



Australian Government
Biosecurity Australia

30 September 2008

BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA ADVICE 2008/32

**COMMENCEMENT OF AN IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS FOR
THE IMPORTATION OF HORSES**

This Biosecurity Australia Advice announces the formal commencement of an import risk analysis (IRA) for the importation of horses from the countries from which Australia currently permits importation. The IRA is part of the Government's response to the Commission of Inquiry into the equine influenza outbreak in Australia in August 2007. An expert panel will assist with the IRA. Biosecurity Australia will prepare a draft IRA report to be circulated to stakeholders for comment.

On 12 June 2008, the Australian Government announced that it had accepted all 38 recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the August 2007 equine influenza outbreak in Australia. Biosecurity Australia is implementing relevant recommendations.

As part of the Government's response to the Inquiry, Biosecurity Australia is to undertake a comprehensive IRA according to the *IRA Handbook 2007*. The IRA is to cover the importation of horses from countries and regions from which Australia currently permits such importation. These include Canada, the European Union, Hong Kong, Macau, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and the United States. The IRA will also cover horses from Japan. Import conditions for horses from Japan were suspended following the equine influenza outbreak in Japan last year.

The Chief Executive of Biosecurity Australia has announced the formal commencement of the IRA and has confirmed that the IRA will be conducted according to the Handbook using a non-regulated pathway. This approach will allow the development of a draft IRA report that will be issued for 60 days public comment. The IRA will be developed with the assistance of an expert panel and in close consultation with stakeholders.

Some preliminary work has been undertaken on the IRA and an expert panel has been identified to assist Biosecurity Australia in its consideration of the scientific issues during the risk analysis. The IRA will be led by Dr Mike Nunn, Principal Scientist, Animal Biosecurity. The expert panel will comprise:

- . Dr Patricia Ellis, Animal Health Consultant with longstanding involvement in the horse industry. She was involved in the response to the equine influenza outbreak in Australia.
- . Dr James Gilkerson, Director, Equine Infectious Disease Laboratory and Centre for Equine Virology, University of Melbourne. He is an experienced veterinary virologist.
- . Dr Hugh Millar, Deputy Director, Biosecurity Victoria and Chief Veterinary Officer, Victoria. He has experience with biosecurity policy and quarantine operations.

Biosecurity Australia has also been implementing a number of the other Government responses to the inquiry, including visits to the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Singapore, Hong Kong and Macau to review pre-export quarantine arrangements; visits to post-arrival quarantine facilities in Sydney and Melbourne; tightening of

the interim quarantine conditions; and assisting AQIS with policy advice. Much of this work is ongoing.

Further information on the IRA process can be found on Biosecurity Australia's website, www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au. 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 (details below).

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