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MEDIA RELEASE

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EXERCISE PROVES ABILITY TO TRACK EXOTIC DISEASE OUTBREAK

The state's biosecurity measures have performed well during a major livestock tracing exercise which simulated an outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

'Exercise Tuckerbox', a desktop simulation, also tested the effectiveness of livestock identification systems, comparing individual electronic identification for cattle against the mob-based ear tag system for sheep.

"Foot and mouth disease poses a \$13 billion risk to the Australian agricultural sector and could cripple the livelihoods of the State's farmers," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"Exercise Tuckerbox demonstrated the speed and effectiveness of our current livestock traceability systems to respond to a disease emergency with all animals traced within 12 hours, which is half the time required by the National Livestock Traceability Performance Standards.

"The success of the exercise suggests there is no need to move to a radio frequency identification system for sheep traded on the domestic market as long as producers ensure all sheep are tagged and accompanied by the appropriate National Vendor Declaration forms and documentation," Ms Hodgkinson said.

Exercise Tuckerbox is part of the NSW Government's program to defend the economy, environment and community against the negative impacts of animal and plant pests, weeds and diseases.

It is part of a suite of biosecurity measures which include the recent opening of Australia's most modern biosecurity laboratory at Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute which gives NSW the capacity to diagnose multiple exotic and emerging plant and animal diseases.

Exercise Tuckerbox traced over 421,000 sheep and cattle to nearly 2,300 properties, saleyards and abattoirs throughout NSW and in other states in less than 12 hours.

The exercise tested and compared the mob-based tracing system for sheep and goats with individual electronic identification for cattle using the NLIS database and found both systems were highly effective and met the national tracing performance standards.

Exercise Tuckerbox was conducted by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and the Livestock Health and Pest Authorities.

NOTE: This was a simulation exercise only. There was no actual exotic disease alert or outbreak.

Snapshot of Exercise Tuckerbox:

- Traced 181,000 cattle and 240,000 sheep to 2,050 properties, 47 saleyards and abattoirs.
- Animals were tracked to Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT.
- Using the NLIS database, tracing was completed with the equivalent of 7 people within 12 hours, well within the 24 hours required by national tracing standards.

Five Facts about Foot and Mouth Disease:

- Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is NOT present in Australia.
- FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that affects cloven-hooved animals such as pigs, cattle, sheep, goats and deer. It does not affect humans, horses, or companion animals such as dogs and cats.
- Strict quarantine measures are in place in Australia to prevent entry of the disease through preventing animals and product imports which may host the virus.
- The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) estimated losses from an FMD outbreak in Australia could range from \$AUD 7.1 billion for a small, three month outbreak to \$AUD 16 billion for a large, 12-month outbreak.
- Major FMD outbreaks in Japan and South Korea in 2010-2011 incurred costs of approximately US \$2.74 billion and US \$2.7 billion respectively.

Sheep Saleyards involved in Exercise Tuckerbox:

- Cootamundra
- Corowa
- Cooma
- Forbes
- Wagga Wagga

Cattle Saleyards involved in Exercise Tuckerbox:

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| • Armidale | • Gloucester | • Narrabri |
| • Camden | • Grafton | • Nowra |
| • Carcoar | • Gunnedah | • Pambula |
| • Coonamble | • Inverell | • Scone |
| • Cowra | • Kempsey | • Singleton |
| • Denman | • Lismore | • Tamworth |
| • Dorrigo | • Macksville | • Taree |
| • Dubbo | • Maitland | • Wagga Wagga |
| • Dunedoo | • Moree | • Wauchope |
| • Forbes | • Moss Vale | • Wollombi |
| • Glen Innes | • Mudgee | • Young |