



4 June 2004

ANIMAL BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2004/08

LIVE REPTILES – REVISED QUARANTINE CONDITIONS

This Animal Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (ABPM) provides stakeholders with Australia's proposed amended quarantine requirements for the importation of live reptiles (other than crocodylians and their eggs) in **Attachment A**. We would welcome comments by 30 June 2004.

Zoo animal import policies (including reptiles) were reviewed in August last year (ABPM 2003/20). The amendments proposed then primarily updated contact details for the Department of Environment and Heritage, references to the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) Code and post-import arrangements. Subsequently, as a result of work on reptile import risk analyses (IRAs), Biosecurity Australia has identified additional hazards not addressed in the current conditions. The proposed conditions at **Attachment A** include requirements for three viral diseases, not previously considered. These conditions are interim, pending completion of the IRAs.

The amended conditions include requirements for herpesvirus, *Mycoplasma* spp and ranavirus.

- Herpesviruses and mycoplasmas have been demonstrated to be pathogenic and causally associated with disease in testunids. Both herpesvirus and mycoplasmas have been reported in snakes, and herpesvirus in lizards, as primary pathogens. Diseases due to these agents have not been reported in Australian reptiles. As a result, certification requirements are included in the draft conditions.
- Ranaviruses have been isolated from snakes and testunids and associated with disease. Recently, there appears to be more frequent reports of this agent in reptiles, and is considered to be an emerging disease threat overseas. The isolation of ranavirus from clinically affected pythons, seized after being illegally smuggled into Australia, highlights a possible risk of introduction of this disease agent. This information, together with the known pathogenicity of ranaviruses in amphibians and fish, is considered sufficient to include certification requirements in the conditions.

With respect to parasites, the conditions have been amended to remove the requirement to treat reptiles for external parasites and to include the requirement to treat for internal parasites. In addition to information from current work on reptile IRAs, Biosecurity Australia also considered recommendations from stakeholders regarding internal parasite treatments in the recent review of the live amphibian import conditions were relevant to reptiles. The requirement to treat for external parasites was removed because of the potential toxicity of external parasiticides in reptiles. Freedom from external parasites on inspection prior to export remains a certification requirement.

The pre-export isolation and post-arrival quarantine periods remain at 90 days each and are considered appropriate for the additional diseases included in the import conditions.

Diseases that have been removed from the proposed quarantine requirements include aeromonas septicaemia, salmonellosis, septicaemic cutaneous ulcerative disease (SCUD), tuberculosis, ulcerative shell disease (USD) and ulcerative stomatitis. All these diseases in reptiles are due to infection with ubiquitous bacteria and often result from poor management practices. Although specific aetiological agents were originally assigned to the shell conditions of turtles (SCUD and USD) this has been subsequently demonstrated not to be the case.

Biosecurity Australia is conducting an import risk analysis (IRA) on reptiles of the Sub-Order Serpentes (snakes), and plans to undertake IRAs on Testudines (turtles and tortoises) and Sauria (lizards) in due course. Following consideration of stakeholder comments, Biosecurity Australia will finalise these amended conditions for reptiles that will apply until completion of at least one of those IRAs or until further amendments are deemed necessary.

Next Steps

Biosecurity Australia would welcome your comments on the attached amended conditions by 5 July 2004. We will take into account stakeholder comments as we finalise the conditions.

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 (details below).

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to ABPMs will be publicly available and 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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