



Australian Government
Biosecurity Australia

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**COMMENCEMENT OF AN IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS FOR
ORNAMENTAL FINFISH WITH RESPECT TO GOURAMI IRIDOVIRUS**

This Biosecurity Australia Advice announces the formal commencement of an Import Risk Analysis (IRA) under the regulated IRA process to review Australia's freshwater ornamental finfish policy with respect to quarantine risks associated with gourami iridovirus (GIV).

This analysis will be undertaken as a standard IRA, requiring completion within 24 months from announcement.

Biosecurity Australia is presently preparing a draft IRA report which will be circulated to stakeholders shortly for comment. Stakeholders will have up to 60 days to submit written comments on the draft report and will have opportunities to discuss matters raised in any submissions directly with Biosecurity Australia.

Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum 2007/20 of 12 September 2007 advised stakeholders that changes to the IRA process had been implemented on 5 September 2007 when regulations made under the *Quarantine Act 1908* formally took effect. That advice also notified the transitional arrangements for Biosecurity Australia's import work program, including a number of risk analyses that commenced under the previous arrangements and were to transition to the new regulated IRA process.

A policy review on the importation of live freshwater ornamental finfish with respect to iridoviruses had previously been announced. Stakeholders were informed of this in Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum 2005/01 of 11 March 2005. This policy review will now be completed under the new regulated IRA process as a standard IRA.

Gouramis are a group of attractive ornamental fish comprising several species native to South East Asia and Africa. They are sought after aquarium species. Australia has imported a large number of gouramis for many decades. Ornamental finfish are imported under a range of quarantine conditions established by an IRA completed in 1999.

Iridoviruses can cause serious disease in fish. The 1999 IRA considered several species of gouramis and concluded, amongst other things, that specific risk management measures were required for these species due to biosecurity risk posed by iridoviruses, including GIV. Australia's quarantine measures include that gouramis are held in an export premises for a minimum 14 day period prior to export, health certification that they are sourced from populations with no known significant clinical disease in the last six months, and that the fish are held in post-arrival quarantine for a minimum of 14 days. Evidence, including research by the University of Sydney, indicates possible changes to the understanding of GIV and this prompted the commencement of the policy review in 2005.

Following the announcement of a policy review on 11 March 2005, considerable work has been undertaken to progress this analysis. Biosecurity Australia therefore expects to release a draft IRA report shortly to enable all interested stakeholders to provide submissions and comment.

In announcing this IRA, Biosecurity Australia has considered advice from the Import Market Access Advisory Group, which was established as part of the revised IRA arrangements to advise Biosecurity Australia on priorities for import proposals.

The regulations require the Chief Executive of Biosecurity Australia to announce formally the commencement of IRAs to be undertaken under the regulated process. This announcement triggers the start of the regulated timeframe for an IRA.

Further information on the new regulated IRA process can be found on Biosecurity Australia's website www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au.

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