



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

Notice to Industry

34/2008-09

ACCEPTANCE OF AQIS ISSUED “CLEARANCE LETTERS” WITHOUT EXPIRY DATES

The purpose of this notice is to advise that from 1 March 2009 AQIS will cease acceptance of Clearance Letters without expiry dates.

What is a Clearance Letter?

A Clearance Letter is a document issued by AQIS where:

- a) an assessment of a commodity has been performed by AQIS Canberra;
- b) the [Quarantine Proclamation 1998](#) does not support the issuance of an Import Permit for the commodity; and
- c) there is no clear single [ICON](#) case that adequately covers the commodity.

The issuance of Clearance Letters prevents the need for continued referral by industry to entry processing staff to perform detailed assessments each time products are imported. This therefore avoids delays in the movement of cargo. Clearance Letters are commodity and importer specific, and contain import conditions.

Clearance Letters have previously been issued without expiry dates, but this practice has been rectified in recent years.

How will this impact Importers?

It is understood that there are approximately 18 Clearance Letters without expiry dates that are presented to AQIS regional offices each week, nationwide. On occasions it is the same Clearance Letter that is presented each time. Importers will need to contact the [AQIS Program relevant to the particular product being imported](#), to determine if a Clearance Letter is still required, and how to obtain a new Clearance Letter.

Any new Clearance Letters will be issued with a 2 year expiry date, meaning that the commodity will require re-assessment 2 years from the date of issue. Depending on the complexity of the commodity, it is advisable that Importers submit requests for re-assessment at least ten working days before the expiry date. This will prevent unnecessary delays to consignments.

AQIS acknowledges that Clearance Letters are issued for low risk commodities, but it is important that products are re-assessed periodically, to allow consideration of changing pest and disease profiles of commodities as well as changing manufacturing practices.

Further Information:

Should you require more information about this Notice, please contact the [Entry Management Team](#), AQIS Canberra on (02) 6272 3390.