



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Biosecurity Australia

5 November 2010

BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA ADVICE 2010/31

AMENDMENTS TO REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTATION OF PENGUINS FROM NEW ZEALAND

This Biosecurity Australia Advice (BAA) informs stakeholders that Biosecurity Australia has provided advice to the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) recommending amendments to the policy for the importation of King and Gentoo penguins from New Zealand. The policy which was established in 2008 allows penguins to be imported from New Zealand into a specially constructed, environmentally controlled facility under Quarantine Containment Level 3 (QC3) containment at the Melbourne Aquarium. The amendments will allow the penguins to be imported to other purpose built environmentally controlled facilities. The penguins will undergo 35 days post-arrival quarantine at the facility under QC3 containment and will then be permanently housed at an approved facility for life.

Biosecurity Australia completed a policy review for the importation of King and Gentoo penguins from New Zealand on 20 May 2008 (BAA 2008/15). This followed the release of a draft policy review in February 2008 (BAA 2008/1) for public comment and consideration of comments in finalising the review. The policy allows the importation of King and Gentoo penguins from a closed facility in Auckland, New Zealand, to a specially constructed, environmentally controlled facility under Quarantine Containment Level 3 (QC3) containment at the Melbourne Aquarium subject to testing the colony for avian influenza, Newcastle disease and infectious bursal disease prior to export of the penguins. The birds undergo post-arrival quarantine (PAQ) for 35 days.

Biosecurity Australia has received a request to amend the policy to enable the birds to be imported into other AQIS approved facilities and to be housed in facilities that are not QC3 following their PAQ. Biosecurity Australia has reviewed the physical containment requirements for consignments of King and Gentoo penguins from New Zealand. The review has taken into account New Zealand's continued favourable avian health status, the successful safe importation of penguins since 2008 from facilities in New Zealand with good avian health records, and the requirement for testing of the source colony for diseases of quarantine concern prior to export of the penguins.

As a result, Biosecurity Australia has concluded that the importation of penguins should be permitted to other AQIS approved facilities that meet the same level of containment as Melbourne Aquarium for PAQ. Under these arrangements the penguins would be imported into a facility being specifically designed to meet the American Zoo and Aquarium Association standards (AZA, 2005) – a QC3 facility. Imported penguins that successfully complete the 35 day PAQ period in QC3 containment may be released from quarantine and do not need to be permanently housed in a facility that is QC3. Release from quarantine is only permitted following a favourable health report from the veterinarian of the quarantine premises to AQIS immediately prior to the end of the post-arrival quarantine period. The penguins will remain in an approved purpose built facility in accordance with State Zoo licence restrictions for life.

AQIS will take this advice into account when considering applications for import permits.

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.

Information on import risk analyses and policy reviews being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on Biosecurity Australia's website.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Martin". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

ROBYN MARTIN
General Manager
Animal Biosecurity

Contact officer: Robert Heard
Telephone no: (02) 6272 3933
Facsimile no: (02) 6272 3399
E-mail: robert.heard@daff.gov.au