



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **BAF FOCUSSES ON BETTER PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

**THURSDAY 15 AUGUST 2019**

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) is working towards finalising an Animal Biosecurity Emergency Response Plan (ABERP) in efforts to better respond to emergency situations relating to animal health and diseases in regards to addressing the emerging global trends.

BAF has engaged the services of “Ausvet”, a global epidemiology consultancy company from Canberra, Australia, to assist in the compilation of the ABERP. This will allow BAF to be better positioned to respond to emergencies, which may be related to incursion of animal diseases or invasive alien species into Fiji. Ausvet is a leading global consulting services provider in epidemiology, disease surveillance, health information systems, biosecurity, risk assessment, research and data analysis and project management. Animal Health Australia is also assisting with the formulation of the ABERP.

BAF is working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry Health and Medical Services, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Land Transport Authority, Fiji Police Force, Fiji Corporative Dairy Company Limited, Fiji Bee Keepers Association, Goodman Fielder International, Rooster Poultry,

Fiji Crop and Livestock Council and Fiji National University among others to finalise the ABERP in addressing any exotic concerns in these livestock sectors.

The first round of consultations were conducted in April 2019 where initial views and comments from all stakeholders were taken regarding critical matters such as farm livestock management and biosecurity practices, ascertaining how exotic diseases or pests can be introduced, established and spread into Fiji, the current technical capacity in each individual organisation and training requirements to handle emergencies.

The second round of stakeholder meeting which took place in Nadi this week focused on the gist of the draft ABERP prepared by Ausvet, engaging in a mock exercise by relevant stakeholders and to seek their consensus regarding their roles and responsibilities during an actual emergency response.

BAF's Acting Chief Executive Officer Mr. Surend Pratap said the need for an ABERP is imperative for the greater good of the nation. BAF and its stakeholders need to be well versed with how to respond to emergency situations in such changing times and be equipped with pooled resources to deliver proactively too in a timely manner.

"BAF cannot work in isolation and requires assistance from its stakeholders in ensuring that emergency situations are swiftly taken care off without posing further risks to Fijians", Mr. Pratap said.

The general public is encouraged to contact BAF's Disease Report Hotline: 5997 for any reports of incursions and information in these regards.

The ABERP is expected to be finalised in a few months' time as BAF continues to work mutually with stakeholders towards ensuring Fiji remains safe from incursions of any harmful exotic pests and diseases for sustainable food and income security.



BAF staff members with the stakeholders and Ausvet team during the second round of stakeholder meetings in Nadi earlier this week

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