biosecurity

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biosecurity is published by MAF Biosecurity Authority, and covers biosecurity and animal health issues. It is of special interest to all those with a stake in New Zealand’s animal production industries.

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The sixth article in the series on MAF’s Animal Biosecurity group looks at the links between the group and other organisations with responsibility for protecting New Zealand’s biosecurity.

A few years ago the phrase ‘agricultural security’ referred to protection of New Zealand’s farming and horticultural industries. Now MAF talks about ‘biosecurity’, and biosecurity encompasses a lot more than just agriculture. It’s about protecting New Zealand’s natural and physical resources, including plant, animal and human health, from harmful organisms.

MAF’s Animal Biosecurity group plays a key role in the protection of New Zealand’s biosecurity, but it is not the only organisation with biosecurity responsibilities. Government departments, regional councils and private agencies are also involved in biosecurity matters.

Animal Biosecurity’s primary biosecurity goal is to protect the health of our animal population. It works with other biosecurity organisations, industry groups and technical committees to help ensure communication between the different groups and a consistent approach to biosecurity issues.

Biosecurity Council

The Biosecurity Council was established by the previous Minister for Biosecurity to ensure a coordinated approach to biosecurity issues and the provision of high quality biosecurity advice. The council includes representatives from the four main government departments with biosecurity responsibilities (MAF, Conservation, Fisheries and Health) as well as other government organisations with an interest in biosecurity. It provides an opportunity for these groups to communicate with each other on biosecurity matters and ensure a consistent approach (see Biosecurity 10: 4-5).

MAF’s Biosecurity Authority (MAF Biosecurity), of which the Animal Biosecurity group is a part, plays a major role in the council. The council’s secretariat is located within MAF Biosecurity, and the group director of the authority is a member of the Biosecurity Council itself and chairs its Biosecurity Technical Forum. The Biosecurity Technical Forum comprises technical and policy representatives from each of the government departments and organisations involved with biosecurity issues.

Members of the Biosecurity Council meet to discuss and recommend:

- the general direction for biosecurity in New Zealand;
- which biosecurity priorities should be funded by the Minister for Food, Fibre, Biosecurity and Border Control;
- how biosecurity risks should be managed, and by whom;
- what the appropriate level of biosecurity protection is for New Zealand.

Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA New Zealand)

ERMA New Zealand plays an important role in protecting New Zealand’s biosecurity because it is the body responsible for considering applications to import or develop new organisms.

Animal Biosecurity liaises closely with ERMA New Zealand over the importation of new organisms into New Zealand. Approvals by ERMA New Zealand occur in parallel with consideration of the implications of imports for animal biosecurity, which is managed by Animal Biosecurity.

NGO forum

A new forum has been established for non-governmental organisations, such as environmental groups, to discuss issues with MAF Biosecurity. Matters affecting animal biosecurity may be discussed there.

Agricultural Security Consultative Committee

The ASCC is convened by Animal Biosecurity as a forum for animal industry representatives and MAF to discuss policy and technical issues relating to biosecurity.

The ASCC provides an opportunity for industry to be kept informed of MAF decisions on biosecurity matters, and for debate on the potential impact (technical, economic, or social) of those decisions.

Input from ASCC members helps Animal Biosecurity identify factors relating to biosecurity which may affect New Zealand’s competitive position and market access.

The ASCC also has four specialist subcommittees that consider and review specific technical issues relevant to their particular industries.

Pest management strategies

In the past MAF would respond to incursions of exotic pests or organisms with implications for
New Zealand's agricultural industries. Now the Biosecurity Act 1993 provides a mechanism for regional councils, industry groups, government departments and individuals to develop plans (pest management strategies) to manage harmful pests or diseases. The Animal Biosecurity group promotes and assists with the development of strategies that affect animal health.

Pest management strategies set out how an organism will be managed or eradicated, who is responsible for various activities, and funding and compensation arrangements (if any).

By encouraging industry groups to plan ahead the management of pests and diseases will be better coordinated, and there will be more certainty about the level of control that will be undertaken. A pest management strategy can be developed to cover the management of either exotic diseases or those which already exist in New Zealand. National strategies are already in place for bovine tuberculosis and American foulbrood.

The decision to develop a pest management strategy depends principally on whether the benefits of controlling a pest or disease outweigh the costs. The group proposing the strategy can determine which pests they wish to cover provided there is a net benefit from the measures taken.

Pest management strategies are targeted at either a national or regional level. Regional pest management strategies are approved by regional councils to manage existing or potential pest threats in their areas of responsibility. For example, a council may control rabbit density by setting acceptable density levels via its pest management strategy.

Case study - national American foulbrood pest management strategy

American foulbrood (AFB) is a disease of honey bees, which exists throughout New Zealand. It is caused by a pest known as Paenibacillus larvae. The National Beekeepers’ Association of New Zealand (NBA) is the management agency responsible for AFB control and ensuring that programmes are in place so that the pest management strategy continues to meet its objectives. The long-term objective of the strategy is to eliminate American foulbrood from beehives in New Zealand.

