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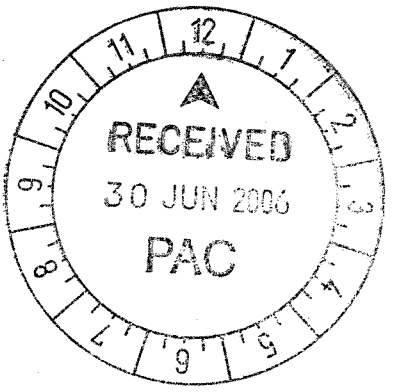

THE CABINET OFFICE
NEW SOUTH WALES

TCO/12630

30 JUN 2006

Ms Noreen Hay MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Managing Animal and Plant Diseases
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Hay

Please find attached the NSW Government submission to the NSW Parliament Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Managing Animal and Plant Diseases.

Should you have any questions about this submission, please contact Ms Clare O'Reilly (Acting Director, Natural Resources Management and Legislation Policy, Department of Primary Industries) on (02) 8289 3928.

Yours sincerely

for Roger B Wilkins
Director-General

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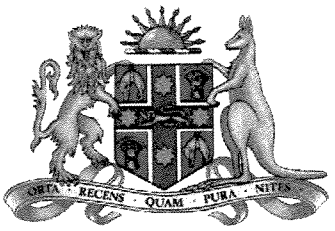


NSW GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC ACCOUNT'S COMMITTEE FOLLOW-UP INQUIRY INTO THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORTS:

1. *NSW AGRICULTURE: MANAGING ANIMAL DISEASE EMERGENCIES;* AND

2. *IMPLEMENTING THE OVINE JOHNE'S DISEASE PROGRAM.*

JUNE 2006

A. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to sub-section 57(1)(c1) of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative Assembly has announced an inquiry following up the implementation of the recommendations made in two performance audit reports prepared by the Auditor General on the management of plant and animal diseases within New South Wales. The two reports which are the subject of the Inquiry are:

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

The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are:

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 role of Government and industry; and

4. Any other related matters.

The purpose of this submission is to demonstrate the responses made by the NSW Government to the Auditor-General's reports and recommendations, as well as provide further information regarding NSW's preparedness and response mechanisms, surveillance programs and the shared responsibility assumed by the NSW Government and Industry.

B. Executive Summary

NSW enjoys an enviable reputation for producing high quality, safe agricultural products worth as much as $10 billion per year in gross farm gate value (over $8 billion even during the current drought). Primary industries (including mining) and down stream processing sectors also account for between 30 and 40 per cent of the overall economic activity in regional NSW.

It is widely recognised that successful and effective biosecurity programs are required to underpin and foster international and domestic markets for these agricultural products.

As demonstrated by this submission, since the Auditor General's reports in 2002 and 2003 NSW agencies have made significant progress towards developing a whole-of government biosecurity approach for the preparedness and response to animal and plant pest and disease emergencies including new and emerging threats, and aquatic species. The NSW biosecurity approach is based on risk analysis and surveillance, and where appropriate, is supported by identification, tracing and data management systems. It also integrates with national monitoring programs and performance standards for specific endemic and exotic diseases, and with national disease recording and reporting arrangements.

Experience managing real emergency pest and disease events plus simulated exercises to test plans, policies and operating procedures for emergency pest and disease threats, along with experience managing routine endemic problems, have highlighted some areas that may benefit from further enhancement such as information systems and cross border operational arrangements. It is essential that liaison continue between relevant agencies and jurisdictions on practical aspects of implementation and program maintenance.

Participation, contribution, and commitment from industry are also essential for the success of programs and preventative measures, with industry playing a key role in managing the risks of outbreak. However, pests and diseases that impact on human health, biodiversity and native species still require Government intervention. National cost sharing agreements also commit the Government to co-funding control for incursions of certain serious (emergency) pests and diseases.

This submission highlights considerable progress on issues relating to recommendations in the performance audits on managing animal disease emergencies and implementing the Ovine Johne's Disease Program.

Significant savings and efficiencies have been realised in many existing programs, without compromising their effectiveness. However, it is recognised that continuing review is necessary to ensure that the best management practices are identified and followed.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENTS

Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI)
NSW DPI manages pest and disease issues which impact on primary industries and also has responsibility for legislation and policy relating to agricultural and environmental weed control implementation, protection of aquatic ecosystems and animal welfare. Its role includes maintaining surveillance and diagnostic capacity in relation to pest and diseases of plants and animals. It responds to animal disease and pest emergencies with environmental and public health impacts, in conjunction with the Departments of Environment and Conservation and Health.

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)
DEC has a specific role in managing pest animals, emergency disease outbreaks and their impact on native animals and plants, natural habitats and other lands both in, and around national parks.

Department of Health (NSW Health)
NSW Health is responsible for public health issues related to animal disease emergencies. These include potential threats to human health, public health intervention options and a range of environmental health concerns. NSW Health has considerable expertise and surveillance capacity for detecting new and emerging infectious diseases in human populations. Its response capabilities for human disease outbreaks also inform the development of responses to animal disease outbreaks.

Office of Financial Management (NSW Treasury)
NSW Treasury's main role in the management of animal and plant diseases is managing funding for and Budget impact of animal and plant disease programs, ensuring appropriate economic principles are consistently applied to these programs, and contributing to NSW Government consideration of its role in relation to this issue.

D. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE INQUIRY

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REPORTS' RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEIR RELEVANCE UNDER CURRENT ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

1.1 AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT *MANAGING ANIMAL DISEASE EMERGENCIES*

The Auditor General's Report made a number of recommendations based on findings of its review of the preparedness of the NSW Government to respond to animal disease and pest emergencies. The recommendations were aimed at assisting the development of strategies for responding to large-scale emergency animal diseases. The recommendations are set out below in italics, together with a brief description of the implementation of each recommendation and its relevance under current administrative arrangements.

1.1.1 *Risk Based Planning – NSW Agriculture should apply a more comprehensive approach based on risk analysis principles to the management of emergency animal diseases. It is essential for the improved linkage and alignment of strategies, plans and resources.*

Risk based planning is now routinely adopted during the development of both pre-incident preparedness and also incident responses. It is acknowledged that planning based on risk analysis encourages a more conscious and proactive decision making process. Because the need, nature, magnitude and timing of pest and disease response services are unpredictable and fluctuate, they represent a financial risk. By adopting a risk analysis approach, both operational and financial planning factors can be considered when evaluating the probability and impact of disease outbreaks and corresponding prevention and control measures.

Two examples of risk based planning in operational matters are:

- The whole of government preparedness response for the national Avian Influenza exercise (*Exercise Eleusis*) (facilitated by NSW DPI) was based on risk management principles. The approach adopted for that exercise has been largely carried forward into the whole of government Pandemic Taskforce, responsible for monitoring the preparedness for a human flu pandemic.

- The revision of the National Animal Health Performance Standards, which has included input from NSW DPI, has been based on risk analysis principles.

