



26 April 2012

BIOSECURITY ADVICE 2012/10

AMENDED HEALTH CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CATTLE, SHEEP AND GOAT SEMEN AND EMBRYOS FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION, AND CATTLE SEMEN AND EMBRYOS FROM NORWAY AND SWITZERLAND

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of amended health certification requirements for cattle, sheep and goat semen and embryos from the European Union, and cattle semen and embryos from Norway and Switzerland. Monitoring of the recent outbreak of Schmallenberg virus, which has caused abortions and birth deformities in cattle, sheep and goats in Europe, indicates that, based on current knowledge, ruminant semen and embryos imported from Europe may be at risk of infection with this virus. Consequently, Australian livestock may also be at risk of infection. To manage these biosecurity risks, a requirement that ruminant semen and embryo donors be tested for Schmallenberg virus has been added to the relevant import conditions, effective from 14 May 2012.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry initiated this policy following the widespread outbreak of Schmallenberg virus now causing abortions and birth deformities in cattle, sheep and goats in a number of European countries. The determination took into account current scientific information, international standards developed by the World Organisation for Animal Health, as well as policies adopted by other countries for the importation of ruminant semen and embryos.

The monitoring of Schmallenberg virus, identified in November 2011 to be a vector borne orthobunyavirus, and a review of experimental studies reported on the related Akabane virus (present in Australia), has identified that, based on current knowledge, the risk of transmission via ruminant semen and embryos cannot be disregarded, and that Australian livestock may be at risk of infection.

The Department has consulted with the Australian States and Territories, industry bodies and virologists regarding the biosecurity risks of Schmallenberg virus. It is agreed that biosecurity measures are necessary to manage the risk of Schmallenberg virus entering, establishing and spreading in Australia.

The measures require donors of ruminant semen and embryos collected after 1 June 2011 to be tested for antibodies to Schmallenberg virus such that it can be shown that infection and subsequent viraemia resulting from Schmallenberg virus did not occur in donors during the collection period. These measures, outlined in Attachment 1, will be inserted into the current import conditions. These measures may be modified if an ELISA becomes available or removed if satisfactory evidence is produced to demonstrate that SBV is not likely to be present in semen and/or embryos at a level likely to transmit the disease.

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
A/g Assistant Secretary
Animal Biosecurity

ATTACHMENT 1

Pending the development and approval of an appropriate, validated ELISA or a satisfactory body of evidence that SBV is not likely to be present in semen and/or embryos at a level likely to transmit the virus, the following shall be used for the importation of germplasm from Europe collected after 1 June 2011:

(A) TO BE INSERTED INTO:

- (i) **Veterinary certification for the importation of bovine semen from Member States of the European Union**
- (ii) **Veterinary certification for the importation of ovine semen from Member States of the European Union**
- (iii) **Veterinary certification for the importation of caprine semen from Member States of the European Union**
- (iv) **Veterinary certification for the importation of bovine semen from Norway, and**
- (v) **Veterinary certification for the importation of bovine semen from Switzerland**

Schmallenberg virus

Prior to the export of this consignment each semen donor must be certified as follows for Schmallenberg virus:

For semen collected on or after 1 June 2011, a virus neutralisation test for antibody to the Schmallenberg virus on a blood sample collected

either

between fourteen (14) and sixty (60) days after last collection of semen from the donor for this consignment with negative results

or

between fourteen (14) and sixty (60) days before first collection of semen from the donor for this consignment with positive results

(B) TO BE INSERTED INTO:

- (i) **Veterinary certification for the importation of bovine embryos from Member States of the European Union**
- (ii) **Veterinary certification for the importation of ovine embryos from Member States of the European Union**
- (iii) **Veterinary certification for the importation of caprine embryos from Member States of the European Union**
- (iv) **Veterinary certification for the importation of bovine embryos from Norway, and**
- (v) **Veterinary certification for the importation of bovine embryos from Switzerland**

Schmallenberg virus

Prior to the export of this consignment, each embryo donor must be certified as follows for Schmallenberg virus:

For embryos collected on or after 1 June 2011, a virus neutralisation test for antibody to the Schmallenberg virus on a blood sample collected

either

between fourteen (14) and sixty (60) days after last collection of embryos from the donor for this consignment with negative results

or

between fourteen (14) and sixty (60) days before first collection of embryos from the donor for this consignment with positive results.