The strategy provides incentives for beekeepers to enter into individual agreements with the NBA to take responsibility for managing the disease in their own hives. It aims to ensure that beekeepers are competent to recognise and control AFB. It provides for a system of inspections at least once a year. There is also a set of strategy rules which specify obligations or prohibitions on various activities.

The strategy is enforced by AgriQuality New Zealand, under a contract with the NBA. Beekeepers meet the costs of managing the disease in their own beehives.

New laboratory at the National Centre for Disease Investigation

A new containment laboratory is soon to open, enhancing MAF’s disease investigation capability

MAF is working to shorten the time taken to rule-in or rule-out exotic disease in the laboratory by providing safe, reliable, accurate screening tests at the National Centre for Disease Investigation (NCDI) at Wallaceville, near Wellington.

A physical containment (PC) level 3 laboratory has been built at the NCDI to provide a secure environment for test development and the screening of samples for the presence of exotic disease agents.

More rapid diagnosis

Most exotic disease agents are prevented from entering New Zealand by strict border controls, but exotic disease incursions do occur or may be suspected. It is critically important to rapidly identify potential exotic disease agents if the effects of an incursion are to be minimised.

The new PC3 laboratory will reduce New Zealand’s reliance on overseas laboratories for exotic disease testing. This will speed up diagnosis, as there can be major delays getting clearance to transport potentially-infected samples through the air space of countries en-route.

Delays may also be experienced if New Zealand relies on overseas laboratories to demonstrate that a zone or the whole country is free of an exotic disease. Overseas reference laboratories will be reluctant to provide speedy results on the large numbers of samples to be tested for these purposes.

Rapid, accurate diagnosis is the key to effective disease control. This includes early reporting of unusual disease events even when the probability of the disease being exotic is low. This must be followed by timely clinical, pathological and epidemiological assessment of the disease in the field, and rapid laboratory confirmation of the causative agent.

Early detection and identification of potential exotic disease agents enables the timely selection of appropriate control actions, and minimises the impact of an outbreak through reduced disease spread, reduced quarantine zones, increased opportunity for regionalisation, faster eradication, early declaration of country freedom and thus reduced economic consequences.

New laboratory

AgResearch, MAF’s landlord at Wallaceville, has constructed a biosecure PC level 3 laboratory to be leased to MAF’s National Centre for Disease Investigation (NCDI). This laboratory is built in accordance with the Australia/New Zealand Standard Safety in laboratories, part 3 microbiology (AS/NZS 2243.3:1995) for a PC level 3 facility. The facility also has the additional security of the PC level 4 requirements of shower out, double ended autoclave and liquid waste decontamination facilities. These requirements are consistent with international best practice for laboratories dealing with exotic animal diseases.

The primary biosecurity and safety barriers in the new laboratory, as in any microbiology laboratory dealing with potential pathogens, are class II biohazard cabinets (fig. 1). These cabinets minimise the chance of organisms escaping into the laboratory area.

In the PC3 laboratory, the biohazard cabinets are surrounded by secondary facility design barriers. Access to the laboratory will be restricted and entry and exit will be through air locks. The air locks, corridors and laboratories are held at negative pressure with the most highly contaminated areas at lowest pressure. Air flows from the outside of the building through the airlocks and corridors into the laboratories which are maintained at 85 pascals below atmospheric pressure.

The exhaust air is filtered through high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters (fig. 2) that remove 99.97% of particulate matter greater than 3µm in diameter to remove potentially contaminated aerosol droplets. The directional

New containment laboratory at the National Centre for Disease Investigation
air flow is such that the air in all rooms is changed at the rate of 20 times per hour.

Staff must remove all of their clothing and shower before leaving the laboratory at the end of the day. In addition, all particulate and liquid waste materials and laboratory clothing leaving the lab will be sterilised by heat or chemical treatment. Equipment will be serviced within the laboratory wherever possible but large items can be removed through a decontamination chamber where they are sterilised with formaldehyde gas.

The air handling, sterilisation and security systems will be monitored and recorded electronically. Alarms will sound if the systems deviate from specifications. A full-time microbiological security officer ensures that all systems are operating to specification and staff comply with standard operating procedures.

**Test methods**

The NCDI relies on careful monitoring of test performance, comprehensive quality standards (ISO 17025), internal and external quality assurance audits and participation in international inter-laboratory comparison programmes to ensure test accuracy and international acceptance of test results. These accredited test methods require the use of positive control materials to validate tests and for staff training to ensure that the tests are immediately functional when required.

The range of available tests will be expanded to cover most of the agents that are of potential risk to New Zealand and those where trading partners are likely to ask MAF to prove that New Zealand is free from infection.

Where possible, these tests will use killed antigens or non-infectious nucleic acid sequences. However in many cases, the live infectious agent is required to establish and validate the test. NCDI staff are working on a detailed application to the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA New Zealand) for approval to import into containment a number of live unwanted organisms for this purpose.