Risk based planning also underlies the development of operational procedures to deal with major pest and disease incidents. For instance, the NSW Emergency Pest and Disease Response Team regularly reviews and tests these operational procedures.

1.1.2 *Disease Surveillance – The surveillance strategy for emergency animal diseases should be revised to ensure that adequate investigation and sampling is occurring across the State. NSW Agriculture should continue to actively support initiatives to recruit and develop more veterinarians for livestock work in rural NSW. Without adequate numbers of livestock veterinarians, surveillance is restricted.*

Disease surveillance is a key part of NSW DPI's involvement in managing plant and animal diseases. In the financial year 2005 – 2006, NSW DPI allocated funding to surveillance projects as follows:

Project	Budget Allocation 2005/06
Endemic notifiable animal diseases including OJD and BJD	$50,000
Granuloma survey - TFAP	$ 9,000
Endemic plant and pests (currant lettuce aphid, YC Ant, citrus canker)	$57,000
Footrot strategic plan	$30,000
Fish disease surveillance	$30,000 minimum
Exotic notifiable diseases animal project	$20,000
Exotic plant and forest disease project	$15,000
Mortality investigations in animals to enhance spec through labs	$50,000
National arbovirus monitoring program	$18,000
District & targeted surveillance to facilitate on-farm surveillance	$160,000
Plant Health Diagnostic Services (PHDS)	$46,000
Emerging plant and forest disease project	
TOTAL	$437,000
Contingency Funds	$ 50,000

Under national cost sharing arrangements for plant and animal diseases, States have to demonstrate preparedness and surveillance resources are in place. NSW DPI uses its Consolidated Fund allocation to pay for preparedness and surveillance services. These funding arrangements are designed to reduce Budgetary impacts posed by unplanned response costs.

Maintaining robust surveillance systems and programs is an essential aspect of NSW's export arrangements and international competitiveness. For instance, in late 2006, an EU delegation will visit Australia for the purpose of conducting an audit of the surveillance systems, including how Australia substantiates its claim for freedom from 'Mad Cow Disease'. In addition to this specific audit, there are approximately six delegations from trading partners each year to examine livestock and livestock production systems. Without support for the surveillance programs in place, international trade in livestock and livestock products would be jeopardised.

In September 2002, an additional $8.9 million over four years was provided for NSW DPI and Rural Lands Protection Boards to set up systems to monitor livestock movements. This has comprised:

- $5.4m over four years for the Mandatory Livestock Identification Scheme infrastructure; and
- $3.5m over three years to implement a new IT system to trace livestock movements as part of regulating and controlling livestock disease.

These systems are designed to rationalise and improve consistency of Statewide processes and data used for tracking livestock movements, and play a central role in regulating and controlling livestock disease.

Adequate numbers of livestock veterinarians are essential for the success of surveillance programs. NSW DPI recognises the problems posed by both an aging rural veterinary practitioner workforce, and the difficulties of attracting veterinarians to rural areas. It has responded by implementing a program, whereby a small number of current veterinary students are being offered work experience with the Department's veterinary corps.

NSW DPI is also active in promoting the Accreditation Program for Australian Veterinary Practitioners (APAV). The NSW Chief Veterinary Officer accredits private veterinary practitioners to work on public animal health services under the APAV scheme, which is coordinated nationally by Animal Health Australia. This scheme allows accredited veterinary practitioners to augment public animal health services in areas such as the Johne's disease market assurance programs, export certification and the Australian Veterinary Reserve.

1.1.3 *Chief Veterinary Officer – NSW Agriculture should ensure that the Chief Veterinary Officer's national and statutory responsibilities are not jeopardised by the position's day-to-day Project Manager role. To limit the potential slowing down of an emergency response, the CVO should have authority to relate directly to executive management to resolve issues that may impede a speedy initial response to an emergency outbreak.*

During an actual or simulated emergency animal disease outbreak, appropriate steps are taken to delegate the managerial functions of the Chief Veterinary Officer (as Director, Animal and Plant Biosecurity) to one of three deputy Chief Veterinary Officers, so that there is no interference with the Chief Veterinary Officer's national and statutory responsibilities during the emergency. This system was tested and worked well during Exercise Minotaur (Sept 2002) and Exercise Eleusis (Nov 2005).

1.1.4 *Immediate Response Funding – NSW Agriculture should explore the option of an initial response fund to support the immediate response action when an emergency animal disease is reasonably suspected. This would support professional clinical judgement made in the field and would limit any impact on the Department's budget. It would help overcome any delay caused by fears of national funding not being available under the cost sharing Deed.*

DPI's budget includes a contingency to fund immediate responses to pest and disease outbreaks. Once the contingency has been spent, then supplementary funding must be sought for pest and disease outbreak costs. Currently, this supplementary funding includes costs under other agreements, such as the cost sharing deeds with Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia, and the Commonwealth and State cost sharing arrangements

established by the Primary Industries Ministerial Council and Primary Industries Standing Committee.

From time to time, the expertise, knowledge and emergency response experience of NSW DPI means it has the capacity to act on behalf of other agencies in relation to a threat, despite the fact that the threat is not a threat to primary industries (for instance, the response to fire ants was managed by NSW DPI despite the fact it did not impact on primary industries). In such cases however, NSW DPI may still be directed by the Government to fund the response from its contingency.

In the period July 2000 to June 2005, NSW DPI received supplementary funding of over $21 million for pest and disease management costs (average of $4.3 million per year). NSW DPI and NSW Treasury are working together on forecasting and financial contingency planning arrangements to reduce the financial risk of unplanned expenditure.

The National Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement has been reviewed and improved to ensure a greater level of surety in the flow of funds. Business rules are being developed as part of this Agreement. Exercise Eleusis and Exercise Minotaur both tested the funding arrangements under the Agreements and ongoing improvements will be made to reflect regular reviews of the arrangements.

1.1.5 *Response Benchmarks – NSW Agriculture should consider developing benchmarks to better manage initial actions. Most importantly they should address the timing of identification and response actions. They should in particular also outline the level of co-operation required of government and industry in the incident identification stage. The benchmarks would have State and national application.*

Response benchmarks have been developed and validated for tactical responses in NSW and work will continue on benchmarks at the strategic level. NSW is facilitating the establishment of a national committee charged with the responsibility to develop and adopt procedures which will also include benchmarks.

1.1.6 *Tracing Animals – NSW Agriculture must continue to support the development of national livestock identification schemes. The ability to trace cattle and sheep is critical to a speedy response.*

NSW has adopted the National Livestock Identification Scheme (NLIS) for both cattle and sheep. NLIS for cattle was effective from the start of 2005, and a staged introduction for sheep commenced from January 2006. The NLIS enhances the pre NLIS systems for the tracking of cattle and sheep in NSW, and nationally.

