



22 January 2013

BIOSECURITY ADVICE 2013/02

DRAFT POLICY REVIEW OF THE IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS FOR HORSES FROM APPROVED COUNTRIES

This Biosecurity Advice invites stakeholders to provide comments on the *Import risk analysis report for horses from approved countries: draft policy review* by 25 March 2013.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is reviewing the biosecurity policy for the importation of horses, which also applies to donkeys and mules. This review of the *Import risk analysis report for horses from approved countries* (issued in March 2010) was foreshadowed in the Australian Government's response to recommendation 35 of the *Report of the Equine Influenza Inquiry* of 2008.

Biosecurity Australia Advice 2011/18 (BAA 2011/18) advised stakeholders of the commencement of this review and invited submissions from interested parties.

This draft policy review takes into account submissions received from stakeholders since the announcement of the review on 31 October 2011 (BAA 2011/18), new and relevant peer-reviewed scientific information, advice from international scientific experts, and relevant changes in industry practices and operational practicalities. DAFF has reviewed the hazard list and updated the assessment and management of the biosecurity risks associated with the importation of horses, donkeys and mules from approved countries.

DAFF has considered changes to the distribution or epidemiology of African horse sickness, dourine and glanders and determined that these disease risks are managed within current biosecurity measures.

Key proposals of the draft policy review are the:

- revision of biosecurity measures for contagious equine metritis considering changes in the clinical presentation of infection with *Taylorella equigenitalis*
- revision of biosecurity measures for equine influenza considering availability of up-to-date vaccines, recent experience with molecular diagnostic techniques and recognised changes in virus clade distribution
- revision of biosecurity measures for equine viral arteritis considering measures recommended by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in 2012
- revision of biosecurity measures for equine piroplasmosis considering reported changes in prevalence in some approved countries, the potential effects of regional strain differences in diagnosis, and the difficulties in diagnosing and establishing the true status of tested animals, especially in areas of low disease prevalence
- removal of biosecurity measures for West Nile fever in line with the OIE recommendation that trade restrictions should not be imposed on dead-end hosts such as horses and because a new variant strain of West Nile virus was identified in horses in Australia in 2011.

The department invites comments on the technical aspects of the proposed biosecurity measures associated with the importation of horses, donkeys and mules. In particular, comments are invited on the appropriateness of the measures or alternative measures that would provide equivalent risk management outcomes.

Comments on the review should be submitted by 25 March 2013 to:

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The review is available via the department's website: www.daff.gov.au/ba/memos.

All submissions received on the review will be carefully considered by Animal Biosecurity in finalising the review of existing policy.

Please pass this notice on to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should contact Animal Biosecurity.

Next steps and implementation

After stakeholder submissions have been carefully considered and the policy review has been finalised, considerable consultation and planning will be required before revised biosecurity measures are implemented. Specific biosecurity measures and health certificates will need to be developed through negotiation with each approved country to reflect that country's animal health status. DAFF will provide sufficient time for notification of implementation dates to stakeholders to enable the smooth implementation of revised biosecurity measures for horses, donkeys and mules from approved countries. In the meantime, the current import conditions apply.



Andrew Cupit
Assistant Secretary
Animal Biosecurity

Confidentiality

Stakeholders are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to Biosecurity Advices will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports prepared on the subject matter.

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 only be treated as confidential if they are marked 'confidential' and they can be classified as such in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.