



Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service



IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

The agriculture sector's contribution to the wellbeing of Australians, the strength of the Australian economy and the health of the natural environment are underpinned by a conservative approach to managing animal health risks in quarantine policy and border controls.

The Biosecurity Services Group of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) manages pest and disease threats associated with imports with policies and procedures that meet international obligations under the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). The group also works with the Trade and Market Access Division of DAFF to facilitate technical market access for exporters of agricultural products, including live animals and animal products.

This chapter outlines the import and export-related activities of the Biosecurity Services Group (encompassing the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service [AQIS] and Biosecurity Australia) in 2010.

6.1 Biosecurity reforms

Australia has a strong and effective biosecurity system that must adapt to meet new challenges, such as climate change and increasing global trade.

On 18 December 2008, the Australian Government released *One Biosecurity: A Working Partnership* — the independent review of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements (the Beale Review). In its preliminary response, the government agreed in principle to the review panel's 84 recommendations.

The Australian Government continues to reform biosecurity in a number of areas to build a better biosecurity system that fosters partnerships, improves governance structures and targets risks. Change will be incremental and ongoing.

Key reform activities in 2010 include:

- endorsement of the draft Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity and the draft National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement by primary industries and natural resource management ministers
- establishment of the Biosecurity Advisory Council to provide independent advice to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on biosecurity policies and activities across the biosecurity continuum
- commencement of risk-based intervention trials at the border — this involves moving away from mandatory intervention targets and focusing resources based on analysis of risks and returns
- continued development of new biosecurity legislation to replace the *Quarantine Act 1908* and other relevant pieces of legislation
- continued scoping work on a significant upgrade of information and communication technology systems and future arrangements for post-entry quarantine facilities
- amendments to legislation for imported food, which came into effect on 17 February 2010 — these amendments enable AQIS to enter into compliance agreements with importers, formally recognising their food safety management systems.

6.2 Imports

The importation of animals and animal products into Australia is regulated by DAFF under the *Quarantine Act 1908* and its subordinate legislation, and by the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and its subordinate legislation.

6.2.1 Import risk analyses

Many of Australia's quarantine requirements are based on the standards, guidelines and recommendations established by international organisations, such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). However, additional measures are sometimes needed to reduce risk to an acceptable level. Import conditions are only applied to the extent necessary to protect human, animal or plant health.

A regulated import risk analysis (IRA) process came into effect in September 2007. Timeframes for the completion of IRAs are prescribed through regulations, and provide for either a standard or expanded IRA process, depending on the complexity of the science and

the nature of the biosecurity risks. A standard IRA will be completed within 24 months and an expanded IRA within 30 months. IRAs can also be conducted using a nonregulated pathway; for example, where an existing policy is reviewed.

The methods used to conduct IRAs are in line with Australian Government policy, the *Quarantine Act 1908* and its subordinate legislation, the requirements of the SPS Agreement, and relevant international animal health standards. The report of the IRA is a key document that assesses the quarantine risks and, where appropriate, recommends risk management measures. The IRA process provides for a number of public consultations, including consultation on the draft report.

In 2010, the Animal Biosecurity branch finalised or made progress with a number of IRAs:

- horses from approved countries — a quarantine policy determination was made in March 2010
- beef and beef products from Canada, Japan and the United States — concurrent IRAs commenced on 8 April 2010
 - the 'stop the clock' provision was applied to the IRA of beef and beef products from Japan, effective from 10 May 2010, following the detection of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in breeding cattle at a farm in Miyazaki Prefecture, Kyushu
 - the 'stop the clock' provision was also applied to the IRA of beef and beef products from Canada, with effect from 24 November 2010, to allow technical information to be provided
- prawns and prawn products — a quarantine policy determination was made in April 2010
- freshwater ornamental finfish, including review of biosecurity risks associated with gourami iridovirus and related viruses — a provisional final IRA was completed in July 2010.

6.2.2 Policy reviews

Policy reviews are science based and conducted in consultation with stakeholders. In 2010, the Animal Biosecurity branch finalised policy reviews for:

- zoo bovids from New Zealand — a quarantine policy determination was made in February 2010
- ruminant genetic material from Europe — a draft policy review of the bluetongue risks associated with cattle, sheep, goat and deer semen and embryos from the European Union, and cattle semen and embryos from Switzerland and Norway, was circulated to stakeholders in June 2010



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- penguins from New Zealand — requirements for importation were amended in November 2010.

