

PBRI Communiqué Meeting 17, 16 November 2021

Meeting 17 was attended by representatives from seven plant RDCs, Plant Health Australia (PHA) and the Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment (DAWE). Lucinda Staley, AgriFutures Australia, chaired the meeting which included a members' update on biosecurity activities and investments relevant to the PBRI.

An update was also provided on [Agriculture Innovation Australia](#) (AIA), by Anwen Lovett (Project Manager, AIA Investment Plans). AIA is at stage two of its investment planning process for the Trade and Market Access, Climate, Biosecurity and Digital Agriculture themes. The plans deliver against the four priorities announced under the Government's Agricultural Innovation Agenda.

The PBRI members contributed to the first stage of the AIA investment planning process, drawing on cross-sectoral priority areas from the [PBRI Strategy](#). Four high priority ideas submitted for consideration were:

1. Emerging threat watch
2. Early detection
3. Biosecurity sentinels and
4. Building the value of biosecurity in the community.

The investment ideas were further developed and incorporated into a submission to AIA by CSIRO (biosecurity theme lead). The PBRI will contribute to stage two of the process through consultation with CSIRO.

As part of PBRI strategy implementation, 19 biosecurity projects have been contracted with a total value of approximately \$52 million (cash and in-kind). Eight new cross-sectoral concepts were described with co-investment interest and partnerships identified. These concepts align to PBRI's six key focus areas, and include pest modelling, novel control methods, fall armyworm management strategies, and pathogen genomics. Most concepts have been initiated as a direct result of RD&E presented at the [PBRI monthly forums](#).

The PBRI fora continue to showcase expertise and knowledge which may be used to develop future RD&E investment opportunities. A decision was made to open these fora to a broader audience, due to the increasing interest in participation. The most recent PBRI forum on [Detection and Diagnostics](#), held on 21 October and the next forum is on [Surveillance RD&E](#), scheduled for 3 December 2021.

Fifty extension practitioners working across plant and honeybee industries, met to hear insights from Jim Pekin, CEO Australian Banana Grower's Council, on the incursion of Panama disease tropical race 4 (TR4) and to experience the world of bee biosecurity, through a presentation by Ally Driessen, AgVic, at the third [Biosecurity Extension Community](#) (BEC) meeting on 26 October.

The PBRI has a new partnership with the Plant Health Committee (PHC), through which RD&E priorities will be explored. A workshop is planned for 18 November to identify common research areas for potential collaboration and co-investment.

MOU partner, B3 New Zealand are in the process of reinvesting \$4.2 million of SSIF funds that will become available in July 2022. The B3 Science Partner Forum was held on 21 October, showcasing B3 research to all stakeholders. MOU partner, Eupresco invited Australian research topics for their current round closing at the end of November.

Irene Kernot provided an update on behalf of MOU partner, ACIAR. She described the role of the new Commission for International Agricultural Research, led by Fiona Simpson (NFF) in setting program direction for agricultural research and development. There is also a new amalgamation of the CGIARs, '[One CGIAR](#)', which will be encouraged to focus on the Pacific, with opportunities for Australian research investment in plant health. ACIAR also works with the World Vegetable Centre and CABI, with additional opportunities for partnerships in plant health. In planning for ACIAR projects commencing in July 2023, country strategies are being developed for investment across the regions with plant and animal biosecurity as a priority.

Collaboration with PBRI members on Fall armyworm research and citrus biosecurity has already occurred, with areas for new collaborations on projects focused on virus surveillance across the Pacific, tomato leaf miner and phytoplasmas in banana in PNG.

The PBRI Symposium (a hybrid event) will be held at the Adelaide Wine Centre on the 11 &12 May 2022 and is sponsored by DAWE. A ‘Ritman’ scholarship has been supported by PBRI members to honour the late Dr Kim Ritman, who was a foundation member of PBRI. The scholarship will enable students to travel and register for the Symposium to promote their professional development. More information on the Symposium registration is available on the PBRI [website](#). The IYPH conference has been scheduled for the same week as the PBRI Symposium in May 2022 in the UK. There is potential for conference sessions to be streamed to each event as part of an International Plant Health exchange.

The next PBRI Committee Meeting will be held on 10 March 2022, chaired by Dr Gabrielle Vivian-Smith.