

Important Changes to Equine Exotic Disease Control

The NZ Equine Health Association is seeking to represent the equine industry under in a Government Industry Agreement (GIA), and is inviting feedback on the proposal.

The Government Industry Agreement (GIA) on Biosecurity Readiness and Response offers the equine industry more certainty that responses to important equine diseases will be undertaken and the opportunity to be more involved in biosecurity decision making, but with this responsibility comes a share of the costs for readiness and response activities.

Currently the government funds and makes most of the decisions on equine biosecurity activities. This can result in a disjointed approach, with government not getting a realistic picture of the industry's biosecurity priorities, and the allocation of resources that is not aligned with our best interests.

This GIA can improve the situation. Industries that sign up to it will gain a direct say in managing biosecurity risks that affect their domains. They will share, with MPI, decision making, costs, and responsibility in preparing for and responding to biosecurity incursions. They will have more certainty that high priority risks are being addressed and that all parties will have incentives to invest in preparedness.

How does the GIA work?

Under the GIA, industry organisations and MPI will sign a Deed that formally establishes the biosecurity partnership to best prepare for and effectively respond to biosecurity risks.

The Deed sets the ground rules for minimum commitments, joint decision making and shared resourcing. It provides for a biosecurity forum for all signatories, to be held twice a year for discussions on the whole biosecurity system. Industry signatories will also be able to meet annually, or as otherwise agreed with MPI, to discuss their relevant issues.

Having signed the Deed, industry organisation and MPI will explore the biosecurity risks and development priorities that represent business risks and/or opportunities. Partners will discuss actions that they each can take across the wider biosecurity system (pre border and border control, pest management, as well as readiness and response) to improve biosecurity outcomes.

During active biosecurity responses, MPI and affected industry signatories will be partners through the process, with shared decision-making responsibilities.

Partners may also agree Operational Agreements. These are practical documents that describe arrangements to achieve outcomes related to:

- Specific unwanted organisms
- Groups of unwanted organisms
- Activities that improve overall biosecurity readiness and/or response.

Cost sharing

Under GIA, signatory industries will be expected to meet some of the costs for readiness and

response activities. Their share of the cost will be determined using the proportion of public benefit relative to the total benefit to the industry. However the Government has committed to funding a minimum of 50% of the cost of prioritised readiness and response activities. Where two or more industries benefit from a readiness activity or response, the industry portion of the costs will be shared between them.

As an incentive for early signatories who sign within three years of the Deed being authorised, MPI will cover 100% of response costs and a high proportion of readiness costs within this three year period.

Signing up to GIA does not commit industry to funding readiness programmes or response actions; and numerous decision points are in place to ensure that all parties agree to costs incurred under the response plan.

- Funding for readiness programmes must be agreed before the programmes begin.
- The decision to initiate a biosecurity response will be made by consensus, meaning industry can say “no” to a response if they do not feel this is worth pursuing.
- Industry can set a “fiscal cap” for a response, to limit how much they spend on a response.

Who is representing the Equine industry for the Biosecurity GIA?

Two decades ago the New Zealand Equine Health Association was given the mandate of liaising with Government on equine welfare, health and biosecurity matters. During 2012 NZEHA renewed its mandate. NZEHA has been working alongside all the other primary industries in the preparation of the GIA Deed and with MPI in the development of our first Operational Agreement for the higher likelihood equine pests Equine influenza, Contagious Equine Metritis, Equine infectious anaemia and Equine viral arteritis.

How will NZEHA communicate to the industry?

NZEHA’s prime means of communicating with industry is via committee members reporting to their parent bodies. Where equine organisations don’t have a representative on the committee they have a number of options:

- Ask an existing representative to also represent them
- Attend the NZEHA meetings as observers
- Have their Chair be copied the minutes of NZEHA meetings

More information about GIA

If you would like to know more about the Biosecurity GIA please visit:

<http://www.gia.org.nz/About>. This page describes GIA and provides answers to a number of questions that you may have.

Have your say

MPI and NZEHA strongly encourage the equine sector to participate in the GIA process and there

are still plenty of opportunities for further input. A draft Operational Agreement for equine disease is being produced and will be communicated with industry through the nominated representatives. If you have any queries or comments please contact NZEHA via your representative at NZ Thoroughbred Racing, Simon Cooper simon.cooper@nzh racing.co.nz or the Executive Advisor NZEHA, Dr Trish Pearce by email pearce.patricia@gmail.com or phone 0275062091.

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