MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY & FISHERIES

26 October 2007

Exercise Wild Boar A Success

Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister Chris Natt today congratulated everyone involved with Exercise Wild Boar, held in Darwin earlier this week.

“Exercise Wild Boar successfully assessed the Northern Territory’s response to an emergency animal disease (EAD) outbreak, in this case Classic Swine Fever (CSF) in domestic and feral pigs throughout the Top End,” Mr Natt said.

“A State Disease Control Headquarters (SDCHQ) was established at Berrimah Farm and included expert staff in the areas of operations, planning, public relations and communication, logistics, legal and industry liaison.”

Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines chief veterinary officer Dr Brian Radunz said simulated exercises such as the one held this week, are essential to ensure the NT is prepared for a disease outbreak emergency.

“CSF, also known as hog cholera, is a highly contagious viral infection of pigs that is often fatal,” Dr Radunz said.

“The team from across Government worked under simulated outbreak conditions for two days to evaluate DPIFM’s response to an outbreak of EAD in the NT such as CSF.

“The major aim was to contain the disease to particular areas and undertake surveillance, quarantine and eradication measures to prevent the spread of infection.

“The movement of pigs within the NT was banned, and a comprehensive survey of feral pig populations was adopted to locate and identify the extent of the presence of the disease.”

Dr Radunz said the effectiveness of organisation, response decisions and the overall functioning of DPIFM’s plan to establish an Emergency Animal Disease Response Plan specific to the NT was tested.

“There is an ongoing program of training and assessment to maintain the skills for an effective response action of government and livestock industries,” Dr Radunz said.

“Although Australia is free of CSF, it is found in South-East Asia, so it is vital to regularly test current emergency plans designed to contain EAD outbreaks.”