



MEDIA RELEASE

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Katter engages with industry after fed biosecurity briefing on cattle biosecurity risk

BOB Katter, Member for Kennedy has encouraged graziers and farmers to ramp up on-farm biosecurity while the Government continues to roll out biosecurity efforts at airports in response to the outbreak of Lumpy Skin Disease or Foot and Mouth Disease in Indonesia and Bali which would have dire consequences on their trade.

With Lumpy Skin Disease and Foot and Mouth Disease on Australia's doorstep, Kennedy MP, Bob Katter sought a briefing from the Federal Department of Agriculture this week regarding biosecurity prevention efforts.

He hit the phones yesterday seeking feedback, opinion, and advice of representatives of the livestock industry in the Kennedy Electorate and has shared this feedback with the Minister for Agriculture and Department of Agriculture for consideration.

Suggestions provided within the report included working with Indonesian counterparts to prioritise vaccination in areas of high tourism, mandatory bag searches for all returning passengers, foot baths upon arrival, an updated declaration card featuring the question 'Have you been in Bali in the last six months?', and an on-farm ban period of two weeks upon return from infected areas.

Mr Katter said, "I've spoken to a dozen graziers as well as meat and livestock industry associations to understand what it is that they need from Government. They all agree that the risk is very, very serious and that biosecurity efforts need to be ramped up, particularly at all airports with returning passengers from Indonesia and Bali."

Mr Katter said most of the local industry understood the concerns highlighted around travel bans and the consequential trade impacts, but most were supportive of increased presence at all airports that receive passengers from Indonesia and Bali, not just at Cairns and Darwin as it is currently.

"These people are returning from a place that has a very serious disease. Lumpy Skin is mainly carried by mosquitos and biting insects whereas Foot and Mouth is spread from animal to animal and human to animal – both could wipe out our cattle and livestock industry. The farmers tell me they hold serious concerns about the produce coming in from these countries and mandatory bag searches must be ramped up immediately at all airports around the country that have planes coming in from Indonesia and Bali.

"Anyone that visits Bali must also dip their shoes when they get off the airplane into an antiseptic footbath and an idea was posed was that a two-week farm ban also be imposed on passengers returning."

BOB KATTER

Katter's Australian Party

Federal Member for Kennedy



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Mr Katter said farmers should be asking all visitors to their properties if they have been to Bali or Indonesia recently and take steps to enforce a farm biosecurity plan.

“We have public servants responsible for managing our borders who are so far removed from our way of life up here. The various cattlemen associations must be ready to sue these people for negligence if they fail to seriously take up these proposed prevention methods,” Mr Katter said.

Member for Hill, Shane Knuth said these two diseases posed a real threat to Australia and biosecurity measures needed to be in place years ago not just being thought of now.

“The reality is, if one case was to get into Australia the very real possibility of this spreading throughout the beef and dairy industry is huge.

“It could be easily brought in through produce and travelers returning from Bali or Indonesian countries which is why we need stricter security measures.

“If one feral pig was to contract these diseases it could spread throughout the country with the recent figures revealing more than 25 million feral pigs in Australia, we wouldn't be able to stop it.

“We don't want to be developing plans we want security measures in place, now, to prevent and stop these diseases from entering this country.

“The devastating cost to the industry could be up to \$80 billion alone if Foot and Mouth was found in Australia.”

-ENDS-

For more information or a comment from Bob Katter,
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