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## Biosecurity legends take centre stage in Canberra



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The cream of Australia's biosecurity crop have been recognised in Canberra, with the announcement of the 2017 Australian Biosecurity Award recipients.

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, Senator Anne Ruston, said 2017's winners demonstrated the impressive work undertaken by industry and government to support Australian agriculture through our biosecurity system.

"Australia is fortunate to be free from many of the agricultural pests and diseases present in other parts of the world," Minister Ruston said.

"This is only possible because of our strong biosecurity system and the work of our biosecurity stakeholders across the country.

"Each year we recognise individuals, groups and organisations whose contribution to our national biosecurity system goes above and beyond the call of duty, and this year is no different.

"The Industry award winners include John Chambers of the Customs Brokers and Forwarders Council of Australia, who has worked for two decades to enhance biosecurity integrity for the export and import industry.

"Mike Dixon from Gladstone Ports Corporation was recognised for his instrumental role in the eradication of fire ants from a central Queensland port.

"Kangaroo Island Freight Services, Middleton's Distribution and Biosecurity South Australia received the first joint industry and government award for their work successfully containing a Khapra beetle incursion.

"I was also especially pleased to see Vinehealth Australia awarded for their continuous work in protecting South Australia's vineyards from pests and diseases for 117 years.

"It was fitting that 2017's David Banks Biosecurity Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Bruce Christie for his work leading and successfully managing many responses to important pests and diseases, including the eradication of equine influenza from NSW.

"Mr Christie is currently Deputy Director General Biosecurity and Food Safety within the NSW Department of Primary Industries and is considered a national leader in biosecurity who has been protecting Australia from pests and diseases for more than 35 years.

Government Award winners included the team behind the development of CropSafe, an early warning system that detects outbreaks of exotic pests and diseases, and Agriculture Victoria's Biosecurity Branch, awarded for their biosecurity case management platform MAX, which allows end-to-end information systems to be deployed within days, resulting in a quicker and more efficient response.

Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia were also recognised for their significant Farm Biosecurity Program, which has led the way with the development of a suite of education and awareness raising tools for on-farm biosecurity.

"The work of tonight's winners is absolutely critical to ensure Australia's biosecurity system is ready and prepared to support the future of Australian agriculture," Minister Ruston said.