



HORSE INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting 26

Friday 17 June 2022

10:00am to 1:30pm

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
Mickleham Quarantine Facility, 135 Donnybrook Rd, Mickleham VIC 3064
Teleconference available

Department

Wayne Terpstra (Chair)	Animal and Biological Imports
Michelle Blowes	Animal and Biological Imports
Danni Davis	Animal and Biological Imports
Kaylene Jones	Animal and Biological Imports
Kym Russell	Animal and Biological Imports
Peter Finnin	Animal Biosecurity
Tania Ware	Animal Biosecurity
Ben Wilson	PEQ Operations
Tamara Nolan	PEQ Operations
Felicity Tessier	PEQ Operations
Melissa Henson	PEQ Operations
Donna Bennett	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Leah Wells	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Clare O'Shannessy	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Claudia Lin	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Jess Gorham	Exports Division
Dan Edson	Office of the Chief Veterinary Officer
Timothy Naylor	Live Animal Exports
Eunice Chuah	Live Animal Exports
Paul Douglas	Finance Division
Judith Greenham	Finance Division

External

James Gilkerson	Australian Veterinary Association
Ross Kendell	Horse Industry Consultant
Andrew Small	Racing NSW
Karen Day	Racing Australia
Cameron Croucher	Equine International Air Freight (EIAF)
Jeffrey Wilkinson	Equine Veterinarians Australia
Chris Burke	First Point Animal Services/International Racehorse Transport (IRT)
Josh Murphy	New Zealand Bloodstock
Andrew Kelly	Harness Racing Australia
Rachel Ratini	Equestrian Australia
Cameron Bell	Agriculture Victoria
Jane Bennett	NSW Department of Primary Industries

APOLOGIES**Internal**

Robyn Martin	Biosecurity Animal
Lee Cale	Cargo Operations and PEQ Biosecurity Operations
Emma McGrath	Animal and Biological Imports
Murli Baker-Gabb	Animal Biosecurity

External

Melanie Latter	Australian Veterinary Association
Grace Forbes	Racing Victoria
Paul Bloodworth	Racing Victoria
Fiona Thompson	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Qld
Josie Holmes	Agriculture Victoria
Graham Cooke	Agriculture Victoria
Kathleen Mullan	Harness Racing Australia

Meeting commenced at 10:10am**1. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the 26th meeting of the Horse Industry Consultative Committee (HICC), acknowledging that some participants were attending in person and others via teleconference. The Chair acknowledged apologies from those who could not attend.

Mr Wilson (PEQ Operations) provided an acknowledgement of country.

The Chair acknowledged the passing of Dr Patricia Ellis in early May. Staff in the department were very sorry to hear of her passing. Trish was a long-term member of the department's Horse Industry Consultative Committee (HICC) and provided valuable contributions over her term. She also contributed to emergency disease responses through the Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Disease (CCEAD) and worked on many projects with the department. These included management of biosecurity risks associated with horse imports for the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and the horse import risk analysis, which was finalised in 2010. She is sorely missed.

Mr Burke (IRT) agreed on behalf of the horse industry that Dr Ellis had made contributions to the Australian horse industry that could never be underestimated.

2. Minutes from Meeting 25 and outstanding Action Items

The Chair called for comments on the minutes for the 25th HICC meeting. No comments were received, and the minutes were accepted.

Action Item 1 from HICC 25 was moved to Finance Subcommittee, which met after HICC 26 was completed.

Action Item 2 from HICC 25 was completed.

Action Item 3 from HICC 25 was delayed, and an update listed at Agenda Item 3 of this meeting.

Action Item 4 from HICC 25 was completed, and an update on NEXDOC status was listed at Agenda Item 9 of this meeting.

Action Item 5 from HICC 25 was listed for further discussion at Agenda Item 8 of this meeting.

Action Item 6 remains pending internal approval with the Animal Biosecurity Branch Assistant Secretary and Biosecurity Animal Division First Assistant Secretary and was included for update at Agenda Item 4.

Action Items 7-8 were completed, and an update on items 6 and 8 were included at Agenda Item 4 of this meeting.

Action Item 9 will be updated out of session as there were no updates available at the time of HICC 26.

Action Item 10 was listed for discussion at Agenda Item 11 of this meeting.

3. Update on finance (paper) and Biosecurity Cost Recovery Arrangement

Mr Terpstra (Chair) introduced Paul Douglas (Finance Division) who provided commentary on the tabled paper about the Biosecurity Cost Recovery Arrangement for horses at the Mickleham Post-Entry Quarantine Facility.

