

# BIOSECURITY ACT 2015

## General Biosecurity Duty

### What does the general biosecurity duty mean?

The general biosecurity duty supports the principle of shared responsibility, and means everyone is doing what is reasonable for them to do to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.

### GENERAL BIOSECURITY DUTY

#### WHAT IS MY DUTY?



**Prevent biosecurity risks**



**Eliminate risks**



**Minimise risks**



As much as is reasonable

#### WHEN DO I HAVE A DUTY?

**If you deal with, or deal with a carrier of biosecurity matter you have a duty**

e.g. weeds, animals, plants or machinery...



And if you **should know** that there is a risk

#### HOW DO I FULFILL MY DUTY?

**By referring to:**



- State strategic plans
- Regional strategies
- Local plans
- Guidelines & advisory material
- Codes of practice & industry standards
- Mandatory measures



### How will the general biosecurity duty apply to me?

You are not expected to know about all biosecurity risks, but you are expected to know about risks associated with your industry, business, day-to-day work and hobbies.

Some measures you could take include

- Isolating stock that shows signs of a disease to minimise the risk of disease spread to other stock on your property or to stock on neighbouring properties
- Implementing an on-farm biosecurity plan, which could include regulating the entry of vehicles, people and equipment onto the farm or specific areas within the farm
- Requesting completed animal health declarations from sellers when you are considering buying stock
- Checking your footwear and gear so you don't transfer unwanted pests or diseases. Clean your clothing and equipment once you're finished to prevent the spread between environments
- Disposing of garden clippings responsibly by bagging, composting on site, using green bins and not transporting loose waste off your property
- Not dumping fish, plants or snails into or near waterways, stormwater drains or the ocean. Disposing of aquarium waste responsibly by tipping waste water on the garden and placing solid waste like plants or gravel in the bin or burying it

Fulfilling your general biosecurity duty could include a number of measures. Here are some examples:

## HORSE OWNERS



Horse owners have a general biosecurity duty to ensure that the biosecurity risks associated with keeping horses are prevented, eliminated or minimised.

Horse owners in an area such as Northern NSW know or should

know there is a higher risk of infection from Hendra virus. These horse owners therefore have a general biosecurity duty to prevent, eliminate or minimise the biosecurity risks associated with Hendra virus infection. This could

be as simple as keeping horses away from trees in which fruit bats roost and making sure that the horses' food and water is not near these trees. The horse owner may also choose to vaccinate horses against Hendra virus infection.

## WEEDS



If a weed poses a biosecurity risk in a particular area, but is not the subject of any specific legislation, the general biosecurity duty would apply to manage that weed or prevent its spread.

Property owners may fulfill their general biosecurity duty by controlling the movement of weeds on and off their land, by:

- Finding out where products brought onto the property (such as fodder, soil, mulch or gravel) originated and taking steps to manage any risks from it
- Holding newly acquired livestock in a restricted area before releasing them onto the property

- Holding stock in a weed-free area before transporting them off the farm if they had been exposed to weed seed
- Not selling feed, soil, gravel or other products that might contain weed seed

## RECREATIONAL USERS OF WATERWAYS



Recreational users of waterways who should reasonably know about the biosecurity risks will be subject to the general biosecurity duty.

For example, if educational and warning signs are prominently placed at boat ramps and other

areas where the water is accessed for recreational purposes warning of a biosecurity risk, the duty would apply. Recreational users of waterways may fulfill their general biosecurity duty simply by cleaning their boating, fishing, swimming

and other equipment of any water weed before using it in other waterways.

## FOOTROT IN SHEEP AND GOATS



NSW is currently largely free of footrot, although sporadic outbreaks still occur, largely as a result of the movement of stock into the state.

There are specific regulatory controls in effect for footrot, however the general biosecurity duty will also apply from the time the disease is first suspected. The

owner of stock that is suspected or confirmed as having footrot is clearly dealing with the stock and would usually know or ought reasonably to know of the associated biosecurity risks, and therefore has a general biosecurity duty to ensure the risk is prevented, eliminated or minimised.

All reasonably practical measures must be taken to ensure that potentially infected sheep or goats cannot stray onto neighbouring properties, come into contact with uninfected stock or have access to land that might be used by uninfected stock, such as public roads.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACT, VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CONTACT US:**

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