

Media Release

13 February 2019

VFF calls for increased biosecurity investment and penalties

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is today calling for increased investment in biosecurity monitoring at our borders and harsher penalties for those caught with prohibited animal and plant products.

This follows the recent detection of African swine fever and Foot and Mouth Disease found in pork products declared and seized at Australian airports and mailing centres.

“Australia’s national biosecurity is critical for our food, beverage and tourism sectors. We have seen Foot and Mouth outbreaks in other countries and what it has done to their economies,” said Mr David Jochinke, VFF President.

“We know 283 illegal pork products were detected at the border in a two week period. Of these, 40 were infected with African swine fever and three with Foot and Mouth Disease. We only need one infected product to go undetected to jeopardise our whole industry.

“We need more investment in Federal and State biosecurity controls and greater deterrence through harsher penalties for deliberate breaches of our import standards. We also need more education and tougher sanctions for travellers entering the country.

“The current penalties are no more than a slap on the wrist. They are an insult to Australia’s food, beverage, and tourism sectors when a Foot and Mouth outbreak could cost Australia close to \$50 billion over ten years,” said Mr Jochinke.

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About the VFF

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is dedicated to representing the interests of farmers and making a positive difference to their businesses and communities. We strive to create an environment for our members, our farmers, that enables profitable, safe, sustainable production to ensure an enduring social licence in a community that respects and values the sector.