



Department of
**AGRICULTURE
FISHERIES &
FORESTRY -
AUSTRALIA**



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ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2003/02

IMPORT OF WALLABIES FROM NEW ZEALAND AMENDMENT OF CURRENT INTERIM CONDITIONS

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) provides stakeholders with proposed amended interim quarantine requirements for the importation of wallabies from New Zealand. Amendment is required to facilitate the importation of tammar wallabies, descended from a population now extinct in Australia, to establish a population in the former range of this species in South Australia. Comments by 7 March 2003 would be appreciated.

In about 1870 Sir George Grey, former Governor of New Zealand and previously of South Australia, liberated a wide variety of exotic animals and birds, including brush-tailed possums and several wallaby species, on Kawau Island in the Hauraki Gulf some 40 km north of Auckland. Most of the wallaby species and the possums thrived and have long been considered pests because of their impact on the ecosystem of Kawau. It is intended that they be eradicated from the island.

A study by Macquarie University scientists in 1998 [Taylor AC and Cooper DW *Animal Conservation* (1999) 2. 41-49] concluded that New Zealand tammar wallabies are descendants of an extinct and distinct Australian population, and that it would be highly desirable to establish a colony of these animals in their native South Australia. The South Australian Department of Heritage and Environment proposes to re-establish a population on the Eyre Peninsular. Details of the proposal, which has the support of both Biosecurity Australia and Environment Australia (EA), can be found among archived notices on the EA website: www.ea.gov.au/biodiversity/trade-use .

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) currently allows the importation of macropods into Australia under 'Interim quarantine requirements for the importation of marsupials and monotremes' dated 5 July 1999 as amended on 22 April 2002 (Attachment A). These interim requirements are intended to apply until a more comprehensive import risk analysis (IRA) is completed although they are subject to updating – see ABPM 2002/50 Attachment E.

Wallabies on Kawau Island cannot comply with certification requirement 2.1, and therefore 2.2 of the interim condition, as the island is not “a government registered or licensed zoological gardens or wildlife park, or a government approved facility ...” The purpose of requirements 2.1 & 2.2 is to give a basis for confidence in the health status attested under 2.3. Alternative certification that provides equivalent quarantine security is therefore required.

Of the diseases of quarantine concern identified in requirement 2.3, New Zealand is free from all but tuberculosis.

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The animals on Kawau Island are almost certainly free from tuberculosis. As far as is known, no marsupials have been taken to the island for many years, possibly not since the original introductions in the 19th century. Hundreds of wallabies have been exported from Kawau Island to many countries in the past two decades with no significant disease problems noted or recorded. Disease has not been reported in possums. Most of New Zealand north of Auckland is recognised as free from bovine tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium bovis*). There are no deer or cattle on the island to maintain a reservoir of *M bovis*, farming on the island having been abandoned in 1973 following 30 years of decline.

However, to confirm freedom from tuberculosis, it is proposed to require the thorough post-mortem examination of at least 30 wallabies with negative results prior to allowing importation. Some possums will also be examined. The wallabies will also be checked for evidence of Johnes' Disease and parasite burdens, although it is not proposed that this be a certification requirement. The results of the latter examinations will be used to decide on post-import health management.

It is further proposed to require the animals to undergo 6 months post-arrival quarantine isolation and health monitoring at a quarantine approved premises (in this case Monarto Zoo), rather than 30 days, to compensate for not having that period of observation prior to export.

Proposed amended quarantine requirements, to apply to the importation of wallabies from New Zealand, are at Attachment B. These are based on the updated interim quarantine requirements for marsupials and monotremes. Appropriate amendments, to provide quarantine security equivalent to the current requirements (as discussed above), have been made to certification requirements 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 and to post-arrival quarantine requirement 4.1.

Next Steps

Biosecurity Australia would welcome comments on the proposal from stakeholders. Comments received by 7 March 2003 will be considered in finalising the amended conditions.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should contact the officer listed below.

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to ABPMs will be publicly available. Comments 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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