



HORSE INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting 20

Monday 13 May 2019

10.00am to 2.30pm

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

18 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra ACT 2601

M.6.09

Participants

Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

Department

Wayne Terpstra (Chair)	Animal and Biological Imports
Ainslie Brown	Animal and Biological Imports
Tanya Oliver	Animal and Biological Imports
Emma Ford	Animal and Biological Imports
Cassie Pert	Animal and Biological Imports
Peter Finnin*	PEQ Operations
Simon Mills*	PEQ Operations
Mathew Scarlett*	PEQ Operations
Alyce Adams*	VEMS
Tania Ware	VEMS
Leah Wells	VEMS
Beth Cookson	Animal Biosecurity
Allan Sheridan	Animal Biosecurity
Kate Usher*	Animal Biosecurity
Kirsty Blair*	First Points of Entry
Anita Tapper	Finance and Business Support
Annie Lorimer	Live Animal Exports

External

Peter Friend	Equestrian Australia
Kathleen Mullan	Harness Racing Australia
Josh Murphy	New Zealand Bloodstock
Cameron Croucher	Equine International Air Freight
Chris Burke	International Racehorse Transport
Amy Little	International Racehorse Transport
Andrew Small	Racing NSW
Jeffrey Wilkinson	Australian Equine Veterinary Association
Paul Bloodworth*	Racing Victoria
Grace Forbes	Racing Victoria
Ross Kendell	Horse Industry Consultant

Apologies

James Gilkerson	Australian Veterinary Association
Cristy Secomb	Australian Equine Veterinary Association
Cameron Brown	Harness Racing Australia
Mark Burnell	Australian Horse Industry Council
John Peatfield	Thoroughbred Breeders Australia
Barry O'Farrell	Racing Australia
Adam Powell	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Trade and Market Access Division)
Dennis Way	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Veterinary and Meat Export Services)
Donna Bennett	Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (Veterinary and Meat Export Services)

*teleconference

Meeting commenced at 10:30am – due to flight delays

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the 20th meeting of the Horse Industry Consultative Committee (HICC) and introduced himself as the new Assistant Secretary of the Animal and Biological Imports Branch (ABIB). The Chair acknowledged apologies from those who could not attend and recognised members' effort to travel to Canberra and participate in the meeting.

2. Minutes from meeting 19 and actions arising

The Chair called for comments on the Minutes for the 19th HICC meeting. The Minutes were accepted by all attendees.

Action item 1 from the 19th HICC meeting (use of levies) was addressed by Anita Tapper who advised that primary industry levies are collected for specific purposes under specific collection legislation and regulations and can't be invested into other initiatives. Chris Burke clarified that industry was enquiring whether surplus funds from cost recovery activities could be directed for research and development rather than being returned to industry payers. Mr Burke suggested possible uses for surplus funds such as glanders research, assisting AAHL with exotic equine disease research, and funding 'non-essential' improvements to the Mickleham quarantine facility. Anita advised that there is no formal departmental policy for investing surplus funds from an arrangement into research or capital improvements. This would be part of the internal budget process and any decision would need to be made by the secretary on advice from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The Chair thanked IRT for their background information on the agenda item and indicated that he would raise the issue with the CFO.

Action items 2, 3 & 7 from meeting 19 were discussed below in agenda items 4, 5 & 8 respectively.

Action item 8 from meeting 19 has been completed; however, Chris Burke mentioned the difficulties of transitioning to the new EU regulations. Of particular concern was the department's ability to communicate with the EU. Although, Chris Burke noted that the department seems to be gaining some traction now. Wayne Terpstra agreed to discuss this further with IRT out of session.

ACTION ITEM 1: Wayne Terpstra to discuss the use of surplus funds collected through cost recovery levies to support industry research and development objectives with the Chief Financial Officer. Action item 1 from meeting 19 to stay open.

3. Program Financial Update (Paper)

The Chair welcomed Anita Tapper to present the paper on 'Biosecurity Cost Recovery Arrangement Financial Performance Report 2018-19 December Year-To-Date'. The biosecurity arrangement is expected to have a surplus of just under \$21 million for the period 1 July 2018 to 31 March 2019, however the March quarter report has not yet been finalised. Anita noted that the end of March revenue for horses would be in line with the forecast.

