



OIA22-0824

23 November

Scott Miller
fyi-request-19288-c09b7220@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Scott

Thank you for your email of 20 October 2022 requesting a copy of the Exercise Whakatau Kōrero report. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested the following:

“... I would appreciate it if you provide me with a response as a high priority: a copy of the Whakatau Kōrero report (or a reason within the OIA why it is being withheld).”

Exercise Whakatau Kōrero was an eight-part series, held in 2019, that looked at establishing all-of-government arrangements in the event of a Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) response. The exercise was a tabletop discussion series to identify the lead agencies for the different workstreams to support a FMD response.

The focus of Biosecurity New Zealand, a business unit of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), is on stopping exotic pests and diseases from entering New Zealand. MPI has a multi-layered biosecurity system that involves strict import requirements, checks at the border, and surveillance. People in New Zealand have an important role to play in protecting the country from unwanted pests and diseases, including FMD. Staying alert and reporting any suspected exotic pests and diseases to Biosecurity New Zealand's hotline, 0800 809 966, is crucial. We strongly advise anyone who comes across cloven-hooved animals, either wild or farmed in New Zealand, with blisters or sores around the mouth, muzzle, feet and teats, lethargy, lameness, or other viral clinical signs to report to our hotline, so we can investigate. Information on how to report is available at: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/how-to-findreport-and-prevent-pests-and-diseases/report-a-pest-or-disease/>.

New Zealand has never had an outbreak of FMD and is officially recognised as FMD-free. Because of our multi-layered biosecurity system, risk of an FMD outbreak in New Zealand is low. For more information on Biosecurity New Zealand's response to FMD, please refer here: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/plans-for-responding-to-serious-disease-outbreaks/footand-mouth-disease/response-to-foot-and-mouth-disease/>.

The New Zealand Government released a plan in December 2018 that sets out how we would respond and recover from an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

The FMD plan provides information on:

- coordination arrangements at a national level
- the disease and its impact
- how the New Zealand Government will manage a response and recovery effort.

MPI led development of the plan, which is the Government's first overarching FMD plan for coordinating a response and recovery effort. You can find a copy of the report here:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/32386-The-New-Zealand-Government-Foot-and-Mouth-Disease-Response-and-Recovery-Plan>

Due to the ongoing outbreak of FMD in Indonesia, Biosecurity New Zealand is putting an increased focus on awareness and other activities to protect us from FMD, including:

- a wide-reaching awareness campaign involving online digital messaging, in-flight announcements, digital noticeboards and flyers to reach passengers coming into the country at 3 stages; pre-departure, in-flight and on arrival
- regular updates to primary sector partners and the country's veterinary network
- Biosecurity New Zealand has provided personal protective equipment to Indonesia to conduct biosecurity measures, disinfectant, backpack sprayers and other tools to help on the ground and offered technical expertise as well
- an on-the-ground audit in June of Indonesia's palm kernel supply chain shows Indonesia is meeting New Zealand' strict biosecurity requirements for foot-and-mouth disease. You can read more here:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news/mediareleases/pkeaudit-shows-strict-fmd-requirements-being-met/>

MPI has established an FMD Task Force that is enhancing operational readiness for FMD. The programme of work covers topics including all-of-government arrangements, resourcing, operational planning, and recovery, to name a few. The Task Force is reviewing and updating existing comprehensive plans for the unlikely event of an FMD outbreak in New Zealand. They are incorporating much that has been learned through recent emergencies including COVID-19 and the biosecurity response to the cattle disease *Mycoplasma bovis*.

As requested, the *Exercise Whakatau Kōrero Evaluation Report* has been attached as Appendix One.

Some information has been withheld in the attached appendix pursuant to the following sections of the OIA:

- Section 6(a) – *the making available of information would be likely to prejudice the security or defence of New Zealand or the international relations of the Government of New Zealand*
- Section 9(2)(a) – *to protect the privacy of natural persons.*

The Ministry for Primary Industries is satisfied that in the circumstances of this case, the withholding of the information is not outweighed by other considerations which render it desirable in the public interest to make the information available.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Ministry for Primary Industries at Official.InformationAct@mpi.govt.nz.

Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Morehu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michelle Morehu
Director, Government Services