



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service



# Cargo Management eBulletin

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**Providing information to the Cargo and Shipping industries on the latest AQIS developments**

## ✦ **Seed Contamination on Imported New Vehicles**

In recent months AQIS surveillance inspections have detected a rise in the number of new vehicles imported into Australia from Asia that have been found to be contaminated with prohibited plant seed. Subsequent increased surveillance has resulted in long delays in quarantine clearance and congestion in some ports. Samples collected by AQIS Officers have been identified and found to include weedy species that pose a serious quarantine threat to Australia.

Following consultation with industry representatives, AQIS issued Notice to Industry 20/2008 'Contamination on imported new vehicles' outlining information on how to best prepare vehicles to be free of quarantine risk material (QRM) prior to export to Australia.

The notice to industry outlines that it is the importer's responsibility to ensure each consignment of new vehicles is clean and free of all QRM, including live insects, seeds, soil, mud, clay, animal faeces, animal material, plant material such as straw, twigs, leaves, roots, bark, food refuse and other debris prior to arrival in Australia.

Contamination of vehicles can occur at any point in the logistics chain from manufacturing plant to export facility, so it is important that inspections and remedial action take place immediately prior to loading the vehicles for export to Australia.

Notice to Industry 20/2008 'Contamination on imported new vehicles' can be found at, [www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/import/general-info/ian/07-08](http://www.daffa.gov.au/aqis/import/general-info/ian/07-08) or to obtain further information on contamination issues of new vehicles, contact Lindy Cayzer on (02) 6272 4938 or email [treat.inspect@aqis.gov.au](mailto:treat.inspect@aqis.gov.au)

**AQIS appreciates the continued co-operation of industry with this important activity.**

## ✦ **AQIS Expands Trial of Lodging Documents through E-mail**

The AQIS Import Clearance Documentary Assessment Project has been looking at alternatives to the current electronic lodgement mechanism (Zetafax) to help speed up the process of lodging documents with AQIS.

AQIS commenced an e-mail lodgement trial in late 2007 involving 7 brokers. The scope of this initial trial was limited to machinery imports only with documents being forwarded to the region in which they would normally be processed under current arrangements.

Though limited by its restricted scope, the initial trial has been successful and AQIS Import Clearance is now working closely with the AQIS/Industry Cargo Consultative Committee (AICCC) secretariat to further expand these email trials.

The next phase of the email trial will commence in mid March and will allow the same 7 brokers to e-mail documents for a broader range of commodities. Where successful, these trials will continue to be expanded to include more commodities, more regions and more brokerages.

✦ **AQIS Broadens AIMS Account Client trial to include more Brokers**

As outlined in the November issue of the Cargo Management eBulletin, AQIS will soon make it easier for regular clients to manage their service charges, following the successful trial of an account-based system. Under the AIMS Account Client Scheme, approved clients will not be required to make upfront payments.

AQIS will progress the full scheme implementation in line with the corporate wide Client Account Scheme scheduled for gradual implementation beginning in April 2008.

Since March 2007, in close consultation with industry, AQIS has been running a staged trial of the scheme with a number of brokerages around the country. The trial has proven to be very successful from both an AQIS and industry point of view. The trial has involved setting up regular, financially reliable users of AQIS services as "account clients" in AIMS to remove the requirement for up-front payment for AQIS services. Instead, these clients have the option of either making payment upon completion of each entry on receipt of a "final record of service" or being invoiced on a regular basis.

The scheme has the potential to significantly reduce the burden on industry in relation to the timing of payments as well as the amount of time and expense AQIS incurs on revenue activities.

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✦ **Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Review**

The AQIS Import Clearance Program is currently reviewing its BCP to ensure the clearance of imported goods remains possible during times of electronic systems outages. AQIS will also be an active participant in the Customs trial of their BCP arrangements on 19 March 2008. AQIS Import Clearance BCP regional representatives will trial their ability to access the Customs Business Continuity database on 14 March 2008.

The Business Continuity arrangements will mirror current consignment clearance procedures. Brokers will be required to submit consignment information to Customs who will provide an indication of the consignments status. Where the status is AQIS related, the broker will be required to provide additional information to their AQIS regional office. More information on Customs/AQIS BCP can be found at [www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=5729](http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=5729)

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✦ **Improvements to operational practices undertaken by suppliers to conform to AQIS's packing and cleanliness requirements**

From February 2007, importers have been advised by AQIS that their suppliers, who had been found to provide incorrect packing declarations and other supporting import documentation, would be subject to increased monitoring and inspections. This increased intervention would only cease when a number of consignments from the supplier are found to meet AQIS requirements following a full unpack inspection. These inspections not only add to the cost of clearing goods but also delay the release of consignments to importers.