1.1.7 *Animal Disposal – The development of solutions for the disposal of large numbers of animals is a key indicator of NSW Agriculture's capacity to deal effectively with large-scale emergency animal outbreaks. Solutions should include the integration of NSW Agriculture's specialist emergency animal disease procedures and structures with those of the broader based State emergency services and the identification of possible disposal sites.*

Previous animal disease emergencies, such as the Newcastle Disease outbreak in poultry at Mangrove Mountain in 1999, highlighted issues relating to human health issues connected with

animal diseases. This included the destruction and disposal of animal carcasses and the following work has been undertaken to address this issue:

- Development of plans for the mass disposal of carcasses. This has included the identification of up to 82 sites that could be used for the burial of carcasses.
- Development of enhanced methods for the disposal of animal carcasses. Options being considered include disposal in electric generators and cement kilns.
- NSW DPI has taken a lead role in the recent national adoption of aerobic composting as a method of disposal. The composting method could be an important option as part of the control activities for an outbreak of Avian Influenza.

Further work, particularly through the emergency arrangements, will be undertaken to reduce the risks associated with mass animal carcass disposal and other public health issues. The recent Exercise Eleusis tested a number of aspects associated with public health, such as the mass disposal of poultry carcasses, caring for the mental health needs of workers and the communication of risks to the public. Agreement was also reached on disposal options for both infected and non-infected animals.

The planning and preparation for potential animal health emergencies has demonstrated that the major environmental issues during an animal health emergency also involve the treatment and disposal of animal carcasses, animal products and fomites[1]. These are complex issues that depend on factors such as: the type of disease; the animal species affected; the size and location of the outbreak; decontamination procedures; the mass/volume of infected and uninfected materials to be disposed of; transportation means and availability, etc.

Considerable work has been undertaken to address these issues and develop a uniform national approach to animal health emergencies in terms of biosecurity and the transportation, treatment and disposal of infected carcasses. In particular, a recent review of the procedures for animal carcass disposal has resulted in a proposed new AUSVETPLAN manual, which is currently being finalised.

1.1.8 *Information Systems – NSW Agriculture should ensure that emergency animal diseases management information systems are improved. They must support more accurate and complete collection, collation analysis and reporting. This includes the further development of digital mapping capabilities.*

There are a number of national projects to develop and adopt enhanced information systems to support data collection, analysis and reporting of animal disease outbreaks. These systems, (referred to as the Biosirt Package), will replace the Animal Disease Emergency Management Information System (ANEMIS) and the Resource Management Package (RMP). The new systems will be superior to current arrangements in that they will provide a national animal disease management system, which will be both competent and capable to respond to animal disease emergencies. They will also cover day to day management of plant and aquatic systems, in addition to animal diseases and pests. Both the reports of Eleusis and Minotaur Exercises specifically recommended the need for new systems and participants committed to their development.

[1] Fomites refer to all other potentially infected material other than animal carcasses and include feed, water, etc.

ANEMIS is expected to be replaced in about 12 months and the RMP in about two years. NSW DPI's present systems have been updated and enhanced and will continue to be operational until the new systems are released.

1.1.9 *Regulation of Swill Feeding – The gap in the inspection of the use of food from restaurants in the swill feeding of pigs should be filled by regulation.*

The gap in the swill feeding legislation identified in the May 2002 report has been rectified by the introduction of clause 60 of the *Stock Diseases Regulation 2004*, which prescribes certain prohibited substances for pig feeding.

1.1.10 *Cross Border Cooperation – Memoranda of Understanding should be negotiated between NSW and neighbouring States. They would complement national plans and provide for greater understanding and integration of activities in cases of cross-border outbreaks.*

Memoranda of Understandings have been developed, but not yet signed, between NSW and the ACT and Queensland respectively. Dialogue with SA and Victoria about the terms and content of similar memoranda is underway.

Preparedness activities have also been undertaken with a view to enhancing cross-border operations and responsiveness. Exercise Rawhide is an example of such an activity. It was conducted in Queensland near the NSW border, under the premise of a terrorist release of Foot and Mouth Disease. Testing of the relevant cross-border systems was undertaken by participants from each State.

1.1.11 *Revision of Response Plan – The Exotic Animal Diseases Control Manual should be revised. Content should reflect the changing circumstances reflected in this report and developments in the national emergency response plan. Presentation should be made more consistent and user friendly.*

Parts 1 and 2 of the AUSVETPLAN Control Centre Management Manual (CCMM) have been adopted in NSW as the key response manual for animal pest and disease emergencies in NSW. This manual is used nationally. In addition, NSW DPI has developed operational guidelines and procedures to support the CCMM on specific issues. All agencies likely to be associated with a response to an emergency animal disease in NSW have access to the NSW procedures and guidelines.

NSW DPI has an ongoing national role in the development of the CCMM and other AUSVETPLAN documents.

1.1.12 *State Disease Headquarters Operating Procedures – Standard operating procedures should be further developed for the State emergency animal disease headquarters managed by NSW Agriculture. They should include the higher-level co-ordination of liaison activities with the media and communities, the use of private veterinarians and veterinarians from interstate or overseas, and the analysis of emergency costs relative to benefits.*

Members of the NSW First Response Team of the State Disease Control Headquarters continue to develop the procedures that are specific to their scope of operations. Exercise Eleusis recently provided an opportunity to test and review the procedures in place, and identify further procedures that need development.

1.2 AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT *IMPLEMENTING THE OVINE JOHNE'S DISEASE PROGRAM*

The Auditor's General report identified two problems in the implementation of the Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) Program in NSW at the time of the review in 2003, namely:

(a) the lack of a strategic approach to program management; and
(b) an ill defined governance structure.

The steps taken to implement the Report's recommendations are identified below.

1.2.1 *A New Strategic Approach – A more comprehensive strategic approach to the OJD Program in New South Wales is required, including operational objectives and targets. This will allow for better co-ordination and monitoring by industry and NSW Agriculture.*

In response to the February 2003 findings of the Auditor General, the NSW Government initiated a broad consultative inquiry into Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) management within NSW. From May to July 2003, 25 consultative meetings with a broad range of industry stakeholders were held around the State. The discussion and subsequent submissions formed the basis of a consultative draft report. This report was circulated widely and in total almost 100 submissions were considered in preparation of the final report, "Assessment of the NSW Ovine Johne's Disease Program" (the Bull Report) which was published in September 2003.

Concurrently the NSW OJD Advisory Committee, which was administered by NSW Farmers' Association and included a broad range of industry stakeholders, undertook similar consultation with sheep producers and industry representatives, and made a number of recommendations for the future management of OJD in NSW.

Both reports recommended a move away from the regulated control of OJD and towards risk-based trading underpinned by accompanying documented declarations of the status of animals in regard to OJD.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BULL REPORT

- Industry to take the lead role in managing the disease.
- The future role of Government to be educative and supportive rather than regulative.
- The future OJD program in NSW to be a risk based trading model. This in essence adopts most of Option 2 from the National OJD Program's (NOJDP) National Framework for the Future Management of OJD in Australia.
- Future trading to be based on a factual Animal Health Declaration.
- It is proposed that the Animal Health Declaration be included in the National Vendor Declaration.
- A high assurance status for flocks to be developed.
- Exclusion Area may be established in low prevalence Rural Lands Protection Boards in the State providing majority support is demonstrated.
- A group of producers in a catchment area or local area to be encouraged to enter into a voluntary exclusion area to protect their status.
- Zoning to be discontinued.

