

LUMPY SKIN DISEASE UPDATE



12 MAY 2022

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) is a clear and present risk to the northern pastoral sector, and to the domestic beef industry nationally. Members of the NTCA can be assured that this is my and the Executive Committee of the NTCA's highest priority and that we are all strongly engaged with the Management team on the direction of industry responses to this emergent issue.

At the NTCA AGM this year, members approved a policy position that included the following elements,

That the importation of the LSD virus for research purposes was appropriate for the production of a vaccine.

That trading relationships with SE Asian countries must be supported and safeguarded against LSD outbreaks.

The investment in Biosecurity operations in Northern Australia needed to be prioritised.

That industry needed to be supported to be able to assist in providing extension and training for producers and industry stakeholders in the recognition and management of LSD.

This has proven prescient. At a Federal level, structures for the management of the current and future risk of LSD are beginning to take place. The NFF and Red Meat Advisory Council have formed a committee with the relevant Research and Development Corporations (MLA, LiveCorp) in conjunction with the Dairy Industry and Federal Government.

This group has identified four areas of focus:

- The prioritisation of the Development of an Australian LSD vaccine.
- Support for Indonesia in managing LSD in the region.
- Engagement with key markets on the importance of strengthening ongoing trade and market relationships.
- Domestic Biosecurity Preparedness for an LSD incursion to Australia.

In Darwin, Minister Littleproud announced the investment of \$60m over the coming four years to further support Northern Biosecurity preparedness, specifically in relation to LSD. This was welcomed by the NTCA, though it appears likely that significant further funding will be required

from State and Territory Governments, as well as future Federal Governments.

The Federal Department of Agriculture is currently going through a risk assessment process to bring the live version of the LSD virus to Australia for research purposes. This is a vital and necessary step in developing a vaccine for usage in Australia.

The present situation is that the active vaccinations available globally, which contain a live version of the LSD virus, are not available for use by the Australian industry without the same trade ramifications as the virus itself entering Australia organically. We must prepare our own before LSD gets here.

While this will alarm some members of the industry, the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP) is a world leading facility in disease research and will house the LSD virus when it arrives. The facility currently undertakes disease research into some of the most contagious and dangerous diseases in existence (Ebola as an example) - successfully. Industry can have confidence that they will be able to manage the research around LSD safely.

There are innumerable moving parts to the challenges ahead. Members of the NTCA can rest assured that their interests are being protected and that we will not hesitate in advancing our, and your, views on the management of this risk to us all.

We have an opportunity to show the world our strong history of biosecurity management is stronger than ever. We have an opportunity to lead and to help support our trading partners in fighting back against the spread of this disease globally. Our job is to make sure we deliver on our hard-won reputation and that as one, we face this threat head on.

David Connolly

President

Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association

<https://www.ntca.org.au/news/2022/may/12/lumpy-skin-disease-update>