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Foot and Mouth Intercepted at Border

Cattle Council of Australia (CCA) has praised biosecurity officials who intercepted pork and beef products contaminated with Foot and Mouth Disease fragments at our international border.

The pork item was not declared on the passenger's arrival card but was presented to biosecurity when prompted, the beef product was undeclared. Foot and Mouth Disease is not transmissible to humans.

CCA President, Lloyd Hick said the case shows why it is so important to follow biosecurity rules.

"Doing the right thing is easy - if in doubt, declare it," Mr Hick said.

"In both cases, it was fragments detected, not the live virus, and it could not have spread – but this illustrates how easily Foot and Mouth Disease could have been brought in.

"This is why it is so important to declare any plant or animal material, even if unsure.

"A declaration is just a way of asking biosecurity 'is this okay?' and they'll let you know if it's safe.

"This is how our targeted biosecurity system is meant to work, but we've got to stay on our toes.

"If Foot and Mouth gets into Australian livestock it could cost us \$80 billion over ten years.

"That would see jobs lost all along the supply chain, in both the city and the bush.

"We also acknowledge Federal Government's decision to introduce disinfectant foot mats in airports.

"Disinfectant mats are a useful tool, but they are only part of a response to biosecurity threats.

"Foot and Mouth Disease can also arrive on luggage and clothing, so we must stay vigilant.

"Anyone travelling to Australia from a country with Foot and Mouth Disease should make sure they wash all clothes and scrub all shoes before they get on the plane.

"This is particularly important for people who live and work in rural, regional and remote areas.

"CCA appreciates that the Government has been constantly reassessing the safeguards it has in place.

"The biosecurity response should match the threat. We will need more resources as the risks increase.

"We also urge the Government to reassess spot fines and invest more in traceability as these measures will provide further safeguards and allow us to respond swiftly to an incursion in Australia."

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