The physical barriers, laboratory techniques and adherence to detailed operating procedures will ensure biosafety and microbiological security. This will protect both the operator and the environment regardless of whether the facility is used for test development or laboratory identification of suspect exotic or new disease organisms.

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**The new role of the OIE in international trade**

The world organisation for animal health, the OIE, has a new role under the SPS agreement. The president of the OIE’s international committee explains.

**Introduction**

We are now in an era of rules-based trading. For animal health regulatory bodies, the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) becomes the main influence.

The SPS agreement established simple and sound principles by which impartiality and fairness in world trade would be pursued:

- trade decisions based on a predetermined process of risk assessment;
- decisions and risk analyses based on facts which are established by sound scientific investigation and knowledge;
- a transparent process of decision-making which is subject to review.

Under the SPS agreement, the recognised international standards, guidelines and recommendations for animal health and zoonoses are those developed under the auspices of the OIE, the Office International des Epizooties or world organisation for animal health.

The WTO has also recognised and accepted the OIE as the international scientific reference for animal health. This was confirmed by an agreement on technical cooperation which was signed between the Director-General of the WTO and the Director-General of the OIE on 4 May 1998.

**What is the OIE?**

The OIE is an international animal health organisation, based in Paris and comprised of 151 member countries. This year it is celebrating its 75th anniversary. It was created in 1924 through an international agreement signed by 28 governments.

Its main objectives, stated at that time, were:

- to promote and coordinate research on contagious diseases of livestock for which international collaboration was desirable;
The OIE is a standardising intergovernmental organisation. It is an organisation of a technical nature as opposed to a political organisation. It exists for coordination and cooperation amongst its members, not for the purpose of managing or integrating their economies.

The OIE is a worldwide organisation and not a regional organisation. It is not controlled by any country, but is independent and is funded by its members. Each member country has one delegate and one equal vote, regardless of its size.

The International Committee, which is made up of the delegates of the member countries, constitutes OIE’s supreme body. But even this body has not been endowed with any legislative power.

The Central Bureau in Paris, with a staff of 31, operates under the direction of a Director-General who is elected every five years. An Administrative Commission, which is elected with regional representation for a three-year term, oversees the general functioning of the Bureau.

However OIE basically address its scientific objectives through working Specialist Commissions, made up of members who are geographically representative and who are elected every three years by the International Committee.

There are four specialist commissions:

- the Code Commission which develops the International animal health code, specifying guidelines for international trade;
- the Standards Commission which develops a manual of standard diagnostic procedures;
- the Foot and Mouth Disease and other Epizootics Commission;
- the Fish Diseases Commission.

These commissions are supported in their work by:

- nine collaborating centres;
- 127 reference laboratories in 26 countries;
- four working groups on biotechnology, informatics and epidemiology, wildlife diseases and veterinary drug registration;
- ad hoc groups;

- scientific experts from the most advanced and highly developed countries.

In addition to these groups, the work of the OIE is supported by five regional commissions and three regional representation offices.

**What is the role of the OIE?**

Today, the OIE is involved in:

- disease recording and in the distribution of information on current disease occurrences within the territories of its member countries;
- publishing scientific information;
- training;
- standardisation of diagnostic methods;
- developing guidelines for trade based on the latest scientific disease knowledge, as well as accessing the best scientific experts of its member countries;
- assisting with immediate disease control procedures;
- evaluating the documented disease status of areas or countries;
- assisting the WTO as to the scientific validity of animal health information submitted by countries in trade dispute resolutions.

The original provisions of the OIE endow the International Committee with the authority to develop international standards that are scientifically based, consensual in the manner of their adoption but not legally binding.

**How does the OIE develop these standards?**

Recommendations are developed by specialist commissions and working groups. They call on leading international specialists to prepare new draft standards on the basis of progress in veterinary science. They also invite the views of delegates of member countries on draft texts.

Finally, international standards of the OIE are formally adopted by means of resolutions by the OIE International Committee. Therefore, OIE standards result from a wide consensus of the highest veterinary authorities of the member countries, and it is this which confers on them their scientific and practical value.

After the entry into force of the SPS agreement, the signatory members of this agreement find themselves using the OIE recommendations as a more permanent reference for all the sanitary measures that they apply, both to imports and exports, and even in their own territory.

So the SPS agreement has changed the context in which the OIE standards are applied, and has strengthened the international mission of the OIE.

**The future**

Ten years ago, the OIE International Committee decided to review on a regular basis the strategies to be implemented to best fulfil the missions of the OIE as specified in its basic texts. In 1990 a strategic plan for the period 1990-1995 with five themes was enunciated by a working group.

In 1995, this strategic planning exercise was repeated for the period leading to the year 2000. Out of this exercise came three themes:

- the development and dissemination of information;
- the development and promotion of international standards;
- technical and scientific cooperation with the veterinary services.

Now we are initiating the process once again to build a new strategic plan for the next five years. Clearly this will be influenced by the changes brought about by the SPS agreement. Building on the reports of a series of working groups, a meeting in Ottawa, Canada in October 1999 with a small group of international representatives formulated the approach of the new strategic plan. This final plan will be presented to the General Session of the OIE in May 2000.

