



23 November 2004

## ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2004/18

### INTERIM CONDITIONS SUSPENDING THE IMPORTATION OF BARRAMUNDI COD FOR ORNAMENTAL PURPOSES

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum advises stakeholders of the suspension of imports of live barramundi cod for the ornamental fish industry pending completion of a review of the quarantine risks. It appears that several risk factors have changed since the last assessment was completed in 1999.

Barramundi cod (*Cromileptes altivelis*) is a finfish species permitted live importation under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* administered by the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage. The species was included in the 1999 import risk analysis (IRA) of ornamental finfish (policy memorandum 1999/77), on which current quarantine conditions are based. The premise of the IRA completed in 1999 was that imported barramundi cod would be sourced from wild populations and destined for public or home aquaria in Australia.

It appears that advances in the barramundi cod aquaculture industry potentially have implications regarding the source and end-use of imported barramundi cod.

Biosecurity Australia reviews its import policies in the event of significant new information, including where the source or end-use may have changed. A preliminary assessment indicates that the potential risks have changed. Biosecurity Australia will review the import policy to ensure that the risk management measures appropriately address the risk. Pending completion of the review, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has accepted Biosecurity Australia's recommendation that the live importation of barramundi cod under the ornamental finfish conditions be suspended.

#### **Preliminary evaluation of risks**

The preliminary evaluation of the potential risks indicates the biosecurity risks associated with the importation of barramundi cod under the ornamental fish conditions may have increased, and that a detailed review is warranted.

Barramundi cod sourced from aquaculture, without any restrictions, could be expected to present different risks than wild-caught fish. The risk factors are likely to be crowding, stress, absence of predators and other conditions that favour the multiplication of disease agents, survival of infected hosts and increased prevalence of disease agents.

Similarly, the likelihood of exposure of fish in Australia's natural waters to a disease agent via an imported fish will be different if imported barramundi cod juveniles are used for aquaculture grow-out in open or semi-open systems, or as broodstock in hatcheries.

## **Policy review**

Biosecurity Australia will reassess the quarantine risk associated with importation of barramundi cod into Australia as ornamental finfish, in light of potential changes to sourcing and end-use patterns.

## **Interim conditions**

Live specimens of barramundi cod (*Cromileptes altivelis*) will not be permitted importation into Australia until further notice.

## **Next steps**

The interim measures on barramundi cod take effect immediately.

In due course, Biosecurity Australia will circulate a policy review for stakeholder comment. We invite stakeholders to submit any relevant technical information they believe may be relevant to this review.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should get in touch with the contact officer listed below. Alternatively, if you wish to be removed from the distribution list, please advise the contact officer.

## **Confidentiality**

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to policy memorandums 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.

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