■ Prevalence mapping to be continued on a regional and local basis.
■ Vaccine to be available to all producers in NSW.
■ Vaccine to be available through retail outlets handling animal health products.
■ Negative and positive results from Abattoir Monitoring must be given to producers.
■ The changes to the NSW program and the ensuing protocols available to sheep producers to be made available to goat producers.
■ OJD to remain subject to section 9 of the *Stock Diseases Act 1923.*
■ OJD to remain subject to section 20J of the *Stock Diseases Act 1923* and the penalties be increased to 200 points.
■ Exclusion Areas to be subject to sections 11A, 14 and 20H of the *Stock Diseases Act 1923.*
■ The NSW OJD Industry Advisory Committee to be wound up at the conclusion of the current program.
■ Changes to be implemented no later than 1 January 2004, or as soon as practicable depending on national negotiations, following two months of educational campaign and immediate changes to vaccine use and supply.

KEY OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NSW OJD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

■ Objective: Less total infection in the NSW flock
It is important to recognise the opportunity currently available to apply different sets of strategies in different prevalence regions eg reducing the level of infection in infected flocks/areas and slowing spread into uninfected flocks/areas.
■ Objective: Fewer Limitations on NSW Producers trading within NSW and interstate
Trading limitations can result either from market forces in a deregulated environment, or from short term or long term regulation
■ Recommendation: State Strategies
A range of strategies are required to provide the basis for a state-wide program. The following strategies have been endorsed by NSW industry as appropriate for OJD management within NSW (Note: these strategies should also be recognised nationally to allow comparable trading and disease control standards across jurisdictions).

- Research activities which will deliver practical recommendations to producers
- Advisory activities which will deliver soundly-based technical information to producers, to allow progression from a highly regulated control approach to one sustained by informed market and production forces
- Area prevalence monitoring which is able to reflect the progress of disease control activities within the area

  In NSW prevalence monitoring is recommended on a RLPB divisional basis, with area reassessment being required every two years.
  Note 1: definition of prevalence areas should not imply zones.
  Note 2: NSW should reserve the right to assess and review disease monitoring by other jurisdictions on an equivalent sheep/flock number basis.
- Risk-based trading using a nationally endorsed system that allocates assurance based trading credits (ABC) for disease control activities/criteria such as flock location, testing history, MAP participation and vaccination status underpinned by a requirement for vendor declarations/Animal Health Statements for all non-slaughter trading, with provision to exempt all terminal crossbred lambs from disease control requirements.
- A flock assurance scheme based on the current Sheep Market Assurance Program (MAP) (further technical assessment of the use of Abattoir Surveillance within the MAP is to be undertaken)
- Pathways for infected flocks which allow all infected flocks to progressively resume full trading, by implementing disease control measures, including vaccination. Vaccine

pathways need to provide an equivalent risk to other accepted pathways. The objective of any pathway for an infected flock is two-fold:
a) access to trade and
b) removal of the "infected" label, with its associated stigma and legal implications.
Pathways are incorporated within the ABC trading system so they should not need to be implemented as a separate strategy.

- Availability of vaccine: vaccine to be available for use in all areas of NSW

■ Recommendation: Additional Regional Strategies
Further strategies may be selectively applied in different areas to address the specific needs, and best utilise the available resources, of those areas.

1.2.1.1 Implementing the new strategic approach

The NSW Government immediately responded to both reports by announcing a new approach to the management of OJD in NSW, which was to be phased in over an eight month period, from November 2003 to 30 June 2004. The final date for the implementation program coincided with the start of the new management program for OJD, known as the National Approach to Management of OJD (NAOJD) on 1 July 2004. The staged implementation ensured that NSW sheep producers were not disadvantaged during this period in terms of interstate trade.

Importantly, this new plan for OJD management in NSW heavily influenced the approach to OJD management being adopted nationally and had the same strategic objectives, namely:

- That areas currently free from disease remain free;
- That area prevalence is maintained or reduced for the very low prevalence, low prevalence and medium prevalence areas; and
- That area prevalence will be reduced in high prevalence areas such that prevalence area status may be reviewed in the longer term.

The State implementation plan was announced on 23 September 2003, described as building blocks for a new NSW approach to management of OJD. The approach allowed for the State to be essentially managed in two parts, addressing the disparate but strong concerns of producers in both the higher and the lower prevalence areas of NSW. The two parts are:

- Management Areas, mainly comprising the higher prevalence areas, encourage producers to manage their own risk by using strategies such as vaccination, on-farm management and informed purchase of sheep.

- Exclusion Areas, comprising most of the very low prevalence areas, which provide access to tools designed to slow the potential spread of OJD into and within the area, by demonstrating local producer support for self-funded and self-managed district programs.

Vaccine is freely available to all sheep producers, and the use of Sheep Health Statements for sale of restocker sheep has been mandated for an introductory period to ensure that producers are familiar with their use and benefits.

There are no regulated movement restrictions within or into the State.

NSW producers are assisted to manage OJD risk in all prevalence areas, and to minimise the impact of movement restrictions that have been maintained by several States following the end

of the national six year program (NOJDP) and the introduction of the new national approach (NAOJD).

The phase-in of the new approach (November 2003 to 30 June 2004) was overseen by an interim joint industry/government steering committee and implemented by a NSW DPI taskforce.

During the roll out of the Program, there was some concern from public health units about the significant increase in public health enquiries, in particular regarding advice on needle stick injuries. Further opportunities exist for strengthening the liaison between agencies to manage the interface between wildlife and human health program implementation.

At this point, it is also important to note the new voluntary transaction based contributions scheme that has been established, under amendments to the *Agricultural Livestock (Disease Control Funding) Act 1998,* to support OJD-related industry initiatives. The new scheme commenced collecting funds from producers in October 2005 and replaced the former industry levy scheme.

The Government has provided an advance of $725,000 to allow early payment to those producers owed money from the former Scheme. All affected producers were paid 30 per cent of their outstanding claims in December 2005 and remaining monies are being paid progressively as funds are collected from the new contributions scheme, in order of the date of claim.

1.2.2 *A Better Governance Structure (for endemic disease programs) - The governance arrangements need to provide for greater direction and control over the OJD Program in New South Wales. The roles and responsibilities of committees, working parties and Government should be revised to complement the above strategic and operational framework, and to implement the Program fully.*

A new structure for management of endemic diseases generally was introduced in 2005 via legislative amendments under the *Agricultural Livestock (Disease Control Funding) Act 1998.* The amendments established stronger governance elements to support the management and resourcing of disease control plans by livestock industries.

