

Brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication⁽²⁾

The largest and highest profile disease eradication programs have been in the cattle industry and concerned tuberculosis and brucellosis. Incidence of these diseases dates back to the 1920s and initially State Governments applied control and/or eradication measures in order to protect human health.

Moves to achieve eradication nationally gained urgency during the 1960s and in 1966 the Commonwealth adopted a recommendation of the Australian Agricultural Council (the relevant Ministerial council) that action be initiated on a national basis to eradicate both diseases as soon as feasible. Hence, the nationally coordinated operation originally known as the Bovine Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign (BTEC) commenced in 1970 and was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State governments along with industry.

The latter's contributions were funded by way of a levy which came into effect in 1973. Initially the levy was on all exports of beef and veal to reimburse the Commonwealth's contribution to BTEC's operational costs. The levy rate was 1.32 c/kg (0.6 cents per pound). In 1976 the meat export levy was suspended and a slaughter levy introduced with a component directed to brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication. The size of the levy has varied subsequently.

History of cattle disease eradication levy

	Amount of levy per head
At introduction in 1976	\$1
1979-80	\$3
1 October 1982	\$4
1 July 1986	\$3
February 1991 ^a	\$2.10
December 1991	\$0.85
1 March 1993	\$0.52
1 July 1993	\$0.46
1 July 1995	\$0.44
1 August 1996	\$0.30
1 December 1996	\$0.25
1 July 1997	\$0.17

a. In February 1991, the slaughter levy was subsumed as a component of the Cattle Transaction Levy.

Source: Stewart, John *The National Cattle Disease Eradication Trust Account (NCDETA)* briefing paper prepared for the CCA, 15 June 2005

From the start of the BTEC in 1970 to its conclusion in 1997, expenditure totalled approximately \$840 million. This expenditure included spending on the eradication of brucellosis and freedom status for that disease was declared in Tasmania in 1975, Western Australia in 1985, Victoria, New South Wales, the ACT and the southern part of the Northern Territory in 1983, then Queensland and the remainder of the Northern Territory in 1989.

Australia was declared provisionally free of brucellosis in 1986 and freedom status was achieved in 1989.

Alterations in funding arrangements were made at various times as BTEC progressed. From 1988 until the end of the campaign, the industry levy provided 50% of total funds, the States 30% and the Commonwealth 20%.

Australia was declared free of tuberculosis in 1997. However, because the disease can remain dormant in animals for long periods and the available tests fail to detect some cases, sporadic residual cases may occur. Consequently, the Operational Management Review of BTEC conducted in 1995 recommended the establishment of the Tuberculosis Freedom Assurance Plan (TFAP), initially for 5 years, to continue BTEC activities following the achievement of national tuberculosis freedom. Thus, TFAP was put in place to ensure that any resurgence of tuberculosis in Australian cattle was promptly and effectively eliminated. The program commenced in 1998 following the declaration of Australia as a Free Area for bovine tuberculosis and ended in December 2002.

A mid-term review of TFAP was held in late 2000 and considered the need for a further period of surveillance for tuberculosis. The review recommended that a further four-year program be established to commence in January 2003. This program is known as TFAP 2 and is scheduled to conclude on 31 December 2006. The last case of tuberculosis was in 2002.

Animal Health Australia⁽³⁾

During the early 1990s it became apparent that consumers along with national and international trading partners required increased accountability for animal health and welfare.

It was agreed that there needed to be high level decisions by governments and industry groups on strategic policy for future planning and funding of national animal health service programs. Following further consideration the Australian Animal Health Council Limited (AAHC) was formed. AAHC was incorporated in January 1996 and commenced operating as a not-for-profit public company under the business name of Animal Health Australia (AHA) in February 2000.

AHA currently has 24 members across four membership categories: Australian Government (1); States and Territories (8); livestock industries (14); and service delivery/non-program participants (2). The structure facilitates flexible and responsive management of animal health issues and accountability is via an independently selected board of directors responsible to members in general meeting.

AHA's role in the national animal health system has expanded significantly over the past five years with the number of programs and projects the company is responsible for growing substantially. Its mission focuses on ensuring Australia's national animal health status delivers a competitive advantage and preferred market access for Australia's livestock industries