



MEDIA RELEASE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE INQUIRES INTO MANAGING ANIMAL AND PLANT DISEASES

The Public Accounts Committee is calling for submissions to its wide-ranging inquiry into the management of animal and plant diseases in New South Wales, announced the Committee Chair, Noreen Hay MP.

“Agriculture is a vital contributor the economy of New South Wales. Threats to animals and plants can endanger trade and the safety of the food supply. New challenges, such as avian influenza, could potentially have disastrous effects on human health.”

“The Committee is keen to test whether the government and industry are equipped to deal with emergency pest and disease situations. It will also investigate how well endemic diseases such as Ovine Johne’s Disease are managed,” said Ms Hay.

The Public Accounts Committee regularly follows up issues raised in reports of the Auditor-General. This inquiry will examine the recommendations made in two recent performance audits:

- *Managing Animal Disease Emergencies (of 2002) and*
- *Implementing the Ovine Johne’s Disease Program (of 2003)*

“The Committee will examine the implementation of these recommendations as part of the review of the effectiveness and efficiency of arrangements for managing animal and plant diseases” said Ms Hay.

Submissions are invited by **12 May 2006**.

The complete terms of reference are attached. Further information about this inquiry can be found at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/publicaccounts.

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Inquiry into Managing Animal and Plant Diseases - Terms of Reference

On 29 March 2006, the Public Accounts Committee resolved to conduct a follow-up inquiry on the Auditor-General's reports, *NSW Agriculture: Managing Animal Disease Emergencies* and *Implementing the Ovine Johne's Disease Program* with the following Terms of Reference:

The Committee will examine:

1. Implementation of the reports' recommendations and their relevance under current administrative arrangements.
2. The State's preparedness to manage animal and plant disease emergencies, particularly with respect to:
 - Risk based planning and disease surveillance;
 - The effectiveness of immediate response mechanisms;
 - Intergovernmental cooperation and the State's compliance with national standards; and
 - Cost sharing arrangements between industry and Government.
3. The effectiveness and efficiency of the management of endemic diseases, including the roles of government and industry.
4. Any other related matters.