TOWARDS A NATIONAL BIOSECURITY STRATEGY

TOWARDS A BIOSECURITY STRATEGY FOR NEW ZEALAND

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTARY DISEASE PROGRAMMES

BIOSECURITY AUTHORITY TO LAUNCH NEW PUBLICATION

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A national biosecurity strategy is to be developed. The initial document proposing the principal components of that strategy has been revised, and appears here for your awareness.

A comprehensive biosecurity strategy for New Zealand is to be prepared. This initiative follows from an initial overview document prepared and consulted on by the Biosecurity Council. The final version of that overview document is printed here for your interest and awareness.

The Biosecurity Council prepared and consulted on a draft document proposing a biosecurity strategy for New Zealand (Biosecurity 13:6). Comments were considered, and the document revised (Biosecurity 15:7). Further changes were made following the December 1999 Biosecurity Council meeting and articulation of the current government’s key goals in March 2000. A new vision statement has been inserted, and the previous government’s goal has been replaced with the applicable goal of the current government.

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Towards a national biosecurity strategy

Development of a national biosecurity strategy

Work is underway to scope the process for developing a national biosecurity strategy. That scoping exercise is expected to be completed by the end of July and will be reported on in future issues of Biosecurity.

The national biosecurity strategy is intended to provide direction and guidance to all agencies involved in biosecurity. It will aim to attain agreement on areas of priority for biosecurity activities.

The involvement of a wide range of interests will be necessary to develop the strategy, and the process for development will need to provide opportunities for those interested in biosecurity to have input into its development.

Sue Cotton, Biosecurity Secretariat, phone 04 474 4283, cottons@maf.govt.nz

Towards a biosecurity strategy for New Zealand

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

World-leading biosecurity.

Mission

Provide effective systems for New Zealand’s biosecurity.

Contribution to government’s goals

One of the key goals of the government as outlined in The Treasury’s 2000 budget policy statement is to:

“Treasure and nurture our environment with protection for ecosystems so that New Zealand maintains a clean, green environment and rebuilds our reputation as a world leader in environmental issues.”

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.
Guidelines are presented for the disclosure of personal information collected under voluntary animal disease control programmes.

Some animal industries are undertaking, or are considering developing, voluntary disease control programmes. These programmes raise issues about the way in which personal information, such as laboratory test results that confirm the presence of an animal disease, might be used without breaching the animal owner’s privacy.

Guidance on how such information might be disclosed is presented here.

**Voluntary disease control programmes**

Voluntary disease control programmes are those where no legal obligations apply, but where an industry has collectively agreed to certain requirements to control or eradicate a disease of concern to its members. An example is the programme that resulted in the eradication of Aujeszky’s disease from the New Zealand pig herd.

In contrast, industries may develop and manage pest management strategies which are statutory programmes that rely on access to coercive powers to carry out control measures.

**Privacy Act provisions**

In carrying out a voluntary disease control programme, a disease control agency may need to rely on laboratory test results to confirm the presence of the disease. How can a laboratory test result that confirms the presence of an animal disease be used in a voluntary disease control programme without breaching the animal owner’s privacy in terms of the Privacy Act 1993?

Laboratory reports on an animal’s health status are personal information that is private and confidential to the animal owner. This applies whether or not the laboratory test is ordered or reported through the owner’s veterinarian.

The Privacy Act limits the disclosure of personal information, but disclosure is permitted in certain situations. Two such situations are where disclosure is authorised by the individual concerned and where disclosure is directly related to the purposes for which the information was collected.

**Authorisation of use of personal information**

The Privacy Act does not prescribe a single means of informing interested parties about information collection and use. The disease control agency needs to have made the owner aware beforehand that disease test results would be collected. The owner must also have been told who will hold those records and if there are circumstances when that information will be disclosed to other parties.

The messages can be delivered in a range of documents used to explain and operate the disease control programme. For example, a ‘personal information’ section could be used on a laboratory submission form, or animal health professionals such as veterinarians could, when taking samples for testing, discuss with their clients the information linkages between the laboratory submission and the control programme. Alternatively, the veterinarian could establish in the course of conversation whether the owner is broadly familiar with the voluntary control programme and supports its requirements.

