



Australian Government

Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity

Implementation of previous Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity recommendations - review April 2016

Audit report
No. 2015-16/04



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Introduction

1. The Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity (IIGB) 2015-16 work program includes a review to assess the actions taken by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) to address recommendations included in previous IIGB audits and reviews.

Background

2. In July 2009, the Australian Government appointed an IIGB to enhance the integrity of Australia's biosecurity systems through the independent evaluation and verification of the performance of these programs across the biosecurity continuum – pre-border, border and post-border.

Review objective

3. The objective of this review was to assess the actions taken by the department to implement recommendations generated by IIGB audits and reviews since the IIGB's review, Implementation of previous Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity recommendations, published on 24 August 2015.

Scope

4. The scope of the review was to assess the adequacy of actions taken and recorded in the department's database (eTRAC), where the department has marked implementation of a recommendation as 'complete'.

5. All recommendations included in completed IIGB reports are recorded in eTRAC, which is used to track and update progress on the department's high-level actions and decisions.

6. As at 1 February 2016, eTRAC contained 26 recommendations marked as 'complete', from 8 published reports.

7. This review also included two recommendations from previous reviews relating to Werribee Post-arrival Quarantine Facility and Eastern Creek Animal Quarantine Station.

8. A total of 28 recommendations were reviewed.

Methodology

9. The IIGB considered the department's actions, as reported in eTRAC, to implement each of the 28 recommendations under review.
10. Where the IIGB considered the original intent and purpose of the recommendation had been satisfactorily addressed, the IIGB has closed the recommendation for no further action or follow-up.
11. In some cases, the IIGB considered further information was required or the actions taken did not fully address the intent of the recommendation. In these cases, the IIGB approached the department for further information or clarification, regarding the actions taken to implement the recommendation.
12. Where full implementation of a recommendation required wider departmental action, for example significant modification or enhancement of an IT system, or the IIGB considered that the nature of the biosecurity risk warrants ongoing monitoring, it is intended that these recommendations will be reviewed again in six months' time.

Findings

13. The IIGB considers implementation of 20 of the 28 recommendations as satisfactory and regards these recommendations as 'completed' (Attachment A).
14. In some cases, the IIGB approached the department for updated information on the actions taken to address recommendations. In all these cases, the IIGB is satisfied with the responses received from the department.
15. The IIGB considers that 8 of the 28 recommendations should remain 'live' and be reviewed again in six months' time (Attachment B).
16. All recommendations on the review list are judged to be low risk, and full implementation of some of these is dependent upon parties external to the department (and outside the department's control).

Conclusion

17. The IIGB considers that the solid and ongoing rate of implement of IIGB recommendations demonstrates the department's continued its commitment to continual improvement in biosecurity risk management.

Next review cycle

18. The IIGB notes that the timing and scope of future reviews of the department's implementation of IIGB recommendations will be considered as part of the development of the Inspector-General of Biosecurity's 2016-17 work program.

[Signed]

Dr Michael Bond
Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity
1 April 2016

Attachment A**Recommendations closed by the Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity**

| Title | | Publicly released |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for importation of natural sausage casings | | 27 October 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 1 | The department should update the import risk analysis for natural sausage casings, incorporating relevant internal policies and/or guidelines used by policy and operational areas for imports into Australia. An update might consider any relevant scientific literature on the persistence of pathogenic agents in sausage casings published since 1999. | |
| 2 | The department should consider conducting periodic in-country evaluations of approved countries' competent authorities to ensure they meet Australia's biosecurity requirements for the production and export of natural sausage casings. | |
| 3 | The department should routinely record the import permit number and inspection outcomes for all natural casing consignments imported into Australia. These data should be available to relevant areas in the department, to assess whether policies and regulations are effectively addressing the biosecurity risks. | |
| 4 | The department should update the ICON database to improve clarity and accessibility of import requirements for importing natural sausage casings into Australia. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for importing stockfeed of plant origin | | 25 June 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 2 | The department's Biosecurity Plant and Biosecurity Animal divisions should jointly undertake desk and verification audits of overseas stockfeed manufacturing establishments to facilitate more effective pre-border compliance and reduce the risk of both plant and animal disease incursions. | |
| 3 | The department should consider implementing a programme of strategically targeted audits of overseas manufacturing facilities and export pathways for plant-based stockfeed. These audits should focus attention and resources on identified areas of higher risk and ensure that compliance is further promoted. | |
| 6 | The department should maintain ongoing testing for animal biosecurity risk material at an appropriate level and record results in a central register that is accessible to the department's policy and operational staff. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Managing biosecurity risks associated with international online purchases | | 24 March 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 2 | The department should grant relevant Mail Program staff in Canberra and regions, access to appropriate internet sites such as online shopping sites, for work use. | |