Where should we go next? How should the role of the OIE change to best reflect its responsibility in the new millennium under a new Director General and with new working commissions, since all of these positions are coming up for election in May 2000? What will be the new role of the OIE in international trade?

This now rests in our hands to find the most meaningful and appropriate role for the most influential global animal health organisation, the OIE.

Dr Norman Willis, President of the International Committee of the OIE; and Executive Director, National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

www.oie.int
New Zealand and Australia have made a new commitment to improving transtasman cooperation on biosecurity matters which may hinder trade. Senior officials from the two countries have been meeting to plan work for implementing this commitment.

An initiative on biosecurity cooperation has been agreed by Australian and New Zealand ministers. New Zealand’s biosecurity minister John Luxton, and his Australian counterpart, agriculture minister Warren Truss, announced their agreement in September.

Their joint announcement reported that “New Zealand and Australian officials are working closely together to look at the national biosecurity policies of both countries and examine the biosecurity restrictions which may hinder trade. The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) and MAF have agreed to put on a more formal footing separate technical groups looking at animal and plant health and border operations.”

CER cooperation

In 1988 New Zealand and Australia made a commitment as part of the CER agreement to harmonising biosecurity systems and minimising restrictions on transtasman trade, while ensuring that animal health and plant health were still protected.

Officials from the two countries have met frequently since 1988 to discuss bilateral and multilateral biosecurity matters. A number of specific issues have been resolved over this period, and a number of others are still under discussion.

New initiative

Because of the importance of maintaining biosecurity and of enhancing opportunities for transtasman trade, the ministers have agreed to strengthen the on-going dialogue on transtasman biosecurity issues.

Officials from MAF’s Biosecurity Authority and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade met with their Australian counterparts from AQIS and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in Canberra in August and in Wellington in September.

This group, now know as the ‘Consultative Group on Biosecurity Cooperation’, is established with terms of reference to:

- strengthen dialogue on transtasman biosecurity issues;
- provide overall impetus and direction on policies for harmonising animal health and plant health measures affecting trade between the two countries;
- oversee the work of technical working groups on animal and plant biosecurity;
- report to ministers at least annually.

This higher-level policy group is co-chaired by the Group Director of MAF’s Biosecurity Authority, Barry O’Neil, and the Executive Director of AQIS, Paul Hickey.

Subsidiary groups

Existing cooperation at the technical level has been also been strengthened. Two technical working groups, on animal health and plant health, will operate to terms of reference developed by the Consultative Group on Biosecurity Cooperation.

The working groups will review existing biosecurity measures that affect transtasman trade, and identify those that are not based on a contemporary risk analysis, do not appear to be based on sound science, or do not reflect genuine differences in pest or disease status or differences in the level of sanitary or phytosanitary protection deemed appropriate by New Zealand or Australia.

The technical working groups will also look at verification procedures associated with trade, such as pre-export clearance, certification, postarrival inspection and permit systems.

An operations group will concentrate on border operations, ‘benchmarking’ the systems of the two countries and sharing information on risk profiling procedures.

A project team will look at the risk analysis methodology used by both countries, with a view to harmonising systems where possible.

Next steps

The subsidiary groups are beginning work this month. The Consultative Group on Biosecurity Cooperation will meet again in Canberra in February 2000, to review progress, plan further work, and prepare a report to appropriate ministers.

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The document proposing the components of a biosecurity strategy for New Zealand has been revised, and appears here for your awareness.

The Biosecurity Council prepared and consulted on a draft document proposing a biosecurity strategy for New Zealand (Biosecurity 13: 6). Comments have been considered, and the document revised. This revised document is printed here for your interest and awareness. Further comments are not being sought at this time.

Purpose of the document

The revised overarching strategy document is intended as a first step in the development of a more comprehensive biosecurity strategy for New Zealand. It is aimed at raising awareness of the need for a New Zealand-wide biosecurity strategy, and gaining agreement on some fundamental components of such a strategy. The involvement of a wide range of interests will be needed to develop the document into a more comprehensive strategy.

Introduction

This document outlines the initial components of an overarching biosecurity strategy for New Zealand’s lands and waters. It was drafted by the Biosecurity Council to reflect a New Zealand-wide perspective on biosecurity.

Maintaining New Zealand’s biosecurity is of crucial importance for all our citizens and for our economic well-being as a small island nation. Our borders are constantly tested by organisms that have the potential to cause severe damage to our biodiversity, economy, environment and quality of life. The growth in trade and tourism, intensification within production systems based on exotic species, and climatic and environmental changes, all increase the risks of invasion and establishment of new destructive organisms. Introduced pests also continue to threaten our indigenous flora and fauna, and production industries. To minimise the threats of both exotic and introduced organisms, New Zealand needs biosecurity systems that are based on sound principles of risk management, good science and cost-effectiveness.

Definition of biosecurity

Protection from the risks posed by organisms to the economy, environment and people’s health through exclusion, eradication and control.

