

A newsletter for pork producers



PigBytes

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ASF is a disease of pigs not production systems

Jayce Morgan

I was asked the other day if African Swine Fever (ASF) is a problem of indoor production systems.

ASF is a disease of pigs not production systems and we should be very clear about that message.

ASF kills infected pigs whether they are indoor or outdoor or pets or wild or feral.

It is a very resilient disease; there is high mortality among infected pigs; there is no vaccine and there is no treatment.

At this stage [on-farm biosecurity](#) and strict adherence to [swill feeding laws](#) are your best defence.

If you want more information about the disease go to [Animal Health Australia > Disease Specific Documents > African swine fever](#).

If you have biosecurity concerns or are unsure about the health of your pigs:

- contact your vet OR
- make a report via the NSW DPI website [NSW DPI Report a pest or disease](#)

Add the Emergency Animal Disease watch hotline 1800 675 888 to your contacts list on your phone.

Use this number if you suspect an emergency animal disease – EAD.

Biosecurity planning to protect your property

Sara Willis

An amendment to **Queensland biosecurity regulation came into effect on 26 April 2019** to address potential biosecurity risks of unauthorised entry to places where animals are kept.

Under the amendment, anybody that enters your property must comply with your biosecurity management plan when they enter or leave and while they are on your property.

To support the security of your property under this regulation, primary producers are encouraged to:

- ensure you are [registered as a biosecurity entity](#) with Biosecurity Queensland
- have an up-to-date biosecurity management plan in place for your property that aligns to the biosecurity regulation:
 - If you already have a biosecurity plan in place, [a checklist](#) is available to support you in upgrading this plan to ensure it aligns to the legislation.
 - If you don't have a plan in place, a template for developing a biosecurity management plan which aligns to the regulation is available from [Animal Health Australia](#)
 - [place a sign](#) at the front gate and other access points that:
 - advise a biosecurity management plan is in place
 - tells visitors how they can contact you during business hours
- keep all doors, gates and other entry points locked when staff are not present
- keep records of audits, staff training and biosecurity procedures up-to-date and at hand

- consider installing security measures such as CCTV video surveillance
- carefully consider applicants and terms of employment before hiring new staff.

Biosecurity management plan: checklist

If you have a biosecurity management plan (the plan) in place, use this checklist to include all required information to ensure the plan aligns to the regulation.

- **Ensure the plan is clearly titled 'biosecurity management plan' and add a section that states 'this is a Biosecurity management plan in accordance with Section 41B(1) and (2) of the Queensland Biosecurity Regulation 2016'.**
- **Include a statement that the purpose of the plan is to: 'State the measures to prevent, control or stop the spread of biosecurity matter into, at, or from the management areas as defined in your biosecurity management plan, pursuant to the Queensland Biosecurity Regulation 2016'.**
- Clearly identify all the potential biosecurity risks to your property posed by the entry of people.
- Include a clearly defined biosecurity management area where the plan applies (a map or diagram of the place is recommended). If you have areas of different risk on your property where special requirements apply (e.g. the piggery, a calf rearing shed, feed pens) then define these clearly. Required entry/exit points and designated tracks would also be useful.
 - Display signs on your property that clearly identifies those different areas.
- Clearly define the measures a person is required to comply with when entering, present at, or leaving any management area at the place.
- Describe the measures as clearly as possible so there is no confusion or ambiguity as to whether and how the measure must be complied with.
- You must make a copy of the plan available for inspection, on request, during ordinary business hours.
- It is recommended that you ask any person entering your property to confirm they have read and understood the plan is in existence and they understand their obligations under it.

- Consider whether it is a reasonable requirement to require visitors entering the management area to record in a register some or all of the following:
 - personal details
 - vehicle details
 - purpose of their visit
 - a declaration that they have read the plan and they understand the measures they must comply with when entering, being present at, or leaving the place.
- Clearly [display signs](#) positioned at access points to the management area on the property. The signs need to state that a biosecurity management plan applies to the place and that it is an offence for a person entering, present at, or leaving the management area to fail to comply with the measures stated in the plan unless the person has a reasonable excuse.
- Include a contact number and ensure you or property manager can be reached to make the plan available for inspection upon request during business hours.
- [Download an approved sign](#). If you prefer, you may make your own sign. Suggested dimensions of the sign are 900mm x 600mm.

