



**SENATOR THE HON MURRAY WATT
MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Communique - Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

13 July 2023

Perth

Commonwealth, state, and territory agriculture ministers met in Perth on Thursday 13 July 2023.

National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture

Gathering on Whadjuk land, Ministers endorsed the National Statement on Climate Change and Agriculture.

An Australian first, the national statement demonstrates agriculture ministers' strong commitment to work in partnership with our agricultural sector to ensure it achieves its full potential as a world-leading, climate-smart producer and exporter of food and fibre.

Ministers agreed that a climate-smart, sustainable agriculture sector will help make farming more productive and profitable, strengthen our rural communities, better protect our environment and increase access to international markets.

Ministers acknowledged the genuine collaboration between Commonwealth, state and territory governments and industry in developing a national statement that recognises the unique perspectives and positions of all jurisdictions.

Ministers also noted the case studies and the exceptional work already underway by industry.

Ministers agreed that building on these efforts, and continuing to invest in programs that drive research and adoption of climate-smart practices, particularly in the face of a changing climate, will be essential to Australia's farming future.

For more information on the statement visit this link <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/farm-food-drought/climatechange/national-statement-on-climate-change-and-agriculture>

Ministers shared information about work underway/planned in respective jurisdictions on initiatives to transition to lower emissions in agriculture.

Ministers noted the need to work together with industry to develop pathways that are ambitious and achievable – where we grow the value and sustainability of the sector, whilst reducing emissions and building carbon stores in the landscape.

National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023-2033

In another first, ministers have released the *National Agricultural Traceability Strategy 2023-2033*.

The strategy will guide a nationally coordinated approach to enhancing traceability for biosecurity, trade, and food safety outcomes.

The strategy focusses on addressing four challenges: data sharing and governance; better interactions between technology, regulation, and compliance; fair distribution of value in the supply chain and a consistent coordinated national effort with governments and industry in partnership.

Ministers noted we all have a role to play in effective traceability—it's a shared responsibility.

Agricultural traceability is critical to emergency response, and Australia's trade, economy, and prosperity.

A nationally harmonised agricultural traceability approach will enhance our already strong biosecurity and food safety track record.

For more information on the Strategy visit this link [National traceability - DAFF \(agriculture.gov.au\)](https://www.agriculture.gov.au/national-traceability-daff)

Animal welfare

Marking years of development and consideration by jurisdictions, ministers have today endorsed new Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry.

Implementation of the standards and guidelines including timeframes will take place at the state and territory level having regard to the specific operational environments of each jurisdiction.

Ministers noted cost of living and supply concerns and acknowledged that many consumers and major retailers have already commenced a transition away from conventional cages.

Ministers agreed that implementation will be reported through the Animal Welfare Task Group.

Red Imported Fire Ants

Ministers were briefed by Minister Furner on progress with the National Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program and work to continue the response plan and associated budget requirements.

Ministers noted that efforts to date have significantly slowed the spread of this significant threat to agriculture, biodiversity, public health and outdoor amenity, and that additional effort will be needed to achieve eradication targets in the future.

Ministers were unified on the need to continue eradication efforts and maintain momentum under a new response program.

Ministers committed to work within their jurisdictions to bring forward previously agreed future

year budget allocations to further support eradication, noting that many jurisdictions have already done so, while future funding arrangements are considered.

National Drought Agreement

Ministers approved the draft new National Drought Agreement, noting the method taken to draft the agreement is an excellent example of the collaborative approach which will help drive meaningful change over the term of the new agreement.

The new text is responsive to the recommendations of the 2022 NDA review and among other changes, it acknowledges the interests of First Nations peoples.

With the new draft agreement approved by ministers, public consultation will commence.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza

Ministers received an update on the global HPAI situation from Australia's Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Mark Schipp.

Australia is free of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), thanks to our location and strong biosecurity system.

The update raised awareness of the global situation and the importance of ongoing biosecurity vigilance amongst our domestic stakeholders.

Agricultural workforce

Ministers received an update on agricultural workforce matters and discussed the work of the Commonwealth's Agricultural Workforce Working Group and recent changes to the PALM scheme.

The Chair also updated ministers on current domestic and overseas workforce initiatives.

Ministers noted the impact of labour shortages on the sector and committed to working closely with industry and workforce providers to ensure domestic and overseas workforce initiatives are appropriate for the agriculture sector.

First Nations Agriculture Development

Ministers remain strongly committed to working with First Nations, including Land Councils, Indigenous landholders and Traditional Owners to sustainably develop the agriculture estate and creating significant economic and job opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

Agriculture Trade

Minister Watt briefed the meeting on recent developments regarding the EU free trade agreements and the ongoing effort to remove trade impediments with China.

Closing

Ministers thanked the Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, Western Australian Minister for Agriculture and Food, for hosting the face to face meeting, and noted the retirement and outstanding contribution of DAFF Secretary Andrew Metcalfe AO and noted the significant achievements of the forum today.

Next meeting

Ministers agreed to meet next virtually on Friday, 6 October 2023.

Ministerial attendees

- *Australian Government (Chair): Senator the Hon Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for Emergency Management*
 - *Australian Capital Territory: Rebecca Vassarotti, MLA, Minister for the Environment*
 - *New South Wales: Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales and Minister for Western New South Wales*
 - *Northern Territory: Hon Paul Kirby MLA, Minister for Agribusiness and Fisheries*
 - *Queensland: Hon Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries*
 - *South Australia: Hon Clare Scriven MLC, Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development*
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- *Tasmania: Hon Jo Palmer MLC, Minister for Primary Industries and Water*
- *Victoria: Hon Gayle Tierney MLC, Minister for Agriculture.*
- *Western Australia: Hon Jackie Jarvis MLC, Minister for Agriculture and Food*

ENDS

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