Vision

Protecting New Zealand’s biodiversity

Mission

Provide effective systems for New Zealand’s biosecurity

Contribution to government’s goals

One of the overarching goals of the government as stated in Goals and Priorities 1999/2002 is: “We treasure our clean, healthy and unique environment and will ensure it continues to sustain nature and people’s needs and aspirations. The life-supporting capacity of soil, air, water and ecosystems will continue to be safeguarded and the biological diversity and spectacular scenery that make New Zealand a special place will continue to be able to be enjoyed by future generations.”

Components of the strategy

The following statements outline the main components that the strategy should address to achieve New Zealand’s mission for biosecurity. These statements are not listed in any order of priority. They serve as the overarching components for which more detailed description and specific actions are necessary. They will be developed further through consultation with interested parties.

A. Government and public commitment to biosecurity;
B. Capacity and capability to identify, prevent and manage biosecurity risks and threats;
C. A cooperative and consultative approach to addressing biosecurity risks;
D. Government and stakeholder partnership to ensure adequate funding for biosecurity activities;
E. Clear accountabilities for biosecurity;
F. A legislative framework that meets New Zealand’s biosecurity needs;
G. Exotic biosecurity risks are managed offshore where practicable;
H. Consistent assessment of biosecurity risks across, and within, organisations with responsibilities for biosecurity;
I. Consistent application of cost-effective risk-mitigating measures for identified risks;
J. Communication programmes that increase the public’s awareness, understanding and ownership of biosecurity;
K. Biosecurity-related research that meets New Zealand’s needs;
L. Relevant international biosecurity obligations are met;
M. Treaty partners apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi consistently.
MAF intends to permit the resumption of importation of cattle semen from the United Kingdom, subject to recognised safeguards.

The British authorities have formally requested that MAF permit the importation into New Zealand of cattle semen from the United Kingdom. They point out that the world organisation for animal health, the Office International des Epizooties or OIE, revisited the issue in May this year and confirmed that organisation’s previous position that semen does not pose a BSE risk.

For MAF to refuse to accept cattle semen from the United Kingdom there would need to be a demonstrable animal health risk. All animal disease risks were adequately covered in the import health standard which was suspended in early 1996. Opposition to resuming imports has been based on a concern that such a trade might serve to introduce BSE. There are a number of reasons why such concerns are unfounded.

**Distribution of infectivity within cattle affected with BSE**

Studies on various tissues taken from naturally occurring cases of BSE have detected infectivity only in the brain, spinal cord and the eye. Infectivity has not been detected in any of 45 other tissues including blood, testis, prostate or semen.

Failure to detect BSE infectivity in these bovine tissues does not, of course, rule out the possibility that the agent may be present at a very low level. However, the OIE ad hoc group on Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, at its May 1996 meeting, commented “... the comparative bioassay of cattle tissues in mice and cattle suggested the infectivity of non-central nervous tissue (including muscle) would be >100,000 (10^5) less than that of brain...”. As little as 1 gram of infected cattle brain is sufficient to transmit infection orally to cattle. The comparative bioassay studies suggest that if infectivity is, indeed, present in these other tissues at a titre less than 100,000 that of brain tissue, the amount of tissue needed to transmit infection other than by intracerebral inoculation would be at least 100 kg.

**Transmission of BSE**

There is no evidence that BSE is transmissible in semen. A MAF official has visited the United Kingdom and talked with experts there about new information on the incidence of BSE amongst the progeny of bulls in the former Milk Marketing Board’s AI service (now known as Genus). The data show that there is no greater incidence of BSE amongst the offspring of bulls with the disease than amongst the offspring of healthy bulls.

The results can be summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSE STATUS OF BULL</th>
<th>+</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSE status of + offspring</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- offspring</td>
<td>3,889</td>
<td>23,319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The obvious conclusion from this is that there is no enhanced risk of developing BSE for offspring whose sires developed the disease, as the incidence of BSE amongst the progeny of affected bulls was 0.0064 while amongst the offspring of the control bulls it was 0.0079.

**Conclusion**

BSE has, of course, occurred in a number of countries other than the United Kingdom. However, in no instance has a case of BSE been attributable to importation of semen. Cases of BSE in other countries have been attributed to importation of British cattle and/or British meat and bone meal.

At its meeting in January 1998 (and before the analysis of the Genus data was available) the OIE ad hoc group on BSE concluded “...there is a wide range of tissues from cattle... in which no detectable infectivity is expected to occur at any time, even in clinically affected animals. These tissues include:

- carcase meat
- milk
- hides
- skins
- semen
- embryos washed in accordance with the protocols of the International Embryo Transfer Society.”

There is compelling evidence that bovine semen imported from the United Kingdom constitutes no risk so far as BSE is concerned. A refusal to resume trade would be technically indefensible.

This issue has been discussed by the Agricultural Security Consultative Committee (Animals) and MAF intends to permit the resumption of importation of cattle semen from the United Kingdom, subject to the safeguards prescribed in the OIE *International animal health code.*

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The deadline for submissions is 15 December 1999.

