

Australia grants livestock diseases control and biosecurity funds in South Asia

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Australia is investing around \$770,000 in an international training program to boost farmers' biosecurity capabilities in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Aiming to protect neighboring countries from incursions of exotic diseases like foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and lumpy skin disease (LSD), Australia is partnering with disease-prone zones.

Australia's Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is funding Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste with \$5 million worth technical expertise to help them combat livestock diseases. This includes personnel and logistic support for vaccine distribution, along with testing and epidemiological work. This funding has also helped fund the Biosecurity Training Centre.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Murray Watt said, "Australia has a long history of biosecurity collaboration with Indonesia and Timor-Leste, and we have ramped up our work together since May 2022 following the detection of FMD in Indonesia. This program will provide vital support to Indonesia's efforts to control the FMD and LSD outbreaks there while assisting Timor-Leste's to prevent and prepare for an incursion".

The funding will create and deliver country-specific "train the trainer" programs for Indonesia and Timor-Leste and is part of a \$14 million package announced by the Government last year. The program will be run by the Charles Sturt University through Australia's Biosecurity Training Centre (BTC) from April 2023.

Initiatives to support Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste for FMD and LSD preparedness

Indonesia and Papua New Guinea: The Australian government has committed more than \$17 million to directly support Indonesia's efforts to control outbreaks of FMD and LSD. As a initial funding aid Australia has granted 4 million doses of FMD vaccines and 435,000 doses of LSD vaccines to the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture. Further, Australian Government commits to provide 1 million doses of LSD vaccine to aid in the control of the disease.

In addition, an on-going vaccinator training program delivered to Indonesian vets and paravets to assist in building their technical capabilities in FMD and LSD control and eradication. This will support the development and implementation of long-term communication strategies about FMD and LSD in Indonesia. Australia has supplied expertise to support Indonesia's planning to establish domestic FMD vaccine production. FMD is considered endemic in Indonesia.

Indonesian participants will be receiving training in international best practice approaches to biosecurity. Areas covered will include import risk analysis, border clearance processes, on shore management, disinfection treatments, and specific risk management associated with high priority transboundary plant pests and animal diseases including FMD and LSD among others.

Timor-Leste: Similarly, Australia is providing technical assistance to Timor-Leste to support FMD and LSD preparedness, capacity building including diagnostics, support for delivery of animal health surveys and awareness materials and provision of equipment. An example includes an LSD and FMD awareness and surveillance campaign that is currently being delivered in the municipalities of Timor-Leste that border West Timor, Indonesia. There is currently no FMD or LSD in Timor-Leste.

In addition, Australia has delivered support for Timor-Leste's African swine fever response and recovery arrangements. The Department funds the delivery of joint annual plant health surveys in Timor-Leste in partnership with Timor-Leste's biosecurity agencies. According to the schedule, Biosecurity Development Program will be delivered in Timor-Leste between April 2023 and June 2026. The program is currently in the design phase and will complement and build on the training program occurring currently at the Biosecurity Training Centre.

Charles Sturt University and the department have been working closely with animal and plant quarantine colleagues in Timor-Leste and Indonesia to determine gaps in their capacity to detect and mitigate the risk of exotic disease entering through regulated pathways.