Figure 1: Recommended wording for the Biosecurity Sign.

VISITORS

A BIOSECURITY MANAGEMENT PLAN APPLIES TO THIS PLACE

This is a management area for the Biosecurity Management Plan that applies to this place.

It is an offence for a person entering, present at, or leaving a management area to fail to comply with the measures stated in the Biosecurity Management Plan for the area unless the person has a reasonable excuse.

Please contact us or visit our office before entering to obtain information about the Biosecurity Management Plan and your biosecurity obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*. Vehicles, people and equipment can carry diseases, weed seeds and pests.

Phone / UHF channel: _____

Business Risk Assessment

Jayne Morgan

Farming can be risky business – variability in climate, pest animals and insect incursions, disease outbreaks, market fluctuations and more – can all affect the bottom line and hence profitability.

Farmers can however be proactive rather than reactive to risk and improve their business resilience.

Risks can also be viewed differently by different farmers depending on their past experience, equity and personality. Some people will try to work with nature while others may have a control ethic. Some people are comfortable with debt and have a good understanding of financial systems or at least have good advisers, while others get very nervous very quickly and need different strategies to cope.

I have put together a bit of a checklist – you may have different points worthy of consideration – the main thing is that risks are identified and possible strategies are considered before the event. Planning without stress is likely to lead to better decision making. Life can always be unpredictable but if you have given thought to the options the hard times can be easier.

Suggested risk planning

Identify the risks

- emergency animal disease (EAD), endemic disease outbreak (erysipelas, E coli)
- climatic such as drought or flood, windstorm
- environmental such as effluent system breakdown, weather effects, neighbour complaints, dead livestock disposal, decontamination of effluent
- human resources such as illness, labour shortage, training, WHS and technology
- animal welfare – feed or water supplies affected, disease, labour shortage, weather effects and community perceptions, EAD stock standstill
- marketing – oversupply, activism effects, transport problems due to weather effects, processor problems, EAD effects on community perception of pork
- feed supply – transport issues, energy supply on farm, equipment failure, shortage due to climatic effects (drought or flood), high cost,
- pest animals – feral pigs, mouse plagues,
- financial – high cost of production, low returns, labour costs, equity
- personal – changing goals, health of self and family, finances,
- community – social licence, environmental,

Develop strategies

Many risks are interrelated. Outbreak of an EAD for example could have implications both short and long term on markets, human resources, animal welfare, feed supply, finances, environmental and transport links.

Familiarisation with the Animal Health Australia response plans for EADs is a useful exercise. Go to [Animal Health Australia>AUSVETPLAN Manuals and Documents> Disease specific documents](#).

It is important to consider the risks and identify possible strategies to overcome future risks.

For example you might decide to establish yourself as a customer at two different feed mills to give your farm business more options in times of trouble; or you might decide to acquire the equipment and mix some feed yourself.

Decontamination is a major element of control in EAD outbreaks. You might consider developing an area for motor vehicle decontamination supplied with water and perhaps a concrete pad and sump.

You might consider development of some sort of boundary transfer point for stock and feed supplies to reduce the need for vehicle decontamination.

Staff development is important always. Training and practice in biosecurity matters and EAD identification is extremely valuable. Getting staff on board to help think of potential risks, options and solutions gives you more ideas and can make staff feel more valued.

There is a good article by Deb Kerr in the [April 2019 Australian Pork Newspaper](#) titled “Will your business survive a disease outbreak?”

Decisions made under stress are clouded by emotion. Pre-planning can help you make timely and positive decisions and maintain your business resilience.

Agriculture needs more stories

Jayce Morgan

This article is not about vegan activists and activities they conducted around Australia recently. However there is an increasing need to get the agriculture story out to the community. I am noticing that even among my contacts there is increasing confusion and uncertainty about our food systems.

Social media gives everyone a voice it seems. Information can be distorted, taken out of context and used to create outrage and other negative comments.

If repeated often enough a script develops and certain words create the image and the story line – industrial agriculture, factory farming, drought, flood, low incomes or no labour. This is problematic when this becomes twisted into the single story.

There is an excellent Tedx talk from 2009 titled [‘The danger of a single story’](#) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Chimamanda is Nigerian by birth and relates snippets of life in Nigeria and the US and how single stories create stereotypes. Stereotypes maybe partly true but they are also an incomplete description of the situation.