It was noted that the number of horses being quarantined at the facility has increased considerably over the past two years and that the figures indicate the facility is operating at a significant surplus. There is some indication that not all property costs are being allocated to the correct commodity, so the amount of surplus may not be completely accurate. A Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) review is currently underway to determine whether revenue at PEQ has been correctly allocated and to reassess charging structure and cost adjustments.

As there has been a recent change in government, there has been a delay in the finalisation of the CRIS. The updated CRIS must now be presented to the new Minister. After the Minister has had the opportunity to review, another paper will be presented out-of-session for industry consultation. No timeframe for this consultation was able to be provided at the meeting.

Industry noted that horse figures presented in the tabled paper align with billing rather than actual volume through the facility month by month. It was also suggested that the increase in revenue may also be linked to better utilisation of the horse compounds, with larger consignments producing an increase in efficiencies.

ACTION ITEM 1: Finance division to provide industry with an out-of-session consultation opportunity on the updated CRIS after the new Minister has reviewed it.

4. ABB updates (paper)

Mr Terpstra (Chair) introduced Dr Ware (Animal Biosecurity Branch) to lead the discussion about market access, noting that a paper was also tabled prior to the meeting.

1) Argentina's request to assess direct import of horses to Australia

In April, ABB met with Argentina's National Food Safety and Quality Service about market access for the import of horses directly into Australia. Argentina predicts trade will predominantly involve racehorses and polo ponies. To date, Australia has not assessed any South American countries for the export of horses or their reproductive material.

There would be considerable work involved in an assessment for market access for horses from Argentina, including a full competent authority assessment, an assessment of the country's disease status, and an onsite audit of any proposed pre-export quarantine facilities. The department sought advice from industry members about whether the Argentinian market should be prioritised for assessment.

Industry members noted that there are several hurdles that would need to be overcome before trade could be viable. It is not currently a major market, but numbers may be restricted by glanders residency requirements. Argentina is not considered glanders free, which means that horses are currently moved to a glanders free country for 180 days before export to Australia.

It was also noted by industry that logistical constraints would need to be overcome for an Argentinian market to be cost-effective. Currently there are no freighters travelling direct from Argentina which would mean that an aircraft would need to be chartered. This is likely to be cost-prohibitive for the small number of horses enquired about each year.

It was agreed with industry that resources be better directed to other priorities at this time.

2) Japanese encephalitis update

ABB noted that Japanese encephalitis (JE) is likely to be considered 'not eradicable' due to the presence of environmental reservoirs and vectors. Macau was provided with information on the JE outbreak via our agricultural counsellors and shipments have proceeded since the incursion. New Zealand made changes to their import conditions and removed JE measures. ABB have engaged with the United Kingdom on their JE import conditions. No response has been received to date, but it was noted that the JE conditions for the UK only apply when there has been a confirmed case of JE in an equid, which has not occurred to date.

Industry expressed appreciation for the department's rapid and thorough work on the resolution for the JE requirements that may have affected horse exports to New Zealand.

3) Hendra variant update

A brief update was provided about the Hendra variant that was detected in Australia last year based on an historical sample collected from a horse in 2015. Our agricultural counsellors were notified and provided with briefs in November 2021. The department has not been approached by any competent authority with concerns relating to the Hendra variant and their existing import protocols. There have not been any market access impacts due to the detection of the Hendra variant in horses and it was noted that two papers have been published since the last HICC meeting.

Industry noted current issues with Hendra virus testing sensitivities when exporting horses, and advised there were numerous recent referrals from state laboratories to the Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness to confirm results. Industry's main concerns about Hendra from an export perspective are that there is still no commercially available validated Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals (DIVA) test for Hendra, and that some veterinarians are choosing not to record Hendra vaccinations on the national database. Both of these issues are causing difficulties for exporting horses.

4) Glanders Review

The review is in the final stages of internal clearance before publication. The department anticipates the release of the review by early August, though the machinery of government changes to websites after the recent election could have some impact on web publication. No

trade impacts are anticipated with the release of the review and negotiated health certificates will not need to be amended.

ACTION ITEM 2: The department will provide an update to HICC members about the JE import conditions for the United Kingdom when negotiations are complete.

5. Japanese encephalitis – import conditions review

Mr Burke (IRT) raised issues with trading partners being requested to remove their JE conditions because horses are dead end hosts, and those trading partners replying that Australia has import conditions on JE that should also be removed. Industry's preference would be for government to be more proactive than reactive on disease incursions, particularly regarding the bigger picture of international trade as opposed to exports only.