Chris Burke advised that the numbers in table 7 of the financial report could be misleading as the report is based on timing of post-entry quarantine (PEQ) invoicing rather than the timing of each import. It was agreed that a footnote should be included at the bottom of table 7 in future financial reports to explain these differences.

Anita sought feedback from members on FaBS' expectation for a 3% increase in horse import numbers for the 2019-20 budget. Chris Burke indicated that this increase seemed unlikely and noted that it is highly dependent on the comparative value of the Australian dollar, and is therefore difficult to predict.

Ross Kendell started a discussion about the 2018-19 annual forecast closing balance of \$43.8 million, which is significantly greater than the department's policy to maintain surplus within 0-5% of annual program expenditure. Anita and Wayne Terpstra indicated that the value was for all imports, not just horses. Jeffrey Wilkinson asked Anita whether the surplus money would be returned to industry. Anita explained that the CFO and Secretary could decide to lower import fees, for example, however, no remissions will be given this financial year.

ACTION ITEM 2: Once finalised, the Finance and Business Support (FaBS) team will provide the March quarter report to the secretariat for circulation to members out of session.

4. Offshore Charging Guidelines

Action item 2 from meeting 19 included updating line 31 of the offshore charging guidelines to reflect that audits will be carried out separately between importers, unless by exception.

Anita Tapper advised that FaBS are still developing an amalgamated offshore charging guideline. Once finalised they will seek endorsement from senior management and then gain targeted feedback from stakeholders, including HICC members. FaBS predict that the guidelines may be ready for feedback around the end of the financial year but this will depend on the budget allocations and timing with the incoming government.

The Chair advised members to subscribe to the department's website to receive industry notices on their specific topics of interest to ensure that members receive relevant information as soon as it becomes available.

ACTION ITEM 3: Once FaBS has completed the amalgamated offshore charging guidelines, the secretariat will provide it to the HICC members for their targeted feedback.

5. Exports Cost Recovery

Anita Tapper provided an update on the review of the fees and charges of export cost recovery.

Anita indicated that the review is currently unable to progress due to the department being in 'caretaker period'. Wayne explained the nature of 'caretaker period' to members and noted that the review requires the sign-off of the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. However, once a new government is sworn in it is expected that this will be a priority matter and will progress fairly quickly.

Once the export cost recovery review has been agreed, FaBS will then commence a review of imports cost-recovery.

Wayne Terpstra noted the department's significant regulatory focus on live animal exports following reviews into conditions for the export of sheep to the Middle East (McCarthy review) and the department's regulatory capability and culture (Moss review). Wayne was not aware of any significant changes to live horse exports, however, he noted that horse agents have been impacted by the focus on live sheep exports.

6. PEQ Operations update

The new PEQ Biosecurity Operations Assistant Secretary Peter Finnin introduced himself and welcomed members to contact him in future for Mickleham post entry quarantine related queries.

1) Mickleham Improvements

Simon Mills provided an update of maintenance changes and improvements to the Mickleham compound. New horse crushes have been installed in each compound and the addition of rubber belting around the inside edges of the turnout yards is being progressed. The water temperature in the surgery room has been automatically set for 36°C.

PEQ Operations are trying to secure more funding to make additional improvements including replacing the rubber surface matting in the horse walkers.

After last year's success, another mock emergency surgery run through at Mickleham is being organised for the first week in June. This will help the department to update instructional material and ensure PEQ staff and industry are prepared in the case of a real emergency event. Mat Scarlett will circulate more information to the relevant parties.

PEQ Operations are currently undertaking preparations for the July shuttle stallion consignments.

Chris Burke noted the large number of horses in PEQ over the last 18 months and thanked PEQ Operations staff for their efforts over the busy period.

2) Mickleham consignment bookings

Currently, importers are unable to see the Mickleham booking schedule for horses as the information is treated as commercial-in-confidence. As a result, importers are unable to easily know how many spaces are left for particular dates.

