

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is BOSSS?

Bovine Syndromic Surveillance System (BOSSS) is a free web site that contains information on many endemic and exotic diseases of cattle as well as educational material on disease signs and techniques for conducting post mortems and taking samples.

### Who can use it?

Remote-area cattle producers are being encouraged to use the new web-based tool to help them compile histories of their herd's health status and to aid in the diagnosis of cattle disease occurring on their property.

### Who developed BOSSS?

BOSSS is being supported throughout Australia by an institutional alliance that includes state departments of primary industries and the Australian Biosecurity CRC for Emerging Infectious Diseases. Producer bodies have also indicated their support for the system.

### What use is it to cattle owners?

BOSSS can be used by producers for

1. Keeping detailed paddock records of herd health
2. Reporting and diagnosing disease early to
  - prevent spread of disease within herd and to other properties
  - identify exact cause of sickness or death
3. Provide surveillance data to DPIFM
  - predict regional disease trends to alert other producers
  - provide accurate certification of property for live export

### How does it help vets?

The website acts as a confidential database to help animal health authorities such as DPIFM study disease trends that are reported via the BOSSS website and this information is vital when managing biosecurity threats.

DPIFM Biosecurity staff can use the data entered by producers to monitor trends across the entire territory or from interstate.

### Is the data confidential?

Data is collected on a confidential basis without linking the results of monitoring and evaluation to any individual property or producer.

### What sort of information is available on the BOSSS website?

The BOSSS website provides access to information on over 1000 cattle diseases including

- clinical signs
- diagnosis
- treatment and control
- post mortem guidelines and sample collection techniques

In the future, when producers are regularly entering data, the system will provide disease distribution maps and a disease symptom digital image library.

### Does it give a disease diagnosis?

The information entered by the producer is analysed and compared with that stored in the BOSSS database. A list of possible diseases is generated in ranked order. The system directs producers to a guided examination to narrow the list of possible diseases by asking specific questions about the case. The diagnosis should always be confirmed by a field investigation conducted by a DPIFM Veterinary Officer or Stock Inspector if possible.



### Can the site provide extra advice from a human?

Yes – the BOSSS site provides links to experts such as veterinarians and an on-line discussion forum allow cattle owners to email other producers or experts to seek advice and opinion. BOSSS's objective is to facilitate contact between producers and experts, wherever they may be located.

### Does BOSSS replace the need for calling a vet when sick or dead cattle are found?

No - producers should still 'Look, Check, and Ask their Local Vet or Stock Inspector when they find unusual symptoms of disease. BOSSS will strongly encourage users to do this if there is any risk of an exotic disease.

### How do I register for BOSSS?

To register as a BOSSS user or find out more about the system, please contact your regional DPIFM Veterinary Officer or Stock Inspector.

### How many producers are needed?

The more producers that use the system, the more valuable the data generated, particularly for disease patterns.

### Can hands on training be provided?

Producers can contact their regional Animal Biosecurity Officer to receive individual BOSSS internet training or follow the User Manual available on the website at

[www.ausvet.com.au/bosss/resources/BOSSS%20Manual.pdf](http://www.ausvet.com.au/bosss/resources/BOSSS%20Manual.pdf).

Training in post-mortem technique and sample collection is also available.

**IMPORTANT – BOSSS does not replace the need for a cattle owner with sick animals from phoning a vet or a stock inspector.**

**Livestock owners, managers, agents and veterinarians should notify DPIFM if they suspect stock that have symptoms of 'notifiable' diseases. These diseases can be found on the departmental website at**

[www.nt.gov.au/dpifm/Primary\\_Industry/Content/File/biosecurity/Report\\_Form\\_for\\_Notifiable\\_Diseases\\_v4.pdf](http://www.nt.gov.au/dpifm/Primary_Industry/Content/File/biosecurity/Report_Form_for_Notifiable_Diseases_v4.pdf)

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