

NRCoP & ANZSOG present

Regulating at the Border: working together in ordinary and extraordinary times

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Monday, 20 May 2024**Question 1: Justine**

Providing decision makers with decision making advantage through the use of intelligence, data and insights, will have been a tactical/strategic asset in the time of COVID. How have you translated the learnings from this time in the intel space to influence the way in which the intel capability now works (i.e. investment in training, increased capability, reduction in fragmented approaches and silos etc.)?

Answer

As part of audits conducted by the ANAO and IGB, recommendations included establishing a streamlined intelligence function that could inform senior leadership of threats posed in the agriculture domain. In 2022 the Operational Intelligence and Coordination branch was created to address these recommendations. Over the past 2 years the team has grown and formal training has been conducted in order to equip members with the tools necessary to develop an understanding of threat across biosecurity and exports. In this time the team have produced over 40 intelligence products which have provided insight into subjects such as; import methodology, commodity identification, network identification and analysis, in tandem with establishing broader baseline situational awareness regarding contemporary biosecurity threats. Future capability uplift includes an Operational threat capability which will work with strategic intelligence partners to identify national trends and patterns that correlate to international trends enabling the senior executive to position the dept to address emerging international threats.

Question 2: Justine

Have you considered simulation exercises akin to what we do for exotic disease incursions?

Answer

We undertake a range of activities to prepare for emergencies, including exercises to ensure that we can respond in the most effective manner. This helps us test our plans and improve interoperability with other agencies. Some examples of recent exercises are the Exercise Paratus series which explored the Australian Government's role during escalating biosecurity emergencies across multiple jurisdictions, and Exercise Waterhole which evaluated how well-prepared Australia's animal health laboratory network is to respond to a large-scale emergency animal disease (EAD) outbreak. In addition to those that the department leads, we regularly participate in exercises run by others – such as the National Emergency Management Agency and state/territory agencies. We use the lessons from these exercises to inform capability uplifts and better position ourselves to manage the complex risks faced by the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors.