



3 September 2012

BIOSECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF COMMERCIAL RABBITS (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) FROM CERTAIN MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. GENERAL

1.1. These conditions are for the importation of domestic rabbits from certain Member States of the European Union other than household pets.
Prospective importers should be aware that each State and Territory may have restrictions on the importation and keeping of rabbits which may vary from time to time. They should contact the relevant State or Territory authorities listed in Appendix 1 to obtain information on these restrictions.

1.2. A valid Import Permit must accompany each consignment of rabbits. The permit must be obtained, before the export of the rabbits, from DAFF. A processing fee will be charged for the permit.

1.3. Permission to import rabbits must also be obtained from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. Further information may be obtained from:

The Director
Wildlife Trade Regulation Section
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
GPO Box 787

Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6274 1900

Facsimile: (02) 6274 1921

Email: wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au

1.4. Each consignment must be accompanied by an original international veterinary certificate that conforms to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code (the Code) Model International Veterinary Certificates signed by an Official Veterinarian of the country of export.

An Official Veterinarian means a veterinarian authorised by the Veterinary Authority of the country of export to perform certain official tasks associated with animal health and/or public health, and inspections of commodities and, when appropriate, to certify in conformity with the Certification Procedures of the Code.

1.5. The veterinary certificate must:

- be written in English and a language understood by the Official Veterinarian of the country of export
- provide details of the certifying authority, property of origin and approved pre-export isolation facility
- include the name and address of the exporter and importer and identify the import permit against which it was issued
- provide identification for each rabbit (microchip number/site)

- meet the requirements of the Certification section and state that all import requirements have been met. Any variation must be specifically authorised by DAFF.

1.6. The Official Veterinarian must:

- sign, date and stamp (with the stamp of the Veterinary Authority) each page of the veterinary certificate and all attached documents, e.g. laboratory reports that form part of the extended veterinary certification
- endorse each page of copies of supporting documents with date, signature and Official Veterinarian stamp
- record their name, signature and contact details on the veterinary certificate.

1.7. The rabbits:

- must be consigned from the country of export directly to Australia by a route approved by DAFF
- may only be transhipped en route with the approval of DAFF. Approval from the relevant authority may also be required in countries of transit and transshipment.

1.8. The use of hay or straw during transport is not permitted. Treated wood shavings, sterilised peat and soft board can be used.

1.9. The design of the containers, the recommended species requirements and the preparation for transport must be in accordance with the recommendations of the Code and International Air Transport Association (IATA) Live Animals Regulations, or meet alternative requirements specified by DAFF.

1.10. Conditions of importation may be varied or reviewed at any time at the discretion of DAFF.

1.11. In the event of rabbits arriving in Australia without the correct certification, or in any other way not having met these requirements, they may be retained in quarantine, returned to the country of origin or destroyed without recompense.

2. CERTIFICATION

The Official Veterinarian must certify:

2.1. After due enquiry, that each rabbit for export was resident on the property of origin since birth before entering pre-export quarantine (PEQ) in a separate quarantine isolation facility approved by the Veterinary Authority.

2.2. On the property of origin:

- the rabbits are housed in accommodation that precludes access by wildlife and rodents
- the accommodation is free from infestation with external parasites
- the colony is either closed or else records are maintained of the origin of all rabbits and their dates of introduction
- disease outbreaks are routinely investigated and detailed records kept.

2.3. After due inquiry, there has been no clinical, epidemiological or other evidence of the following diseases in the rabbits destined for export or in any lagomorphs on the property of origin during the 12 months before export:

- rabbit haemorrhagic disease (calicivirus)
- myxomatosis

- tularaemia (*Francisella tularensis*)
- treponematosi (*Treponema cuniculi*)
- sylvatic plague (*Yersinia pestis*)
- European brown hare syndrome.

2.4. The PEQ facility satisfies DAFF requirements including:

- approved by the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country for the holding of animals for export to Australia
- rabbits in PEQ must be isolated by a minimum of 50 metres from all other lagomorphs not of equivalent health status. Equivalent biosecurity can include **strict** isolation in a facility separated by solid walls from all other lagomorphs not of equivalent health status and under conditions that the veterinary authority is satisfied provides strict isolation.
- the accommodation precludes access by wildlife and rodents
- the accommodation protects the rabbits from insects

OR

- the country of export has been free from tularaemia for the previous 2 years (delete the option that does not apply)
- the water supply must be treated with chlorine to a level of 1.5 mg available chlorine/L or with an equivalent disinfectant
- the PEQ facility must be depopulated, cleaned and disinfectant applied before the entry of any rabbits
- during PEQ rabbits are not treated with antibiotics and antibiotics are not routinely used in the feed or drinking water.

The PEQ facility was inspected on/...../..... (date) before commencement of PEQ.

2.5. The rabbits were held in PEQ, in an approved facility, for at least 30 days immediately before export.

2.6. PEQ must be under the supervision of the Official Veterinarian.

2.7. Any person entering the PEQ facility during PEQ must not have contact with other lagomorphs or must shower and change clothing on each occasion of entry to the facility. Clean protective clothing was dedicated to use within the facility.

2.8. After due inquiry and in accordance with a written declaration from the owner/agent, the rabbits destined for export have not been vaccinated for myxomatosis at least six months before export.

2.9. Each rabbit in the PEQ facility remained free from clinical, epidemiological or other evidence of snuffles (*Pasteurella multocida*) or encephalitozoonosis (*Encephalitozoon cuniculi*).