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**Stuart MacDiarmid, National Manager (Risk Management), Animal Biosecurity, phone 04 474 4223, macdiarmids@maf.govt.nz**

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The deadline for submissions is 15 December 1999.
New regulations have been made to require importers of livestock, including embryos or semen, to identify animals and keep records.

The Biosecurity (Imported Animals, Embryos and Semen Information) Regulations 1999 apply to sheep, cattle, deer and goats, and come into force on 15 November 1999.

The purpose of the regulations is to enable imported animals, imported genetic material, recipient animals of such material, and animals originating from imported embryos to be identified (see Biosecurity 10: 7). If tracing is required because of a disease problem in the country of origin or within New Zealand, MAF will know where the imported animals are located and can find out where genetic material was used.

The regulations are a measure to better protect animal and public health. They will assist the New Zealand animal products industry to trade with other countries on a sustainable basis.

The new information requirements consolidate and extend measures that were formerly contained in regulations for the artificial insemination of cattle, and in a range of import health standards.

The artificial breeding industry routinely records information for both imported and domestic semen and embryos and so will notice little change. Similarly, livestock breeders using imported genetic material probably already keep this information as part of their business records, but subsequent owners of animals originating from imported embryos will also have to do this.

The requirements of the regulations on the livestock industry are described below.

Owners of animals imported live

Owners or managers of live imported animals must confirm to MAF the location of each animal in June every year, and that the “MAF IMPORT” eartags issued under the permit to import are in place. These eartags were first issued in 1998.

Additionally, MAF is to be notified if an imported animal:
- dies from illness, or is put down because of illness;
- dies by injury or old age;
- is slaughtered (indicate meat works unless home kill);
- is sold, or otherwise changes ownership;
- one or both MAF IMPORT eartags is lost or damaged;
- is missing.

MAF must be informed within seven days of these events happening. In the case of fatal illness, the animal disease emergency line should be used within four hours. This is so tissue samples can be taken should there be suspicion of an exotic disease.

Country of origin rules may restrict the export of animal products from these animals. Owners or managers need to inform the meat company whether or not there is an imported animal in the consignment, each time they consign stock.

Owners of animals imported as embryos

Owners of animals originating from imported embryos must retain records for seven years in a manner and format from which they can be readily retrieved and copied by a person authorised under the Biosecurity Act. This information must be available at 48 hours’ notice.

The information required to be kept for animals imported as embryos is:
- the date of birth, sex, species, and the breed or type;
- the place where the animal is kept;
- the animal’s on-farm identification;
- any change in ownership, and the name and address of both the new owner and the former owner;
- the date the animal dies or is consigned to slaughter.

Genetic material importers and technicians

Persons in charge of stocks of imported animal genetic material (AGM), and technicians who perform artificial insemination or embryo transfer with such material, are required to keep records for seven years. If AGM is on-sold, the new owner must make records and retain those records.

The information required for imported AGM of sheep, cattle, deer and goats includes:
- the name and address of the owner or person in charge of the recipient animal;
- the individual identification of the recipient animal;
- the date any AGM is destroyed;
- the name and address of anyone to whom AGM is distributed.

Imported embryos, semen: Ashley Edge, Policy Adviser, Biosecurity Policy Coordination, phone 04 474 4213, edgea@maf.govt.nz

Imported animals: Neil Armitage, National Manager Approval/Registrations, Food Assurance Authority, phone 04 498 9819, armitagen@maf.govt.nz
Draft import health standards for consultation

The following draft import health standards (IHSs) have been developed by MAF and are available for public consultation.

Sheep and goat meat products for human consumption from Chile

This draft import health standard has been prepared according to the safeguards within the MAF risk analysis The importation into New Zealand of meat and meat products – a review of the risks to animal health of 1991. Chile is a country free from foot and mouth disease. The sheep and goat meat products are to be derived from animals subjected to ante- and post-mortem veterinary inspection.

The European Community – New Zealand veterinary agreement and what it will mean for imports

At the time of writing, it is expected that the European Community – New Zealand veterinary agreement (Veterinary agreement attached to Council Decision 97/132/EC) will enter fully into force in the near future. A 90-day transition period will follow to enable a managed introduction of new importation requirements for animal products from European Community member states.

The European Community member states are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. MAF has drafted import health standards that will enable the importation of a wide range of animal products from these countries.

Draft import health standards for the importation of various animal products from the European Community were first discussed in Biosecurity 2: 10 (15 March 1998). In the intervening period, MAF has continued equivalence negotiations with the European Commission.

European legislative changes to formally recognise the outcome of negotiations are well advanced. As a result, the original draft import health standards have required some amendments. MAF now invites comments on the most recent draft import health standards that have been prepared in anticipation of changes to European legislation. The changes have been made now so that the import standards will be available for use when the veterinary agreement enters into force.

