



Surviving an Emergency Animal Disease: A 30-Minute Plan for Livestock Transport Enterprises

About this document

The likelihood of emergency animal diseases (EADs) such as foot-and-mouth disease is low but when outbreaks do occur, they have a serious impact on livestock transport businesses. An EAD could result in an immediate reduction in export markets and restrictions on livestock movements, and (in the case of a foot and mouth disease outbreak) an initial national livestock 'standstill'. Infected or at-risk properties may also require livestock to be culled to help stop the disease from spreading. Would your business survive?

This planning tool will assist you to develop an EAD survival plan. 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. Just follow the four steps provided (note that a more detailed guide on risk management planning for an EAD is also available online). If you are not participating in truckCare, the Australian Livestock Transport Industry's independently-audited quality assurance program, consider (as a minimum) following the actions in this brochure. Another critical resource, both to prepare for a possible EAD and to respond to one should it occur, is the AUSVETPLAN *Enterprise Manual for Saleyards and Transport*. You should take the time to [download](#) and browse this manual and to file it where it is readily accessible.

Step 1: Think about your business

An EAD could disrupt normal sales and purchases of your transport service, as well as the people, organisations and businesses you depend on. Completing the table below will help you identify the areas in your business (e.g. products and inputs) that may be vulnerable.

What areas of your business may be vulnerable?

1. Key services	<i>For example: Haulage to and from saleyards, saleyards to feedlot or slaughter, local haulage, interstate haulage.</i>
2. Key customers	<i>For example: Cattle producers, sheep producers, stock agents, feedlots, abattoirs.</i>
3. Key inputs and suppliers	<i>For example: Fuel, parts, machinery, staff, contractors.</i>
4. Key support services and service providers	<i>For example: mechanics, saleyards, accountants.</i>
5. Key regulators	<i>For example: local council, Department of Primary Industries (DPI or equivalent), Environment Protection Authority (EPA), Road Transport Authority.</i>

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) or more localised in the form of declared areas (restricted and control areas) around infected and at-risk premises. A national livestock standstill is a publicly announced ban on all movement of susceptible animals. This type of standstill is declared by authorities to

allow them to assess where the disease already is without the situation getting worse through continuing movements. It is a criminal offence to move livestock during a livestock standstill.

Individual premises may also be placed in quarantine. The restrictions may affect a property's ability to sell or move livestock, products, feed and supplies. Visits by people and vehicles may be restricted or may require strict biosecurity¹ 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 premises may also be subjected to humane culling operations for which compensation would be payable to livestock owners. Alternatively, livestock may require emergency vaccination. Depending on your location, ongoing disease control and eradication arrangements may constrain or restrict your business activities for days, weeks, months or even years.

Could your business survive the following?

1. Infection of livestock in your consignment or on your premises.
2. A reduction in export markets and the loss of income, staff and suppliers.
3. Movement restrictions and feed shortages.
4. Implementation of emergency disease control activities requiring your time, equipment and other resources.
5. Increased requirements to demonstrate responsible behaviour towards staff, the environment, livestock welfare and the local community.

Step 3: Identify actions to take

Look through the list to identify 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 should write these in the space provided.

Risk Area 1: Infection of consignment, property or premises		Priority? Tick if yes.
Top 3 Actions	1. Adopt your industry standards for biosecurity to protect your business.	
	2. Regularly review and test biosecurity plans for animal, fodder and vehicle movements and consider getting the assistance of a veterinarian or biosecurity expert to develop, implement or upgrade biosecurity plans.	
	3. Train staff in basic disease recognition, biosecurity and hygiene, including procedures for reporting suspicions of notifiable ² disease. If there is ever any doubt, immediately contact a local veterinarian. Develop systems that reward good biosecurity practice and make it part of the workplace culture.	
Risk Area 2: Export market closures, loss of income and staff		

¹ Biosecurity is defined here as “a set of measures for protecting a population from infectious diseases at the national, regional and farm level.” (Source: farmbiosecurity.com.au)

² A list of notifiable animal diseases is available at:
http://www.daff.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1015075/notifiable.pdf

Top 3 Actions	4. Think about your cash flow and investigate ways of accessing finance if an emergency arises.	
	5. Prepare your business to service other markets should livestock markets close.	
	6. Review your business insurance and lease agreements to determine the implications of an EAD outbreak.	
Risk Area 3: Movement restrictions		
Top 3 Actions	7. Record state and territory government livestock authority contact details so that you can promptly apply for permits to move livestock if a national livestock standstill is declared.	
	8. Develop a plan for staying fully informed about movement restrictions during an EAD, for example by checking web alerts on www.outbreak.gov.au	
	9. Be aware that animals in transit when movement restrictions are declared must be managed as directed by the state and territory government authorities to avoid legislated penalties.	
Risk Area 4: Disease control activities		
Top 3 Actions	10. Have a plan and adequate infrastructure for rapid and thorough decontamination of heavy equipment and trucks.	
	11. Where possible, seal transport trucks to prevent leakage of manure or urine if animals are permitted to be transported.	
	12. Improve record keeping of stock movements.	
Risk Area 5: Obligations and responsibilities		
Top 3 Actions	13. Understand your legal obligations and responsibilities during a disease outbreak, particularly with regards to livestock movements.	
	14. Make a conscious decision to co-operate with authorities and assist clients during an outbreak.	
	15. Ensure that staff are aware of, and adhere to, codes of practice for welfare of cattle and sheep, especially sections relating to animal handling.	

Step 4: Implement your plan

Work through the list implementing the priority actions.

Remember that you have a legal obligation to report suspicions of notifiable diseases. This can be done by calling the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on **1800 675 888**, or contacting a local veterinarian or the nearest department of primary industries or agriculture. Early detection and reporting of disease is essential to minimise the impact of an EAD. Staff must also be made aware of the penalties imposed for not reporting suspicions of an EAD.

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. This document is available online at the following websites:
 - www.woolproducers.com.au
 - www.woolindustries.org/fawo.htm
 - www.cattlecouncil.com.au
 - www.sheepmeatcouncil.com.au

Industry Biosecurity Manuals

- Occupational Health and Safety Reference Guide Australian Meat Industry: <http://mintrac-whs.com.au/wp-content/uploads/OHS-Reference-Guide-Part4.pdf>
- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines 2013, Land Transport of Livestock, page 23: www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/files/2011/02/Land-transport-of-livestock-Standards-and-Guidelines-Version-1.-1-21-September-2012.pdf

AUSVETPLAN Documents

- Operational Procedure Manuals
 - www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/emergency-animal-disease-preparedness/ausvetplan/operational-procedures-manuals/
- AUSVETPLAN Enterprise Manual for Saleyards and Transport
 - www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/SYT3.0-15-FINAL29Jan13.pdf
- Disease Strategies
 - www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/programs/emergency-animal-disease-preparedness/ausvetplan/disease-strategies/

And remember, if you spot suspicious disease symptoms, contact the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888