A key element of this structure were provisions for the creation of an industry based Standing Disease Control Advisory Committee. This Committee considers the establishment of (industry funded) animal disease control programs in NSW. If the Standing Committee recommends establishment of a disease control program, the Minister for Primary Industries can appoint an Industry Advisory Committee to provide direction to the program, including advice on any funding arrangements that may be required. The legislation also specifically establishes a separate Fund Administrator for any disease control program to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage industry funds.

Both the Standing Committee and any Industry Advisory Committee that is appointed are required to have significant industry representation. In the case of OJD, the Standing Committee recommended the establishment of a disease control program and the Minister for Primary Industries has appointed an OJD Industry Advisory Committee.

An 'in-house' OJD Management Group under the chairmanship of the NSW Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) has been established within NSW DPI. This Group ensures that the

requirements of both the State and national programs are met, and where necessary consults with, or provides advice to the Industry Advisory Committee.

This Group has proved extremely successful for the management of OJD. It brings together officers from biosecurity policy, biosecurity operations, compliance, industry development, extension and research, and provides an efficient forum for review of current activities and consideration of any initiatives or concerns.

NSW DPI also provides advice on OJD to industry groups and individual producers both directly and through support of Rural Lands Protection Board (RLPB) staff.

Communication for OJD has been addressed through the provision of a dedicated OJD website,[2] the production of a series of OJD information sheets, and provision of OJD information at field days, in press releases, RLPB newsletters, etc. All OJD policies, procedures and information documents are available to both staff and the public on the website, and content is maintained by the OJD Management Group.

Management of biosecurity information in general is also currently under review. The Animal and Plant Biosecurity Branch of NSW DPI is instituting a quality management system that will eventually be able to be adopted by all biosecurity branches of NSW DPI. This system will ensure provision of consistent, up-to-date biosecurity information to staff and the public on all diseases for which NSW DPI provides advice or management services, including OJD.

1.2.3 *Drawing on Emergency Animal Disease Planning Practices - Preparedness for and response to a disease threat similar to OJD will improve if some of the principles of the national approach to emergency animal diseases are adopted and adapted.*

NSW is improving its capacity to prepare for, and respond to, emerging disease threats by adopting some of the principles of the national approach to emergency animal diseases. At a State level this is mainly by adopting risk based planning and biosecurity measures. These may be implemented at the level of the individual enterprise, the industry, or the whole State. In the context of OJD, this includes Sheep Health Statements, abattoir surveillance and the ABC scoring system.

NSW DPI is contributing at a national level to policy development for emerging disease threats. Its recent experiences with porcine myocarditis, and a suspect (later found negative) case of post-weaning multisystemic wasting syndrome has put NSW DPI at the forefront of national policy development for emerging disease threats.

[2] http://www.agric.nsw.gov.au/reader/ojd

2. THE STATE'S PREPAREDNESS TO MANAGE ANIMAL AND PLANT DISEASE EMERGENCIES

2.1 RISK BASED PLANNING AND DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Risk based planning and surveillance activities inform the basis of NSW's preparedness to respond to animal and plant disease emergencies. The 1999 Newcastle Disease outbreak and the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in the UK both prompted a comprehensive review of animal disease management in NSW.

The NSW DPI Surveillance Operational Plan (2005-2007) is based on a risk management framework and comprises five core projects:

- Mortalities investigations;
- Non-mortality exotic/notifiable disease investigations;
- Zoonotic[3] and emerging disease investigations;
- Targeted surveillance investigations; and
- Surveillance reporting and benchmarking.

The Plan is based on national animal health system performance standards. It was developed through an examination of the existing environment, including business planning documents from Animal Health Australia, Animal Health Committee considerations, review of the previous plan, and consideration of the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's Frawley report covering wildlife and private practitioner surveillance and a review of the existing risks. The Plan identifies major risks and strategies to address the risks.

Emergency disease investigations/confirmations in animals 2000-2004

Year	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**
Australian Total	104	149	178	135	131
NSW Total	22	71	83	100	97
Examples					
Anthrax	-	26	34	61	56
Avian Influenza	1	2	-	3	12
Foot-and-mouth disease	4	9	3	5	2
Hendra Virus	3	0	2	2	1
BSE (Mad Cow Disease)	0	0	0	0	1
Newcastle disease	11	21	21	11	11

Major animal pests and diseases requiring response / investigation 1998-2004

[3] Zoonotic – a disease that can be transmitted from animals to people or, more specifically, a disease that normally exists in animals but which can infect humans.

Detection	Agent	Place	Industries impacted	Indicative Industry value $m	Current
1998	Avian Influenza	Tamworth	Poultry	$475M	Passive Surveillance
1998	Newcastle Disease	St Marys Sydney	Poultry	$475M	Vaccination Program in place
1999	Newcastle Disease	Mangrove Mountain	Poultry	$475M	Vaccination Program in place
1999	Newcastle Disease	Nrth Wst Sydney	Poultry	$475M	Vaccination Program in place
2000	Newcastle Disease	Nth Wst Sydney	Poultry	$475M	Vaccination Program in place
2000	Avian Influenza	NSW Various	Poultry	$475M	Passive Surveillance
2000	Foot-and-mouth	NSW Various	Sheep/Cattle/ Pigs	$2,105M	Active surveillance
2000	Hendra Virus	NSW Various	Horses/People	-	Active surveillance
2001	Anthrax	Cent/ Wst NSW	Sheep/Cattle	$1,826M	Passive Surveillance
2001	Small Hive Beetle	Sydney Basin	Bees	$29.9M	Passive Surveillance
2001	Avian Influenza	NSW Various	Poultry	$475M	Passive Surveillance
2001	Foot-and-mouth	NSW Various	Sheep/Cattle/ Pigs	$2,105M	Active surveillance
2001	Hendra Virus	NSW Various	Horses/People	-	Active surveillance
2002	Tuberculosis	NSW Various	Cattle	$1,309M	Active Surveillance
2002	Newcastle Disease	Horsley Park	Poultry	$475M	Vaccination Program in place
2002	Anthrax	Cent/ Wst NSW	Sheep/Cattle	$1,826M	Passive Surveillance
2002	Foot-and-mouth	NSW Various	Sheep/Cattle/ Pigs	$2,105M	Active surveillance
2002	Hendra Virus	NSW Various	Horses/People	-	Active surveillance
2003	Foot-and-mouth	NSW Various	Sheep/Cattle/ Pigs	$2,105M	Active surveillance
2003	Anthrax	Cent/ Wst NSW	Sheep/Cattle	$1,826M	Passive Surveillance
2003	Hendra Virus	NSW Various	Horses/People	-	Active surveillance
2003	Avian Influenza	NSW Various	Poultry	$475M	Passive Surveillance
2004	Anthrax	Cent/ Wst NSW	Sheep/Cattle	$1,826M	Passive Surveillance

2004	Porcine Myocarditis	Corowa	Pigs	$27.9M	Properties in quarantine
2004	Foot-and-mouth	NSW Various	Sheep/Cattle/ Pigs	$2,105M	Active surveillance
2004	Hendra Virus	NSW Various	Horses/People	-	Active surveillance
2004	BSE (Mad Cow Disease)	Wst Sydney	Cattle	$1,309M	Active Surveillance
2004	Avian Influenza	NSW Various	Poultry	$475M	Passive Surveillance

2.2 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IMMEDIATE RESPONSE MECHANISMS

NSW is the only State/Territory that maintains a response team for emergency animal pests and diseases, namely the NSW Emergency Animal Pest and Disease Team. This Team has been given specific training on emergency pest and disease responses including diseases of aquatic plants and aquaculture.

