

## **National Plant Biosecurity RD&E Strategy Implementation Committee Meeting 18**

### **TELECONFERENCE**

**11<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

**10:00am – 12:00pm AEST**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mr Greg Fraser	Chair
Dr Gary Fitt	CSIRO
Dr Sharon Harvey	Wine Australia
Mr Tim Lester	CRRDC
Dr Suzy Perry	QDAF
Dr Kim Ritman	DAWR
Dr Shashi Sharma	DAFWA
Dr Simone Warner	DEDJTR Vic
Dr Ken Young	GRDC
Mr Rod Turner (Strategy Leader)	PHA
Dr Victoria Ludowici (Executive Officer)	PHA

### **Apologies**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Dr Mike Ashton	QDAF
Dr Satendra Kumar	PHC Chair
Mr David Moore	Hort Innovation
Dr Leigh Pilkington	NSW DPI
Dr Michael Robinson	PBCRC

### **Key dates**

30<sup>th</sup> May 2017- Policy Considerations Around Plant Pest Diagnostics and RD&E Workshop, AgriBio

31<sup>st</sup> May- PHA Member Meeting, Melbourne

6-8 June- Plant Health Committee Meeting, Townsville

7-8 June- National Biosecurity Committee Meeting, Darwin

7<sup>th</sup> June- AGSOC R&I Committee Meeting, Sydney

19<sup>th</sup> June- RDC's Biosecurity RD&E Initiative Meeting, Canberra

17-20 September- Australian Entomological Society AGM and Conference, Terrigal

26-28 September- Australasian Plant Pathology Society and PBCRC Science Protecting Plant Health Conference, Brisbane

## **Meeting Summary**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Implementation Committee agreed;

- A review of capability available to the plant biosecurity system will be included as part of the strategy update, however, a full audit of FTEs is not required.
- The presentation at the Australian Entomological Society and Science Protecting Plant Health Conferences should focus on the outcomes of the Whitefly and Whitefly Transmitted Virus Preparedness Workshop and the Science Protecting Plant Health Conference presentation will focus on the outcomes of the Policy Considerations Around Diagnostics Workshop. Both presentations will provide an overview of the plant biosecurity RD&E system and highlight the Implementation Committee's role within the system.

## **Agenda Items 1 and 2: Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Dr Mike Ashton, Dr Satendra Kumar, Mr David Moore, Dr Leigh Pilkington and Dr Michael Robinson.

## **Agenda Item 3: Review of Action Items**

Progress on the Action Items arising from the previous meetings were discussed. Action Items covered by the agenda were deferred to the appropriate Agenda Item with most of the Action Items being noted as complete.

For the Action Item relating to research conducted on Xylella in the last 10 years. The Executive Officer has contacted DAWR, Hort Innovation, PBCRC, RIRDC and Wine Australia. Once all the information has been received an out of session paper will be circulated to the Implementation Committee. The Executive Team have contacted MLA and AHA about the pastures workshop and both agreed to be involved. The Executive Team will contact CSU and Dairy Australia to ascertain interest in being involved in this workshop. The updated budget for the Implementation Committee will be sent out of session.

**Action:** Executive Officer to circulate a paper about research conducted on Xylella in the last 10 years out of session.

**Action:** Executive Team to contact CSU and Dairy Australia regarding the pastures workshop.

**Action:** Executive Officer to circulate the updated budget out of session.

## **Agenda Item 4: Council of RDCs Initiative- update**

The CRRDC provided an update of the RDC's Biosecurity RD&E Initiative. A committee consisting of the R&D managers of CRDC, FWPA, GRDC, Hort Innovation RIRDC, SRA and Wine Australia with the PHA CEO acting as independent chair. A Program Director has been appointed and is due to start in June and Kim Ritman confirmed he will be the

DAWR representative. The first meeting of the RDC Initiative will be held in Canberra on 19<sup>th</sup> June.

The RDC Initiative is cognisant of minimising duplication and are aiming to make use of existing arrangements rather than creating new structures. The RDC Initiative is yet to discuss the linkages to the Implementation Committee and other structures involved in the plant biosecurity RD&E system. The possibility of including the new Program Director as a member of the Implementation Committee and on the Strategy Review Subcommittee was raised and this will be discussed at the RDC Initiative's first meeting in June.

The linkages of the RDC Initiative with the states will evolve. The new Program Director position may assist with forming these relationships. Both the RD&E and the policy/regulatory sides of the state governments will need to be engaged with the RDC Initiative as these are separate steams within state/territory governments.

The RDC Initiative will need to consider the plant biosecurity RD&E system post the PBCRC and interact with any new organisations that may arise from the Smart Biosecurity Science proposal or assist with the wind up of the PBCRC. Assistance could involve considering further funding R&D projects from the PBCRC.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Environmental Biosecurity**

The Executive Officer has been in contact with DAWR regarding the National Environment and Community Biosecurity RD&E Strategy (NECRDES). DAWR is currently recruiting to drive the NECRDES and once this position has been filled the Executive Team will organise a meeting to discuss the NECRDES and its implementation.

