



Australian Government
Biosecurity Australia

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BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA ADVICE 2008/06

**COMMENCEMENT OF AN IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS FOR
APPLE FRUIT FROM THE USA**

This Biosecurity Australia Advice announces the formal commencement of an Import Risk Analysis (IRA) under the regulated IRA process to consider a proposal to import fresh apple fruit from the USA grown in the States of Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

This analysis will be undertaken as an expanded IRA, requiring completion within 30 months from announcement. The *Quarantine Regulations 2000* provide that the Chief Executive of Biosecurity Australia may decide the expanded process will be followed where the IRA involves significant differences in scientific opinion or significant harm to people, animals, plants or the environment may result from an importation.

As this IRA will be undertaken using the expanded process, the IRA will also involve review by the Eminent Scientists Group that is independent of Biosecurity Australia.

The transition of this risk analysis into the new regulated IRA process recognises work already undertaken under the previous process. Some preliminary work has been undertaken by Biosecurity Australia regarding this import proposal and, subject to the processes outlined below, this may assist completion of the IRA earlier than the 30 months allowed under the regulated process.

Biosecurity Australia is presently developing an issues paper that will shortly be circulated for comment by, and consultation with, interested stakeholders. Stakeholders will have up to 60 days to submit written comments on the issues and will have opportunities to discuss matters raised in any submissions directly with Biosecurity Australia. Biosecurity Australia will also announce the formation of an expert panel to assist its consideration of the scientific issues associated with the proposed importation.

Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum 2007/20 of 12 September 2007 advised stakeholders that changes to the import risk analysis (IRA) process had been implemented on 5 September 2007 when regulations made under the *Quarantine Act 1908* formally took effect. That advice also notified the transitional arrangements for Biosecurity Australia's import work program.

Preliminary work has already been undertaken in relation to the IRA of apples from the USA, especially in terms of giving early consideration to the pest list provided by the USA and identifying pests and diseases of interest. Notwithstanding this, Biosecurity Australia will undertake this IRA using the expanded IRA process on the basis that it expects that the IRA involves significant differences in scientific opinion.

An issues paper will be issued for comment and consultation, an expert specialist panel will be formed to assist consideration of the scientific issues and the IRA will be reviewed in due course by the independent Eminent Scientists Group. The issues paper will be circulated to stakeholders shortly.

In announcing this IRA, Biosecurity Australia has considered advice from the Import Market Access Advisory Group, which was established as part of the improved IRA arrangements to advise Biosecurity Australia on priorities for import proposals.

The regulations require the Chief Executive of Biosecurity Australia to formally announce the commencement of IRAs to be undertaken under the regulated process. This announcement triggers the start of the regulated timeframe for an IRA.

Further information on the new regulated IRA process can be found on Biosecurity Australia's website www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au.

John Cahill
Chief Executive

Contact: Louise van Meurs
Telephone: 02 6272 4042
Facsimile: 02 6272 3307
Email: plant@biosecurity.gov.au

The Government recently announced a comprehensive review of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements. The review is expected to report by 31 July 2008. It is possible that recommendations for further improvements to Australia's IRA process will flow from the review. Any need for further changes will be considered, in consultation with stakeholders, once the outcomes of the review are known. In the meantime, Biosecurity Australia will continue with its work program.