The need for, and effectiveness of this Team was tested in its participation in the program to control an outbreak of Citrus Canker in Queensland. In addition to providing training personnel to Queensland, the team also monitored the situation in NSW to ensure there was no cross-border infection. The Team also had key roles dealing with an aquatic weed in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River, Nodavirus in farmed fish at Nelson Bay, and management of the QX disease of oysters in the Hawkesbury River.

A National Rapid Response Team (NRRT) has been established following the success of the NSW Team. Its primary responsibility is to support the smaller jurisdictions during a response in their State/Territory.

NSW DPI also has in place contingency plans and arrangements under the State Disaster Plan which requires it to act in a variety of circumstances, which would otherwise be outside the agency's responsibilities. For example, it may respond to bushfires in national parks or floods, which do not impact on primary industries.

A significant number of NSW Government agencies have participated in, and contributed to, activities aimed at developing a cooperative response to an emergency pest or disease incident. An example of this was the whole of government committee that worked to enhance NSW's preparedness for an outbreak of Avian Influenza. Agencies involved in this committee included: NSW Health, DEC, NSW DPI, Department of Community Services, Premier's Department, Department of Transport, NSW Food Authority, NSW Police, NSW Fire Brigade and Rural Fire Brigade, State Emergency Services, as well as RLPBs and the NSW Farmers' Association. This committee was primarily set up to prepare for Exercise Eleusis but has remained ongoing.

Similarly, the NSW State Emergency Management Committee and relevant committees at the district and local levels have successfully worked to enhance cooperation between its member agencies.

A core part of this has been involvement in simulated exercises, workshops on responding to particular outbreaks and reviewing and updating internal mechanisms to ensure responsiveness capability.

The arrangements at the national level that seek to trigger a coordinated national response have been well developed in recent years. In addition to Exercises Minotaur and Eleusis that both heavily tested these arrangements, the response systems at that level have been successfully activated several times a year in recent years. These arrangements range from technical management through to the development of a National Communications Network.

2.3 COST SHARING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

The *Rural Lands Protection Act 1998* provides for the establishment of Rural Lands Protection Districts in NSW, the associated RLPBs and the State Council of Rural Lands Protection Boards (State Council). There are currently 48 RLPBs within NSW that exercise a wide range of functions in the areas of animal health, stock identification, management of pest animals and pest insects, management of travelling stock routes, stock watering places and reserves. These Boards are not funded from consolidated revenue, but from rates collected from local landholders within local Rural Lands Protection Districts.

There are over 130,000 RLPB ratepayers in NSW. In the 2004-05 financial year, ratepayers contributed approximately $8.8 million in animal health rates and approximately $23.5 million per annum in total rates, which fund the activities of RLPBs.

Landholder-funded RLPBs are the primary means of delivering rural animal health services within rural NSW. This includes activities or services such as animal disease management functions, supervising the control of pest animals and in implementing major pest insect control campaigns. For instance, RLPBs have well developed disease investigation and advisory activities in respect of herd or flock health problems as well responsibility for eradicating and controlling infectious diseases such as Enzootic Bovine Leucosis, Johne 's disease and footrot. Similarly, RLPBs are responsible for supervising the control of rabbits, wild dogs and feral pigs, as well as assisting landholders respond to mice plagues or wingless grasshoppers plagues.

A recent outbreak of plague locusts provides an example of how the Government and industry can cooperate to manage unforeseen disease and pest problems. In this case, the enormity of the locust control campaign quickly depleted the funds contributed by industry for locust control. Government then funded industry's share of the remaining campaign through a loan from NSW DPI to the Noxious Insect Fund, which landholders are now repaying through their RLPB noxious insect levy contributions.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE MANAGEMENT OF ENDEMIC DISEASES, INCLUDING THE ROLES OF GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY

Endemic diseases of livestock are managed jointly by Government, landholder-funded RLPBs, private practitioners and livestock owners. NSW DPI has core responsibility on behalf of the NSW Government and has responsibility for administering legislation to minimise the risk of disease outbreaks. Policies and procedures to promote compliance with this legislation have been developed and are disseminated through RLPBs and private practitioners to livestock owners.

The actual implementation of control programs is largely devolved to the landholder-funded RLPBs and private practitioners via a variety of programs. These programs are developed by a consultative process involving a wide range of stakeholders within the effected industry.

At a regional level, management of animal diseases is managed through the following agencies or representatives:

3.1 SENIOR REGIONAL ANIMAL HEALTH MANAGERS (SRAHM)

SRAHMs play a pivotal role within the implementation and monitoring of animal health policy within their regions. SRAHMs have involvement in disease control policy, animal health planning and the operation of Regional Animal Health Committees.

A map showing the Animal Health Regions within NSW is in Appendix 1.

3.2 ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAMS UNDER THE RURAL LANDS PROTECTION BOARDS (RLPB)

RLPBs have core animal health programs which include:

Emergency Animal Disease Preparedness programs to prevent emergency animal diseases in livestock, respond effectively to an Emergency Animal Disease incident and promote the detection of emerging diseases in a prompt manner.

Animal Disease Surveillance and Reporting to provide effective disease surveillance to meet State and district needs including: animal productivity; trade; human health; and animal welfare. This program also assesses and manages the risk factors for key diseases to minimise their impact within their district, region and State communities

3.3 NATIONAL AND STATE ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

NSW participates in recognised national and State animal health programs and complies with the National Animal Health Performance Standards. RLPBs implement most of these programs, which include:

National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) which provides information on the seasonal and spatial distribution of arboviruses and arbovirus vectors.

Tuberculosis Freedom Assurance Program (inc NGSP) which maintains Australia's ability to declare freedom from Tuberculosis.

National TSE (Mad Cow) Surveillance Program which requires sample testing of suspect animals to meet NSW's obligations under the program. This program also report on the health of animals imported from countries with BSE.

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis (EBL) Program which has been established to achieve and maintain EBL freedom in the State dairy herd in those districts that have a dairying industry.

Residues (including NORM & NARM) Program which manages all chemical residue risks and ensures that they are assessed and properly managed.

National Livestock Identification System (NLIS - Cattle & sheep) Program which implements Australia's NLIS at the district, regional and State level to allow better traceability of livestock product back to source.