**Biosecurity Act provisions**

In some instances the disease-causing agent will have been determined to be an unwanted organism in terms of the Biosecurity Act 1993. In such cases there are legal obligations not to spread the organism, irrespective of the existence of any organised disease control programme.

There are also specific duties on the owners or managers of animals that are known to harbour, or are suspected of harbouring, the disease. The animals must not be offered for sale or moved, for example, except in a situation where official permission has been given.

A chief technical officer may give permission to animal owners or managers that would allow them to undertake the activities otherwise prohibited under sections 52 and 53 of the Biosecurity Act.

**Integrating privacy and biosecurity considerations**

The Biosecurity Act obligations can only be met if the presence of the disease is made known to people potentially involved with the infected animals such as staff, buyers and neighbours. A disease control programme, therefore, has a legitimate role in ensuring that personal information that is otherwise protected under the Privacy Act (such as animal disease records) is collected and used judiciously.

The disease control agency could remind animal owners to time to time of their responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act and the need for some disclosure of personal information to minimise unwitting breaches of the Biosecurity Act.

The disease control agency could also inform stakeholders of any practical steps they can take, if the disease occurs on their property, to mitigate the effects of the disease and of any regulatory consequences.

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15 March 2000
August this year will see the launch of a new publication by MAF’s Biosecurity Authority. It will deal with animal, forest and plants biosecurity issues, as well as animal welfare, and will replace the existing Biosecurity (covering animal biosecurity) and Phytozone (covering plants and forest biosecurity).

The new publication will be used to communicate, and consult on, issues relating to animal, forest and plants biosecurity and animal welfare.

MAF Biosecurity has reviewed its publications, following the creation of the Biosecurity Authority last year. The new publication will meet several needs:

- Generic policy issues can be reported in a single publication for all stakeholder groups.
- It will be frequent enough to be used for consultation with plant and forest groups (Phytozone is currently published only three times per year).

August Biosecurity is to start a new publication in August, covering all of the authority’s functions.

I need to know:

- That information about my animals is going to be collected;
- That any member of the public who specifically asks the programme agency for the disease status of my animals will be told the current status;
- Who the programme agency is, and how to contact it, and any other agency that may also be holding my individual test results;
- That my personal information in relation to the disease (if an unwanted organism) may be obtained by inspectors or authorised persons appointed under the Biosecurity Act 1993, either directly from me or from the programme agency;
- That the supply of the information by me (as agreed to by my use of the laboratory submission form developed for the programme), is voluntary, but that my duties under the Biosecurity Act (if any) can be discharged most efficiently by complying with the disease control programme;
- If there might be any consequences to me of not supplying information (for example, are there sanctions available under the programme that might be imposed on my business?); and
- That I have the right to access and to request the correction of my personal information held by the programme agency, and any relevant associated agencies.

The new publication will be called Biosecurity, and will be published eight times per year on the same dates as the current Biosecurity (1 February, 15 March, 1 May, 15 June, 1 August, 15 September, 1 November, 15 December). It will be much larger than this current publication, and have a new look with the different subject areas easily identifiable.

There will also be changes to the way the publication is managed by MAF, including a new editor.

You don’t have to do anything to receive the new Biosecurity; it will be sent to all of those currently receiving this publication and Phytozone.

Andrew Matheson, Editor, Biosecurity, ph: 04 474 4219, biosecurity@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.

Circus animals returning to New Zealand
A New Zealand circus is currently planning a visit to Fiji accompanied by animals including monkeys, lions and one elephant. This standard has been drafted to allow for their return into New Zealand, taking into account that these animals will be kept in containment during their entire visit overseas.

Spray-dried cattle, deer, goat, pig and sheep blood products for further processing into animal food from Australia
This standard contains the same safeguards as other IHSs for the importation of blood products, including the requirements that the products must originate from a government-licensed slaughtering establishment that slaughters animals for human consumption and that operates under government supervision. The products must be derived from animals which were subject to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection at the time of slaughter, and be suitable for use in animal foods according to Australian regulations.

