



15 November 2012

BIOSECURITY ADVICE 2012/23

TRIAL OF A PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM FOR MANAGING THE BIOSECURITY RISKS OF IMPORTED ORNAMENTAL FISH

This Biosecurity Advice informs stakeholders of a trial of proposed changes to Australia's system for managing biosecurity risks associated with imported ornamental fish. The proposed changes aim to better manage the biosecurity risks by shifting the emphasis of risk management off-shore. The changes would negate the need for the current system of post-arrival quarantine detention of fish. The proposed changes include an on-arrival fish health surveillance program that would continuously monitor the effectiveness of overseas authorities in ensuring the health of ornamental fish exported to Australia. The department is planning to trial the surveillance system to test its operational feasibility. Ornamental fish import permit holders willing to participate in the trial are asked to contact Animal Biosecurity by 17 December 2012.

The department is proposing changes to the way it manages the disease risks associated with imported ornamental fish, placing greater emphasis on managing the biosecurity risks off-shore at source. The proposed changes include the introduction of an on-arrival fish health surveillance program that would allow DAFF to monitor the performance of overseas authorities and export establishments and ensure that the health requirements of ornamental fish exported to Australia are met. These arrangements should also enable the department to be more responsive to emerging disease issues and to work closely with exporting countries to manage biosecurity risks effectively.

Under the proposed system;

- all shipments of freshwater and marine ornamental fish would continue to be inspected on arrival,
- bags of fish showing significant mortality or morbidity would be sampled during on-arrival inspection and the remaining fish destroyed or re-exported,
- some bags would be selected randomly during on-arrival inspection for sampling and the remaining fish in the consignment released,
- fish samples would be sent to participating laboratories for a general health assessment and testing for specific disease agents of quarantine concern, and
- the information obtained would be analysed and appropriate action taken to manage any biosecurity disease risk at the source.

Under the proposed system there would not be a need for Class 7.1 quarantine approved premises (QAP) for the post-arrival detention of imported ornamental fish. Should the new arrangements be introduced, the department would work with premises operators to manage this process, which could coincide with the annual licence renewal process.

The department is planning to trial the on-arrival fish health surveillance program to test its operational feasibility. The first trial will involve only those bags of fish that would otherwise be destroyed due to non-compliance with Australian import requirements. A subsequent more comprehensive trial is planned for which DAFF will need the cooperation of volunteer importers. Holders of ornamental fish import permits who are willing to participate in the trial are asked to contact Animal Biosecurity by 17 December 2012.

The contact is:

Ramesh Perera
Animal Biosecurity
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Telephone: +61 2 6272 4675
Facsimile: +61 2 6272 3399
Email: animal@daff.gov.au

All current import conditions and requirements will remain in place during the trial. While the trial is being conducted and assessed, DAFF has suspended work on the review and amendment process of the Class 7.1 QAP criteria.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should contact Animal Biosecurity.



Andrew Cupit
Assistant Secretary
Animal Biosecurity