Educating surveillance stakeholders - A novel e-tool to improve engagement and decision making

Petra Muellner¹, Toni Tana², Ulrich Muellner¹, Sara Khaling-Rai², Katharina Stärk³ and Brendan Gould²
¹Epi-interactive, Wellington, New Zealand
²Surveillance and Incursion Investigation Group, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, New Zealand
³SAFOSO, Bern, Switzerland

Summary

• Epi-interactive was engaged by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) to develop a tool to support decision-making by surveillance stakeholders.
• Aims of animal health surveillance had to be integrated with those from other sectors to ensure a consistent approach to biosecurity surveillance across all sectors and to build a basis for collaboration on surveillance tasks.
• A common high-level understanding was identified as the best starting point to improve biosecurity surveillance activities across sectors.
• New media tools provided unique advantages to enrich stakeholder communication and education.

Introduction

• The project was part of MPI’s Surveillance strategy 2020.
• In New Zealand stakeholders in biosecurity surveillance are diverse and include livestock industries, aquaculture, horticulture, conservation organisations, as well as Maori.
• The aim of the project was to provide guidance to stakeholders to improve basic surveillance decision-making.

Challenges

• Needs of surveillance stakeholders are very diverse, not only between sectors but also within sectors.
• For example freedom-of-disease surveillance programs are common in the forestry and animal sector to meet trade requirements, but are less familiar to the marine or environmental stakeholder groups.
• Terminology, definitions and awareness of surveillance differ between the sectors.
• The subject is diverse and difficult to break down to an entry-level introduction.

Our solution

• Stakeholder interviews identified that an e-tool was more likely to be well received than a report or spread sheet format.
• Such a format is more suited to increase awareness and engagement, which were seen as key to improved stakeholder decision-making.
• Further advantages of an e-tool are the easy navigation, the support of hierarchical content and better comprehension through visible learning.
• The tool was programmed in Flash and can easily be deployed on websites or as a CD-ROM.
• The tool content focuses on selected aspects of biosecurity surveillance such as the importance of international trade requirements, an illustration of the dynamic nature or risks and a high-level categorisation of surveillance objectives.
• Case studies from different sectors are used to illustrate the theoretical aspects described.

Conclusions

• E-tools provide several advantages over traditional formats, such as reports, for communicating with stakeholders and for providing decision-making guidelines.
• They are of particular value where awareness and engagement are low, as they offer a flexible and accessible interface to deliver technical content.

Acknowledgements

MPI Surveillance and Incursion Investigation Group, in particular Simon McDonald, Paul Stevens, Mark Bullians, Lora Peacock, Jonathan Watts, Hernando Acosta, and Paul Bingham. Further Karen Pugh, Rory McLellan, Claudia Riley, Sian Howard and the MPI Information Management Team. Surveillance Stakeholders Representatives: Glen Macky (FDAO), Eric Hillerton (Dairy NZ), Graeme Inglis (NIWA), Anglia Marjardi (Programming) and Lou Wallace (Design).

This work was funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand