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BIOSECURITY ADVICE 2013/19

IMPORTATION OF LABORATORY MOUSE EMBRYOS FROM APPROVED COUNTRIES - POLICY REVIEW OF HANTAVIRUS

This Biosecurity Advice informs stakeholders that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has finalised the *Importation of laboratory mouse (*Mus musculus*) embryos from approved countries: policy review of hantavirus*. Importation of laboratory mouse embryos may be permitted subject to the *Quarantine Act 1908*, and the application of sanitary measures as specified in the *Biosecurity measures for the importation of laboratory mouse (*Mus musculus*) embryos*. The policy will be taken into account by decision makers when considering import permit applications for laboratory mouse embryos from approved countries in accordance with the *Quarantine Act 1908* and *Quarantine Proclamation 1998* as amended.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has completed a policy review of the importation of laboratory mouse (*Mus musculus*) embryos from approved countries. The available scientific information indicates the risk management measures for hantavirus in laboratory mouse embryos are no longer required.

Biosecurity measures for the importation of laboratory rats and mice and their reproductive material were adopted in March 2003 (Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum 2003/06). These requirements included testing and isolation of donors to manage the risk of hantavirus in mouse embryos.

This policy review of hantavirus concluded that *M. musculus* is not known to be a reservoir host for hantaviruses and there is no evidence of transmission of hantavirus via embryos in rodents. It concludes that the biosecurity risk associated with hantavirus does not justify specific risk management measures for hantavirus for the importation of laboratory mouse embryos.

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) was consulted to review the human health risks associated with hantaviruses in laboratory mouse embryos. DoHA has advised that it has no objection to removing testing requirements for hantaviruses in donor mice.

This policy review includes a number of key revisions to the current biosecurity measures for laboratory mouse embryos. These revisions include:

- removal of the requirement for pre-export testing of donor mice for hantavirus
- removal of the reference to compliance with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code
- other minor changes to the policy for clarity and ease of certification in line with current biosecurity policies.

The biosecurity measures will continue to require that there is no clinical, epidemiological or other evidence of hantavirus where the donor mice were bred or housed during the 12 months before embryo collection.

Biosecurity measures for live laboratory rats and mice, their semen and laboratory rat embryos remain unchanged.

The policy review and revised biosecurity measures are available via the department's website, daff.gov.au/ba.



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