



31 August 1999

ANIMAL QUARANTINE POLICY MEMORANDUM 1999/62

Chief Veterinary Officers, all States and the NT
Animal Programs Section, AQIS Operations
Office of the Australian CVO
Animal and Plant Health Branch, NOAPH
Veterinary Counsellors, Washington, Brussels & Seoul
Agricultural Counsellor, Tokyo
Australian Dairy Industry Council
Meat and Livestock Association
Australian Alpaca Association
Australian Egg Industry Association
Australian Horse Council
Australian Ostrich Association
Australian Trout and Salmon Farmers Association
Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association Ltd
Australian Seafood Importers Association
Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Division of Marine Research, CSIRO
Australian Seafood Industry Council
Australian Institute of Marine Science
ACIAR Fisheries Coordinator
PIJAC
Tuna Boat Owners Association
Standing Committee on Fisheries & Aquaculture
Aquaculture Committee
Wildlife Australia, Environment Australia
Wildlife Protection Section, Environment Australia
Chief Veterinary Officer, MAF RA, NZ

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
Australian Registered Cattle Breeders' Association
Australian Poultry Industries' Association
Deer Industry Association of Australia
National Poultry Association
Pork Council of Australia
Australian Recreational & Sport Fishing Confederation
Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch, AFFA
Fisheries Research & Development Corporation
Fishing Industry Advisory Committee
Aquaculture CRC Limited
Australian Prawn Farmer's Association
Australian Aquaculture Forum
Food and Beverage Importers Council
WA Fishing Industry Council
Health and Environment Committee
Aquatic Animal Disease Experts
Scientific and Research Organisations
Fishing, Industry and Community Organisations

EU Delegation, Canberra

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPROVAL OF COUNTRIES TO EXPORT ANIMALS (INCLUDING FISH) AND THEIR PRODUCTS TO AUSTRALIA.

This Animal Quarantine Policy Memorandum provides finalised guidelines for the approval of countries to export animals and their products to Australia.

Under the SPS Agreement a member is required to apply quarantine measures in a non-discriminatory manner. In line with our obligations the Animal Quarantine Policy Branch (AQPB) has been moving towards the development of generic import conditions (ie all sources) for animals (including fish) and their products. Nevertheless, in recognition of the difference in confidence provided by export certification from different countries, it has been necessary to formulate guidelines by which a country's capacity to meet Australia's import requirements can be assessed.

AQPM 1999/41 sent in June 1999 provided stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on AQIS's proposed guidelines for approving countries to export animals (including fish) and their products to Australia. A period of 30 days consultation was provided.

Few responses were received. Of those who responded the following comments were made:

- *There was comment on the statement, “ AQIS monitors the performance of approved countries in reporting OIE listed diseases, and notifying Australia of changes in disease status, including any incursions of disease that might affect bilateral trade in animals/products.” The comment was that there was no explanation as to how AQIS achieved this, and that it may be more difficult in practice than in theory.*

Whilst acknowledging the difficulties involved, AQIS has a network of overseas contacts, official and unofficial, and takes serious account of any information received from these sources. Early warning advice also comes through electronic communication systems and overseas governments may be asked to clarify unofficial reports.

- *The importance of having bilateral agreements was stressed by two respondents. One particularly expressed concern about significant disease agents not reported to the OIE. It was suggested that all exporting countries should enter into bilateral agreements with Australia.*
- *Concerns were expressed that the guidelines did not account for diseases not regularly monitored by the competent authority in the exporting country.*

The above two points deal with a similar theme. Where regular consignments are expected of a commodity likely to be affected by a non-OIE listed disease of concern, a bilateral agreement, to inform Australia of any outbreak, would be part of the approval process.

- *Concerns were raised about the risk of faulty certification.*

This underlines the need to assess and monitor the performance of certifying authorities in exporting countries.

- *One respondent preferred all certification to be supplied by the Official Veterinary Authority rather than some other authority.*

This has been addressed by the inclusion, in the guidelines, of an explanatory paragraph on appropriate certifying authorities under g) appropriate arrangements for certification/documentation.

- *The inclusion of a requirement that the exporting country practice similar eradication policies as Australia with respect to most OIE List A diseases was suggested.*
- *The inclusion of a section to deal with disease surveillance within exporting countries was also suggested.*

These have been adopted with additional words under: “d) Animal health controls” in the guidelines. Eradication policies, where appropriate to Australian import conditions should be the equivalent of those in place in Australia.

- *There was a suggestion that importations of stockfeed of plant origin should also be limited to approved countries.*

New conditions for the importation of stockfeed of plant origin were promulgated on 16 August this year. These are generic, and specify that permits will only be issued for approved countries. The same guidelines will be used in approving countries to export stockfeed of plant origin to Australia.

Next Steps

The finalised guidelines (Attachment 1) will be adopted and become effective from today, 31 August 1999.

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1982*, all submissions received in response to Animal Quarantine Policy Memoranda will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports prepared on the subject matter of the Memoranda.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reveal the identity of a respondent unless a request for anonymity accompanies the submission. Where a request for anonymity does not accompany the submission the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 of the Privacy Act.

The contents of the submission will not be treated as confidential unless they are marked 'confidential' and they are capable of being classified as such in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

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Animal Quarantine Policy Branch

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