



19 July 2000

ANIMAL QUARANTINE POLICY MEMORANDUM 2000/34

IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS: UNCOOKED CHICKEN MEAT

DISMISSAL OF APPEALS

This Animal Quarantine Policy Memorandum (AQPM) advises of the dismissal of appeals against the scope and timing of, and the membership of the risk analysis panel (RAP) for the import risk analysis (IRA) of uncooked chicken meat.

AQPM 2000/23 announced the AQIS Executive Director's decision on the scope of the IRA of uncooked chicken meat and the membership of the RAP which will conduct the analysis. The appeal period closed on 15 May 2000. Appeals were received from the Australian Veterinary Poultry Association (AVPA) and the Australian Chicken Growers Council (ACGC).

The AVPA considered that the RAP lacked current and recent industry expertise in farming practices and current diseases of poultry and sought the appointment of a particular poultry consultant to the panel.

In its submission the ACGC raised several issues, including that State Governments should be represented on the panel by a current employee of a State or Territory Government and that AQIS should have provided details of the risk analysis process, including timing and proposed arrangements for technical working groups.

The Director of Quarantine, who is the Secretary of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia, considered the appeals and concluded that AQIS had followed proper processes, that the RAP should be constituted as proposed, and the IRA should proceed accordingly. The Secretary advised that AQIS and the RAP will consult with stakeholders throughout the IRA. The work schedule of the IRA and the composition of technical working groups will be decided by the RAP when it meets.

The Secretary also advised that the members of the RAP have an appropriate mix of technical and scientific skills and an appropriate balance of industry and policy experience.

The ACGC also raised questions on the means by which veterinary residue issues will be handled in the risk analysis and Australia's interpretation of international obligations and the way these obligations will be addressed in the risk analysis. While not appealable matters, AQIS provides the following explanation.

Under the Quarantine Act 1908, residues of veterinary drugs and agricultural chemicals are not the subject of quarantine control. The food safety issues associated with residues in foods are addressed

in the Australian Food Standards Codes promulgated by the Australia New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA). In accordance with normal arrangements, AQIS will keep ANZFA informed of progress on the IRA, to ensure that the Authority has the opportunity to meet its responsibilities for risk categorisation under the relevant legislation in a timely way.

AQIS's interpretation of the term 'international trade obligations' refers to the Australian Government's understanding of relevant obligations. AQIS will consider the application of relevant international standards (ie as set out in the OIE International Animal Health Code) as a means to address the quarantine risks associated with exotic poultry diseases. Australia may adopt measures which are more stringent than a relevant international standard provided such measures are based on sufficient scientific evidence and a risk assessment appropriate to the circumstances, and reflect a consistent approach to risk management.

Next Steps

The risk analysis panel will meet shortly to develop its work program. AQIS will then issue a further AQPM to stakeholders.

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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