Frozen kangaroo meat for pet food from Australia
This standard contains the same safeguards as other IHSs for the importation of pet food products, including the requirements that the products must originate from a government-licensed slaughtering establishment that slaughters animals for human consumption and that operates under government supervision. The products must be derived from animals which were subject to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection at the time of slaughter, and be suitable for use in animal foods according to Australian regulations.

Unprocessed fibre of sheep, goats and lamoids (alpaca, llama, vicuña, guanaco) for scouring
There are two draft standards available: a generic IHS and one for importation from Australia. MAF also seeks feedback on which countries importers wish to import these commodities from, so further standards can be progressed.

The IHSs are based on the MAF import risk analysis Unprocessed fibre of sheep and goats. After further analysis, MAF determined that lamoid fibre posed no additional risks to those of sheep and goats, and could be imported under the same conditions.

The generic IHS includes all the diseases for which safeguards are required, and details the safeguards recommended for each disease. It will not be issued for use from the generic standard MAF will develop individual country IHSs, such as the standard for importation from Australia.

Individual country standards will only include the safeguards for diseases that aren’t covered by disease freedom certification from the exporting country. This will ensure that the final conditions for importation are simply laid out, yet incorporate all the safeguards required. All imports of unprocessed fibre for scouring will have to be scoured in a transitional facility registered by MAF, regardless of additional safeguards that may be applied.

Import health standards for used wool packs, fleeces for home spinning, and unprocessed fibre for testing will be prepared after a range of country-specific IHSs are developed for unprocessed fibre for scouring. These standards will use similar safeguards; any differences will be due to the different physical characteristics of the commodities, and how they are handled after importation.

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http://www.maf.govt.nz/AnimalIHS
The deadline for submissions is 15 June 2000

New import health standards issued

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

Shelf-stable petfoods containing animal products
Clause 8.4.2 of this standard has been revised to include rawhide dog chews.

Specified meat products from Australia for use on flights leaving New Zealand
The word ‘veterinary’ has been deleted from this standard to enable products to be sourced from domestic abattoirs.

Specified meat products from France for use on flights leaving New Zealand
References to Australia have been removed from this standard as a specific standard now exists for that country (see above).

Sheep embryos from Australia
Goat embryos from Australia
Goat semen from Australia
Sheep embryos from Australia
Bovine semen from the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands
The word ‘conceived’ has been deleted from this standard to enable animals derived from embryos imported into Australia from South Africa to be imported into New Zealand. This is consistent with New Zealand’s recognition of South Africa’s scrapie status, and the safeguards imposed by Australia to manage the risk of importing maedi-visna and jaagsiekte.

Bovine semen from the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands
The IHSs for bovine semen from the United Kingdom and bovine semen from Jersey have been amalgamated into this standard following the resumption of the importation of bovine semen from the United Kingdom and the deletion of the references to bovine spongiform encephalopathy.
Non-viable invertebrates from all countries
This standard has been altered by adding clause 6.1 (iii) to allow the importation of commercially prepared insect(s) in glass cases.

Meat and meat by-product samples for evaluation and destruction
This standard has been altered by adding the words "Regulatory Authority standard 154.02.17 transitional facilities for biological products" to clause 9.

Beef/deer/goat/sheep meat and meat products from Australia
This standard has been altered by deleting the wording "with an official Australian government" seal to allow the use of Australian company seals.

Tropical butterfly pupae from all countries
This standard is based on the private risk analysis: Application for an import health standard for the importation of tropical butterflies into New Zealand, the MAF review of the analysis and the MAF review of submissions.

Horses from New Caledonia
This standard was notified for comment in Biosecurity 16: 8 and is based on New Zealand's current policy for the importation of horses as well as Australia’s import policy for horses from New Caledonia.

Specified inedible animal products and biologicals
This standard has been modified to include commercial consignments of loose animal bristles or hair. Current standards allow for the importation of small quantities of loose washed horse hair and commercial quantities of manufactured products containing animal bristles or hair. Importers have requested the importation of loose animal bristles or hair which have been boiled for more than 2 hours.