The health requirements outlined in the updated import health standards are based on European Community animal and/or public health legislation that has been recognised as delivering guarantees equivalent to those required by New Zealand legislation. As a result, certification requirements outlined in the import health standards are quite different to those found in other import health standards.

If we consider pasteurised dairy products as an example, MAF stakeholders will be used to seeing certification requirements along the lines that the product is derived from a country free of foot and mouth disease and that the product has been manufactured from pasteurised milk. Instead of this approach, the import health standard requires certification that the product complies with European Community Council Decision’s 64/432/EEC and 92/46/ EEC. This legislation has been recognised as ‘equivalent’ to MAF import requirements as it details animal and public health controls, including the processing parameters which apply when milk is pasteurised.

Therefore, the draft import health standards must be considered in conjunction with the relevant European Community legislation and the veterinary agreement itself. Anyone interested can obtain relevant European Community legislation from the web site: http:// europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/html.

The draft import health standards cover the following products:

- Heat treated (pasteurised) milk and milk products for human consumption.
- Heat-treated milk and milk products not for human consumption (e.g. stockfood, industrial use).
- Marine fisheries products (marine finfish other than salmonids, molluscs, crustaceans).
- Fish eggs/roe (derived from marine or freshwater fish) hermetically sealed in cans or glass jars.
- Fresh/frozen/processed salmonid products.
- Rendered mammalian protein for further processing into petfood.
- Rendered non-mammalian protein (fish or poultry meal) for animal food.
- Processed petfood (petfood in hermetically sealed containers, petfood made from fish, petfood containing rendered animal protein e.g. dog and cat biscuits).
- Cattle, goat, sheep, pig, deer hides and skins.
- Cattle, goat, sheep or pig blood products for pharmaceutical or technical use (includes products from slaughtered animals or from live, donor animals).
- Cattle, goat, equine, sheep and deer raw materials (e.g. spleens, pancreas glands, tracheae) for pharmaceutical use, technical use or petfood.
- Inedible tallow from cattle, goats, equines, sheep, pigs and deer.
- Mammalian game trophies.
- Cattle meat (beef) for human consumption (includes fresh meat, meat products, minced meat, meat preparations, bones, bone products, processed animal protein products, blood, blood products).
- Cattle, sheep, goat, pig sausage casings for human consumption.
- Deer meat (venison) for human consumption (includes fresh meat, meat products, meat preparations, bones, bone products, processed animal protein products, blood, blood products).
- Equine meat products for human consumption (includes fresh meat, meat products, minced meat, meat preparations, bones, bone products, processed animal protein products, blood, blood products).
- Pig meat products for human consumption (includes fresh meat, meat products, minced meat, meat preparations, bones, bone products, processed animal protein products, blood, blood products).
- Rabbit meat products for human consumption (includes fresh meat, meat products, and meat preparations).
- Sheep and goat meat products for human consumption (includes fresh meat, meat products, minced meat, meat preparations, bones, bone products, processed animal protein products, blood, blood products).
- Edible tallow (lard and rendered fats for human consumption) from cattle, goats, equines, sheep, pigs and deer.

**New import health standards issued**

The following new import health standards (IHSs) have been issued by the Director of Animal Biosecurity and are available for use. Any previous IHSs covering these combinations of country of origin and commodity species have been revoked.

**Salmonids for human consumption from specified countries (SHC)**

This standard now recognises the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) export certificate CFIA/ACIA 5024 (99/01) in respect of salmonid fish in the genera Salmo, Salvelinus and Oncorhyncus.

Clause 5.3 has been altered by deleting the words “at least 30 days”.

**Cattle meat products for human consumption from Argentina**

This standard was notified for consultation in Biosecurity 12: 9. The meat and meat products for export must be produced and processed in premises licensed to export to the European Union and the United States of America. Argentina is a country free from foot and mouth disease and has never recorded a case of BSE.

**Cattle semen from Hungary**

This standard was notified for consultation in Biosecurity 13: 11, includes the same safeguards that have been implemented for other European countries and is based on current import policy.

**Specified products for human consumption containing dairy products, eggs or meat**

This standard has been amended as follows:

- the countries of origin of the products have been clarified;
- the list of foot and mouth disease free countries from which dairy products may be imported has been updated in accordance with the OIE list adopted in May 1999;
- the products where the import approval has expired have been removed;
- bird’s nest products have been added to the approved list.

**Zoo otters (Aonyx cinerea) from Australia**

These standards were notified for consultation in Biosecurity 13: 11.

**Dogs and cats from New Caledonia and Singapore**

In these standards the Idexx Kit (Snap HTWMPF) test for heartworm has been added to the list of approved tests in clause 5 of Veterinary Certificate A.

**Horses from Australia**

The equine infectious anaemia (EIA) safeguards in this standard have been updated following consultation with the New Zealand Equine Health Association and the Agricultural Security Consultative Committee (Animals).

**Horse semen from Germany**

This standard replaces the previous version dated 12 January 1998, and updates the zoosanitary certification required to ensure consistency with the import health policies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as determined by other IHSs and the ongoing import health risk analysis for horses and horse semen. Effectively, this provides consistency with OIE recommendations for trade in horse semen.

