

Research And Funding

How Animal Health Programs Work In Australia

Judith Morrison

ARMCANZ - Ministers

*Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia
and New Zealand*

SCARM - Senior Officials

Subcommittee on Agriculture and Resource Management

**Provides assessments and recommendations to ARMCANZ
Ministers**

**Policy proposals come up through a series of committees and
subcommittees**

AAHC

Australian Animal Health Council

Government and Industry representatives

Will report directly to the Ministers

Representation is directed to develop funding for programs

**Will use contributions from stakeholders and States/Territories
and C'wealth will contribute**

AVA is a member

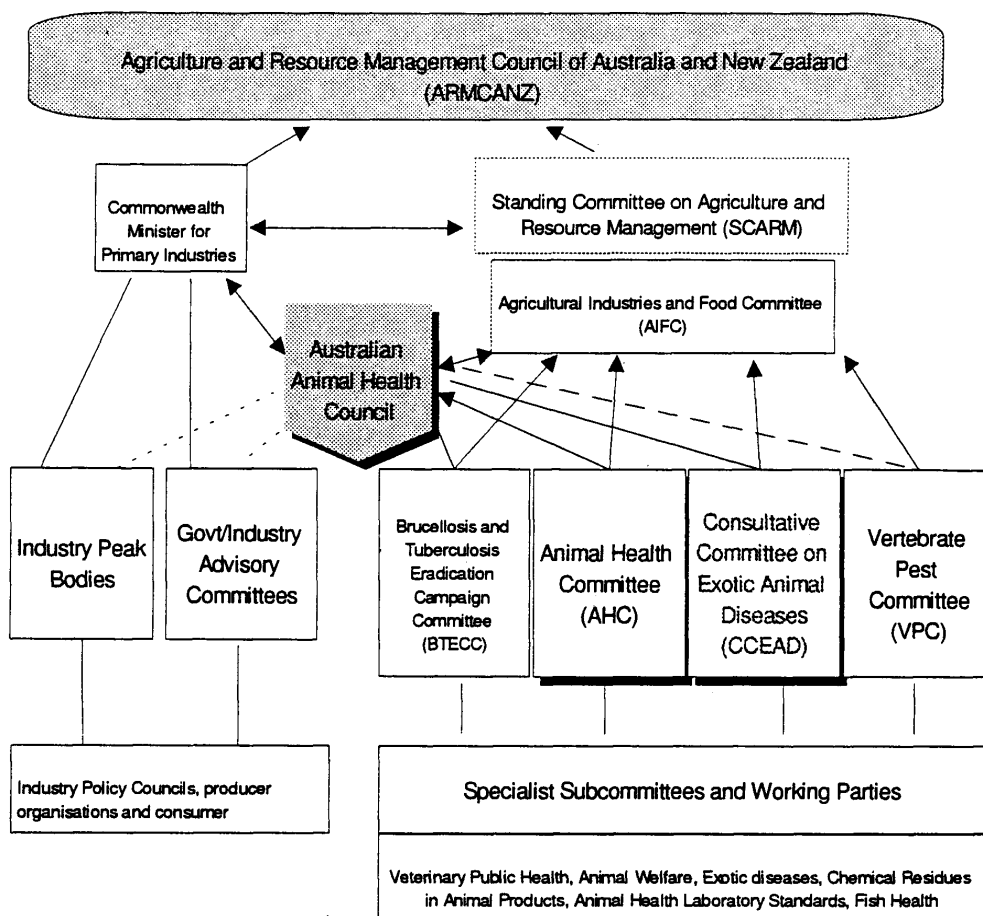
VC

Veterinary Committee

Chief Veterinary Officers from each State and Territory

Develops animal health policies for consideration

**Draws on the skills of the State/Territory CVO's and their
supporting organisations**



How do you propose a new animal health program?

via the AVA and its representative on the AAHC

via the relative industry representative on the AAHC

**via the office of the CVO in your State or Territory who will
put the program to AAHC or SCARM**

Animal Health Organisational Arrangements

Australia is a Commonwealth federation governed by a Commonwealth government, six State Governments and two Territory governments. Our Constitution sets out the powers of the Commonwealth government and the States and Territories have exclusive authority in areas that the Constitution does not define as being within the authority of the Commonwealth. Although quarantine and international trade are within the authority of the Commonwealth, *animal health within Australia is a State/Territory responsibility*.

Official veterinary services in Australia comprise officers from the Commonwealth Government, State and Territory Governments and local governments. A system of consultative committees ensures that these elements work together to serve the overall interest of Australia.

Australian States and Territories are responsible for disease control and eradication within their own boundaries. The Commonwealth provides advice and coordination, and in some circumstances financial assistance for national disease eradication programs.

ARMCANZ brings together the different constitutional responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the States/Territories for the agricultural sector. SCARM is the permanent committee that supports ARMCANZ. SCARM consists of the heads of DPIE, the State/Territory departments of agriculture, representatives from CSIRO,

DOF, DFAT and NZ.

