

EQUINE INFLUENZA INQUIRY

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS

1. These additional submissions by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) address the matters raised at T4530-T4536 and T4542-4545 and paragraphs 2.24 to 2.28 of the submissions to this Inquiry from the State of Queensland.
2. The relevant documents being discussed in the Queensland submission and in the transcript comprise an unsigned minute to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF.0001.578.0014), a draft policy paper attached to that minute (DAFF.0001.578.0002) and a draft letter to the Prime Minister also attached to that minute (DAFF.0001.578.0017).
3. DAFF has two additional submissions in relation to these documents and the assertions made about them:
 - a. The documents are drafts.
 - b. The submissions made by Queensland in relation to risk in the document should be rejected.

a. Status of the documents

4. The draft minute to the Minister regarding future arrangements for AQIS operated post entry quarantine facilities (DAFF.0001.578.0014) was not signed or approved in a final form by any DAFF officer. It was not provided to the Minister's office in electronic or hard copy format. It was never provided to the Cabinet.
5. Nevertheless, the directions discussed in the draft policy paper attached to that draft minute had been the subject of extensive consideration and consultation within DAFF over a number of years since the 1990s and are reflected in Government policy since the Government's response to the Nairn Review in 1997.
6. The detailed content of the draft policy paper was developed by a 'Post Entry Quarantine (PEQ) Working Group' that had been established by the AQIS Executive in 2005 (see minutes at DAFF.0001.565.0292, DAFF.0001.565.0298; and

DAFF.0001.101.0048). The AQIS Leadership and Governance Committee also received papers on these matters in May, July, August and November 2006 (see DAFF.0001.852.1344; DAFF.0001.208.0493; DAFF.0001.852.1482; and DAFF.0001.207.2328).

7. The directions in the draft policy paper had also been discussed with external stakeholders, including state/territory Chief Veterinary Officers through the Animal Health Committee (DAFF.0001.852.1168) and industry.
8. As such, the work within AQIS on the future of quarantine stations has been the subject of input from a number of officers. Illustrative documents which have been provided to the Commission on this topic include final minutes to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF.0001.041.0092; AQIS.2002.024.0038), PEQ Working Group minutes and AQIS Leadership and Governance Committee minutes (references noted above).

b. Concept of risk in the context of post entry quarantine facilities

9. The discussion of risk in the draft policy paper focuses on the operational management of risks associated with alternative arrangements for post entry quarantine, rather than the inherent quarantine risks presented by different categories of animals and plants.
10. The consideration of levels of risk in this context reflects the views of a number of reviews, including the Lindsay Review in 1988 and the Nairn Review in 1996, which considered it feasible to allow greater involvement of private facilities for a range of animals and plants that have inherent moderate to high quarantine risks, including horses, provided that adequate quarantine security could be maintained.
11. The criteria for determining which species of animals and categories of plants could be considered 'low risk' in this context has included whether there are existing standards for private facilities and a history of successful operation of private facilities, a requirement for relatively short quarantine periods and established testing and diagnostic procedures. For example, the diseases of dogs, cats and horses are well known: there are existing testing and diagnostic procedures to identify quarantinable diseases and the periods of time the animals must remain in post

arrival quarantine are relatively short. Indeed, this compares with importation of live birds and bees which are considered high risk in this context as they require more complex diagnostic testing and variable periods of quarantine and can be more easily smuggled. In the case of bees the original imports are never released; only the progeny is released.

Conclusion

12. For these reasons, the submission at paragraphs 2.24 to 2.28 of the submissions to this Inquiry from the State of Queensland should not be accepted: they ignore the draft status of the documents and, more particularly, the context and the type of risk which was being discussed.