



Engaging in biosecurity in horticultural regions

Effective pest and disease control is critical to the horticultural industry as it underpins access to lucrative domestic and export markets.

Protecting the economy, environment and people's health from pests and disease is known as biosecurity. It includes trying to prevent new pests and diseases from arriving, and helping to control outbreaks when they do occur. Engaging the community at the local level - including farmers, peri-urban and urban residents, farm workers and travellers - is critical to creating good biosecurity outcomes. The Beale review of quarantine stressed the importance of shared government and community responsibility to address biosecurity (www.daff.gov.au/quarantinebiosecurityreview).

There are many biosecurity engagement activities occurring in horticultural regions throughout Australia. However, there is a lack of knowledge about what helps or hinders effective whole-of-community biosecurity engagement in different contexts. There are also opportunities for more national collaboration and strategic coordination between engagement projects to foster mutual learning and ensure efficient use of resources.

The Engaging in Biosecurity in Horticultural Regions project (May 2008 to June 2011) aims to develop a biosecurity engagement framework comprising landholders, industry and local communities for the early detection and reporting of pest and disease incursions.

The objectives of the three year project include:

- identifying the principles and practices that contribute to successful biosecurity engagement

- providing guidelines for biosecurity engagement investments (how to get the 'biggest bang for buck')
- strengthening collaboration between biosecurity engagement practitioners.

Phase 1 of the project (May 2008 to February 2009) consolidated existing information on biosecurity engagement. A biosecurity engagement literature review and a gap analysis are available on the Bureau of Rural Sciences website at www.daff.gov.au/brs/social-sciences/publications

The purpose of **Phase 2** (March to December 2009) is to profile a range of existing biosecurity engagement initiatives and to draw together a check list for planning and delivering biosecurity messages. Six case studies in horticultural regions across Australia will be explored to extend knowledge of, and aggregate lessons about, successful engagement tools in different contexts. The project will interview stakeholders and hold focus group discussions in each case study region in collaboration with project participants and partners.

Phase 3 (January 2010 to June 2011) will develop and evaluate biosecurity engagement trials based on the lessons learned and guidelines identified in Phase 2.

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