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Will Australia's biosecurity standards survive the free trade era?

Biosecurity is at the forefront of Australia's success as an agricultural exporter. Australia has an enviable biosecurity record due to investment in research, development and biosecurity infrastructure. However, as agricultural trade barriers fall and tourism and travel increases, there is an increased risk of biosecurity breaches in Australia, and these could have a devastating economic impact.

The Australian Farm Institute asked a range of industry representatives and academics to provide their views on whether Australia's biosecurity system is adequate for future challenges, and what need to be done to make sure it will withstand future challenges.

"As Australian agriculture increasingly targets premium markets, our national biosecurity standards are one of our strongest selling points, but also our biggest potential liability if we get it wrong. Trade disruption due to a biosecurity incident would have a much bigger economic impact if these premium markets were suddenly shut down." Said Mick Keogh, Executive Director of the Australian Farm Institute.

The papers included in this edition of the *Farm Policy Journal* highlight the complexity of this topic, and the need for policy-makers to have a constant focus on it.

Articles included in the Spring 2016 Journal:

- 'Trade Liberalisation and Australian Biosecurity: Opportunities and Challenges under the "Shared Responsibility" Approach', by Dr Carol Richards, Queensland University of Technology, and Assoc Prof Vaughan Higgins, Charles Sturt University
- 'Do Free Trade Agreements Risk Australia's High Biosecurity Standards?', by Kathleen Plowman and Dr Ian Langstaff, Animal Health Australia
- 'Where there is Export Opportunity there is Always a Biosecurity Risk - Is Australian Horticulture Ready for Both?', by Tania Chapman, Chair of Voice of Horticulture
- 'Pandora's Box and the Level Playing Field: Food Safety and Regulations', by David Adamson, Queensland University of Technology
- 'Can Australia's Biosecurity Standards Survive in the Free Trade Era?', by Tony Mahar, CEO of National Farmers' Federation

The Spring 2016 quarter *Farm Policy Journal* is available online at the Australian Farm Institute website www.farminstitute.org.au or by phoning (02) 9690 1388.

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