2.10. Each rabbit was subjected to treatment with a parasiticide effective against fleas, ticks and mites during the four days immediately before export.

Date...../...../.....Identification.....Active ingredient and dose.....

2.11. Each rabbit has been implanted with an ISO compliant microchip. The microchip number and implantation site, are recorded on the veterinary certificate.

Identification.....Location.....

- 2.12. Each rabbit for export was examined during the 48 hours immediately before export and found it to be clinically healthy and free from evidence of infectious or contagious diseases, palpable skin tumours or swellings and external parasites, and fit to travel.
- 2.13. Each rabbit is at least six weeks of age at the time of export.
- 2.14. The containers carrying the rabbits will be either new and unused or cleaned and disinfected with a broad-spectrum disinfectant before loading
- 2.15. At the port of export a government officer authorised by the Veterinary Authority of the exporting country must certify after due inquiry, that during transport to the port of export the rabbits were isolated from other lagomorphs not of equivalent health status.

3. POST ARRIVAL

- 3.1. Any variation from the **post-arrival quarantine requirements** must be specifically authorised by DAFF.

Transport

- 3.2. Importers or their agents must have a plan developed in consultation with DAFF to cover post-arrival procedures. The plan must include roles and responsibilities for their staff, vehicles for transporting rabbits to a DAFF approved quarantine approved premises (QAP) and road transport arrangements including contingency plans for vehicle and equipment failures.
- 3.3. Rabbits must arrive at the international airport closest to the QAP.
- 3.4. Rabbits must not leave the international side of the airport until a DAFF officer has ordered the rabbits into quarantine and provided a movement direction in writing.
- 3.5. After the rabbits arrive at an Australian airport they must be transferred onto vehicles and proceed directly to the QAP.
- 3.6. Vehicles for transporting rabbits must be enclosed, strong enough to prevent rabbits from escaping and insect-protected.
- 3.7. Vehicles for transporting rabbits from the port of entry to the QAP must be cleaned and disinfected to the satisfaction of the DAFF officer before loading the rabbits. DAFF must be advised of the transport route to the QAP.
- 3.8. The rabbits must not contact any domestic animals from the time of arrival in Australia until release from PAQ.
- 3.9. All quarantine risk material (e.g. bedding, feed, water and waste material) remaining at the airport must be sealed in bags, ordered into quarantine and disposed of under DAFF supervision.
- 3.10. Vehicles, crates and any equipment for transporting rabbits must not leave the QAP until thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to the satisfaction of a DAFF officer.

Post-arrival quarantine (PAQ) requirements

- 3.11. Each consignment of imported rabbits must undergo PAQ in a DAFF approved QAP for at least 14 days.
- 3.12. The DAFF approved QAP must be constructed and managed in compliance with DAFF conditions of approval for a class 7.11 facility.
- 3.13. During PAQ:
 - rabbits must be housed in accommodation that precludes access by wildlife and rodents
 - the accommodation must protect the rabbits from insects
 - rabbits must be isolated from all other lagomorphs by a minimum distance of 50 metres. Equivalent biosecurity can include a facility separated by solid walls from all other lagomorphs, and under conditions that DAFF is satisfied provide strict isolation.
 - any person in contact with the rabbits must not have contact with other lagomorphs during PAQ or shower and change clothing on each occasion of exit from the facility
 - rabbits must be examined daily by a competent person for any signs of sickness
 - sickness, death or escape must be reported immediately to the DAFF veterinarian and details recorded within 24 hours
 - the cause of all sickness and death in rabbits will be established to the extent of excluding European brown hare syndrome, myxomatosis, rabbit viral haemorrhagic disease (calicivirus), sylvatic plague (*Yersinia pestis*), treponematosis (*Treponema cuniculi*) and tularaemia (*Francisella tularensis*).
- 3.14. During the four days immediately before release from PAQ each rabbit must be subjected to treatment with a parasiticide effective against fleas, mites and ticks.
- 3.15. A DAFF veterinarian must examine each rabbit and find it to be clinically healthy and free from any evidence of infectious or contagious diseases and external parasites immediately before release from PAQ.
- 3.16. During PAQ, if any imported rabbit does not meet Australia's biosecurity requirements or during PAQ shows signs of pests and/or disease, then that rabbit, and any or all rabbits in the PAQ facility, may be:
 - detained in quarantine for observation and subjected to testing and/or treatment prescribed by Australian government authorities at the importer's expense
 - exported at the importer's expense
 - destroyed without recompense.

4. IMPORTER'S/AGENTS RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of the importer or importer's agent to ensure all import requirements are met including these requirements and those of other agencies whether Commonwealth (e.g. the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) or State.
- 4.2. The importer or agent must nominate a person who can be contacted by DAFF during the import process and while the rabbits are in quarantine.
- 4.3. The importer or agent is responsible for ensuring that the Australian Government is paid for services provided. The Government will not recompense the importer or agent, for any losses incurred while the rabbits are under DAFF control.

5. APPENDIX 1

State / Territory authorities that should be contacted before importing rabbits:

Australian Capital Territory – Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

New South Wales – Department of Primary Industries

Northern Territory – Department of Resources – Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources

Queensland – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

South Australia – Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Tasmania – Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Victoria – Department of Primary Industries

Western Australia – Department of Agriculture and Food