3.5 REGULATION

The use of regulatory powers under the *Stock Diseases Act* and other associated animal health legislation contribute to consumer and trading partner confidence in animal health programs.

Technically sound disease control strategies are also implemented through various council and committee organisations and wide consultative processes. This generally results in reduced costs and increased production from the livestock industries within the State and flow on effects to the NSW economy. The structure of Government policy development committees is shown in Appendix 2.

3.6 IMPROVEMENTS IN EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF MANAGEMENT OF ENDEMIC DISEASES

Government plant, animal and aquatic animal pest and disease control and invasive species control falls under the general heading of biosecurity. The three main cost elements of biosecurity are preparedness, surveillance and response.

The benefits of biosecurity services are often underestimated and are only obvious to the general community when a biosecurity disaster strikes, such as happened in the UK and Taiwan with foot-and-mouth disease and in Malaysia with Nipah virus. Essentially, in these cases, whole industry sectors were wiped out.

It is estimated that a Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in Australia would reduce export revenues by more than $9 billion for a 12-month outbreak with a loss in domestic meat revenue of $2-3 billion. The recent Foot and Mouth Disease hoax in New Zealand is estimated to have cost $20 million in lost exports.

International trade depends on perception, trust and goodwill. By implementing effective surveillance and response systems, the risk of an outbreak of an endemic disease is reduced and both perception and trust as a 'safe' trading partner are enhanced.

However, high quality government plant and animal health services must be maintained to ensure ongoing protection of the industry and their contribution to regional, state and national economies. In particular, these services are necessary for the following reasons:

- *Government pest and disease control services underpin export health certificates*

Livestock, livestock products (including meat and wool), plants and plant products (including wheat) cannot be exported unless they have a health certificate to get through quarantine in the importing country. Government quarantine services only accept health certificates from other governments. Therefore Australia has to have government veterinary and plant health services if it is to trade internationally. These are provided by the States as well as the Commonwealth. Within NSW, NSW DPI does the work that allows federal government officials (in AQIS) to sign health certificates or declarations.

This gives Australia a significant trading advantage over countries that might have cheaper exports but do not have government animal and plant health services that underpin disease control and trade certification.

The following are the estimated export values for the livestock sector in NSW for 2003/2004:

Dairy products -	$94 million
Wool -	$647 million
Livestock -	$921 million
Meat -	$356 million

In addition to the livestock sector, diseases surveillance, control and certification systems underpin international trade in crop products, such as wheat (NSW exports estimated at $891 million in 2003/ 04).

- *Government pest and disease control services underpin inter-state trade*

Australian states fiercely protect their farmers from diseases or pests not found in their State. Certification of freedom from disease ensures that inter-state trade can be undertaken with minimal risks. NSW DPI undertakes surveillance and response activities for animal, plant and fish pests and diseases as part of this certification process.

- *Government disease control services underpin responses to emergency diseases or pests which could destroy or seriously affect whole farming sectors*

Australia has preserved export markets because it can prevent or identify and quickly eliminate exotic diseases. On average, cases that could be exotic diseases are excluded on a weekly basis within NSW.

NSW is part of a national pest and disease system and responses are national, even if the actual outbreak is detected, and remains in another State. NSW needs resources to conduct surveillance in national eradication programs for exotic diseases both for animals and plants.

- *Government disease and pest control underpins protection of human health and the environment.*

NSW DPI responds to outbreaks of disease in animals that also affect humans, for example, anthrax outbreaks in sheep and cattle, psittacosis in poultry, S*almonella enteritidis* in poultry, the rabies-like bat lyssavirus, Hendra disease in horses, Menangle disease in pigs and Avian Influenza (bird flu) in poultry.

- *Government disease and pest control underpins protection of animal health where farmers cannot protect themselves*

NSW DPI enforces laws that prevent the movement of diseases around the nation that would otherwise seriously impact on farm incomes. Government intervention is particularly essential in the case of highly infectious or easily transportable pests and diseases, where individual action by a farmer will not provide an effective defence.

A major outbreak of bovine tuberculosis which spread from the Northern Territory was stamped out in NSW in 2002. The Newcastle disease eradication programs (Western Sydney 1998, 1999, 2001, Mangrove Mountain 1999, Moonbi, 2000) were a major effort against a newly emerging disease that caused high mortalities in poultry, and was a program in which trading partners took immense interest. The ongoing Newcastle Disease Management Plan (including vaccination) requires major coordination to avoid further outbreaks and loss of markets.

There are currently major disease or pest control programs in place for:

- Cattle ticks;
- Cattle tick fever;
- Footrot;
- Johne's disease; and
- Porcine myocarditis.

The main monetary value of government pest and disease control services lies in the protection of market access. For this purpose, NSW DPI employs animal and plant health specialists and regulatory staff who prepare for emergencies and incidents, conduct surveillance and responds to emergencies. Landholder-funded RLPBs also play a vital role in these activities.

Some examples of programs run by NSW DPI for endemic animal diseases are the cattle tick program, footrot control program, enzootic bovine leucosis eradication program and Johne's disease market assurance programs. A brief overview of each of these programs follows:

The Cattle Tick Program

There are four elements to the Cattle Tick Program

- Prevention of introduction of cattle ticks from Queensland. A buffered border fence is patrolled and crossing points where roads enter NSW from the cattle tick infected area of Queensland staffed. There are livestock inspection and treatment facilities at Tweed Heads and Mt Lindesay.

- Detection and eradication of cattle ticks in NSW. NSW DPI staff monitor stock at Murwillumbah, Lismore, Casino, & Grafton Saleyards. All stock are dipped to eliminate any undetected infestation. Infested herds are quarantined to prevent further spread and eradication programs implemented. Stock movements to and from infested properties are traced and at risk herds inspected for ticks. The control and eradication of ticks also controls tick fever which can be spread by cattle ticks.

- Owner reporting of infestations is required by the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*. This is supported by regulatory action when ticks are detected at saleyards. This may be a warning letter, a Penalty Infringement Notice, or a prosecution.

- Advisory activities support the disease control and regulatory aspects of the program. Each year the Program mounts and staffs a display at PRIMEX, public and industry meetings are addressed, media releases and interviews are given and from time to time information is mailed out to all stockowners on the Far North Coast are made with the support of the RLPBs.

The *Stock Diseases Act 1923* sets out the regulatory framework for management of cattle tick in NSW. A review of the Cattle Tick Program and related matters, such as cattle tick vaccinations, has recently been undertaken. The review recommendations are currently being considered by Government.

NSW Footrot Control Program

The NSW Footrot Control Program is widely regarded as a very successful disease control program aimed at improving the productivity and welfare of sheep and goats by the progressive eradication of virulent footrot. The Program was developed in response to concerns by the sheep industry and Government in NSW that footrot was a serious production limiting disease and that a coordinated disease control program was needed for eradication of the disease.

