

CEO MESSAGE (TENDRILS SEPTEMBER 2022)

Hi, I'm Sarah Corcoran, CEO of Plant Health Australia. Welcome to another bumper edition of Tendrils – your monthly round-up of plant biosecurity news.

Fast access to data and information is key to support the quick identification of, and rapid response to, the detection of exotic pests and diseases. Last month, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Museums Victoria and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia, Plant Health Australia had the pleasure of relaunching the Pest and Disease Image Library known as PaDIL.

PaDIL is an online database containing high-quality diagnostic images and information tools designed to assist agronomists, biosecurity officers, diagnosticians, and researchers both in Australia and overseas with scientific identification. The refreshed system boasts:

- improved search functionality
- a diagnostic image comparison tool for specimen triaging and taxonomic identification and
- an increased representation of priority pest species.

Not only has PaDIL been designed as a key diagnostic resource to increase both detection and diagnostic capability, but it also enhances system integration which is key to strengthening the national plant health system.

Integration and innovation were key themes of the Annual Surveillance and Diagnostic Workshop recently held in Melbourne. The successful three-day event saw 132 diagnosticians and surveillance practitioners gather to share knowledge, and brainstorm how to reconnect community with science, enhance the industry and government working relationship, how to integrate policy and operations and bridging regional, national and international biosecurity.

Our Grains Farm Biosecurity program is a great example of regional biosecurity with five grains biosecurity officers in New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. Our Grains Biosecurity Officers recently attended a two-day program meeting at our offices in Canberra to review current activities and set the future focus. I look forward to delivering the next phase of training, extension and communication to this key industry.

Working with industry, the supply chain and the science community to improve the reach and uptake of best practice biosecurity solutions is a key focus at PHA. With this in mind, we've released two new online training packages to assist more people to recognise exotic pests and diseases. Developed in collaboration with Biosecurity Queensland, Plant Health Australia, and the NSW Government, the Hitchhiker Pests and Nursery Pest and Diseases courses are aimed at businesses that deal with goods and cargo as well as staff at local councils, retail nurseries, landscapers and horticulturalists. The courses are free, can be recognised as professional development and takes about 30 minutes to complete. Head over to our website to find out more.

This month, we farewelled Jess Lehman, David Gale, Rennie Ding and Blessy Pathrose and welcomed Emily Duggan to our Marketing and Communications Team.

Once again, this edition of Tendrils contains a wide range of stories covering agriculture, horticulture and biosecurity.

Enjoy!