

Media Release



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Devastating disease on Australia's doorstep

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) supports the Federal Government's commitment to strengthen biosecurity enforcement at Australia's borders and encourages further investment in public awareness campaigns and biosecurity controls given the devastating outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) occurring across Asia.

"African swine fever is on Australia's doorstep, less than 700km from our boarder in East Timor. It is a highly infectious, contagious and fatal pig disease without any vaccines or treatment and it has already killed hundreds of millions of pigs in Asia," said Mr Tim Kingma, VFF Pig Group President.

"If ASF entered Australia, it would be absolutely devastating to our vibrant \$1 billion pork industry. It would threaten the lives of millions of Australian pigs and the livelihoods of Australia's pork producers.

"It is absolutely critical that we maintain the strictest biosecurity controls at our borders. The Federal Government is stepping-up biosecurity controls in our international airports; including spot checks of travellers from disease-affected countries and biosecurity detector dogs.

"To protect Australia's food security, we encourage higher penalties and stringent enforcement for travellers attempting to smuggle in any banned agricultural products. We also need domestic and international public awareness campaigns targeted at high-risk travellers.

"We have witnessed firsthand around the globe the catastrophic impact of pests and diseases on agricultural industries, including foot-and-mouth disease, avian influenza, white-spot disease on prawns, and the equine Hendra virus.

"Investing in the most advanced technologies, training staff, and educating travellers will help defend against disease, and it will protect all of our agricultural industries, native ecosystems, and human health against the myriad of diseases that threaten us now and into the future," said Mr Kingma.

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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.

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