Clause 6.28 has been added to this standard, allowing the importation of animal bristles or hair from any country if accompanied by certification or a manufacturer's declaration, confirming treatment at a temperature of at least 95ºC for a minimum of 25 minutes, or at a temperature of at least 100ºC for a minimum of 15 minutes. These safeguards are based upon anthrax safeguards recommended in the wool risk analysis.

Other clauses regarding champion horse tails from Australia (clause 6.27) and horse hair in musical instruments (6.15) have been included into this standard from the Import health standard for the importation of horse hair into New Zealand, which has been revoked.

The following standards were amended in accordance with the requirements of the Biosecurity (Ruminant Protein) Regulations 1999:
- Frozen deer pizzles, sinews, testicles and tails from Germany
- Frozen deer pizzles, sinews, testicles and tails from Great Britain
- Dried pet food additives for further processing from Denmark
- Specified bovine products for further processing from France and Germany
- Lamb bungs for pharmaceutical purposes from approved countries
- Specified blood products from The Netherlands
- Sausage casings from approved countries

Specified protein digested animal products from France
Specified goat/sheep products for further processing from Finland
Pig meat and meat products for human consumption from Australia
Clause 7.4 has been amended to allow the importation of edible offal and clause 7.2 has been amended to allow the use of company seals on containers.

Salmonids for human consumption from specified countries (SHC)
Clause 11.1.2 has been amended by deleting the words ‘intended for export to New Zealand’ as this is not part of the export certification provided by the USDA and creates some difficulties with the clearance of this product.

Dogs and cats from specified countries
This IHS has had the following countries added to it as a result of the agreement to harmonise country approvals with Australia:
- Cayman Islands
- Republic of Croatia
- Hungary
- US Virgin Islands

Lebanon has been removed as a country from which imports can occur.
Peninsular Malaysia has been removed, because a separate IHS has been developed.

Dogs and cats from peninsular Malaysia
This import health standard re-instates importation from Malaysia, suspended in 1999 as a result of the outbreak of Nipah virus and the reporting of clinical cases in dogs, and seropositive dogs and cats. The IHS includes a serum neutralisation test for Nipah virus for dogs and cats, to be completed at Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) within the 45 days prior to shipment. This test has been imposed by the AQIS for imports to Australia on the advice of CSIRO scientists who were involved in test development during the outbreak.

This IHS also removes the requirement that dogs and cats come from outside the rabies control zone in peninsular Malaysia. The safeguards in place for rabies provide sufficient assurances that imported dogs and cats will not be importing rabies virus. This is consistent with Australia, which used to consider peninsular Malaysia except the control zones to be rabies-free, but now imposes rabies safeguards equivalent to this IHS on dogs and cats from anywhere on the peninsula.

Dairy product samples for evaluation
Specified products for human consumption containing dairy products, eggs or meat
Commercial consignments of dairy products for human consumption from Canada, the European Community, New Caledonia, Norway, Switzerland, the United States of America and Vanuatu
Dairy products for human consumption from Thailand
Meat and meat by-product samples for evaluation and destruction
Samples of untanned cattle/sheep/goat/deer hides and skins from specified countries
Commercial shipments of untanned cattle/sheep/goat/deer hides and skins from specified countries

Pre-cooked heat-and-eat meals containing animal products for human consumption from Canada, the European Community and the United States of America

Dairy products not for human consumption from Canada, the European Community, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America

Following outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in Japan and Korea, these countries (formerly included in the above IHSs) have been deleted from the list of countries of origin.

Primates from Australia for zoological gardens

Madagascan giant day geckos (*Phelsuma madagascariensis grandis*) from Australia for zoological gardens

Star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*) and yellow-headed tortoise (*Indotestudin elongata*) from Australia for zoological gardens

Agouti (*Dasyprocta aguti*) from Australia for zoological gardens

These standards were notified for consultation in *Biosecurity* 17: 8.

Specified inedible products and biologicals

Clause 6.17 has been amended by deleting the wording “provided they are free from contamination”, as border staff would have to open all containers containing leather if this requirement was to be enforced. Commercially tanned leather goods are of no higher risk of contamination than other non-leather items.

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www.maf.govt.nz/AnimalIHS

Draft facility standards for consultation

The following new or revised draft standards for facilities have been developed and are available for consultation. All standards have had the requirement for neighbours’ consent removed in line with changes to the Biosecurity Act, and the formats have been updated, including recognition of the Biosecurity Authority.

