



Australian Government
Biosecurity Australia

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BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA ADVICE 2008/02

IMPORTATION OF ELEPHANT SEMEN – DRAFT POLICY

This Biosecurity Australia Advice (BAA) provides stakeholders with proposed quarantine measures for the importation of elephant semen from Singapore, the United States of America (USA) and Member States of the European Union (EU). We would welcome stakeholder comments by 6 March 2008.

Quarantine measures for the importation of elephants from Thailand were finalised in 2004 (Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum 2004/16). Foot and mouth disease (FMD), tuberculosis (TB) and surra (trypanosomosis due to *Trypanosoma evansi*) were identified as the main diseases of quarantine concern. Other diseases deemed to require risk management were endotheliotropic elephant herpesvirus (EEHV) infection, haemorrhagic septicaemia (HS), elephant pox, and parasites.

The elephants imported from Thailand in 2006 under the 2004 policy, and elephants already held in Perth and Melbourne Zoos, are to be bred as part of the Asian Elephant Captive Management Plan. The male imported from Thailand is just reaching breeding age. The other two males in Australia are considered unreliable for breeding. The zoos have sought the development of quarantine measures to import fresh, chilled semen from bulls in Singapore, the EU and the USA to address these issues and to ensure genetic diversity.

The proposed quarantine measures accompanying this advice have been developed by reviewing relevant scientific literature and the risk assessment underpinning the quarantine policy for the importation of elephants from Thailand that was finalised in 2004.

The review concludes for FMD that, in accordance with Australia's longstanding policy, the zoo in which the donor elephant resides must be in a country recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) as free from FMD. With regard to TB, testing with negative results of elephants in the zoo is required to reduce the level of risk to meet Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP). The available evidence suggests the risk of introducing EEHV with semen is very low but sites of latent infection in elephants have not yet been identified. Transmission of other herpesviruses by artificial insemination is documented. The review concludes two years zoo freedom from confirmed cases is required to ensure the level of risk meets Australia's ALOP.

The review also considers the quarantine risks associated with surra, haemorrhagic septicaemia, elephant pox and parasites and concludes the risks are extremely low or negligible via the importation of semen and meet Australia's ALOP. Risk management measures are therefore not proposed for these diseases and pests.

The following measures are proposed:

- . FMD: certification that the donor bull is resident in a zoo that is situated in a country recognised by the OIE as an FMD free country
- . TB: all elephants in the zoo must have been tested for TB with negative results, using the elephant TB STAT-PAK Assay, in the twelve months prior to semen collection.
- . EEHV: certification that no case of EEHV has been diagnosed in the zoo in the two years prior to semen collection.

The review paper is at Attachment A and proposed quarantine measures are at Attachment B.

Consultation

Biosecurity Australia would welcome your comments on the attached proposed measures by 6 March 2008. We will take into account stakeholder comments as we finalise the review.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should get in touch with the contact officer listed below. Alternatively, if you wish to be removed from the distribution list, please advise the contact officer.

Information on import risk analyses and policy reviews being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on the Internet at <http://www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au>.

Confidentiality

Stakeholders are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to BAAs will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports on the subject matter of the memoranda.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reveal the identity of a respondent unless a request for anonymity accompanies the submission. Where a request for anonymity does not accompany the submission the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

The contents of the submission will not be treated as confidential unless the submission is marked 'confidential' and they are capable of being classified as such in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

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