The current situation

The policy essentially sets the baseline for MAF involvement in responses. MAF’s biosecurity interests extend beyond primary production— it is charged with protecting the economy, environment, human health, and our whole way of life from biosecurity risks. This requires hard choices about how limited resources are allocated. And while some industries already invest significantly in surveillance and incursion related activities, they too face resource constraints and decisions over priorities.

We are therefore keen to explore an alternative whereby the Crown and industry organisations can enter into agreements for joint decision-making and resourcing. The approach introduced in this pamphlet would give industry more say in which pests and diseases we should plan for, including how to mitigate the potential impacts of, and better respond to, pests and diseases of common concern.

Submissions process

Submissions are welcome from all interested parties on any aspect of the proposed framework for joint Government-industry agreements.

In particular, we welcome comments on:
- your thoughts on the rationale behind each suggestion in the paper;
- whether there are any other feasible options that you think should be considered; and
- what would be the likely positive and negative impacts on your organisation for each suggestion.

The closing date for submissions is Friday 14 December 2007.

Please address submissions to:
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Disclaimer:
The discussion paper does not necessarily represent the views of individual members of the joint MAF-industry working group, their organisations, or the Government.

RESPONDING TO PESTS AND DISEASES

One of the greatest risks to New Zealand’s primary production sector is the threat of new pests or diseases causing loss and damage to terrestrial or aquatic animals and plants, or impacting on our ability to access overseas markets

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) will continue to develop effective border measures and enforce them rigorously. Importers must comply with border measures and pay for clearance of their goods at the border.

That said, New Zealand’s primary production industries rely on international trade and the rules around it. There is no such thing as “zero risk” at the border. Border measures can only be imposed to the extent necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health on the basis of scientific information.

MAF is committed to responding to pests and diseases that are found here that will have nationally significant impacts. But we can improve by working more closely with others to better manage introductions of pests and diseases.

MAF is currently revising its policy, tools and procedures for preparing for and responding to pests and diseases. The policy sets out what the Crown will do and what people can expect of responses to pests and diseases. The focus of the policy is on roles and decision-making, using a consistent approach across all sectors, no matter how big or small the response may be.

A Joint Industry and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Public Discussion Paper

September 2007
A NEW APPROACH TO BIOSECURITY THREATS

A group of representatives from primary production sectors and MAF have been working for over two years on new ways for Government and industries to work together to more effectively address biosecurity threats.

A public discussion paper has been prepared that outlines a new framework for joint decision-making and resourcing for readiness and incursion responses that directly impact on primary production industries.

The discussion paper describes MAF’s current approach to incursion management, explains why a new framework is desirable, and outlines the proposed framework and its guiding principles.

INTERESTED IN READING MORE?
The public discussion paper is available electronically at:

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY FOR BETTER BIOSECURITY OUTCOMES

The approach outlined in the discussion paper could offer benefits over the current system by getting MAF and industry parties to work together before a crisis arises. Agreeing in advance to strategic roles and responsibilities will facilitate swift and effective responses to any incursion.

By sharing resources and making joint decisions about how best to prepare for and respond to pests and diseases, MAF and primary production industries could ensure that this work becomes proactive rather than reactive.

At its heart, the proposed framework involves Government and industries coming together to decide:

- which pests and diseases of interest to industry will trigger responses;
- what is required to be ready for a pest or disease incursion;
- how costs will be shared (based on relative public and private benefits); and
- how to make rapid, joint decisions for incursion responses if these pests and diseases do arrive.

The new framework should result in:

- More effective and efficient investment of limited resources, due to the greater examination of costs and benefits and the use of the best combination of Government and industry resources.
- Clear incentives for all parties to invest appropriately in readiness activities such as surveillance and on-farm biosecurity plans.
- Greater certainty for all parties about the likely nature of any particular response and resource sharing arrangements that would apply.

WHO CAN BE INVOLVED AND HOW

Joint Government-industry agreements could be developed with any willing primary production organisation that has a sufficient mandate to represent their industry.

The framework is based on the idea that those directly benefiting from an activity should be involved in decision-making and in return, contribute to the direct costs of that activity.

The direct beneficiaries of readiness and response activities can include industries and the Crown.

All parties to a joint Government-industry agreement would devote resources to negotiating and implementing such an agreement. The parties would need to first agree on cost share arrangements for particular pests and diseases.

This represents a major shift in culture – from one of MAF being the decision-maker and consulting industry, to one of joint decision-making and resourcing by consensus.