25 June 2002

Please note there was an error with the previous version of this memorandum and attachment, relating to packaging requirements.

ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM  2002/33

QUARANTINE REVIEW: HIGHLY PROCESSED PRAWN PRODUCTS

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) provides advice to stakeholders on changes to the biosecurity policy for highly processed prawn products. These changes will be implemented immediately.

On 28 May 2001 (ABPM 2001/11) Biosecurity Australia announced the full range of interim measures for the import of uncooked prawns and prawn products. These measures reflect the recommendations of the draft Import Risk Analysis report on uncooked prawns and prawn products and were implemented by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) as interim measures following an incident where imported prawns were inadvertently fed to crustacean broodstock.

In October 2001, Biosecurity Australia received a submission requesting that we undertake an assessment of these interim measures relating to highly processed prawn products and the emergency harvest clause in the health certification. The submission provided evidence that prawns that have been peeled to at least the last tail segment, are breaded or battered and are greater than 18grams presented a lower quarantine risk than other types of uncooked prawn products and, in light of this requested, that the emergency harvest clause in the health certification be removed.

Biosecurity Australia considered the request in terms of the pest and disease risk, ie. likelihood of pest/disease establishment and resulting impact.

Issues

The key considerations in this assessment included that the:

. prawns are imported pre-coated, ready to be cooked by the consumer and in many cases are pre-fried;
. prawns used in these products are large (greater than 18g);
. product is unlikely to be further processed before cooking therefore any resultant waste will be cooked before disposal; and
. products of this nature are not preferred for use as bait and berley not only because of the breadcrumb and batter coatings but also because of the prohibitive cost.

Biosecurity Australia assessed that the extremely low probability that this product would be used as bait or processed commercially more than offsets any increase
in the likelihood that these highly processed prawns may be infected with disease as a result of the removal of the emergency harvest clause. In developing the changes to the biosecurity policy for highly processed prawns, Biosecurity Australia sought comments from the State and Territory Governments, the Australian Prawn Farmers Association and the Seafood Importers Association of Australasia. All issues raised have been addressed in the modified policy.

**Import policy changes**

For these highly processed prawn products the required certification will now contain the following clause instead of the emergency harvest clause

‘The prawns included in this consignment:
. have been peeled to at least the last tail segment;
. are breaded or battered;
. have a finished product grade size count of, at least, 55 per kilo (or 21/25 per pound); and
. are packaged in lots of no more than 3kg in weight.’

The modified biosecurity policy for highly processed prawns is at Attachment A.

**Next steps**

The policy will be implemented immediately. Should you require clarification or have questions on any of the information provided above please contact Dr Vanessa Findlay on the details 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 Animal Biosecurity 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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