6.2.3 Biological products

Biological products include a wide range of products derived from humans, animals, plants and microorganisms that are used for food, therapeutics, research or analytical work. Examples of biological products are diagnostic and analytical kits and reagents, vaccines and other therapeutics, human and animal food products, bioremediation agents (living organisms used to clean contaminated soil or water) and organic fertilisers.

The importation of biological products into Australia is governed by the *Quarantine Act 1908*. Under the Act, many biological products need an import permit from the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine. Permits are issued based on an assessment of the risk associated with importation. The assessment takes into account:

- policy advice from an appropriate branch of DAFF (for example, Animal Biosecurity) or authority (for example, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing)
- the biological contents of the product
- the relevant plant or animal health status of the country of origin for each biological component
- the manufacturing processes for the ingredients and the product
- the proposed end use of the product
- the facility (if any) in which the product is to be held.

Appropriate conditions are included in the import permit to manage the quarantine risk of each biological product. Import permits are normally issued for multiple shipments over two years; however, permits may be revoked or amended if there are changes to the quarantine risk for an import.

During 2010, staff responded to approximately 7000 applications for import permits for biological products, 8000–10 000 email enquiries to a generic email address (not including inquiries to individual officers) and 15 000–20 000 phone calls through a public helpline.

This year, two previously FMD-free countries — the Republic of Korea and Japan — reported outbreaks of FMD in their livestock. Australia does not import any live animals that are susceptible to FMD from these countries, but does routinely import products sourced from animals. On the basis of scientific advice from the Animal Biosecurity branch, AQIS suspended a range of imports from these countries, including dairy products, skins and hides, laboratory materials and veterinary therapeutics. Other products, such as processed meats, pet food, wool, leather products and farming equipment, were assessed on a case-by-case basis.

6.2.4 Live animal import program

The live animal import program:

- assesses applications to import animals
- issues import permits with appropriate conditions
- audits health certification for compliance with import conditions
- examines imported animals and genetic material on arrival
- liaises with overseas certifying authorities to verify that certification is consistent with import conditions and international standards for the live animal trade
- inspects and approves some overseas pre-export quarantine facilities
- formulates standards for AQIS-approved privately operated quarantine premises, and inspects, monitors and audits these premises.

6.2.5 Animal quarantine program

AQIS operates four animal quarantine stations with the capacity to manage imported animals — dogs, cats, horses, ruminants, hatching eggs, live pigeons and bees — that are subject to a period of quarantine. The animal quarantine program ensures that facilities and the care of animals being quarantined meet acceptable standards for biosecurity and for animal health and welfare.

The quarantine stations are situated at Eastern Creek (New South Wales), Spotswood (Victoria), Torrens Island (South Australia) and Byford (Western Australia). Each is approximately one hour's drive from the international airport terminal, allowing animals to be transferred for examination and quarantine soon after their arrival.

Equine influenza inquiry

AQIS continued implementing the response plan to the inquiry into equine influenza following the outbreak of this disease in Australia in 2007. Professor Peter Shergold AC, former secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, continued to serve as an independent expert, providing regular external assessments of the implementation to June 2010. Professor Shergold reported to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in March 2010 and July 2010.

In his fifth and final report, Professor Shergold concluded that the challenge of implementing new and improved quarantine procedures had been met to a high standard, and that the process used represented an effective model for future management of complex projects. The reports are on AQIS's website.⁷⁰

Most recommendations from the inquiry have now been implemented, apart from some long-term and ongoing recommendations. The focus has turned to applying the lessons from the inquiry to the importation of other species and commodities to strengthen import measures.

6.3 Exports

The Australian Government seeks to improve trade opportunities and access arrangements for Australian agricultural products through active participation in the Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations. In addition to gains realised through multilateral activities, Australian producers have benefited from a plurilateral free trade agreement with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through the ASEAN

Australia New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, effective from 1 January 2010. Producers continued to benefit from bilateral free trade agreements with Chile, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand and the United States. Free trade agreements are currently being negotiated with China, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Japan, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. Australia is also participating in the negotiation of a Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus agreement with Pacific island nations, and a Trans Pacific Partnership agreement with Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Vietnam.

