

## Exercise APOLLO frequently asked questions

### 1. What is involved in hosting an emergency response exercise?

If there is an outbreak of an emergency exotic plant or animal disease or pest in WA the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA) would lead the response within Hazard Management Agency statutory requirements. This is a core function of the department.

In 2015, DAFWA formed a steering group and planning team to bring together Exercise APOLLO. Preparation work has been ongoing over the past 12 months.

The planning team includes representatives from DAFWA, Animal Health Australia, the Federal Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and representatives from agriculture departments in other States.

More than 100 DAFWA staff have undertaken accredited emergency management training, and Exercise APOLLO will enable them to practice their new skillset in a realistic environment.

There has also been significant engagement with the local livestock industry, and several representatives from relevant livestock bodies, WAFarmers and Pastoralists and Graziers Association of Western Australia will take part in the exercise in specialist adviser and industry liaison officer roles.

Participants will work on a simulated emergency animal disease outbreak, with the exercise commencing on day six of the simulated response.

State and Local Co-ordination Centres will be activated. An Exercise Co-ordination Control Centre will be established to facilitate and evaluate the exercise, this does not occur in a real time emergency response.

Exercise APOLLO builds on the work undertaken as part of Exercise ODYSSEUS in 2014 which



was a nation-wide exercise simulating the implementation of a livestock standstill.

Exercise APOLLO is part of DAFWA's \$20 million Boosting Biosecurity Defences project funded by the State Government's Royalties for Regions initiative.

### 2. Where and when will Exercise APOLLO be held?

Exercise APOLLO will be held over three days from 17 to 19 May in Bunbury.

Co-ordination Centres are being established in the offices of DAFWA, Department of Parks and Wildlife, and Department of Emergency Services.

### 3. How many people will be involved in Exercise APOLLO?

Exercise APOLLO will involve approximately 150 active participants from local, State and Federal government agencies and industry working together on the response.

Including visitors and observers, there will be approximately 180 people involved over the three days.

### 4. What does DAFWA hope to achieve out of Exercise APOLLO?

Exercise APOLLO is part of the Department of Agriculture and Food's commitment to building capacity in biosecurity emergency response and recovery in WA.

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The exercise will enhance DAFWA's capability, capacity and preparedness, together with industry, to respond to an emergency animal disease outbreak. This activity will have flow on benefits for the management of future animal and plant pest and disease emergencies.

DAFWA will be assessing and evaluating a number of operating systems, plans and procedures to ensure the agency and industry are prepared for a real-time incident.

Learnings from Exercise APOLLO will enable DAFWA and industry to continue to build on preparedness in a shared responsibility capacity.

## 5. Why is an emergency preparedness exercise like this necessary?

If there was an outbreak of an emergency exotic plant or animal disease or pest in WA, the Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia (DAFWA) would lead all agencies in a response. This is a core function of the department.

Exercises such as APOLLO enable agencies and industry to enhance awareness of roles and responsibilities, and assess their preparedness, capability and capacity to respond to a real time incident. Exercises are invaluable in enabling participants to work through procedures and systems in a simulated live situation.

## 6. How much has it cost for the Department of Agriculture and Food to run Exercise APOLLO?

Emergency response is a core activity for DAFWA. Emergency preparedness activities are being funded as part of the Boosting Biosecurity Defences project funded through Royalties for Regions. A total budget of \$600 000 has been allocated for all activities.

The budget for Exercise APOLLO is approximately \$230 000 which includes direct costs for planning, implementation and evaluation. Considerable in-kind support has also been provided by DAFWA to bring this together. Animal Health Australia, industry, other jurisdictions and WA government departments are also contributing to the success of this exercise, either directly or indirectly.

The department is also investing a further \$1.2 million over three years in emergency response

training for staff (2005/16 – 2017/18). This training is also being funded through Royalties for Regions.

This investment in preparedness will help protect the future of Western Australian agribusiness. Preparedness is essential to ensuring that DAFWA, the State and industry are well prepared to effectively respond to biosecurity incidents in Western Australia in order to protect our world class agriculture sector and ensure ongoing market access.

The quicker a disease is detected, the sooner the spread can be stopped and costs can be reduced.

For example, a detection of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) would result in immediate closure of export markets for Australia's livestock and livestock products. Trade restrictions would not be lifted until after the disease was eradicated.

FMD would not only affect trade; there would be flow-on effects in communities, including job losses, business closures, and social and mental health stress.

Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) estimates the cost to eradicate FMD in Australia over 10 years would be \$52 billion.

## 7. What other agencies are involved in Exercise APOLLO?

There are a number of local, State and Federal government agencies and industry bodies involved in Exercise APOLLO, including the WA Government agencies of Police, Health, Environment and Main Roads, and representatives from agriculture agencies from Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. There will also be a number of representatives from WA livestock industries and from Animal Health Australia.

## 8. Has an exercise like this taken place in Bunbury before?

DAFWA has not previously hosted a large scale exercise in Bunbury. However, DAFWA co-ordinated Exercise Wild West, a large, functional exercise similar to Exercise APOLLO, in Perth in 2006. Exercise Wild West was also based on a simulated outbreak of a livestock animal disease.