ABB and ABIB have discussed reviewing JE conditions now that Australia's status has changed and will keep industry informed.

Dr Gilkerson (AVA) mentioned that JE provided a recent example of how access to highly sensitive tests would go a long way to helping Australia's decision making in disease outbreaks. Many tests in horses were coming back as inconclusive due to potential crossover with other, endemic flaviviruses such as Murray Valley encephalitis. Many tests in the OIE code have been grandfathered across and used widely for so long that there can be general disinclination to change what already exists even if something better becomes available. Industry agreed that lack of funding into better testing protocols may prevent Australian agriculture from achieving its highest potential.

There was discussion about whether we are likely to see sudden and dramatic mortalities in horses if mosquito populations rise rapidly in the spring, or if past exposure to local flaviviruses might provide cross protection for Australian horses. An incident with horses to Thailand was described, where half a consignment died within 6 days as they were naïve to local mosquito-borne disease. Dr Gilkerson advised that taking naïve horses into a hotspot with high viral load would likely be quite different to the domestic scenario, even if it is a wet spring. Without high horse population densities like those that occur in pig farms, and without an abundance of multiplying hosts such as pigs kept near horses, the viral load is less likely to cause high mortalities.

There was also discussion about the intentions of the domestic horse industry to use any JE vaccinations that might become available, with Dr Gilkerson indicating that several organisations had been interviewed about expected volume of use. It appears likely that relatively small numbers of horses would be vaccinated, and that uptake under emergency conditions, such an outbreak in the event of a wet spring and rapid re-emergence, might differ compared to long term uptake in the general horse population. Racing Australia still isn't sure of uptake regarding vaccination, but are launching a vector awareness campaign and are interested to get industry participant feedback on that. Harness Racing Australia had an indication that around 8000 horses may be vaccinated initially if the emergency use permit goes through, but aren't sure of intentions for long term use.

ACTION ITEM 3: ABIB to inform industry when JE conditions are reviewed, and notify of any relevant changes to import conditions.

6. Equine viral arteritis – import and export protocols

Mr Burke (IRT) raised concerns with Australia's consistency for import and export protocols relating to equine viral arteritis (EVA). Industry's understanding is that Australia has strains of EVA and does not have plans for control or eradication, but still imposes EVA testing requirements for horse imports.

The EVA testing is not reliable and causes issues where pre-export quarantine facilities may be moved offline or shipments delayed because of false positive test results. Another option under the import conditions is vaccination, but the vaccines aren't widely used around the world and may become harder to source as manufacturers decide cost to benefit ratios for small markets. Additionally, there was concern that the interpretation of another option in the import conditions, where a horse remains eligible for import to Australia if it demonstrates a stable or declining titre, seems inconsistent and doesn't match OIE requirements. The department has previously advised importers that a less than 2-fold increase would be considered stable, but industry's understanding was that it should be a less than 4-fold increase. The overall concern was that the import requirements for EVA are difficult to meet, and there is also no advantage possible in using EVA freedom for exporting horses, since the virus has previously been detected in Australia. If Australia isn't planning to control or eradicate EVA, industry would appreciate a review of the import conditions.

ABB advised that the department is keen to explore the differences between exports and imports across many commodities. This is not an easy fix and will take considerable time and resources, but the department's long-term goal is to harmonise the approach to export and import of animal commodities. ABIB advised that Australia relies mostly on passive surveillance for EVA detections, which would mostly occur when horses are tested prior to export. If importers have data on positive or false positive test results for EVA, and would like the department to review the import conditions, it would be useful to have that data provided.

Dr Gilkerson (AVA) mentioned that industry has had contact from New Zealand about Australia's EVA status, but advised that he doesn't know of any true positive cases. Industry collectively recalled only one export horse in the last 20 years that had been considered a true EVA positive. If Australia is actually free from the disease, industry would then prefer Australia to invest in efforts to prove freedom from diseases like EVA, so agricultural exporters can use that to their advantage, and justify keeping the import conditions as they are. It was suggested ongoing surpluses in horse import fees could be diverted into research to advance equine biosecurity protocols for Australia.

ABIB advised that there is no lawful avenue to direct excess funds relating to import related cost recovery into research. However, it may be worth discussing with Finance Division how investment in diagnostic advancements could be funded to further agricultural industries.