Current agricultural practices are claimed by some to be the cause of the demise of many of our ecosystems. Agriculture has been described as industrial, reductionist, simplifying ecosystems for control, lacking diversity due to monoculture of crops or livestock, and pushing livestock and soils beyond their capacity for sustainable production – the list goes on.

People conveniently forget the ecosystem that was destroyed for the building of their house or flat or shopping centre.

Drought is testing the resilience of many agricultural communities in this country; and animal activists are making their presence felt. Social licence and the right to farm remain at the forefront of farming discussions.

There was an excellent presentation at a recent Grain Growers conference on [‘Creating social licence in Agriculture’](#). Ketchum, a consulting firm that works to create better communication for business, has done a lot of work in this area. The decade 2010 to 2020 is described as a decade of turmoil – ‘Shift happened’ largely due to social media.

There is a new type of food influencer – the “Food eVangelist”. They are not mommy bloggers, they utilise twitter and Instagram, their numbers have grown 10% in 3 years and are 24% of consumers, they are spread evenly across income levels and male/females, they are well educated but misinformed, their children already influence their purchases and will be consumers of the future.

Supply chains are becoming demand chains.

Ketchum research has shown that farmers are still trusted **but** what you do is not, because people do not understand what you do.

Fighting is not an option as fighting creates winners and losers and continued resentment. If you run away or turn away the void is filled by other voices. There is a need to create dialogue and listen – listen to what is not being said. Farmers need to be transparent, and create a connection, not hide behind ‘agriculture-speak’.

There was also the message to not confuse strong sales with social licence – there can be a lag of 8 to 10 years before sales are affected.

The presentation is a bit over an hour but that includes questions. The actual talk is about 50 minutes. It is recommended listening.

[Creating Social Licence in Agriculture](#)

Research by Ketchum into the “Food eVangelist”

[Food 2020 The Food eVangelist moves from niche to the new normal](#)

There was also an excellent statement that appeared on [The Country NZ Facebook](#) page (4th April 2019) attributed to the US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack:

“Every one of us that’s not a farmer is not a farmer because we have farmers. We delegate the responsibility of feeding our families to a relatively small percentage of this countrypopulation wise less than 0.1 percent of US population”

He goes on to say that putting trust in someone else to grow our food allows us to be students, doctors, lawyers, carpenters etc – no one has to work in the fields to feed the family – people are free to do whatever they like with their life because there are farmers.

The population of farmers in Australia is probably a similar percentage of the total population. Stories and relationships matter now more than ever.

It is great to see statements like these expressed publicly – but are they shared with the right audience – do they resonate with non-farmers?

The [PigSite](#) also has an article on ‘militant activism’ in the UK and the need for greater communication between farmers and activists.

A sentence in the article does however give pause for thought:

“.....in the past, activists have played a large part in improving conditions of livestock on farm, during transport and at slaughter.”

The recent activists’ action in Australia was seeking to convince consumers to abandon meat and other animal products by highlighting practices most likely to cause discomfort for consumers. Agriculture needs to step up and balance the argument with more stories and interaction with consumers.

[Celebrating Women in Agriculture](#)

Sara Willis

More than 100 women attended the Celebrating Women in Agriculture event at the Toowoomba Golf Club on Wednesday 6 March for International Women’s Day 2019. The day, proudly hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries,

featured seven inspiring women from the agricultural industry sharing their stories and achievements.

International Women's Day celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The campaign theme for 2019 was BalanceforBetter - Better the balance, better the world. As a result of the day, 89% of attendees surveyed indicated they were inspired to review the balance in their own lives.

The day brought together delegates from all walks of life - from farm (30%), supporting farm businesses (24%), academic institutions (9%), financial institutions (16%) and government (12%).

Figure 2: The Toowoomba Women in Agriculture event proved popular with women from all walks of life.



The presentations highlighted the roles that women perform in their industries, businesses and communities. Common themes were the importance of family, the value of planning and the satisfaction of contributing to industry and the community.

The event provided opportunities for networking with 89% of delegates indicating they had made new contacts as a result of the day.

Speakers included DAF Director-General, Beth Woods, Georgie Somerset, General President of AgForce Queensland and five other women from the horticulture, beef, poultry and cotton industries.

The evaluation indicated that the program was well received with 74% of the respondents rating the event as excellent and 26% very good. All delegates indicated they would attend another International Women's Day event.

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