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**AGRICULTURE
FISHERIES &
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ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2003/08

NONHUMAN PRIMATE IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS

RELEASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES PAPER

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) provides stakeholders with the Technical Issues Paper of the nonhuman primate import risk analysis (IRA), for consideration and comment. Comments are due by 22 May 2003.

Biosecurity Australia is conducting an IRA of nonhuman primates. It commenced in March 1998. Previous Animal Quarantine Policy Memoranda 1998/27, 1998/57 and 1998/75 consulted, and provided advice to, stakeholders on the commencement and approach to the IRA. The attached paper is the first technical consultation in the process.

As a result of a current review of the IRA process that Biosecurity Australia expects to finalise shortly, there has been general acceptance of several proposed changes, including the release of a Technical Issues Paper for all IRAs. On this basis, we have prepared such a paper for this IRA. (A draft framework document of the IRA process was circulated in September 2001 (ABPM 2001/26)).

Interim conditions for the importation of primates were introduced in 1996, replacing the 1985 conditions. The interim conditions were amended in December 2002 to update details for Environment Australia and references to registered zoos, and to bring them into line with the Office Internationale des Epizooties (OIE) recommendations. The amended interim conditions will apply until completion of the IRA. A copy of the 1996 and 2002 conditions are attachments to the Technical Issues Paper.

As part of the IRA, Dr Larry Vogelnest of Taronga Zoo was engaged in 1999 to examine the disease risks associated with the importation of nonhuman primates, primarily focussing on zoonoses (transfer of pathogens from nonhuman primates to humans) in line with the OIE recommendations for the international transfer of these animals.

Information for the Technical Issues Paper has been sourced from documents written and supplied by Dr Vogelnest, from published literature, and from personal communications with experts. The attached paper is intended to promote discussion and comment on the main pest and disease risk issues. It identifies 42 viruses and prions, and 85 genera of bacteria, protozoa, and multicellular agents to be considered further in the IRA. Whilst this list appears long, it should be borne in mind that the scope of this IRA covers 233 species of nonhuman primates belonging to 2 suborders, 13 families and 71 genera. Furthermore, in some cases there was insufficient evidence on which to determine the potential to cause harm that a particular agent may possess. The conservative approach has been to classify these agents, at this stage, as potential hazards.

The Technical Issues Paper does not discuss risk management issues, as this will be addressed in a later consultation step, the draft IRA paper. The draft IRA will closely examine the nature of each agent, its pathogenicity, mode of transmission, ease of diagnosis and efficacy of treatment. The draft IRA will include risk assessments and, for those diseases that present an unacceptable risk, proposed risk management measures.

Next Steps

I would appreciate receiving your comments, supported by scientific references, if available, by 22 May 2003. Animal Biosecurity will consider all technical comments received and these will be taken into account in preparing the draft IRA report.

Animal Biosecurity recognises that a number of the stakeholders who receive this paper have substantial knowledge of nonhuman primates and their diseases. Some information may be unpublished data. I encourage these people to closely appraise this document, in particular the pathogenicity of the agents listed, and what is known about their occurrence in Australia.

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and the Privacy Act 1988, all submissions received in response to ABPMs will be publicly available. Comments 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.

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