



Department of
**AGRICULTURE
FISHERIES &
FORESTRY -
AUSTRALIA**



30 January 2002

ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2002/01

NOTIFICATION OF A PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS TECHNICAL ISSUES RELATING TO VHSV IN CALIFORNIAN PILCHARDS AND MACKEREL

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) notifies stakeholders of a public meeting to be held in Adelaide on 20 February 2002, to discuss technical issues surrounding the recent identification of Viral Haemorrhagic Septicaemia Virus (VHSV) in Californian pilchards (*Sardinops sagax*) and mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*). Interested stakeholders are asked to contact Biosecurity Australia for details of the meeting.

ABPM 2001/36 provided advice to stakeholders on the recent detection of VHSV in wild stocks of American pilchards (*Sardinops sagax*) and mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*) caught off the coast of Southern California in early 2001. As a consequence, Biosecurity Australia is reviewing existing biosecurity policies for the importation of these fish species into Australia to ensure that adequate quarantine protection is being provided.

Currently, American pilchards and mackerel are classified as 'non-specified' species that are permitted importation into Australia in the whole round form, provided standard requirements are met. If the risk of the establishment and spread of VHSV in Australia is found to be unacceptable, both these species and closely related species would be re-classified to 'specified' species (ie, species that pose a significantly higher quarantine risk with regard to identified diseases), thereby restricting their importation into Australia to situations where controls can be applied with appropriate confidence to reduce the quarantine risk to an acceptable level.

Biosecurity Australia's policy review will evaluate relevant scientific information, including submissions from scientific and technical experts that stakeholders wish to supply. To provide stakeholders with an opportunity to further participate in this process, Biosecurity Australia will hold a public meeting to discuss the technical issues relating to the review.

The meeting will be held in Adelaide, South Australia, on Wednesday 20 February 2002, and will include presentations by key stakeholders and discussions on the interpretation of the scientific data in the context of quarantine risk. Interested stakeholders are asked to contact the officer below for details of the meeting, including venue and detailed agenda.

In addition, Biosecurity Australia is preparing a technical paper summarising relevant scientific information. The paper will be circulated to registered stakeholders early in February 2002 so that the issues can be considered at the public meeting. A copy of the paper will also be placed on the AFFA website



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(www.affa.gov.au and follow the links to Market Access and Biosecurity / Biosecurity Australia / Animal Biosecurity / Policy Revisions and Scientific Reviews). A summary of the public meeting will be circulated to stakeholders shortly after the meeting and placed on the website.

We recognise that the relatively short notice given for this public meeting may be inconvenient. However, given stakeholder concerns already expressed with respect to the appropriateness of current VHSV-related control measures based on seasonal changes in water temperature, urgent consideration of this matter is needed.

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to Animal Biosecurity Policy Memoranda will be publicly available. Comments may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports prepared 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.

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

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