In the past, Mickleham bookings were arranged on a set schedule of intake windows which importers agreed to every 12 months. The current booking system is more flexible to allow for changes to scheduling and the number of horses to be imported. Currently, importers submit approximate dates and horse numbers to PEQ Operations as requested. PEQ Operations then create a proposed schedule of booking dates and send options back to the importers to accept.

Tanya Oliver asked importers whether they are comfortable for booking information, including dates and numbers of horses, to be shared between importers to allow planning for consignments. Wayne Terpstra noted the difficulty of sharing this type of information under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and advised of future amendments to the Act that will combat unintended issues with information sharing and is likely to benefit HICC members.

Importers shared concerns that information sharing could enable importers to use market power to disadvantage other importers. Importers also queried whether PEQ would open a second compound for a small consignment. Peter Finnin assured importers that the quarantine fees and staffing are structured to allow a second compound to be opened regardless of the number of horses.

Suggested processes included:

- Reverting to set intake windows, which are agreed upon for 12 month periods.
- Introducing non-refundable deposits for booking during an intake window.
- Importers submitting horse names to PEQ Operations when making bookings OR importers confirming horse details at a certain time prior

to commencing pre-export quarantine (for example: 28 days prior to export).

- The department informing shippers of the number of spaces left for each intake window.

Members agreed that in the short-term, scheduling would go back to structured intake windows in 12 month timeframes and PEQ Operations would have quarterly communication with shippers to confirm intakes and horse numbers.

A future procedure may require a declaration to be provided from each importer to allow commercial-in-confidence information sharing and to ensure the department is acting in accordance with section 580 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

ACTION ITEM 4: ABIB to work with PEQ Operations to develop a protocol to resolve consignment booking and scheduling issues for Mickleham.

7. Inspector-General of Biosecurity (IGB) Recommendations

The office of the IGB conducted a review of horse imports in 2018 and as a result, recommendations were made in relation to the following agenda items.

1) First points of entry (FPOE) update

Kirsty Blair updated members on the progress of the horse corral improvements at Sydney Airport, which are required for the facility to meet the new First Point of Entry (FPOE) standards, commencing June 2019.

Sydney Airport Corporation Limited (SACL) are considering a full redevelopment and relocation of the Sydney corral due to the Westconnex motorway extension planned to go through the current site in 2020.

SACL will require short-term funding to immediately address safety and biosecurity issues and to meet the new FPOE standards; and long-term funding for redevelopment and relocation.

Currently the deadline of 16 June 2019 will not be met, however an extension to the deadline will be given to SACL to allow the corral to keep operating (and therefore trade) while improvements are being made. Currently the extension deadline has not been confirmed but a timeline of improvements is expected from SACL by the end of this week.

2) New Zealand/New Caledonia contingency plan

Tanya Oliver informed members that the requirement for a contingency plan for horses arriving from New Zealand and New Caledonia had been removed from the Notice to Industry 8: *Horse Importer responsibilities - horses from New Zealand and New Caledonia*.

In the discussion at the last (19th) HICC meeting, ABIB proposed that horses from New Zealand (NZ) and New Caledonia (NC) showing clinical signs of disease would be held on transport trucks at the airport until relevant test results were received. The resulting HICC discussion highlighted the proposal's lack of operational feasibility at several of Australia's airports.

ABIB undertook a further assessment of the policy, seeking advice from Animal Biosecurity Branch (ABB) and the Chief Veterinary Officer of each Australian state and territory through the Animal Health Committee (AHC).

Taking all advice into account, the department has determined that the risk of horses from NZ and/or NC spreading exotic disease to Australia is lower than Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP). Therefore, the department has removed the need for a contingency plan for horses arriving from NZ and/or NC.

Tanya explained that a horse arriving from NZ or NC with compliant import documentation but showing clinical signs of a disease of biosecurity concern, including nasal or genital discharge, then the horse will be released from biosecurity control which will allow it to be sent to its destination property and have immediate access to veterinary attention.

Wayne Terpstra noted that the department has advised AHC of the change and has not received any comments to date.

3) Industry awareness

The IGB review recommended greater communication of equine biosecurity issues to state and territory chief veterinary officers and Animal Health Australia. Members indicated that they were comfortable with the meeting minutes from HICC and other relevant industry meetings being shared with state Chief Veterinary Officers and Animal Health Australia.