The Animal Biosecurity branch works with industry to take advantage of market access opportunities. Major activities include:

- consulting with industry on export priorities and strategies
- identifying impediments in importing country requirements and international standards, and developing arguments to resolve them
- developing relationships with key trading partners and, where appropriate, implementing bilateral formal agreements or memorandums
- maintaining access to foreign markets during disease or pest emergencies by contributing to technical negotiations with overseas authorities
- contributing to the development of international standards.

6.3.1 Legislation

The *Export Control Act 1982* controls the export of goods, including live animals and meat, processed food, animal reproductive material and a range of other animal products. The export of live animals and animal reproductive material is documented more specifically in the Export Control (Animals) Order 2004. The export of meat, processed food and some other animal products is covered by other subordinate legislation, including the:

- Export Control (Meat and Meat Products) Orders 2005
- Export Control (Eggs and Egg Products) Orders 2005
- Export Control (Fish and Fish Products) Orders 2005
- Export Control (Milk and Milk Products) Orders 2005
- Export Control (Rabbit and Ratite) Orders 1985
- Export Control (Wild Game Meat and Wild Game Meat Products) Orders 2010
- Export Control (Poultry Meat and Poultry Meat Products) Orders 2010.

70 www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/live-animals/eiimplementation

These orders operate in conjunction with the Export Control (Prescribed Goods — General) Orders 2005. More detail can be found in Chapter 7.

All exporters of red meat and livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, buffalo, deer and camelids) require an export licence under the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*.

6.3.2 Technical input for market access

In 2010, the Animal Biosecurity branch assisted with approximately 80 issues involving more than 50 countries, including technical matters in the export of:

- cattle to China, Fiji, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Solomon Islands, Taiwan and Turkey
- bovine semen and embryos to Mongolia, Panama, South Africa and the United States
- sheep and goats to Argentina, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey
- sheep and goat semen and embryos to the European Union and Colombia
- honey bees to various countries
- salmonid eggs to Chile.

Increased acceptance by trading partners of Australia's bluetongue-free zone for exports of ruminants remains a high priority.

6.3.3 Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

The Export Standards branch of AQIS provides technical input and assists with negotiating access to new markets for Australian meat, processed food and other animal products. The branch also responds to the challenges of variations in importing country requirements, including changes in food safety requirements, animal or public health legislation, or other specialised inspection procedures (such as halal slaughter). Export Standards branch provides resources for maintaining, improving and gaining market access for animal and fish products to more than 160 countries.

In 2010, the Export Standards branch:

- facilitated numerous reviews of Australia's production systems for meat and other processed food, including by Russia, the Republic of Korea, the European Union, Indonesia and Malaysia (reviews are integral to the maintenance of many export markets)
- negotiated new or improved market access, and developed certification for a range of commodities and markets, including red meat to Iran, grain-fed high-quality beef and horse meat to the European

Union, dairy products to Russia, crocodile meat to New Zealand, a range of seafoods to India, bivalves and eggs to Singapore and bivalves to Hong Kong

- facilitated market access for meat and meat products to Muslim countries through the Australian Government Authorised Halal Program
- assisted Australian exporters when problems arose in clearing consignments in importing countries.

AQIS's role in certifying and inspecting meat and other food products for export is covered in detail in Chapter 7.

Export certification and inspection services for live animals

AQIS confirms the fitness of Australian live animals and animal reproductive material for export, and verifies that the requirements of the importing countries have been met. These activities involve:

- assisting with negotiating technical market access for live animals and animal reproductive material
- inspecting live animals and animal reproductive material for export, and assessing documentation
- issuing export permits and health certificates to Australian exporters of live animals and animal reproductive material
- auditing the procedures undertaken by licensed exporters, operators of registered premises and accredited veterinarians
- licensing exporters of livestock
- registering premises for the assembly, isolation and quarantine of livestock intended for export
- accrediting AQIS-approved veterinarians for the preparation and inspection of livestock for export.

6.3.4 International standards

DAFF contributes to the development of international standards through its involvement in multilateral organisations and groups. These include the World Trade Organization and its committees, the Food Safety and Animal Health Quadrilateral Forum (Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States), the OIE, and the Codex Alimentarius Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

DAFF's active participation in these groups helps develop international rules and standards that reflect Australia's interests and situation.