outbreak		
23	Ensure adequate supply and storage of clean water and disinfectant for decontamination requirements. Check the relevant AUSVETPLAN Disease Strategy Manual for the appropriate disinfectant/decontamination agent to be used for the EAD outbreak.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
24	Where possible, seal transport trucks to prevent leakage of manure or urine if animals are permitted to be transported.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
25	Other?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>

Risk 5: Managing your obligations and responsibilities

EADs cause severe disruption and hardship to farms and related businesses in many ways, all of which will attract intense public scrutiny. Support from other farmers, community organisations, government agencies and other groups becomes very important during and after the event. Failing to 'do the right thing' can cause difficulties for your business, even long after the outbreak is over.

	Actions for addressing Risk 5: Managing your obligations and responsibilities	Priority for your business?
Before an outbreak		
1	Ensure staff are aware of, and adhere to, codes of practice and/or standards for animal welfare, especially sections relating to land transport (https://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/land-transport/)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
During an outbreak		
2	Ensure staff cooperate with response teams.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Work with industry organisations and support industry spokespeople by directing media to a central point to safeguard the reputation of your business and the industry. Contact your local Department of Primary Industries/ Agriculture for details .	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Manage staff stress and ensure workplace safety standards are maintained.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Keep good records of disease control measures and other activities on your property during the response. Write these down in your farm diary or record this in farm management software.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Participate in community organisations such as the local fire brigade and state emergency services, or service organisations such as the CWA, Rotary and Red Cross, that provide emergency assistance to farmers and others.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Ensure good working relationships with government animal health, environmental and work safety authorities as well as industry organisations, such as livestock peak bodies. Have them advise and assist your business to operate within the law.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
8	If practical, make staff available to assist other businesses with disease control activities.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Other?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>



VISITORS

**PLEASE RESPECT
FARM BIOSECURITY**

Please contact the manager before entering.

Do not enter property without prior approval.
Keep to roadways and laneways.

  



STEP

4

Write down your action plan

Finally, in the following table, write down the actions you have identified as important, when they should be implemented, and who is responsible for them.

Action	Target date	Person responsible
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		

Other resources

For further information to help you complete this plan, you might want to refer to the detailed risk management planning manual below (available online):

- [Preparing your business to survive: A risk management planning manual for an emergency animal disease outbreak](#)
- [Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines 2013, Land Transport of Livestock, Land Transport : Animal Welfare Standards](#)

Industry Resources

National Farm Biosecurity Reference Manual: Grazing Livestock Production:
[National-Farm-Biosecurity-Manual-Grazing-Livestock.pdf](#)

Farm Biosecurity for Livestock Producers:
[Livestock - Farm Biosecurity](#)

www.woolproducers.com.au

www.goatindustrycouncil.com.au

www.cattleaustralia.com.au

www.sheepproducers.com.au

AUSVETPLAN Documents

[Operational Procedure Manuals](#)

[Valuation and Compensation](#)

[Disease Strategies](#)

[Enterprise manuals](#)



Acknowledgment: To GHD and Federation of Australia Wool Organisations Inc (now Wool Industries Australia) for their contribution to the original document.



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**If you see any
suspicious clinical
signs in your
livestock, contact the
Emergency Animal
Disease Hotline on
1800 675 888.**