



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT  
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY  
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MC22-007770

Ms Anne Gething  
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Dear Ms Gething

Thank you for your correspondence of 5 September 2022 concerning foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Indonesia and Australia's Biosecurity response to this outbreak. I would like to apologise for the delay in my response.

In direct response to the emergence and spread of FMD to Bali, the Albanese Government has strengthened biosecurity measures to protect Australia from an FMD incursion, including:

- a ban has been placed on the importation of meat products for personal use from all countries which are not recognised by Australia as FMD free
- heightened border activities, including new biosecurity officers in airports and mail centres, wider screening of passengers, luggage, parcels and postage in airports and mail centres
- increased vigilance across all flights arriving from Indonesia, including Bali
- informing travellers and the public of FMD risk and their biosecurity responsibilities, including through specific FMD advice on every inbound plane from Indonesia
- relocation of biosecurity detector dogs to key airports
- deployment of sanitation foot mats in Australia's international airports
- a review of import permits for products from Indonesia that may carry FMD and a suspension of those of concern
- providing assistance to Indonesia to help control the spread of FMD through the region. Assistance includes advice from Australian technical experts, supply of vaccines, protective equipment and disinfectants, and training of staff on the ground and offers of financial support. This is in addition to assistance already being provided to combat lumpy skin disease, that was recently detected in Sumatra.

To ensure the government is doing everything possible to prepare for a potential animal disease incursion, I announced the establishment of an Exotic Animal Diseases Joint Taskforce on 4 August 2022. The Joint Taskforce, which was convened by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Emergency Management Australia, delivered a report directly to me on 5 September 2022.

While it found that Australia's Emergency Animal Disease system is sound it outlined 14 recommendations for consideration to ensure that Australia is better prepared should there be an incursion of an exotic disease like FMD or LSD. This report is available publicly on the department's website at [agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/emergency/exotic-animal-disease-preparedness-report](http://agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/emergency/exotic-animal-disease-preparedness-report).

As you may be aware, there is no threat to human health or food safety from this disease, but I recognise it would be devastating to our livestock industry if it were to reach our shores.

For that reason, the government will continue to take advice from biosecurity experts and will introduce any further practical measures that will genuinely reduce the risk of FMD entering Australia.

All livestock owners should be aware of the signs of FMD (please see [agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/fmd/livestockproducers](http://agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/fmd/livestockproducers) for a guide) and immediately report any signs to a local veterinarian or the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline on 1800 675 888.

We will also continue to remind state and territory governments and the travelling public of their obligations, noting that biosecurity is a shared responsibility. Anyone who has had contact with livestock or visited a rural area in Indonesia is advised to avoid contact with Australian livestock or farms for 7 days after return. The government will continue surveillance activities and will prosecute breaches of biosecurity rules to the full extent of the law.

For more information visit [agriculture.gov.au/footandmouthdisease](http://agriculture.gov.au/footandmouthdisease).

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely



MURRAY WATT

14 / 10 / 2022