The importance of native microbial ecology in environmental biosecurity was raised. This can represent a significant issue when developing diagnostic protocols for exotic pests as established microbes can create false positives for diagnostic tests developed overseas. It was not certain if this issue was covered in the NECRDES. CSIRO agreed to ascertain if it was included.

There has been a focus on environmental biosecurity RD&E from several different parts of the plant biosecurity RD&E system. NBC has a subcommittee who are looking at biosecurity RD&E, including environmental biosecurity, from a policy perspective and mapping out the current strategies that are relevant in this space, including the state environmental strategies. It was noted that the committee needs to understand its role in the environmental biosecurity RD&E space as many agricultural pests have an impact on the environment as well.

**Action:** CSIRO to ascertain if microbial ecology is within scope of the National Environment and Community Biosecurity RD&E Strategy.

## **Agenda Item 6: Strategy Review**

The plant biosecurity RD&E system has changed significantly over the life of the Strategy. The review will not be a complete rewrite but rather an update so that the strategy reflects the current system. If there are further significant changes in the system during the review the strategy can be fine tuned. The committee is looking for more guidance in the new version of the strategy. The Major, Support, Link Table also needs updating. The AGSOC R&I Committee have been reviewing the definitions of Major, Support and Link and this should be released soon.

Prior to writing the strategy, an extensive audit was carried out on plant and animal biosecurity RD&E capability and capacity. This audit took two project officers 6 months to complete and was externally funded by DAWR and DEDJTR. It was agreed that another extensive audit like this was not required but a review to assess the capability available to the plant biosecurity should be carried out as a part of the strategy update. Universities should be included in this review and the Program Director from the RDC Initiative may be able to assist. The requirements for the plant biosecurity system as a whole, e.g. prevention and risk management, should be included rather than just discipline e.g. virology, The details will be worked out by the Strategy Review Subcommittee. It was noted that the National Animal Biosecurity RD&E Strategy Steering Group are not conducting an audit as a part of their strategy's midlife review.

At the last meeting CSIRO, DEDJTR and QDAF noted their interest in being involved in the Strategy Review Subcommittee. The CSIRO representative noted that he will be taking long service leave this year and the possibility including of another CSIRO representative for the Strategy Review Subcommittee was taken on notice. The Chair also noted the importance of including the RDCs in this subcommittee. The Chair will discuss with the seven plant based RDCs if the Program Director from the RDC Initiative should be involved in the strategy review at the RDC's Biosecurity RD&E Initiative Meeting in June.

**Action:** CSIRO to confirm if another CSIRO staff member will be included in the Strategy Review Subcommittee.

**Action:** Chair to discuss the inclusion of the Program Director from the RDC Initiative at the RDCs Biosecurity RD&E Initiative Meeting in June.

## **Agenda Item 7: Upcoming Conferences- Australian Entomological Society Conference and Science Protecting Plant Health**

The Executive Team submitted abstracts to the Australian Entomological Society and Science Protecting Plant Health Conferences. If the abstracts are accepted the outcomes of the Whitefly and Whitefly Transmitted Virus Preparedness Workshop will be the focus of the Australian Entomological Society Conference and the outcomes of the Policy Considerations Around Diagnostics Workshop will be the focus of the Science Protecting Plant Health Conference. The Implementation Committee agreed that a summary of the structure of the plant biosecurity system will be highlighted and the role of the Implementation Committee within the system will be included.

Attending conferences like these are within the scope of activities for the Implementation Committee and a paper to the AGSOC R&I Committee is not required.

### **Agenda Item 8: Committee Member Communication with Stakeholders**

The Executive Officer reminded the Implementation Committee members to engage with stakeholders in the plant biosecurity RD&E system about the activities of the Implementation Committee. The state government representatives were asked to talk to their partner states about the workshops and other activities currently underway.

### **Agenda Items 9: Other Business**

CSIRO updated the Implementation Committee on their work on Gene drive. This technology is a technique promoting the inheritance of a particular gene to increase its prevalence in a population. This can technique could potentially be used to eradicate plant and animal pests and includes but is broader than Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR). CSIRO has signed an international gene drive agreement and is currently running workshops on the ethical issues of this technology. The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator is currently reviewing their position on gene drive and synthetic biology more broadly.

### **Agenda Items 10: Next Meeting and Close**

The Committee decided that a face to face meeting should be held every 6 months with teleconferences being held on an as needs basis. The next meeting will be held around the Science Protecting Plant Health Conference. The Executive Officer will send a Doodle Poll to determine a date and time to suit everyone.

**Action:** Executive Officer to send a Doodle Poll to ascertain dates for future meetings.

**Meeting close:** 11:45 pm