Several committees advise SCARM on specialist issues and in turn have their own infrastructure of subcommittees, working parties and expert panels that focus on particular areas and comprise specialists and search workers.

The AHC(Veterinary Committee) advises on animal health matters. VC comprises the Commonwealth CVO and the CVO from each State and Territory government. The VC has subcommittees advising it on specific animal health issues such as fish health and laboratory animal health matters.

Veterinary Related Research And Funding In Australia

Much animal health research and development in Australia is funded by government, both Commonwealth and State/Territory. However, industry also funds a significant and increasing amount of research, either direct such as pharmaceutical research or indirect such as through research and Development Councils and Corporations. R&D corporations are a partnership between industry and the Commonwealth government to create a pot of money and to administer the spending of that money. Major research providers included CSIRO, State and Territory departments of agriculture, universities and private companies.

All the major research providers are having continual reviews of what they do and whether they should continue to fund veterinary related programs.

Key organisations in Australia that fund research and development include:

- . Australian Wool Research and Promotion Organisation
- . Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
- . Dairy Research and development Corporation
- . Meat research Corporation
- . Pig Research and Development Corporation
- . Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
- . Chicken Meat Research and Development Council
- . Egg Industry Research and Development Council

RIRDC - Rural Industries Research And Development Corporation

RIRDC's mission is 'to manage research and development investments on behalf of government and industry for the benefit of the people of Australia', by:

- . enhancing innovation in the rural and related sectors;
- . fostering the development of new industries; and
- . addressing strategic issues facing the rural sector.

Highlights of 1995 in relation to animal health research include:

- . establishment of an equine research newsletter;

- . funding and organisation of a workshop on quarantine processes and the management of horse disease emergencies;
- . development of a new ELIZA diagnostic kit for aspergillosis in ostriches; and
- . development of a new method for detection of *Aspergillus tumigatus* in ostriches using a PCR technique.

Wildlife And Exotic Diseases

The Wildlife and Exotic Disease Preparedness Program (WEDPP) commenced in 1984 “to support the development of practical field strategies for the eradication, control and management of feral animals in an exotic disease outbreak”. It is a joint Commonwealth and State/Territory financed program to support the development of practical field strategies for the eradication and control of feral animals in the event of an outbreak of an exotic animal disease.

The WEDPP achieves its mission by:

- . providing funds for research into development and refinement of techniques for the survey, containment and control of wildlife consistent with the control of exotic animal diseases;
- . providing funds for training in and evaluation of wildlife disease control techniques for use in exotic animal disease emergencies;
- . providing technical input into AUSVETPLAN documentation including National Disease Control Strategies and Operational Procedures Manuals.
- . promoting interaction between animal health and wildlife personnel working in the exotic disease preparedness area.

WEDPP achieved many of its original aims, despite becoming the “defacto” funding body for exotic and native wildlife research. A review of this program is being finalised now by the Bureau of Resource Sciences and the recommendations include that this body be sunsetted in 3 years and take more care as to the allocation of any future projects, to ensure that they are targeted to the original mission statement.

Further recommendations include a proposal for the formation of a wildlife diseases research program to be considered by AAHC. There is an obvious need made plain by the past history of use of WEDPP funds, the requirement for endemic disease data brought about by recent animal importations (ie ratites and psittiformes) and the appearance of new diseases in Australian wildlife that are not necessarily promptly researched as funding in Australia is tied tightly to the primary industries.

In 1992 the United Nations backed an environment program where Australia committed itself to a process of **insitu** and **exsitu** biodiversity. This commitment makes our country responsible for our own species in the international forum. However, there is currently no body in Australia that funds research into wild animals including our avian wildlife. Wild animals are a resource that is “held in common” for all Australians. Work is done in this area as part of State and Commonwealth “community service obligation” funds which are always heavily scrutinised. Current rural industry research funding is not available to wild avian research.

CSIRO Ecology and Wildlife group with regarding the future on wildlife research and funding, have decided not to pursue any exotic disease situation, but will leave it to “other authorities”. Diseases of avian wildlife is not considered to be high enough in the public profile to be ranked as a priority, and consequently there is no funding for avian research. They are currently committed to vertebrate pest biology and to conservation biology - understanding the processes that determine the survival of native species.

There is a strong belief within DPIE that WEDPP needs to evolve into a new structure to cope with current wildlife disease circumstances, highlighted by the morbillivirus outbreak, kangaroo blindness and the recent fisheries problems. We believe that this program or R&D corporation would have strong support from the Australian public.

List of Abbreviations

AAHC	Australian Animal Health Committee
ARMCANZ	Agricultural and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DOF	Department of Finance
NZ	New Zealand
SCARM	Subcommittee on Agricultural and Resource Management

Judith Morrison's address is:

Senior Veterinary Officer
Animal Diseases/Incidents
Livestock and Pastoral Division
Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601