ABB advised that the department must set priorities and with recent broader animal health issues in our region, EVA testing protocols or working to declare EVA freedom would be prioritised accordingly. It would be a longer term project if it makes it into the work plan. In the first instance, ABB will have the discussion internally with relevant branch heads and the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer, and will provide feedback to HICC on any specific information that might need to be provided in the event there is agreement to take an idea forward. Any movement towards proving EVA freedom would also go through Animal Health Committee as state and territory Chief Veterinary Officers would need to be involved.

In the interim, ABB has been working with New Zealand and can put guidance into export certificates that states that EVA positives can be retested immediately, which will reduce the timeframe to resolve false positives, as the previous requirement was 14 days between tests. This will also resolve the property status rapidly, allowing other horses to be exported. New Zealand will also be putting this information into a new certificate on their website.

ACTION ITEM 4: ABIB to discuss options for funding investments in research such as diagnostic advancements for import testing with Finance Division.

ACTION ITEM 5: Horse transport agents to provide any readily available data to ABB on positive or false positive test results, and any other trade impacts relating to EVA when exporting or importing horses.

ACTION ITEM 6: ABB to discuss EVA with relevant branch heads and provide feedback to HICC if any specific data is required, including timeframes for provision of such data.

7. Export certification and communication

Mr Burke (IRT) raised concerns with the department's interpretation of export requirements, which can differ between ports of export and regularly results in changes that are hard for industry to manage at short notice. There was also concern that documents such as the Notice of Intention (to export) and pre-export isolation standards were not made available for adequate industry consultation, and that the updates make these more onerous for both industry and the department. Industry believes that department resources could be used more efficiently if industry were given more opportunity to collaborate on updates to ensure they are fit for purpose for horse exports.

Industry is also having difficulty with horses for export that reside in Queensland, after new rules were brought in several years ago that require a Property Identification Code (PIC) per owner of livestock (including horses). If a property had 100 horses on it with 100 owners, it would therefore need 100 PICs. When recent applications to export have been lodged, they were rejected if one owner did not have their name registered on a Queensland property, even if their horse was only residing there for a few weeks prior to export. There is concern that this is just one example of red tape which adds to expense and difficulty in exporting, which could reduce the likelihood of international purchases of Australian horses. Concern was also expressed that department staff may not be adequately resourced and trained in managing export certification, as there can be variability between ports of export in what is accepted, or even for the same port exporting to the same country a few months apart. There was also concern that regional departmental staff may not have adequate resources to support decision-making relating to exports, and this could be contributing to the difficulties.

Industry stated that the work of the horse transport agents is important as they are moving high value athletes and breeding prospects, and advised they always work hard to comply with regulators. With the Olympics coming to Australia in 2032, industry highlighted that it would be a good opportunity to seriously consider the concerns that have been raised and work on resolutions for outstanding issues.

Mr Terpstra (Chair) made a commitment to industry, to discuss the difficulties brought to HICC with the Live Animal Exports (LAE) branch head, and also request senior representation from LAE to participate in HICC moving forward. LAE expressed interest in resolving the issues raised in the meeting out of session and invited exporters to provide specific consignment information for review. Exporters were advised that there may have been some past misunderstandings in relation to inspection requirements for pre-export isolation premises, but reiterated that the department is only working to enforce the legislation in place. It was also noted that LAE strives to facilitate trade, using the example of the recent restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, where information was regularly passed through the Agricultural Post networks at speed to allow ongoing trade in difficult times. Veterinary and Export Meat Group (VEMG) added that consistency is high on their priority list and they are happy to have any issues brought directly to Dr Wells and Dr Bennett as they occur. In relation to the NOI, VEMG has put forward a request to have a separate form for horses to alleviate the issues created by the updated generic form, which covers multiple commodities.

The Chair reiterated the department's commitment to facilitate trade while protecting Australia's biosecurity and provided assurance that the department will work collaboratively with industry to resolve concerns.

ACTION ITEM 7: ABIB to relay industry concerns to senior LAE counterparts, and also seek a senior representative to participate in HICC meetings.

8. JE horse vaccine application status

Dr Edson (OCVO) was introduced to update HICC on the status of the JE vaccine application with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Meetings of a working group formed out of the CCEAD have commenced, with most states and territories represented along with industry. Details around proposed conditions of use of the JE vaccine in horses have been discussed and it is envisaged that the vaccine would be made available to registered veterinarians. It is unlikely that many of the states will mandate that veterinarians must identify individual horses that have been vaccinated. Some states may require veterinarians to register with them and notify of horses vaccinated, but it is not anticipated that any additional regulation would be imposed. Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria had expressed interest in making the vaccine available to equine practitioners.

