

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates May 2013  
**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 82**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division

**Topic:** Bovine Johne's Disease Funding

**Proof Hansard page:** 22 (27/05/2013)

**Senator BACK asked:**

**Senator BACK:** I wonder is it possible to take on notice and advise the committee the amount of funding over the last 10 years that has actually been expended by the various agencies, Animal Health Australia, industry bodies, the federal government, in terms of Bovine Johne's. Secondly, as part of that on notice would it be possible to identify where those funds have been allocated? Is that possible to achieve that?

**Dr Biddle:** I do not think we would be able to necessarily provide information about the industry expenditure to attend committees and all those things, but we would be able to provide information about government and AHA with the cooperation of AHA.

**Answer:**

Animal Health Australia (AHA) has spent a total of \$9 495 189 between 1 July 2003 and 30 April 2013 on Bovine Johne's Disease management. The funding for this AHA special program is entirely derived from industry levies. A table showing allocation of that expenditure over each of these ten years is attached.

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**Question:** 82 (continued)

<b>Animal Health Australia</b>	<b>2012/(Apr)2013</b>	<b>2011/2012</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2007/2008</b>	<b>2006/2007</b>	<b>2005/2006</b>	<b>2004/2005</b>	<b>2003/2004</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>BJD Expenditure Summary</b>											
Program Management & Admin	\$ 128,045	\$ 57,511	\$ 44,771	\$ 119,569	\$ 363,927	\$ 228,551	\$ 126,681	\$ 84,412	\$ 109,504		<b>\$ 1,262,972</b>
Financial & Non Financial Assistance	\$ 711,665	\$ 659,963	\$ 586,555	\$ 679,156	\$ 813,356	\$ 701,857	\$ 934,360	\$ 688,789	\$ 326,141	\$ 10,904	<b>\$ 6,112,746</b>
Surveillance	\$ 17,332	\$ 2,880	\$ 13,264		\$ 77		\$ 22,506	\$ 2	\$ 2,895		<b>\$ 58,956</b>
Communications	\$ 2,543	\$ 11,479	\$ 9,452	\$ 3,278	\$ 89,581	\$ 81,523	\$ 2,569	\$ 33,893	\$ 2,646		<b>\$ 236,964</b>
Testing Subsidy		\$ 65,371	\$ 31,577	\$ 117,435	\$ 32,410	\$ 70,154	\$ 97,987	\$ 77,863	\$ 66,947		<b>\$ 559,745</b>
Research & Diagnostic	\$ 236,515	\$ 505,879	\$ 72,901	\$ 145,801		\$ 288,609	\$ 11,286	\$ 2,816		\$ 1	<b>\$ 1,263,807</b>
Other						\$ 15	\$ 10	\$ 3			<b>\$ 28</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,096,100</b>	<b>\$ 1,303,083</b>	<b>\$ 758,519</b>	<b>\$ 1,065,239</b>	<b>\$ 1,299,351</b>	<b>\$ 1,370,694</b>	<b>\$ 1,195,390</b>	<b>\$ 887,775</b>	<b>\$ 508,134</b>	<b>\$ 10,905</b>	<b>\$ 9,495,189</b>

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**Question: 83**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division

**Topic:** AUSVETPLAN for Lyssavirus

**Proof Hansard page:** 24 (27/05/2013)

**Senator RHIANNON asked:**

**Senator RHIANNON:** When do you anticipate that the public would see the AUSVETPLAN for lyssavirus?

**Dr Biddle:** There is a currently available plan. The revised plan that would be publically available after it is endorsed in the usual way through the ministerial council processes.

**Senator RHIANNON:** Can you give us a time line of when we can anticipate getting to that point?

**Dr Biddle:** I would have to take that on notice. It may be quite a number of months or longer.

**Answer:**

Please refer to Question on Notice 102 (Animal Health Australia) from the Budget Estimates hearing in May 2013.

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**Question:** 84

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division

**Topic:** Queensland Cattle Industry

**Proof Hansard page:** 31-32 (27/05/2013)

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

**Senator SIEWERT:** In terms of the various claims and counterclaims being made about what is happening in the course of the Queensland situation, has the department done an assessment of how much stock is there as a result of the export restrictions? How much stock was carried over?

**Mr Glyde:** Senator, we have not done an assessment of that nature in terms of what are the various sources of the problem of oversupply of animals in that particular region. What we have relied on is the advice from QDAFF and AgForce who estimate that around 300 million head of cattle are affected by drought conditions in the region. Sorry, three million. Three million head of cattle are affected by drought conditions. We have been relying on those two organisations to keep us up to date in relation to the animal welfare issues. The advice from those two institutions is that they could not confirm any reports of livestock being shot on farm as of close of business last Friday.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** They will not be able to afford the bullets for a start.

**Mr Glyde:** I am really just trying to get across that we are monitoring the information that we can get from our Queensland colleagues.

**Senator SIEWERT:** When did you first start engaging with the Queensland department around this issue?

**Mr Glyde:** I will have to take that on notice because there are a number of different parts of the department that would have been involved in this. There is the animal welfare side, clearly, but also the agriculture productivity division that would be involved in these issues that have been coming forward for some time, as the minister said. I cannot give you an exact answer to that, Senator.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Could you take that on notice?

**Mr Glyde:** Sure.

**Answer:**

Officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry first contacted the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry for information about the welfare of livestock in drought declared areas of Queensland on 21 May 2013.