8. Animal Biosecurity updates

The Chair introduced the new ABB Assistant Secretary Beth Cookson, and welcomed Allan Sheridan and Kate Usher from ABB and Annie Lorimer from Live Animal Exports.

1) Market Access

Officers from ABB have recently completed an in-country competent authority assessment for horse, cat and dog imports from Estonia. The Estonian horse industry is rapidly growing and has a number of unique breeds that Estonia wants to preserve. There is increasing interest from people in Australia to import horses from Estonia. A report and outcome is currently being prepared.

2) Appendix B Documents

ABB informed members that after a recent incident of failure to issue an Appendix B for a horse that resided in Belgium during the 60 days prior to export, Belgian authorities advised of information for horse owners on their website, (originally not available in English) which should reduce further issues. ABB asked members for insight into other Appendix B issues that industry was facing.

Amy Little advised that IRT commonly face difficulties with completion of Appendix B's when dealing with Portugal and Spain, while Ireland and northern France are generally more willing to complete Appendix B's. However, Amy noted that issues are generally not with specific countries, but with individual vets that may be unaware of Appendix B requirements or who to contact.

The most common Appendix B issues include the certifying veterinarian not seeing the horse before export, not knowing how to complete the declaration and being unsure if the certificate is a genuine document. Kate Usher noted that competent authorities may be reluctant to certify a horse that has already left the country although the certification is about the equine health status of the property of residence of the horse, rather than the health status of the horse itself. Tanya Oliver noted, however, that one particular clause specifically requests for certification on testing and treatments for piroplasmiasis of the actual horse, not the property of residence, despite that in many cases the certifying veterinarian has not seen the horse and it may have already been exported from their country. Tanya suggested a review into the Appendix B questions. Allan Sheridan responded that the agreed approach to risk management of piroplasmiasis under existing policy prevents ABB from making any changes to the clause in the absence of a policy review, which would need to be based on new information in risk and risk management.

Amy Little (IRT) began a discussion about creating dual language guidance notes for each Appendix B that could explain what needs to be done, provide answers to commonly asked questions, and give key contact details.

Beth Cookson agreed that if industry sent examples of reoccurring issues to the department, ABB could consider developing guidance notes for those specific countries as a start.

IRT indicated that a key contact list for appropriate government contacts from each country would also help agents, who often don't know who to direct Port veterinarians to speak to about Appendix B issues. ABB agreed to develop a list of key contacts for each country with an agreed Appendix B and circulate this to members.

ACTION ITEM 5: Industry to send cases or examples of reoccurring Appendix B issues to ABB who will look at developing guidance notes for the relevant country Appendix B's.

ACTION ITEM 6: ABB to develop a list of key contacts for each country with an agreed Appendix B and circulate this to members to help with troubleshooting Appendix B issues.

3) Hong Kong equine disease free zone (EDFZ) and interim solution

ABB updated members on the new Hong Kong interim arrangement protocol. The protocol was used in April 2019 and seemed to work well. ABB are expecting to receive a more detailed written report on compliance with biosecurity requirements from the Hong Kong Agriculture Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) within the next month.

In regards to the assessment of Hong Kong and the EDFZ, located in Conghua, China, ABB are waiting for China to provide more information about their testing methods before the desk audit can be completed. An in-country assessment cannot be performed until this information is provided. ABB noted that they have been receiving more regular correspondence from China so are hopeful that more information will be received in the next month.

Ross Kendell advised that the racing industry wants an outcome on the assessment as soon as possible due to the significant impact of the EDFZ on the Australian horse racing.

Members and ABB discussed the possible outcomes of the Hong Kong and EDFZ assessment. Chris Burke asked what industry could expect if the department recognised the EDFZ and how it would impact residency requirements. Allan Sheridan explained that horses that enter the EDFZ in China to train and/or race at the Conghua Training Centre (CTC) after the approval date would be able to return to Hong Kong without any effect on their residency status.

If the application demonstrates that effective controls were reliably operating for greater than the 180 days prior to the date of assessment, it may be possible for approval to cover all horses in residency, or travelling to and from the CTC, during the time period on the date of assessment.