Non compliance in the non-commodity area was generally attributed to:

- Bark,
- Undeclared timber packing,
- Soil, animal and/or plant material.

Notifying the importers of the increased monitoring of their shipments has resulted in importers becoming increasingly active in engaging their suppliers on focusing on AQIS's packing and cleanliness requirements. This in turn, has led to some suppliers introducing new procedures and technology in an effort to achieve compliance with AQIS, including:

- upgrading packaging and packaging materials,
- stricter inspection procedures prior to departure to ensure the cleanliness of containers and removal of bark, and
- changing suppliers and shipping agents in instances where repeated requests by importers for compliance to AQIS import requirements was not being met.

This initiative has had a positive effect in encouraging importers to facilitate an increased awareness of AQIS requirements by their suppliers. In turn this has resulted in a trend of greater compliance of import permit conditions.

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## ✦ Slight Improvement in Import Clearance Effectiveness Results

As industry is aware from past Cargo Management e-bulletins the Import Clearance Effectiveness (ICE) activities are integral to AQIS's management of its effectiveness. The data collected from these inspections is used to verify the effectiveness of Import Clearance risk profiling mechanisms and documentary assessment procedures.

The latest ICE reports indicate that **7.8%** of non-commodity items (eg. packaging and dunnage) and **1.1%** of commodities contain quarantine risk material that is either not declared or not detected through profiling mechanisms. This is commonly referred to as **leakage**. Over recent months, the non-commodity leakage figure has continued to reduce slightly from 8% to 7.8%, while the commodity leakage figure has remained steady.

The data continues to indicate greater problems with the non-commodity aspects of containerised cargo than with the cargo itself and ongoing concerns with the accuracy of documentation provided by overseas suppliers.

Non-conformities in documentation are dealt with by applying profiles against suppliers who provide non-compliant documentation, to target future shipments. This approach appears to be influencing supplier behaviour and gradually reducing the non-commodity leakage rate.

AQIS is currently looking at expanding data collection into air cargo bonds and collect data from existing inspections at Class 1 Quarantine Approved Premises. This will determine leakage of air cargo consignments and track detections of quarantine risk material and compare results against random data collection activities.

During one recent ICE inspection conducted on a container of building materials imported from China, Quarantine Officers found bark on timber packing material, lattice with rawhide and ropes and mats made of animal fibre. The quarantine risks were mitigated by gamma irradiation and methyl bromide fumigation, prior to being released.

AQIS looks forward to continuing working with industry on this important activity and further improving the integrity of our quarantine processes. If you would like to provide feedback or obtain information on Import Clearance Effectiveness activities, please call Margaret Ward on (02) 6272 5113 or email: [pimailbox@aqis.gov.au](mailto:pimailbox@aqis.gov.au). To obtain further information on how this initiative will affect your operations in particular, please contact the relevant ICE section within your local AQIS Regional Office:

**NSW:** Ph: (02) 8334 7663

**SA:** Ph: (08) 8201 6059

**WA:** Ph: (08) 9334 1515

**VIC:** Ph: (03) 8387 0103

**TAS:** Ph: (03) 6233 8229

**NT:** Ph: (02) 8920 7044

**QLD:** Ph: (07) 3246 8620

**FNQ:** Ph: (07) 4789 7888

## ✦ Summary of documents and alerts released by AQIS Cargo Management in January/February 2008

Reference Number	Document	Overview
1	<b>Public Quarantine Alert (PQA) 0544</b>	Additional Laboratory Approved for Testing Imported Prawns for Quarantine Purposes
2	<b>PQA 0545</b>	Additional USA Laboratory Approved for Overseas Seed Analysis Certification
3	<b>PQA 0542</b>	Notice to AQIS staff and Nursery Stock Importers: Importation of nursery stock
4	<b>PQA 0548</b>	Fresh Lyophyllum mushrooms
5	<b>Notice to Industry 20,2007/08</b>	Seed Contamination on Imported New Vehicles
6	<b>Shipping Industry Advice 08/07</b>	Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Outbreak in the Republic of Cyprus
7	<b>Shipping Industry Advice 09/07</b>	Ship Sanitation Certificates Transitional Arrangements

## ✦ Contact [cargobulletin@aqis.gov.au](mailto:cargobulletin@aqis.gov.au) if you have any queries, suggestions or requests for further information

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