The review has resulted from the recent upsurge in interest in imports under this standard when industry became aware that a new standard for imports from the European Union was not going to be available for the present New Zealand equine breeding season.

**Supplementary import risk analysis: head-on, gill-in salmonids from Australia for human consumption**

MAF has completed a biosecurity risk analysis on the importation of head-on, gill-in salmonids from Australia, as advised in the 15 September issue (Biosecurity 14: 10). The risk analysis is now available for public consultation, and copies have been sent to those persons who have expressed an interest in this issue.

The diseases identified as being of potential concern are atypical strains of Aeromonas salmonicida, lymphosarcomas in Tasmanian Atlantic salmon, streptococciosis, and epizootic haematopoetic necrosis virus (EHNV). The risk assessment assesses each of these diseases, and concludes for the first three that the risk of introduction posed by head-on, gill-in salmonids for human consumption is low or negligible. Specific measures are recommended for EHNV.

**Change to ID system**

The Animal Health Board (AHB) Identification System has been amended to allow some animals to be moved from their herd to a show and back again without having official ear-tags. This amendment took effect from 14 October 1999. Owners of animals that carry a mark registered to a breed society may apply to AgriQuality for a ‘permit-to-move’. A permit-to-move may be granted if the movement will not compromise the national TB strategy, and provided the animals travel under the owner’s direct control to and from the show.
Everyone listed at the end of an article as a contact point, unless otherwise indicated, is part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Biosecurity Authority. The group within the authority to which they belong is also identified.

All MAF staff can be contacted by e-mail, and the standard format for all addresses is surnameinitial@maf.govt.nz

For example, Ralph Hopcroft would be hopcroft@maf.govt.nz (There are slight exceptions for people with similar names, but these addresses are given where necessary.)

PO Box 2526, Wellington, New Zealand
(+64) 4 474 4100 (switchboard)
most staff have direct-dial lines, which are listed where available
(+64) 4 474 4133
Animal Biosecurity group, except Director
International Agreements group
Biosecurity Policy Coordination group
(+64) 4 474 4100
Group Director and Executive Manager, Biosecurity
Authority, Animal Biosecurity
ASB Bank House, 101 The Terrace, Wellington

The AHB Identification System is approved under the Biosecurity Act and regulations for the identification of cattle and farmed deer in support of the Biosecurity Act and regulations for the
The AHB Identification System is approved under the Biosecurity Act and regulations for the

The NGOs represented comprise environmental groups at this stage, but it is likely that a wider range of NGOs will participate in future. The three other departments with biosecurity

New NGO forum

A new forum has been established to provide closer links between MAF Biosecurity and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The forum will focus on biosecurity matters.

The NGOs represented comprise environmental groups at this stage, but it is likely that a wider range of NGOs will participate in future. The three other departments with biosecurity responsibilities (Conservation, Fisheries and Health) may also attend to enable fuller discussion on matters that cross agency boundaries.

Meetings will be held quarterly and are timed to occur shortly before a Biosecurity Council meeting. This timing enables NGOs to provide their views on matters to be considered by the council or to raise issues that the council should be advised of. The Group Director, MAF Biosecurity, chairs the NGO forum.

Sue Cotton, Biosecurity Policy Coordination Manager, phone 04 474 4283, cottons@maf.govt.nz

Import risk analysis:

Chicken meat and meat products; Bernard Matthews Foods Ltd turkey meat preparations from the United Kingdom.

MAF has carried out a review of the submissions received on its risk analysis on specified poultry products.

The risk analysis on chicken meat and chicken meat products and Bernard Matthews Foods Ltd turkey meat preparations from the United Kingdom was made available for public consultation in May 1999 (Biosecurity 11; 2).

The original deadline for submissions (15 June 1999) was extended following requests from some stakeholders who had not been able to complete their submissions on time. In total MAF received 12 submissions on the risk analysis, the last one dated 13 August 1999.

MAF has carried out a review of these submissions, and has prepared a review of submissions comprising a summary of the technical issues raised in each submission and MAF’s comments on them. Copies of the review of submissions document have been sent to all submitters.

The most significant of the outstanding issues are infectious bursal disease, Newcastle disease, and the public health risks of salmonellae. MAF intends to reassess the risk of introduction of IBD and ND, taking into account matters raised in several submissions. However, MAF is waiting for new information from overseas before this work can be carried out. The Ministry of Health has indicated that it needs to undertake a detailed examination of the public health risks associated with exotic salmonellae in imported poultry meat products. These reassessments may necessitate a further round of consultation.

Andrew Matheson, SPS Notification Authority coordinator, phone 04 474 4219, sps@maf.govt.nz

These animal health regulations have been either proposed or implemented by members of the World Trade Organization, and have been notified under the SPS agreement (the WTO agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures) between 31 August and 15 October 1999.

Andrew Matheson, SPS Notification Authority coordinator, phone 04 474 4219, sps@maf.govt.nz

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