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**Question: 85**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division

**Topic:** Queensland cattle situation timeline

**Proof Hansard page:** 32 (27/05/2013)

**Senator SIEWERT asked:**

**Senator SIEWERT:** What I am trying to establish is the process from when you first began talking to Queensland and when Queensland started realising they were going to need to help the situation. Was there contact from DAFF to Queensland after the fires when it became apparent that there was going to be feed shortages and cattle were going to be in trouble? Can we have a timeline mapped out for contacts between Queensland and DAFF?

**Mr Glyde:** Yes. This is in relation to the evolution of this whole circumstance, not just the national parks.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Yes, not just the national parks. I am looking at the broader issue of when they were looking at and trying to seek assistance, et cetera, and how it rolled out. Can you give us that timeline?

**Mr Glyde:** Yes. I will have to take that on notice obviously to give you that timeline. Also, for the record, we should point out that there are some federal government programs available for people in difficulties at the moment. They are the Transitional Farm Family Payment scheme and the Rural Financial Counselling Service. They are two standing programs that exist for farm families in difficulties and they would apply in this particular circumstance.

**Senator SIEWERT:** Can we take that on notice, for when we get to those areas on the program, that we want to ask questions about timelines and about what discussions have been held with Queensland, the department and the government—obviously, we will not name individuals—and whether there have been any applications?

**Mr Glyde:** Yes.

**Answer:**

Officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry contacted the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QDAFF) for information about the welfare of livestock in drought declared areas of Queensland on 21, 22, 24 and 27 May 2013.

QDAFF officers indicated that cattle movement and sales had increased and prices fallen, that there were reports of some weaker stock being marketed and that if producers were forced to transport weak stock to a depressed market, there was the possibility that animals may need to be euthanased. No specific details of animal welfare incidents were provided.

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**Question: 86**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division

**Topic:** Queensland cattle situation – travel by DAFF officers

**Proof Hansard page:** 33 (27/05/2013)

**Senator IAN MACDONALD asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** Have the people in your department gone to Queensland?

**Mr Metcalfe:** I can check on that, Senator. It would be some hundreds mainly undertaking biosecurity activity. It is something that we do not have as a department, and it is an interesting point to raise. We do not have an independent capability of understanding what is happening in some of the important areas of Australian agriculture. We rely upon state government departments to provide that information, or national bodies, or other bodies to provide that information to us.

**Answer:**

No departmental officers have travelled to Queensland to assess livestock welfare.

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**Question: 87**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division

**Topic:** Starving Cattle in Queensland

**Proof Hansard page:** 45 (27/05/2013)

**Senator IAN MACDONALD asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** Following me raising the question with the minister last Thursday week about the impending disaster with starving cattle, could you let us know what actions the department has been asked to take in relation to that and what inquiries you have made regarding the whole issue following my raising it Thursday week ago the minister?

**Answer:**

Refer to the answer to Question on Notice 85 (Biosecurity Animal Division) from the Budget Estimates hearing in May 2013.

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**Question: 88**

**Division/Agency:** Biosecurity Animal Division  
**Topic:** AQIS Bovine Johne's Disease (BJD) Protocol  
**Proof Hansard page:** 69 (27/05/2013)

**Senator IAN MACDONALD asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** Let me ask the question. If this were raised on behalf of someone, could the department address the issue there? They allegedly lost \$2 million out of it. It is an Indigenous property—an Indigenous freehold property, I might say—that they have owned for 20 or 30 years. It is one of the exemplary cattle stations in the Gulf. They have been hit by the live cattle ban, droughts, fires and then this BJD protocol.

**Senator Ludwig:** We can reverse it and say that you have raised the issue—because you can directly raise it in estimates, obviously. You want us to have a look at the state of a protocol that was provided by the department. We will take it on notice and have a look at that.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** Thank you. That is fantastic. I will ask the question that you suggest. Take that as being my question on notice.

**Mr Metcalfe:** We will certainly look into it and let you what we can.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** It is very serious. I would be very surprised if they have not raised it prior to this.

**Mr Metcalfe:** We are a big department. No-one here is aware of it. That is not to say that we do not know about it, but we will check and come back to you on notice.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD:** Thank you very much for that. The minister is clearly aware of the property, but, regardless of which property it is, it is a very serious thing. I have not explained it terribly well, but it is apparently a backdating of a quarantine protocol that they suggest has affected them very badly and is simply unfair.

**Answer:**

In December 2012, an exporter from the property in question approached the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) seeking advice on exporting slaughter cattle to Malaysia. The exporter raised with DAFF that the Malaysian protocol requires the herd to have been clinically free of Bovine Johne's Disease (BJD) for two years.

DAFF advised the exporter that while movement restrictions for BJD imposed by Queensland authorities apply to the property, DAFF is unable to provide the certification for export that is required by Malaysia's authorities until those quarantine restrictions have been lifted. It was pointed out that until the property is investigated and cleared, DAFF cannot be confident that there are no clinical cases on the property.

DAFF's advice to the exporter is consistent with the advice that was provided on 6 December 2012 from the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer to State and Territory Chief Veterinary Officers, and subsequently to the live export industry, including as follows:



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*Around thirty countries that receive slaughter, feeder or breeder animals from Australia have health requirements which for example include property of origin freedom from clinical BJD. There are also a number of countries that also have BJD requirements for bovine genetic material. DAFF certifies to property of origin clauses for notifiable diseases including BJD based on the advice provided by state jurisdictions. These property of origin clauses may vary in wording for these different countries (so it is not always straight forward).*

*Our advice is that any property under quarantine, movement restrictions for BJD or which otherwise does not comply with the importing country requirements for BJD are ineligible to provide cattle for these sensitive markets. Properties that are under restrictions for BJD need to have these restrictions removed before we could be in a position to possibly certify to property of origin related BJD clauses (noting that some countries require that there is a time period for property freedom that may also need to be met).*