



29 September 2015

BIOSECURITY ADVICE 2015/16

IMPORTATION OF HONEY BEE SEMEN—DRAFT POLICY REVIEW

This Biosecurity Advice advises stakeholders of the release of a draft policy for the importation of honey bee semen from approved countries into Australia.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources invites stakeholders to provide comments on *Importation of honey bee semen—draft policy review* by 1 December 2015.

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department), which has statutory authority for issuing import permits for goods, initiated this review of policy in response to requests from stakeholders for the department to assess the risks associated with the importation of honey bee semen.

The department recognises that there is a demand for imported honey bee genetics to improve the productive and disease resistant qualities of local honey bee colonies. The review takes into account advice from experts, current scientific information, international standards developed by the World Organisation for Animal Health, as well as information in the *Importation of queen honey bees – final policy review (2012)*.

This draft review has identified and categorised hazards of biosecurity concern associated with the importation of honeybee semen. Risk assessments of the hazards have been undertaken as required and risk mitigation measures proposed.

These are:

- Restricting imports to those countries that are currently approved to export queen honey bees to Australia
- Importing from approved countries that are free from Africanised honey bees (*Apis mellifera scutellata* and its hybrids) and have negligible chance of contamination from neighbouring areas infested with Africanised honey bees
- Importing from approved countries or zones that are either within or adjacent to Africanised honey bee infested areas but can demonstrate absence of Africanised honey bees and the use of available diagnostic mitochondrial DNA testing has shown no evidence of Africanisation
- Importing from any approved country regardless of its status as long as the semen has been shown not to be Africanised by a validated and approved test of the nuclear genome.

The department invites comments on the technical aspects of the proposed risk management measures associated with the importation of honey bee semen. In particular, comments are sought on their appropriateness and any other measures stakeholders consider would provide equivalent risk management outcomes.

Comments on the draft review should be submitted by 1 December 2015 to:

Animal Biosecurity
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Facsimile: +61 2 6272 3399
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The draft report is available via the department's website
www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/memos.

All submissions received on the draft review will be carefully considered by Animal Biosecurity in finalising the review of existing policy.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should contact Animal Biosecurity.

Confidentiality

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

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 only be treated as confidential if they are marked 'confidential' and they can be classified as such in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act*.

Andrew Cupit
Assistant Secretary
Animal Biosecurity