Containment facilities for microorganisms

This revision provides a better system for tracking several approved projects within one containment facility. A project would be a specific piece of work using microorganisms or genetically modified organisms that has been approved by the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA New Zealand) or an institutional biosafety committee. In addition, the definitions of institutional biosafety committee, new organism and project have either been modified or added.

Low-security farm animal transitional facilities

Requirements for horses have been added. Safeguards have been added to reduce the likelihood of weed seed introductions. Other changes are clarifications of existing requirements.

Transitional facilities for dogs and cats

Faecal waste may now be disposed of through an approved waste management system instead of by incineration. Other changes are clarifications of existing requirements.

Sheep and goat transitional facilities

The changes are clarifications to existing requirements and the format has also been updated.

Transitional facilities for vertebrate laboratory animals

This is a new standard and will cover the quarantine requirements for laboratory animals such as rats, mice, rabbits and guinea pigs. This standard is very similar to the containment facility standard but includes requirements to prevent the introduction of diseases and pests.

Transitional facilities for tropical fish

This is a revision of the “NASS standard for tropical fish quarantine facilities”. The changes are clarifications to existing requirements and the format has also been updated.

Copies of the draft standards will be sent directly to the operators of affected approved facilities, inviting their comments.

Kerry Mulqueen, National Adviser (Import Management), Animal Biosecurity, phone 04 498 9625, fax 04 474 4132, mulqueenk@maf.govt.nz

The deadline for submissions is 15 June 2000

Import health standards revoked

The following import health standards have been revoked, and the commodity or species from that country of origin is not included on any replacement IHS.

Horse hair

The requirements included in this standard have been included in the import health standard for the importation of specified inedible animal products and biologicals.

Bovine meat and meat products for human consumption from Japan

Following an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Japan, the importation of bovine meat and meat products from that country has been suspended.

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www.maf.govt.nz/AnimalIHS
New conditions proposed for imports of Australian salmon

MAF has completed its review of submissions on its supplementary import risk analysis for head-on, gill-in Australian salmonids for human consumption.

The review concludes that none of the points raised in submissions affect the validity of the conclusions of the supplementary analysis, or the risk analyses that preceded it in 1994 and 1997. As a result, MAF will be negotiating with Australian authorities to develop conditions for the importation of head-on, gill-in salmon from Australia.

The supplementary risk analysis examined only those diseases of salmonids which are present in Australia but which have not been recorded in this country. These diseases are atypical strains of Aeromonas salmonicida, lymphosarcomas in Tasmanian Atlantic salmon, streptococcosis, and epizootic haematopoetic necrosis virus (EHNV). The risk analysis assessed each of these diseases, and concluded for the first three that the risk of introduction posed by head-on, gill-in salmonids for human consumption was low or negligible. However, specific measures were recommended for EHNV.

MAF received 12 submissions on the supplementary risk analysis. As a result of questions raised with respect to one disease, streptococcosis, MAF sought further expert opinion which is reproduced in the review.

Copies of the review of submissions are available from MAF.

New risk analysis on hides and skins

MAF Biosecurity Authority is to undertake an analysis of the biosecurity risks posed by hides and skins imported to New Zealand for processing. The risk analysis has been initiated as part of the veterinary agreement between New Zealand and the European Union, and will consider risks associated with organisms that may be carried on imported hides.

A project team consisting of representatives from MAF and the Ministry of Health has been established, and a working group has been set up. The project team has concluded that the risk analysis should cover least-processed hides and skins from the following animal species: cattle, sheep, goats, deer, pigs, horses, lambs, alpacas, horses, emu and ostriches. The following will not be considered: rabbit skins, drum skins, hunting trophies, pigs noses/ears and other hide products for petfood. The diseases to be considered are those listed in OIE lists A and B.

MAF invites interested parties to make written submissions on the scope of the project.

Directory

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 26 February and 12 April 2000.

How to contact us

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 hopcroftr@maf.govt.nz (There are slight exceptions for people with similar names, but these addresses are given where necessary.)

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