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | The department should ensure its monthly performance reports to mail centre managers include simplified relevant information to improve service delivery. For example, reports should identify processes performing satisfactorily and any areas for improvement. |
| 4 | An independent department officer without privileged access should review Integrated Cargo System reports regularly to ensure all profile amendments are authorised and amended correctly. |
| 5 | The department should regularly review officers' access to the Integrated Cargo System, particularly for privileged access to amend or deactivate SAC profiles, to ensure such access is necessary. |
| 6 | The department should ensure that all regions perform free line surveillance activities regularly to determine if the department's profiles and assessment and screening techniques are efficient and effective. |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for imported fresh cut flowers | | 17 February 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 2 | The department should review the necessity for seals on trucks, applied to provide security for consignments being transported between cargo terminal operators, quarantine approved premises and approved fumigation facilities. If their use is continued, the type of seal should be effective and consistent across regions. | |
| 4 | The department should consider reducing its dependence on methyl bromide gas for treatment of pests in imported cut flower consignments, and consider the assessment and approval of alternative treatments. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for imported animal breed material (mammalian semen and embryos) | | 9 December 2014 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 1 | The department should develop a central compliance register to monitor the performance of exporters of animal breeding material; the register should be available to all department officers involved in verification inspection at ports of entry. | |
| 2 | The department should ensure that staff conducting verification inspections adhere to the minimum document requirements policy. | |
| 3 | The department should consider collaborating with industry and state agencies to develop a practical, cost-effective process that enables post-release tracking of all imported semen and embryos. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| An examination of the effectiveness of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry controls to manage biosecurity risks in the importation of freshwater and marine ornamental fish | | 17 December 2013 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 2 | That DAFF establish and maintain a list of approved suppliers/exporters to facilitate monitoring of compliance and to initiate timely remedial action in response to detected noncompliance with Australian import requirements. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of controls for imported, uncooked, cooked and cured pig meat | | 17 December 2013 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 2 | DAFF should investigate what data and information is being collected and how this information can be extracted from DAFF systems, in particular the AQIS import management system, to assist in the reporting of importation of uncooked, cooked and cured pig meat. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Audit of the Eastern Creek Animal Quarantine Station (Sydney, New South Wales) | | N/A |
| Recommendation | | |
| 1** | DAFF should investigate the Cumberland Livestock Health and Pest Authorities (LHPA) records for property identification codes listing horses, with a view to establish awareness of and record the presence of non-PAQ horses within 1km of the Eastern Creek Quarantine Station annually. | |

** The Department has not accepted this recommendation. However, Eastern Creek Animal Quarantine Station (Sydney, New South Wales) is no longer operational and the IIGB has closed this recommendation.

Attachment BInterim Inspector-General of Biosecurity recommendations
to be reviewed in six months' time

| Title | | Publicly released |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for importing stockfeed of plant origin | | 25 June 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 7 | The department should finalise the job card and a staff training package for inspectors of imported stockfeed within the next six months. The training package should include a step-by-step procedure for recording (in the Department of Agriculture Import Management System, AIMS) details of each stockfeed consignment imported into Australia. These details should be available for analysis and policy development. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Managing biosecurity risks associated with international online purchases | | 24 March 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 1 | The department should regularly review and where necessary update national profiles for international mail for currency, efficiency and effectiveness. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for imported fresh cut flowers | | 17 February 2015 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 1 | The department should enforce current requirements for integral packaging of all imported cut flower consignments and give industry advance notice (six to nine months) of its intention to do so. Alternatively, the risks associated with non-integral packaging should be reviewed. | |
| 3 | The department should consider the need for regular or random post-fumigation checks for live pests, in the context of its risk-return policy, taking account of the biosecurity risks and the additional regulatory burden on industry. | |
| 5 | The department should undertake a review of the existing devitalisation policy and its implementation, and this should occur within the next 18 months. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Effectiveness of biosecurity controls for imported animal breed material (mammalian semen and embryos) | | 9 December 2014 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 4 | The department should review import conditions listed in the ICON database for all animal breeding material to ensure clarity, consistency, scientific accuracy and usefulness for verification at the border. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Importation of untanned animal hides from Colombia in 2012-13 | | 24 February 2014 |
| Recommendation | | |
| 8 | The department should consider implementing an additional quality assurance system, where regular random checks are undertaken to confirm that officers are clearing goods appropriately. | |

| Title | | Publicly released |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Audit of the Werribee Post-Arrival Quarantine Facility (Melbourne, Victoria) | | N/A |
| Recommendation | | |
| 1** | DAFF should investigate the Victorian government records for property identification codes listing horses, with a view to establish awareness of and record the presence of non-PAQ horses within 1km of the Werribee PAQ facilities annually. | |

** The Department has not accepted this recommendation. However, the IIGB will revisit the recommendation in the next review of previous recommendations, in light of any new scientific evidence that becomes available.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AQIS | Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (formerly Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service) |
| AIMS | AQIS Import Management System |
| DAFF | Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (formerly Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) |
| eTRAC | Department of Agriculture and Water Resources database for high-level actions and decisions |
| IIGB | Interim Inspector-General of Biosecurity |
| LHPA | Livestock Health and Pest Authority |