



Department of
AGRICULTURE
FISHERIES &
FORESTRY -
AUSTRALIA



File: 01/6056

11 February 2002

ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2002/06

IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS FOR FERRETS – DELAYS TO FINAL

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) provides advice to stakeholders on the progress of the Import Risk Analysis (IRA) for the importation of ferrets into Australia.

In August 2000, a draft IRA report for the importation of ferrets into Australia was circulated to stakeholders.

This attracted a number of comments from stakeholders on two main issues. The first related to the potential for ferrets to be infected with and transmit tuberculosis, particularly in relation to imports from New Zealand. The second related to the potential for ferrets to become feral, again emphasising the situation in New Zealand. Additional information has been sought on both these issues.

Whilst Biosecurity Australia has traditionally been concerned with issues of animal health, it acknowledges its role in the assessment of the environmental impact of proposed imports of animals when undertaking an IRA, as detailed in the *Quarantine Act* (1908).

To this end, Biosecurity Australia has engaged a consultant to test the proposed Vertebrate Pest Committee's (VPC) Pest Risk Assessment process. The VPC is an advisory body under the Commonwealth-State Natural Resource Management Standing Committee and is made up of one member from each State and Territory and New Zealand plus representatives from CSIRO, Environment Australia and this Department (Bureau of Rural Sciences and Biosecurity Australia). It aims to ensure a co-ordinated national approach to vertebrate pest issues with a focus on managing the harmful impacts of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

The Pest Risk Assessment model has been developed to allow categorisation of exotic vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians) into threat categories. These categories are based on the risks that, if individuals of the species were released, they could harm people, establish wild populations and/or become environmental or agricultural pests. The consultant is testing the model on a range of species introduced to Australia, and also on a range of species introduced to mainland USA. Ferrets are included in the list of species to be assessed by the consultant.

It was considered appropriate to delay release of the final IRA report until the completion of this consultancy. The results will then be considered, and the final IRA for ferrets is expected to be released soon after this.

I would be grateful if you would pass details of this advice to other interested parties, who should advise Biosecurity Australia if they wish to be included in future communications on this matter.

Edmund Barton Building
Barton ACT
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601
ph +61 2 6272 4465
fax +61 2 6272 3399
www.affa.gov.au

ABN 24 113 085 695

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*.

DAVID BANKS
General Manager
Animal Biosecurity

CONTACT OFFICER:	MARGARET LEGGOE
PHONE NOS:	02 6271 6557/ 02 6296 4550
EMAIL:	margaret.leggoe@affa.gov.au