The negotiations with the two Japanese manufacturers of the preferred vaccine candidates are progressing via Agricultural Posts and a recent direct meeting. The manufacturers are interested in providing the documentation required to progress the emergency use permit with the APVMA as well as the information required for the department to assess for the import permit. The information will be provided in Japanese and will require official translation. It was noted that one of the manufacturers had previous plans to discontinue their monovalent JE vaccine for horses in favour of a trivalent vaccine incorporating tetanus and equine influenza, but have put those plans on hold because of Australia's expression of interest in access to the monovalent vaccine. One manufacturer has already provided some documentation and the department is in the process of clarifying if the dossiers are sufficient for progressing the emergency use permit. It seems likely the information for the APVMA emergency use permit could be ready to submit in the next two to three weeks. Supply may be an issue, as one manufacturer indicated availability of around 2500 doses, and the other may be able to supply 25000 doses. There doesn't seem to be a huge demand for the vaccine, but until it's made available it is difficult to predict.

The pig and horse vaccine applications are separate processes, but the negotiations have been strengthened by the pig industry's strong interest in accessing the vaccine. The manufacturers have been advised there would be significant commercial gain, with up to 300,000 doses for pigs forecasted.

Industry asked if the department would need any further assistance, and Dr Edson indicated that the most pressing question remains how many doses Australia might be prepared to sign an agreement to purchase for horses. There may not be much more that can be done to provide certainty on uptake in the domestic horse population, but if industry does have interest for a set number of doses it would be useful information to receive.

9. Update on release schedule for NEXDOC

The Chair introduced Ms Gorham, Acting Director of the Change Management office in Digital Clearance Service (Exports Division), to provide an update on NEXDOC. During May exporters were consulted on NOI processes to provide the department with understanding of potential benefits of digitising this process. The outcomes from those sessions are being analysed and consolidated into research outcomes for a report. That report will be used to inform the next steps for digitisation of the NOI and will provide exporters with an update. No timeline has been given but it seems likely to take at least a month to get the report finalised.

ACTION ITEM 8: Exports Division to provide a timeline for release of the research report outcomes after recent industry consultation about digitising the NOI to export horses. ABIB to distribute this information to HICC members with the meeting minutes.

10. Surgery policy (paper) – Mickleham quarantine facility

Dr Blowes (ABIB) was introduced to discuss the tabled paper about the surgery policy for horses in post arrival quarantine at Mickleham. It was highlighted that horses cannot leave the quarantine facility while they are subject to biosecurity control, and that any surgery needed during this time would have to be performed on site. There is a requirement for documented contingency plans relating to the use of the surgery facilities in the Mickleham horse compounds. The plans must include access to surgical teams and equipment.

The department will require importers to provide a documented plan by 1 August 2022. Each importer has been contacted individually out of session to discuss the need for these documented plans to be provided to the department. It may be that plans are already in place, but the department will need to have a documented plan per importer using the facility in future. It was highlighted that the surgical facilities can be made available when there are no horses subject to biosecurity control in residence, so surgical teams can familiarise themselves with the space and perform any necessary induction and training. This is also mentioned in the department's work instructions and information available to industry. The surgical teams need to visit for a 'dry run' for entering the surgery every 12 months, and it was noted that if they entered to perform surgery on a horse, that would be counted as their annual visit. All surgical teams would still need to complete their annual induction and exotic disease training online.

Industry questioned if emergency surgery could be better defined, and if surgery could still be facilitated if it were necessary but the reason was non-life threatening. ABIB advised that if the owner wanted surgery done, it could be facilitated, but would need to be done at Mickleham if the horse was still subject to biosecurity control at the time. Emergency surgery has been used as the example as it was envisaged that the most likely scenario would be a colic surgery, however, the word emergency could be removed from the paper as other surgeries could be facilitated if needed, although elective surgeries would not be encouraged. There is also a policy that only essential visitors enter the facility while horses are subject to biosecurity control, but individual circumstances may justify a surgery other than in a true emergency. ABIB also reiterated that veterinary surgeons would not be delayed if they arrived for emergency surgery and had not done the online induction, but they would need to be supervised by department staff the entire time they were in the compound.

ACTION ITEM 9: The surgery policy documents on the department's web site and in work instructions will be clarified to remove the word emergency in relation to surgeries at Mickleham. Importers using Mickleham quarantine facility must provide documented surgery contingency arrangements in accordance with the paper to ABIB by 1 August 2022.

