

LINKEDIN ARTICLE

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Strategic response to COVID-19

In a crisis, having a coordinated, methodical approach can make the difference – both in outcomes and confidence. The livestock export industry has been refining and practicing its crisis management planning over the past year, and it's paying off in this time of COVID-19.

LiveCorp, ALEC and MLA make up the industry's Strategic Response Group (SRG), which has been meeting regularly since early March to identify issues and strategies to ensure continuity of the trade.

The SRG is also running simulation exercises involving representatives from peak industry councils and the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, to workshop potential responses to scenarios related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Simulations allow participants to understand information requirements if the scenarios happen in reality, which stakeholders need to be involved and their likely roles, and what actions may resolve the issues and minimise their impact.

The industry's Incident Response Plan was reviewed, updated and tested last year, in recognition of the need for an immediate and effective response should a crisis occur, in order to maintain confidence in the industry from the regulator, industry stakeholders and the community.

Under the plan, the SRG's role is to set high-level, whole of industry objectives and ensure a coordinated response from all three organisations. For COVID-19, the SRG's strategic objectives are to:

1. Shape decisions made by Australian and in-market governments and supply chain companies, to maintain the status of the live export industry as an 'essential service' and prevent COVID-19 disrupting the trade.
2. Demonstrate that animal welfare, human health and wellbeing remain paramount as the live export industry continues to meet the food security objectives of all trading partners.
3. Develop and test scenarios such as rejection of a shipment, to more clearly define activities to support Objective 1.
4. Facilitate measures to support industry recovery.

The SRG will continue to meet, to review new information and refine its objectives and activities, as long as COVID-19 is affecting the business of livestock exports.

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