

Eminent Scientists Group

**THE REPORT OF THE EMINENT SCIENTISTS GROUP
ON THE DRAFT FINAL
IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS REPORT FOR FRESH APPLE FRUIT
FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

TO

THE DIRECTOR OF ANIMAL AND PLANT QUARANTINE

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Introduction

In 2004 the Eminent Scientists Group (ESG) was established to increase confidence in the administration of the import risk analysis (IRA) process conducted by Biosecurity Australia. The ESG is tasked with providing external scientific and economic scrutiny of significant import risk analyses.

This report by the ESG is made in accordance with its terms of reference as listed in the *Import Risk Analysis Handbook 2007 (update 2009)* which are to:

1. review the revised draft IRA report prepared by Biosecurity Australia. This will take account of any relevant new information brought to the ESG's attention, including assessing conflicting scientific views provided to it, to ensure that:
 - (a) all technical submissions received from stakeholders in response to the draft IRA report have been properly considered and
 - (b) the conclusions of the revised draft IRA report are scientifically reasonable based on the material presented,
2. review the revised draft IRA report prepared by Biosecurity Australia to ensure that all relevant matters relating to the likely economic consequences of a pest or disease incursion have been properly considered, and
3. within 60 days of being presented with the revised draft IRA report, prepare a report to the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine on its findings and recommend any action considered necessary to overcome any identified deficiencies. The ESG will provide a copy of the report to the Chief Executive, Biosecurity Australia.

The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has additionally sought any advice the ESG considers may be of assistance beyond these formal terms of reference on matters relating to the science within this IRA.

On 21 September 2009, Biosecurity Australia formally referred the *Draft Import Risk Analysis Report for Fresh Apple Fruit from the People's Republic of China (revised after consideration of stakeholders' comments)* (revised draft China apples IRA Report) to the ESG.

To facilitate deliberations, the ESG was provided with:

- the *Draft Import Risk Analysis Report for Fresh Apple Fruit from the People's Republic of China (revised after consideration of stakeholders' comments)*
- the *Draft Import Risk Analysis Report for Fresh Apple Fruit from the People's Republic of China (revised after consideration of stakeholders' comments)* (track changed version)
- 10 submissions from stakeholders received during the formal period of consultation on the draft IRA report
- the report of stakeholders' comments and Biosecurity Australia's responses for the Eminent Scientists Group.

Following out-of-session consideration of these documents, the ESG met in Canberra on 1–2 October 2009 to prepare its findings. During the course of these proceedings, the ESG met with members from the China apples IRA team on two occasions to obtain answers to questions relating to the China apples IRA process.

This assessment report by the ESG provides observations on BA's treatment of stakeholder comments, scientific conclusions and economic consequences in the development of the revised draft China apples IRA report ensuring that the conclusions of the revised draft IRA report are scientifically reasonable based on the material presented.

Assessment

The ESG notes that there were 10 submissions made by stakeholders, and that these encompassed a considerable range of issues. Biosecurity Australia has responded to these issues where appropriate by including additional information in the September 2009 revised draft China apples IRA report and by making revisions to the draft text. The ESG considers that the responses made by Biosecurity Australia to the majority of the issues raised comprehensively address the concerns of stakeholders and scientific and economic conclusions were reasonable based on the material provided. Other issues raised by stakeholders were considered to be outside the scope of the IRA.

The ESG was aware that considerable effort was invested in the provision of comments in response to the draft China apples IRA report, especially by state and territories. The ESG observed that the comments by stakeholders led to constructive improvements in the revised draft China apples IRA, resulting in a more robust document.

Conclusion

The ESG concludes unanimously that Biosecurity Australia has properly considered the 10 submissions received from stakeholders on the *Draft Import Risk Analysis Report for Fresh Apple Fruit from the People's Republic of China (revised after consideration of stakeholders' comments)*, ensuring that the conclusions of the revised draft IRA report are scientifically reasonable based on the material presented. In addition, all relevant matters relating to the likely economic consequences of a pest or disease incursion were also considered.