



16 August 2004

ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2004/15
PLANT BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2004/22

NEW ARRANGEMENTS TO STRENGTHEN IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS

This Memorandum informs stakeholders of arrangements giving effect to changes announced on 15 July 2004 and 11 August 2004 by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Warren Truss MP, to strengthen the Import Risk Analysis process.

On 15 July 2004, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Warren Truss MP, announced new measures to reinforce Australia's strong, science-based biosecurity policies and boost confidence in the rigour of the Import Risk Analysis (IRA) process. The changes address perceptions that trade considerations, rather than scientific analysis, were influencing the IRA process.

The first of the new measures involves the establishment of Biosecurity Australia as a separate business unit outside the agricultural market access (trade) area of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. This measure has been implemented and is effective immediately. Biosecurity Australia, which provides technical and scientific input into quarantine management regimes, will now operate independently from the Market Access (trade) area of the Department. Biosecurity Australia will report directly to a Deputy Secretary. Biosecurity Australia will not be responsible for market access policy or disputes, which will be managed separately by the market access area of the Department.

The second initiative involves the establishment of an Eminent Scientists Group. The key purpose of the Group will be to examine independently the draft Final IRA Reports prior to their release. In particular the Group will have the following functions:

- Review the draft Final IRA Report prepared by the IRA Team to ensure that the IRA Team has adequately considered all technical submissions received from stakeholders during the formal consultation period on the draft IRA report, and
- Within 60 days of being presented with the draft Final IRA Report, prepare a report to the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine on their findings and recommend any action considered necessary to overcome any identified deficiencies. The Eminent Scientists Group will provide a copy of the report to the Executive Manager, Biosecurity Australia.

Members of the Eminent Scientists Group are selected and appointed by the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Each scientist appointed to the Group will have a proven history of scientific leadership, significant contribution to science and be well respected in the broad scientific community. The first three scientists appointed to the Eminent Scientists Group are:

- Emeritus Professor Malcolm Nairn AM. Professor Nairn has had a distinguished career in agricultural research and is one of the nation's leading experts in quarantine matters. He was commissioned by the Government to lead a review of Australian quarantine and chaired the Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council from 1997 to 2001.
- Dr Jim Peacock AC. Dr Peacock is President of the Australian Academy of Science, a Research Fellow of CSIRO Plant Industry and is recognised internationally in the field of plant molecular biology and its applications to agriculture.
- Dr John Radcliffe AM. Dr Radcliffe is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and has had a distinguished career in the CSIRO.

Additional information about each scientist is at **Attachment A**. The Eminent Scientists Group will commence work immediately with reviews of a number of Import Risk Analyses that will in due course include all current IRAs.

The IRA appeals process remains unchanged, with stakeholders still able to formally appeal final reports. Secretariat support to Import Risk Analysis Appeal Panels is provided independently of Biosecurity Australia.

Consultation

If you wish to suggest inclusion of an additional stakeholder in our distribution list, or if you wish to be removed from the distribution list, please provide details to the Biosecurity Australia contact point below.

Information on all IRAs being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on the Internet at www.daff.gov.au/biosecurityaustralia.

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The scientists appointed to the Eminent Scientists Group are:

Emeritus Professor Malcolm Nairn AM

Professor Nairn started his working life as a veterinary pathologist at the Western Australian Department of Agriculture in 1961. This was the start of his long-term interest in biosecurity and quarantine related issues. A master's degree in microbiology was undertaken through the University of Western Australia in 1966 and a PhD in veterinary Pathology from the University of Minnesota in 1969. He is experienced in disease diagnosis in a wide range of domestic animals and led the research team, which in collaboration with CSL developed the successful vaccine for the prevention of caseous lymphadenitis (CLA) of sheep. Professor Nairn was appointed Chief Veterinary Pathologist at the Western Australian Animal Health Laboratories in 1973 and has published extensively in the scientific press.

From 1975 until 1995 Professor Nairn was involved with Universities, first with the newly established veterinary school at Murdoch University and then moving into senior administration. He was the inaugural vice chancellor at the Northern Territory University from 1989 to 1995. During this period in Darwin a review of the Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) was undertaken for the Australian Government in collaboration with Dr Ian Muirhead.

In 1996 Professor Nairn was commissioned by the Government to lead a team to review Australian Quarantine and a year later was invited to chair the Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council (QEAC) to independently advise the Government on a range of quarantine related issues, including implementation of the Government's response to the quarantine review. He undertook this role from 1997 until the end of 2001.

Professor Nairn is currently chairman of the Board of the recently established Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre: Emerging Infectious Disease, a member of an expert panel advising Chevron Texaco on quarantine issues regarding the Gorgon Gas project on Barrow Island and chairman of the Western Australian Division of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Dr Jim Peacock AC

Dr William James Peacock, President of the Australian Academy of Science, is a Research Fellow of CSIRO Plant Industry in Canberra, one of the world's leading plant research institutes. His laboratory is recognised internationally in the field of plant molecular biology and its applications in agriculture.

He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, Australia's highest honour, for his contribution to the nation. Dr Peacock is a Fellow of The Royal Society of London, and the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering. In 1990 he was elected as a Foreign Associate of the United States National Academy of Sciences and a Foreign Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy. In 2000 he was a co-recipient of the Inaugural Prime Minister's Science Prize.

In February 1988 he was awarded the BHP Bicentennial Prize for the Pursuit of Excellence in Science and Technology. In December 1989 he was awarded a CSIRO Medal for his leadership of CSIRO Plant Industry. He is a Member of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council and one of the four appointments to the Australian Innovation Council. In the commercial field he is Chairman of the Gene Shears biotechnology company.

Dr Peacock has active research programs in the induction of flowering; in the molecular genetics of seed development; in plant haemoglobins; and in the molecular biology of stress responses in plants.

Dr Peacock is prominent in the interfacing of plant science with modern agribusiness. He drives innovative communication efforts to extend research results and educate key decision-makers and the general public as

to the outcomes and value of modern science, particularly gene technology. He has brought the excitement of biological research to a broad cross-section of the community and to a large population of Australian school students.

Dr John Radcliffe AM

Dr John Radcliffe is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering and a CSIRO Honorary Research Fellow and Adviser. Prior to retirement in 1999, Dr Radcliffe was a Deputy Chief Executive of CSIRO, responsible for CSIRO's Environment and Natural Resources Divisions.

He currently chairs the South Australian Centre for Natural Resource Management, and was Chair of the Board of the South Australian Research and Development Institute from 1993 to 1998. Prior to joining CSIRO in 1993, he was Director-General of Agriculture in South Australia from 1985 to 1992.

Dr Radcliffe was Chairman of the Executive Council of CAB International, headquartered in Britain, from 1996 to 1999.

He has an agricultural science degree from the University of Adelaide and a PhD from Oregon State University. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1987 and Membership of the Order of Australia in 2001.