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Australia strengthens biosecurity against Avian Influenza (HPAI)Â with over $7 M investment

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Australia has begun a national exercise to test its preparedness for an incursion of H5 high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI). In an effort to strengthen national preparedness for H5 HPAI, a series of three scenario-based discussion-based simulation exercises centered around high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI), titled â??Exercise Volareâ??, will be held from 15 August to 30 September 2024.Â

Australia has already invested an extra $7 Million to focus on the threat posed by a potential incursion of H5 HPAI. The new initiative will involve activities focused on detection of H5N1 high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) clade 2.3.4.4b in Australian wildlife. Biosecurity details regarding the September activity will be provided to key stakeholders as part of a shared responsibility.Â

Australia remains the only continent free of H5 HPAI, specifically clade 2.3.4.4b, which continues to spread across the globe. Exercise Volare will be delivered in three parts and will address potential effects on public health if H5 HPAI is detected in animal populations in Australia, primarily in wild birds and mammals. Exercise Volare will improve preparedness of agriculture, environment, health portfolios, sector-specific stakeholders, and other agencies to manage future HPAI incursions, as well as inform management of HPAI across wildlife, industry, and health. By involving government agencies across all jurisdictions as primary response agencies, such cross-sectoral biosecurity threats can be addressed with greater collaboration between

portfolios.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Julie Collins MP said, â??Exercises like this are an established part of bolstering Australiaâ??s preparedness and capability to respond to biosecurity emergencies such as HPAI outbreaks. Exercise Volare will help us identify the strengths in our established response mechanisms and opportunities to further strengthen national preparedness and response capability. It will also reinforce that biosecurity is a shared responsibility and that all of us have a role to play in addressing the challenges presented by exotic diseases.â?