A Strategic Plan is overseen by an industry based Steering Committee which is responsible for setting the direction and monitoring progress with the Program. The Strategic Plan has both advisory and regulatory components. The emphasis has been on advice, policy development and research to develop better tools for industry to manage the disease, with government regulation as a back-up only where necessary.

Operational aspects of the Strategic Plan are largely delivered through RLPBs at the district level, with overall coordination at the State level undertaken by NSW DPI. Ongoing research has improved technical knowledge, while scientific support is provided through NSW DPI diagnostic laboratories to assist field staff with diagnosis.

After 18 years the New South Wales Footrot Strategic Plan has been shown to be highly successful. The flock prevalence of footrot throughout the State has been reduced from around 15% of flocks infected in 1991 to below 1%. The whole of the State is on track to become gazetted as a Footrot Protected Area by the end of 2006. Economic evaluations considered footrot was costing the State around $40 million in 1990. That figure has now reduced to below $2 million. The table below provides a summary of the footrot flock prevalence in NSW since 1988:

Summary of footrot flock prevalence in NSW since 1988

Numbers	**1988**	**1991**	**1994**	**1999**	**2003**	**2005**
Total sheep (mill)	56	54	42	36	30	27
Infected Flocks	3820	6179*	3319	588	236	128
Flocks in State	45399	41244	40750	32378	25158	23801
Flock Prevalence	8%	15%	8.1%	2%	1%	0.54%

*** increase in flock prevalence in 1991 associated with better disease intelligence and more responsible reporting by sheep owners.**

With over 92% of the State gazetted as Footrot Protected Area, sheep produces can now reliably source sheep free of footrot from the majority of New South Wales. This has resulted

in continued industry support to ensure the Plan is taken through to completion to the point when any new occurrence of footrot can be reasonably managed.

Enzootic Bovine Leucosis (EBL)

In 1992, when the EBL eradication program began, 22% of NSW dairy herds were infected. EBL provisional freedom status was achieved in December 2002 because of the determination and persistence of a committed team and a successful partnership with the dairy industry. Provisional freedom is only achieved after 99.8% of herds in the area have tested negative to the disease over a period of time. Achieving provisional freedom status is a unique achievement and it is essential that ongoing surveillance programs are supported.

The eradication program is coordinated by a steering committee under the jurisdiction of the NSW Dairy Industry Conference. The steering committee comprises representatives of dairy farmers, milk processors, NSW DPI, RLPBs and Safe Food NSW. Initially, farmer participation was voluntary, followed by a mandatory period (from 1997 onwards) to clean up tail-end herds.

The on-going surveillance program requires that every four months, bulk milk samples from all NSW dairies are sent to EMAI for testing on a fee for service basis (dairy companies are covering this expenditure). There are currently 1,125 diary herds assessed as clear from EBL, two provisionally clear and ten non assessed dairy herds in NSW. Two outbreaks have occurred in the last two years.

Johne's Disease Market Assurance Programs

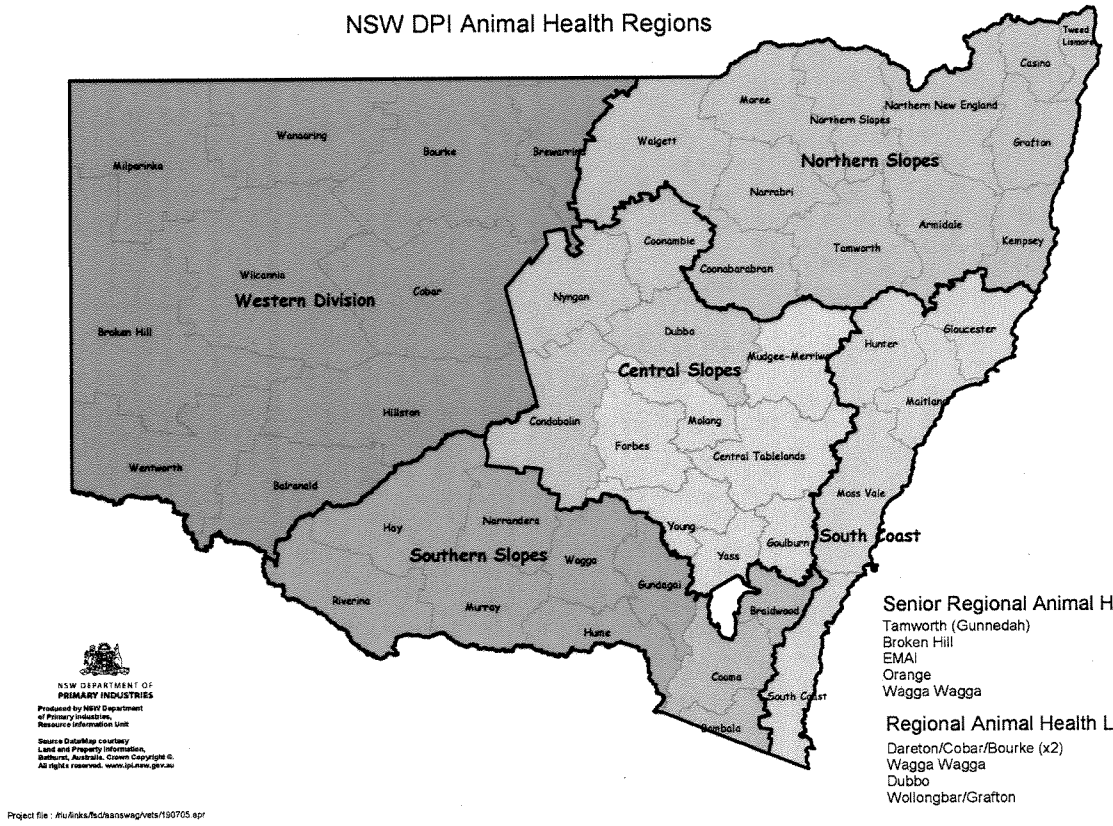
NSW DPI administers voluntary market assurance programs (MAPs) for Johne's disease in cattle, sheep, goats and alpacas. These programs are coordinated nationally by Animal Health Australia. NSW DPI has a representative on the MAP Reference Group, which sets policy for the MAPs. The MAP Reference Group includes a delegate from each industry involved in the MAPs, the Departmental MAP coordinator from each State, and a representative from Animal Health Australia. The MAPs are structured and audit on-farm biosecurity programs which give purchasers of stock the opportunity to source low risk animals.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This submission demonstrates the considerable progress that the NSW Government has made in managing animal and plants diseases, and particularly highlights the actions taken in response to the recommendations from the Auditor-General's performance audits on managing animal disease emergencies and implementing the Ovine Johne's Disease Program.

Further, as stated at the commencement of this submission, the NSW Government recognises the importance of continuing review of existing approaches to this issue so as to ensure that best management practices are identified and implemented.

Appendix 1: NSW DPI Animal Health Regions and Rural Lands Protection Board Districts



Appendix 2: Structure of government policy development committees