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EGG FARMER CEO HEADS TO JAPAN ON H5 STUDY MISSION

Egg Farmers of Australia CEO Melinda Hashimoto will head to Japan on a four-week mission to study how the country manages outbreaks of the deadly H5 bird flu.

Mrs Hashimoto was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship to the study how the land of the rising sun responds to the spread of H5 Avian Influenza.

During her Fellowship, Mrs Hashimoto will meet with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, academic researchers, poultry farmers and food safety experts involved in overseeing disease outbreaks.

H5 Avian Influenza is a highly contagious virus that infects poultry and in some cases humans. H5 is yet to appear in Australia, but authorities are bracing for its potential arrival.

The Churchill Fellowship provides Australians with a unique opportunity to “learn globally and inspire locally”, supporting innovation and knowledge exchange across industries.

Mrs Hashimoto said the threat of H5 was of concern to the Australian egg industry.

“Japan has experienced multiple avian influenza outbreaks over recent decades but, notably, has never recorded a human fatality,” Mrs Hashimoto said.

“By learning from Japan’s response systems, biosecurity practices, and community engagement, I hope to bring back insights that will strengthen Australia’s preparedness and help keep Australians healthy, should H5 reach our shores.”

“This Fellowship is an opportunity to ensure our industry and governments remain one step ahead in protecting both poultry health and public safety,” Mrs Hashimoto said.

Mrs Hashimoto’s work will contribute to strengthening Australia’s national biosecurity framework, ensuring the egg and poultry industries were resilient and ready to respond effectively to the emerging disease threat.

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