Paul Bloodworth noted that the broader racing industry were very interested in the progress of the EDFZ assessment. Paul asked ABB if they could provide a brief, written update on the interim arrangement, where the assessment is up to and the next steps, to be circulated to members, who could then forward on to interested parties. Beth Cookson agreed to circulate this by the end of the week.

ACTION ITEM 7: Secretariat to circulate a written update provided by ABB on the Hong Kong interim arrangement and the status of the Hong Kong and EDFZ assessment.

4) Hendra Virus conditions for exports to China

The Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) is currently developing a 'differentiating infected from vaccinated animals' (DIVA) test for Hendra virus to differentiate between horses testing positive to Hendra due to vaccination versus due to natural exposure to the virus. AAHL requires access to more blood samples from vaccinated horses to help with developing the DIVA test.

Chris Burke highlighted the importance of developing the DIVA test by providing a recent example of a horse being prepared for export to Hong Kong that tested positive to Hendra, despite no evidence of vaccination of this horse following interrogation of the Zoetis Hendra vaccination database. Subsequent investigation determined the horse had been vaccinated, but the microchip number was incorrectly recorded in the database. This resulted in the entire consignment being delayed for export by 21 days.

Allan Sheridan advised importers that AAHL would be grateful for any blood samples that could be used to help develop the DIVA test. This would require the sample submitter to provide a blanket approval to AAHL for any samples to be used for the purpose of developing the DIVA test, should it return a positive result.

5) China export protocol

Allan Sheridan on behalf of ABB provided an update on the draft export health certificate for horses being exported to China. After negotiations by, ABB on problematic areas in the newly implemented protocol, ABB have received correspondence from post in Beijing advising that China has accepted Australia's draft health certificate provided by ABB, which included changes to the following:

- Anthrax free area
- Equine Viral Arteritis testing
- Hendra property freedom

The finalised health certificate is expected to be uploaded on MICoR and distributed to the Veterinary and Export Meat Services team, Live Animal Exports Division and industry.

6) EU health certificates

Members discussed inconsistencies between health certificates and their interpretation among member states of the European Union (EU). IRT indicated that consignments have been held up in different EU ports due to non-biosecurity matters such as formatting and that different port officers have different views on their preferred formatting and interpretations of clauses.

ABB sent a letter to the EU Commission on the 11 April 2019 to confirm Australia's export health certificates are correct and meet EU requirements. ABB hopes that a formal response from the EU Commission may be a useful tool when issues arise with a member state.

Beth Cookson asked agents whether there were consistent issues with specific countries. IRT indicated that the most issues arise in Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

Due to continuing issues and industry having trouble communicating with the certifying officers, Allan Sheridan suggested that ABB and industry organise a meeting to discuss further.

Beth Cookson indicated that she will be travelling to the OIE General Session meeting in late May and there may be an opportunity to flag this issue while there.

Chris Burke asked how Brexit would affect the EU conditions. ABB advised that Brexit will include a 12 month transition phase where the current EU conditions will still be used.

9. Other business

1) VEMS staffing issues

Wayne Terpstra noted that the department is aware of staffing shortages with the Veterinary, Exports and Meat Services Group (VEMS). Wayne has been speaking with Dennis Way, the VEMS Executive, to find ways to combat the staffing issue which has impacted the operations of industry. VEMS staffing shortages stem from the policy of the current government that introduced staffing ceilings to ensure the APS workforce does not exceed 2007 levels, despite the fact that VEMS is cost-recovered.

Staffing restrictions may be relaxed depending on the outcome of the upcoming federal election. The department has consulted the Departments of Finance, Treasury and Prime Minister and Cabinet, although we are still struggling for a resolution to increase numbers and resources.

Leah Wells added that VEMS has recently recruited additional VEMS officers to be based in the Sydney, Perth and Melbourne offices. However, Leah noted it will take a certain amount of time for the new staff to be available and appropriately trained.

Leah Wells and Wayne Terpstra also noted that VEMS staffing levels have been impacted by the increased regulation of the live animal export (LAE) industry, which has required VEMS officers to act as independent observers on livestock export voyages by sea.

