



The Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative: A Model for Coordinated Plant Health Research, Development and Extension in Australia

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Issue/challenges

Australia's plant industries face increasing biosecurity risks from pests and diseases that threaten production, trade and the environment. A 2017 independent review identified a major gap in the national plant biosecurity system: research efforts were fragmented, poorly coordinated and often duplicated across industries.

This lack of alignment reduced the effectiveness and impact of investment, particularly for pests affecting multiple crops and sectors. A coordinated approach was needed to strengthen priority setting, improve collaboration and deliver greater value from plant biosecurity research, development and extension (RD&E).

Key results

Since 2017, more than **AUD 80 million** has been co-invested through the Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI) in research targeting high-priority pests, including *Xylella*, fall armyworm and brown marmorated stink bug.

The initiative has strengthened national capability in:

- early warning, surveillance and diagnostics;
- pest risk modelling and preparedness;
- sustainable and resilient crop protection systems.

Independent reviews have recognised PBRI as a focal point for plant biosecurity RD&E expertise and a catalyst for collaboration between industry, government and research organisations.

Actions taken

The Plant Biosecurity Research Initiative (PBRI) was established in 2017 to provide a coordinated, collaborative platform for plant biosecurity RD&E. It enables partners to pool resources, expertise and capability to achieve outcomes beyond those possible through individual investments.

Seven Research and Development Corporations fund the core collaboration programme, supporting a full-time PBRI Programme Director responsible for coordination and co-investment. Governance is provided by a Management Committee comprising eight core members, including the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and major plant industry research organisations.

PBRI also works with national and international partners, including B3 New Zealand, Euphresco, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, the Plant Health Committee and Plant Health Australia.

Conclusions

The PBRI model demonstrates how coordinated governance, shared priorities and sustained collaboration can significantly improve the efficiency and impact of plant biosecurity research investment.

Renewal of the five-year PBRI agreement in 2023 reflects strong member confidence in the approach and recognition of its value in reducing duplication, strengthening preparedness and enhancing national plant health resilience. The model offers a practical example for countries seeking to strengthen plant biosecurity through coordinated research and investment.

