



Australian Government
Biosecurity Australia

16 May 2006

BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA POLICY MEMORANDUM 2006/16

**PRAWNS AND PRAWN PRODUCTS IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS (IRA) – REVISED
IRA TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND PROGRESS REPORT**

This Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum (BAPM) informs stakeholders of a change to the prawns and prawn products IRA team and of the outcome of initial research into the susceptibility of Australian prawns to Taura syndrome virus (TSV).

The prawn IRA commenced in 1996 with an issues paper (Animal Quarantine Policy Memoranda 1998/96) released in 1998 and a draft IRA report (Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) 2000/41) released in August 2000. Interim measures for uncooked prawns were introduced in 2000 and 2001 to address risks associated with white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) and yellowhead virus (YHV) (ABPM 2000/57, 2001/06 and 2001/11). These include size limitations, health certification from the relevant government authority in the exporting country, post arrival inspection in Australia by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and testing for WSSV. In May 2002, it was decided to release a revised draft IRA report that is now at an advanced stage of preparation.

The IRA team has continued to meet regularly to prepare the revised draft report. Additional resources within Biosecurity Australia have been allocated to the IRA and I have now appointed Dr Mike Nunn, Principal Scientist, Biosecurity Australia, to take over as chair of the IRA team. He comes with extensive experience in scientific analysis and providing advice in animal health policy. Dr Robyn Martin, General Manager, Animal Biosecurity, Biosecurity Australia will remain as a member of the IRA team. The overall membership of the prawn IRA team is therefore:

Dr Mike Nunn, Principal Scientist, Animal Biosecurity, Biosecurity Australia (Chair)
Dr Leigh Owens (James Cook University) – aquatic animal health expert
Dr Brian Jones (Department of Fisheries, Western Australia) – aquatic animal health expert
Mr Glen Hurry (DAFF) – fisheries and aquaculture management
Dr Robyn Martin, General Manager, Animal Biosecurity, Biosecurity Australia.

Biosecurity Australia and the IRA team have been monitoring developments regarding the emergence of the prawn disease, TSV, including the spread of TSV into parts of Asia, the increased volume of imports, the lower cost of vannamei imports from Asia, and scientific information on the virus. TSV is exotic to Australia and is not a human health concern.

Taura syndrome is an internationally reportable viral disease affecting mainly vannamei prawns (*Litopenaeus vannamei*). Originally reported from Ecuador in cultured *L. vannamei*, the disease has since been associated with production losses in the Americas, and more recently in Asia. Its spread is usually associated with movements of live prawns. It is not

known to manifest as a significant disease in the prawn species produced in Australia and there is no commercial vannamei prawn fishing or farming in Australia.

Biosecurity Australia has commissioned the Aquaculture Pathology Laboratory, University of Arizona in the United States, to research the susceptibility of five Australian crustacean species to infection with the Thai and Belize isolates of TSV by ingestion of infected prawn meat or by injection. The species were:

- . banana prawn *Fenneropenaeus merguensis* (challenged only with Thai TSV isolate),
- . black tiger prawn *Penaeus monodon*,
- . redclaw *Cherax quadricarinatus*,
- . marron *Cherax tenuimanus* and
- . the giant freshwater prawn *Macrobrachium rosenbergii*.

Significant clinical disease due to TSV was not observed in any of the Australian species challenged. Nor did challenge with TSV result in cumulative mass mortalities that are typical of TSV outbreaks among susceptible species. TSV nucleic acid was detected in all the species, although an active (replicative) infection was only detected in *Fenneropenaeus merguensis* and *Penaeus monodon*, following injection challenge. The positive control prawns, *L. vannamei*, which were treated in the same way as the Australian animals, developed the disease and died.

Further information on the research is available from Biosecurity Australia's website at www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au or available in hard copy from Biosecurity Australia on request. Due to the low number of some experimental animals, Biosecurity Australia has commissioned the University of Arizona to repeat the study for banana and black tiger prawns.

Biosecurity Australia and the IRA team will continue to monitor and review the situation in light of the latest available scientific information on TSV and will continue to assess the suitability of the current controls to meet any new or changed risks.

Consultation

For further information on the IRA team members please contact the officer below.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should get in touch with the contact officer (details below).

Information on IRAs and policy reviews being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on the Internet at www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au.

Confidentiality

Stakeholders are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to 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 1988*.

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 1982*.

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A/g Chief Executive

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