



29 June 2000

PLANT QUARANTINE POLICY MEMORANDUM 2000/11

REVIEW OF SPECIFIC COMMODITY UNDERSTANDINGS ON IMPORTATION OF OLIVE PLANTS FROM ISRAEL AND ITALY

This Plant Quarantine Policy Memorandum (PQPM) provides stakeholders with information regarding the Review of the Specific Commodity Understandings (SCU-2 and SCU-4) on Conditions for the Importation of High Health Olive Plants from Israel and Italy into Australia through Open Quarantine.

AQIS has now reviewed SCU-2 and SCU-4 on the Conditions for the Importation of High Health Olive Plants from Israel and Italy respectively into Australia through Open Quarantine and the draft review papers are available on the AQIS Homepage at <http://www.aqis.gov.au/docs/plpolicy/reviewcurr.htm>

AQIS notified olive industry stakeholders on 15 July 1999 that it would review the two bilateral arrangements with Israel and Italy for importation of high health olive plants into Australia. The current import conditions are detailed in two Specific Commodity Understandings (SCU-2 and SCU-4) between AQIS and the national plant protection organisation of each exporting country. Additional import conditions are on the AQIS Import Conditions (ICON) database, as notified in our letter of 14 April 2000.

In the draft documents, AQIS has combined SCU-2 (Israel) and SCU-4 (Italy) into one SCU for both countries, as differences in the two SCUs have caused problems for AQIS and industry.

The new draft SCU sets out only the conditions for **production and export** of high-health olive plants from the exporting countries. AQIS has removed from the proposed SCU the **import and post-entry quarantine** conditions and procedures, and placed these in a separate document which will not be part of the international agreements. This draft document is the "Procedures and Conditions for the Import of High Health Olive Plants Produced Under the SCU".

In reviewing the SCUs, AQIS has consulted extensively with experts in Australia and overseas to develop the best available protocols. The proposed procedures and conditions aim to make it easier and quicker to import commercial quantities of olive plants, and at the same time, reduce the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia. Other significant proposed changes to the current SCUs with Israel (SCU-2) and Italy (SCU-4) are:

- The new draft SCU adds active testing of mother trees annually for olive knot bacteria or regular spraying with copper, in addition to visual inspection for symptoms. This will reduce the risk of bacteria being carried on propagating material, because symptoms show only after mechanical damage to trees.
- Tissue cultures, cuttings and seedlings will now be permitted. These present a lower risk of introducing quarantine pests than rooted cuttings. Most of the pests intercepted to date by AQIS inspectors have been on roots, particularly when growing in rockwool.
- The lists of quarantine arthropod pests and pathogens have been modified slightly (mainly additions), but no attempt was made to validate or thoroughly review the original lists.

The main proposed changes to the **Import** Procedures and Conditions are:

- Sampling of plants on arrival in Australia for inspection instead of 100% inspection. This should hasten clearance by AQIS.
- Active testing, especially for olive knot bacteria, will be more effective at detecting diseases and pests than visual inspection.
- Plant consignments from each new source will be strictly audited until the source has established a good record. Once each source has demonstrated that its plants meet AQIS standards of high health according to the SCU, large quantities of plants should be able to be imported with minimal disruption.
- An improved chemical dip for insects and mites, consisting of the systemic insecticide, imidacloprid (Confidor), with a summer oil. This mixture avoids the use of white oil, which can be toxic to plants under some conditions. The chemical dip can be used instead of methyl bromide fumigation as long as no live insects are seen on inspection.
- The 12-month post-entry quarantine period will remain for all SCU olive material.

Industry, the exporting countries and other key stakeholders now have an opportunity to comment on the draft documents, and the new conditions and procedures will not come into effect until the national plant protection organisations in Israel and Italy have signed the SCU document. You are invited to comment on the technical issues raised in the draft review documents. AQIS will accept written submissions until the close of business on 21 September 2000. Submissions should be sent to the following address:

Import Risk Analysis Secretariat
 Plant Quarantine Policy Branch
 Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
 GPO Box 858
 CANBERRA ACT 2601
 Tel: (02) 6272 5094
 Fax: (02) 6272 3307
 Email: plantquar@aqis.gov.au

Subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received with respect to the review will be publicly available and be listed or referred to in papers or reports prepared in the review. If a request for anonymity does not accompany a submission, the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of the *Privacy Act*. The contents of a 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*.

If you wish to suggest inclusion of an additional stakeholder in our distribution list for this Review, or if you wish to be removed from the distribution list, please provide details to the Import Risk Analysis Secretariat at the above address.

Information on all Import Risk Analyses being conducted by the Plant Quarantine Policy Branch is available on the AQIS Homepage at <http://www.aqis.gov.au/docs/plpolicy/plhome1.htm>

We look forward to receiving your comments on the draft review documents.

Brian Stynes
Assistant Director
Plant Quarantine Policy Branch