11. Future expansion for government run horse quarantine facilities

The Chair advised that when land was purchased for Mickleham quarantine facility, there was excess land area which would allow for future expansion of the animal and plant facilities. Consideration was being given to demand for the facilities, which may have resulted in an extra horse compound based on current increases in horse imports. During the pandemic, state and commonwealth governments arranged to build human quarantine facilities under state control on that vacant area. Mr Wilson (PEQ Operations) mentioned that the plan for the human quarantine facilities was 3000 beds and the construction had stopped at 1000. While there is some space remaining that has not been developed, it has been moved to state government control, and an adequate perimeter around a horse compound may not be able to be met. It is therefore unlikely that the previous plan to expand any animal facilities could be carried out using excess land.

During the pandemic Victoria had also closed their airports to arrivals for a time, to prevent further COVID-positive people entering. This led to discussions amongst the previous government about whether a single animal quarantine facility was the most effective management option for the country, and whether it might be prudent to open another facility in a different location. There is a new airport under development in western Sydney, and it is so far unknown whether the new government may consider a new facility for animal or plant quarantine near that airport. If additional quarantine facilities were created, it would not be to the same size and scale as Mickleham. Other considerations for future expansion could include changing the current alpaca facility, which is rarely used, to a horse compound. Occasional alpaca imports, which require a minimum 14-day quarantine period, may then be able to be facilitated in a horse compound. Altering the alpaca compound would be costly and time consuming, as there are currently no showering facilities, no stable block and the truck wash bay is not set up to manage the requirements for wash-down after horses have been transported.

Industry asked if there would be consideration of additional private quarantine facility options. The Chair advised that it is a process to explore all ideas and their costs and benefits, including another government or private facility, then take them forward to the department's secretary. Then, if the secretary would be prepared to take an idea forward, it would become a Cabinet submission, and the government would then need to decide if it went further.

The 2032 Olympics were also raised as a potential biosecurity risk for the horse industry, and ABIB advised that discussions around quarantine for that event are already underway. It was noted that Brisbane will be hosting the Olympics, and that the Hendra virus risk for horses is just one of many considerations being raised. The department will work to ensure the appropriate people and organisations, such as Planning Committees, who may be unaware of these issues for the animals competing, are advised accordingly.

ACTION ITEM 10: ABIB to keep HICC informed of plans for future expansion of government run horse quarantine facilities.

12. Other business

No other business was raised. Dr Gilkerson noted that he would provide a Hendra DIVA paper to ABIB to circulate to other HICC members with the minutes.

13. Close and next meeting

The Chair advised that most HICC general meetings are held in May, with an interim teleconference in November. The next HICC interim meeting will be planned for November 2022, and the next general meeting will aim towards May 2023. The secretariat will provide a range of dates closer to the time.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Meeting finished at 12:30pm.

Summary of Action Items

ACTION ITEM 1: Finance division to provide industry with an out-of-session consultation opportunity on the updated CRIS after the new Minister has reviewed it.

ACTION ITEM 2: The department will provide an update to HICC members about the JE import conditions for the United Kingdom when negotiations are complete.

ACTION ITEM 3: ABIB to inform industry when JE conditions are reviewed, and notify of any relevant changes to import conditions.

ACTION ITEM 4: ABIB to discuss options for funding investments in research such as diagnostic advancements for import testing with Finance Division.

ACTION ITEM 5: Horse transport agents to provide any readily available data to ABB on positive or false positive test results, and any other trade impacts relating to EVA when exporting or importing horses.

ACTION ITEM 6: ABB to discuss EVA with relevant branch heads and provide feedback to HICC if any specific data is required, including timeframes for provision of such data.

ACTION ITEM 7: ABIB to relay industry concerns to senior LAE counterparts, and also seek a senior representative to participate in HICC meetings.

ACTION ITEM 8: Exports Division to provide a timeline for release of the research report outcomes after recent industry consultation about digitising the NOI to export horses. ABIB to distribute this information to HICC members with the meeting minutes.

ACTION ITEM 9: The surgery policy documents will be clarified to remove the word emergency in relation to surgeries at Mickleham. Importers using Mickleham quarantine facility must provide documented surgery contingency arrangements in accordance with the paper to ABIB by 1 August 2022.

ACTION ITEM 10: ABIB to keep HICC informed of plans for future expansion of government run horse quarantine facilities.