Members agreed that VEMS staff are doing the best they can, considering staffing shortages. However, importer agents noted that resourcing issues unfortunately reflect badly on the industry when things like documents can't be issued until the last moment. Chris Burke asked the Chair if industry should raise this issue with their local members. It was agreed that HICC members could write to their local members in line with their business needs, either prior to or after the new government has been elected.

2) National horse traceability register for horses

This agenda item was going to be addressed by Mark Burnell of the Australian Horse Industry Council. However, he unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting.

Benefits of a traceability register were briefly discussed by Jeffery Wilkinson, Chris Burke and the Chair. This register would improve horse traceability but also allow for vaccination and testing history to be readily available via a horse's microchip number. Members noted that difficulties may arise due to it being a national register used by state governments.

3) TRACE system for horse exports

Annie Lorimer explained to the committee that development of the TRACE system had ceased. Instead, Export Documentation System (EXDOC) is moving to a new system called Next Export Documentation System (NEXDOC), which will cover export documentation for multiple commodities and make TRACE redundant.

Chris Burke mentioned that industry was consulted too late in the development process of TRACE so the system was impractical for industry use. Chris asked when industry would be consulted to ensure NEXDOC is fit for purpose.

ACTION ITEM 8: LAE Operations and Wayne Terpstra to speak with relevant colleagues in Information System Division (ISD) and Exports Division about industry engagement in the development of NEXDOC.

4) EU breed accreditations

Adam Powell from the Trade and Market Access Division (TMAD) was the presenter of this agenda item, but was a last minute apology.

Chris Burke gave background information on this agenda item and mentioned that having more horse breeds accredited with the EU would have a positive impact on both import taxes and recognition of different horse passports. Chris noted that the issue is probably most relevant to Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC).

The Chair asked members if they would be interested in discussing this agenda item out of session. Members agreed to information being circulated by the secretariat to members out of session and instructions on how to progress applications for EU recognition of horse breeds would be provided.

ACTION ITEM 9: Adam Powell to put together more information on EU breeding accreditation and provide it to the secretariat for circulation to HICC members out of session. ABIB will act as conduit for applications for EU recognition of horse breeds.

5) HICC terms of reference

The HICC terms of reference are due this year and will be circulated to members for comment by the end of the financial year. Nomination letters will also be sent out to members at this time.

Chris Burke asked if exports could be added to the terms of reference as historically it has only mentioned imports. However, this had been previously rectified and both imports and exports are mentioned in the current terms of reference.

Members agreed that the secretariat should attach the terms of reference to emails when papers are sent out to members, so that they are readily available.

The Chair also suggested including an agenda item in the next meeting for a member of the exports team to update members on new exports legislation.

ACTION ITEM 10: Secretariat to circulate the current terms of reference to members, send out the new terms of reference for comment and distribute nomination letters.

ACTION ITEM 11: Secretariat to organise a member of the Exports Division to attend HICC meeting 21 to provide an update on new exports legislation.

10. Close meeting and next meeting

Members agreed that the next HICC meeting (21) would be held in Melbourne.

Jeffrey Wilkinson suggested that an informal teleconference be held prior to the next meeting to update members on the progress of action items. All members agreed this would be useful.

The secretariat will also send out an electronic update of action items in 3-4 months and request agenda items from members for an informal teleconference to be held in 6 months.

It was agreed that the next formal meeting would be in approximately 12 months but this would be confirmed with members at the 6 month informal teleconference.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked members for their time and input throughout the meeting.

Meeting finished at 2:30pm

Summary of Action Items

ACTION ITEM 1: Wayne Terpstra to discuss the use of surplus funds collected through levies to support industry research and development objectives with the Chief Financial Officer. Action item 1 from meeting 19 to stay open.

ACTION ITEM 2: Once finalised, the Finance and Business Support (FaBS) team will provide the March quarter report to the secretariat for circulation to members out of session.

ACTION ITEM 3: Once FaBS has completed the amalgamated offshore charging guidelines, the secretariat will provide it to the HICC members for their targeted feedback.

ACTION ITEM 4: ABIB to work with PEQ Operations to develop a protocol to resolve consignment booking and scheduling issues for Mickleham.

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