

5 September 1997

Dear Stakeholder

In our letter of 19 August 1997, we advised you that the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) has received an import access request for maize from the USA for use in processing and animal feed in rural areas.

AQIS will conduct a risk analysis on this proposal using the process outlined in the document *Australian Quarantine - a shared responsibility: The Government Response*. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an opportunity to comment on the proposed approach to the risk analysis.

### **The process**

AQIS considers that the risk analysis for the importation of maize from the USA should be undertaken using the non-routine process.

The steps involved in a non-routine risk analysis are:

1. AQIS advises stakeholders that an import access request has been received (our letter of 19 August 1997 informed you of the receipt of the request for maize).
2. AQIS determines the priority of the risk analysis, considers the type of process to be followed, including possible panel members if the non-routine process is preferred, and develops a timetable for the risk analysis. AQIS then advises stakeholders of the outcomes of its preliminary evaluation of these issues and invites stakeholders to comment on the type of process proposed and the panel membership. A consultation period of 30 days is allowed.

3. AQIS considers stakeholder comments on the type of process proposed and the panel membership and finalises its position on these issues (this involves endorsement of the final position by the Executive Director of AQIS). Stakeholders are then advised of this position and an appeal period of 30 days is allowed.

Any stakeholder with significant concerns about the panel membership or the type of process to be followed may appeal to the Director of Quarantine (the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries and Energy) who will consider the appeal within 30 days.

4. The risk analysis panel prepares an Issues Paper outlining the technical issues to be considered during the risk analysis. This paper is circulated to stakeholders, who will have 60 days to comment.
5. The risk analysis panel conducts the risk analysis, taking into consideration the comments received from stakeholders on the Issues Paper and input from specialised working parties that the panel may initiate. When the risk analysis is completed the panel prepares a Discussion Paper for circulation to stakeholders. The Discussion Paper will include an analysis of the quarantine risks and the proposed risk management strategies.
6. The panel considers stakeholder comments and finalises its position on the proposed import and the quarantine conditions that will apply. The Executive Director of AQIS makes the decision on whether to grant access to the proposed import. Stakeholders are advised of this decision and the commencement of a 30 day appeal period during which stakeholders may lodge an appeal on the process which was followed during the risk analysis. If an appeal is lodged, the Director of Quarantine will convene an Import Risk Analysis Appeal Panel to consider the appeal.
7. If there is no appeal, or if a problem with the process has been successfully addressed, AQIS implements its decision on the import access request.

### **Panel members**

AQIS is responsible for coordinating and chairing a risk analysis panel for each import access request requiring a non-routine risk analysis. The panel is responsible for managing the risk analysis and will appoint expert working parties to undertake specific components of the risk analysis, if required. AQIS

considers that the following experts would be suitable to undertake the risk analysis on maize from the USA:

Dr Bill Roberts (Chair)  
 Assistant Director  
 Plant Quarantine Policy Branch  
 Policy and International Division  
 AQIS

Dr Bob Ikin  
 Head, Pest Risk Analysis Section  
 Plant Quarantine Policy Branch  
 Policy and International Division  
 AQIS

Mr Bill Magee  
 Program Manager, Grain  
 Animal and Plant Programs Branch  
 Quarantine and Exports Operations Division  
 Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

Mr Mev Connell  
 Advisor to the CSIRO Entomology Division  
 (formerly: Chief Executive Officer, Grain Elevators Board of Victoria;  
 Director, Australian Wheat Board; Assistant General Manager, Australian  
 Wheat Board)

Dr Rob Brown  
 Managing Director, Agricultural Management and Consultancy Services  
 Consultant to Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

### **Release of information**

Information relating to the identity of the respondent and the substance of comments received in response to the process may be made available to other respondents, and to third parties, unless a request for anonymity is included with the response. Where a request for anonymity is not made, a respondent will be taken to have consented to the release of information including the respondent's identity, and the substance of the response, for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 (under the *Privacy Act 1988*).

### **Timeframe for completing the risk analysis**

We estimate that the risk analysis on maize from the USA will take approximately 14 months to complete, using the process outlined above. If there are no unanticipated delays, we would expect the Issues Paper to be circulated between December 1997 and February 1998, and the Discussion

Paper between April and May 1998. Stakeholders will be kept informed of any significant delays or variations to the proposed timeframe.

**Request for comments**

You are invited to comment on the proposed process and panel membership as described in this letter. Your comments will be taken into consideration when AQIS finalises its position on these issues at end of the consultation period. AQIS will accept written submissions until the close of business on Wednesday 8 October 1997. Responses should be forwarded to:

Risk Analysis Secretariat  
Plant Quarantine Policy Branch  
Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service  
GPO Box 858  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Digby Gascoine  
Director  
Policy and International Division