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10 June 1998

ANIMAL QUARANTINE POLICY MEMORANDUM 1998/50

Chief Veterinary Officers, all States and the NT
Animal Programs Section, AQIS Operations
Office of the Australian CVO
Animal Diseases/Incidents Section, LPD, DPIE
Animal and Plant Health Branch, BRS
Australian Egg Industry Association
Australian Ostrich Association
Australian Chicken Growers Council Ltd
Australian Chicken Meat Federation

CSIRO Division of Animal Health
National Farmers' Federation
Quarantine and Animal Health Task Force, NFF
Australian Animal Health Council
Australian Veterinary Association
Australian Livestock Exporters' Council
National Meat Association of Australia
National Poultry Association
Australian Poultry Industries' Association

Veterinary Attache, Embassy of the USA
Veterinary Counsellors, Washington, Brussels & Seoul
Agricultural Counsellor, Tokyo

Commercial Counsellor, Embassy of Thailand
EU Delegation, Canberra
Chief Veterinary Officer, MAF RA, NZ

COOKED CHICKEN MEAT FROM THE USA, THAILAND AND DENMARK: FINALISATION OF CONDITIONS

In 1997, the Central Veterinary Laboratory, Weybridge, UK conducted trials on behalf of AQIS on the inactivation of infectious bursal disease virus (IBDV) strain CS88, a highly virulent strain of this virus which is exotic to Australia. The results of the trials indicated that the virus was unexpectedly resistant to heat inactivation with a 'tailing' effect, where some residual virus continued to resist inactivation, particularly at temperatures lower than 74 °C. Information on the results of the Weybridge trials were provided in Australian Quarantine Policy Memorandum 1997/93 of 7 November 1997.

In light of the unexpected divergence of the experimental results from previously published research, a Scientific Working Group was established to review the results of the Weybridge trials and make recommendations to AQIS on any further research for consideration. A summary of the Working Group's findings follows; the full report may be obtained from AQIS.

Conclusions of the Working Group:

- . the 1997 Weybridge trials were designed and conducted in a proper scientific and thoroughly professional way.
- . the most important reasons for the difference in results between the 1997 trial and a similar trial conducted in 1988 were the virus strains used and the menstruum (medium) in which they were suspended.

- . there was good correlation between time and temperature at 74 °C and 80 °C in the IBDV inactivation trial and these results were valid for calculation of cooking times as a basis for quarantine conditions for the importation of cooked chicken meat.

The Working Group recommended that:

- . 6D values for IBDV inactivation (ie time required to achieve a reduction of 10^6 in titre of virus as a safety factor) be recalculated on the basis of the new statistical analysis done for the Working Group.
cooking times could be calculated for temperatures between 74 °C and 80 °C.
- . extrapolations from the 1997 Weybridge trials not be made for cooking temperatures lower than 74 °C and higher than 80°C.
- . countries wishing to use different cooking temperatures should present a scientific case to AQIS based on 6D reduction times.
- . dialogue be established with appropriate international organisations to establish better standards to verify inactivation protocols for animal foodstuffs prepared for human consumption.
- . the Working Group could usefully remain as a standing reference group for AQIS. The Working Group would like to review and comment on the revised draft quarantine protocol before its adoption.

AQIS accepts the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations with the exception of the final point above. The Weybridge trials demonstrated evidence of 'complete' inactivation (ie no virus detected) at 80° at ≥ 125 minutes. This suggests that it may be possible to obtain a satisfactory level of virus inactivation at higher temperatures within reasonable time periods. However, until further data are available, AQIS will not consider extrapolation outside the range 74-80°C. Prospective importers or exporters or agencies in countries seeking access may wish to present scientific information as a basis for the establishment of alternative cooking times. If proponents intend to conduct specific research to provide such information, it would be prudent for them to liaise with AQIS in the development of research protocols.

As recommended by the Working Group, the Commonwealth Chief Veterinary Officer and AQIS will approach the OIE concerning the need to develop international standards for verifying the inactivation of animal pathogens in processed animal products for human consumption.

AQIS considers that the proposal that the Working Group remain as a standing reference group for AQIS would be inconsistent with the approach which would normally be followed for import risk analyses, in accordance with Government policy, since each import risk analysis panel is to recommend what expert working groups are required and their composition; moreover, the composition of the risk analysis panel itself, including independent members as appropriate, is a matter for consultation with stakeholders. Additionally the working group was not constituted under

its terms of reference to review and comment on the draft quarantine protocol and, given the extensive consultation already conducted, AQIS considers no further review is warranted.

AQIS has revised the cooking parameters in the Quarantine Requirements for the importation of cooked chicken meat in line with the recommendations of the working party. A copy of the final conditions is at Attachment 1. AQIS does not propose to conduct further investigation or research into this matter at this time.

Unless otherwise advised, these conditions will come into effect on 10 August 1998. This takes account of Australia's obligations to notify the WTO and allow a reasonable period for WTO members to provide comments.

AQIS has received inquiries from importers wishing to source cooked chicken meat from regions other than the USA, Thailand and Denmark. The reason for the high cooking parameters specified in the present protocol was to address the risk posed by infectious bursal disease virus which is presently the most resistant avian pathogen of concern. AQIS proposes to respond to requests for import of cooked chicken meat from other regions by conducting a routine risk analysis. In the absence of any new disease risks being identified, which cannot be managed by the proposed cooking requirements, the attached import protocol will form the basis for import. Approval of a region will depend on the outcome of an evaluation of the veterinary services and inspections of processing establishments. Processing establishments located in countries of which AQIS has previously evaluated the veterinary services, and has a knowledge of that country's public health, animal health and regulatory standards, will be audited at an early stage after trade has commenced.

SARAH KAHN
Assistant Director
Animal Quarantine Policy Branch

Contact Officer:	Linda Corner
Telephone no:	(02) 6272 5171
Facsimile no:	(02) 6272 3399
E-mail:	linda.corner@dpi.gov.au

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