



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service



Cargo Management eBulletin

No: 09-2004 (OCTOBER)

[click here to print eBulletin or to view online](#)

✦ Current issues concerning AQIS Cargo Management and the Cargo and Seaports Industries

✦ Fewer containers will require screening under proposed Giant African Snail inspection procedures

AQIS is working to introduce a new Giant African Snail (GAS) inspection regime for containers that would significantly reduce the numbers of inspections required, whilst addressing the quarantine risk. At present, up to 26 containers surrounding a container from a GAS risk country also require inspection. However, under the new proposal, only those containers directly above or below a GAS container would require inspection, subject to satisfying minimum segregation requirements. The changes to the inspection procedures are dependent on the continuation of the External Container Inspection Regime (ECIR) for all containers from vessels carrying containers and cargo from GAS ports and AQIS will closely monitor the performance of these new changes.

The new inspection regime will, in many cases, substantially reduce the number of containers subject to inspection. Industry would in turn benefit through reduced costs, faster clearance of containers and a reduced need to use GAS security storage on the wharf.

Containers from GAS regions are currently inspected for snails and their eggs. AQIS has intercepted between 30 and 50 snails each year on shipping containers from GAS countries.

AQIS has met with a number of shipping lines to discuss the above arrangements and will continue to closely consult with industry through the AQIS Industry Cargo Consultative Committee (AICCC) secretariat. [Click here to access further information regarding the proposal.](#)

.....

✦ Planned Extensions to Automated Entry Processing (AEP)

AQIS is about to trial a number of extensions to the existing Automated Entry Processing (AEP) system. This will enable accredited brokers to perform a number of activities currently performed by AQIS, but due to their substantially lower risk are suitable for alternate service delivery. These lower risk issues include initial document assessment and self-direction for consignments that have commodity-related quarantine concerns.

Currently, AEP systems only cater for non-commodity concerns relating to containerised cargo. However, a series of workshops were held with industry late last month to develop trial systems relating to three commodities - new tyres, finfish from New Zealand, and dairy products from New Zealand.

Whilst AEP is not a new concept, it is seen as a very high priority project for the AQIS Import Clearance Program. Once fully implemented, major benefits to the barrier clearance industry

will be a reduction in the time and cost of interacting with AQIS, but in a way that maintains the integrity of our quarantine risk management. Allowing industry to process the documentation for a wider variety of imports on AQIS's behalf should substantially reduce the number of visits that accredited brokers need to make to AQIS front counters, as well as the number of documents submitted via Zetafax. As a result, AQIS will also benefit as AEP will free up resources and enable it to concentrate on service delivery, high-risk activities and enhancing auditing and surveillance activities.

It should be noted that AEP does not necessarily mean that consignments will be cleared without any AQIS involvement. Industry will perform the documentation assessment in accordance with processes legally defined in a Compliance Agreement, and the directions applied under AEP will be consistent with those that would otherwise be applied by front counter staff.

Once the trial process is completed and a suitable system is finalised, AEP will then be scaled up for a wider range of commodities.

✦ 2004 client surveys highlight improvements since 2003, and areas for further work

AQIS's cargo and importing units have made much progress in improving their service delivery, according to a new series of surveys. The annual surveys provide AQIS with valuable feedback as to how different areas of the organisation are performing. But more importantly, they also highlight areas where further improvements can be made. Combining the categories and comparing it to last year, there has been a 6.7% increase in satisfaction.

Importers

The survey responses from more than 300 **importers** indicated that the majority were satisfied with the service provided, with 82% giving AQIS a rating of 6 or more out of 10. Overall satisfaction also increased by a small margin, from 6.8 in 2003 to 7.1 in 2004. Of those whose overall satisfaction had improved, the largest proportion said that they attributed this improvement to AQIS staff being more approachable and communicating with them better. About 14% of respondents mentioned that AQIS staff were better trained, more knowledgeable and experienced. A number of suggestions for improvement also emerged from the survey, namely improving staff training and knowledge levels, improving efficiency and processing, increasing contact with clients, and improving value for money.

Customs Brokers

Of the 302 **customs brokers** who took part in the survey this year, 80% gave AQIS a rating of six or more out of 10. The overall average of 6.8 was up slightly on the average figure of 6.6 from the 2003 survey. The most significant reasons behind this improvement according to those surveyed were improved AQIS staff communication and approachability, and an increased focus on contact and personal service. The changes suggested by AQIS clients included to employ better trained staff with specialist knowledge, having more staff, and faster processing of imports. These suggestions have been made by a considerable proportion of survey respondents in every survey since 2000, indicating that AQIS will need to continue focusing on these factors to improve service delivery.

Quarantine Approve Premises

The majority of **Approved Premises** clients surveyed were satisfied with the service provided to them by AQIS, with 91% giving it a rating of 6 or more out of 10. The average result of 7.7 was also slightly up on the figure of 7.5 obtained in 2003 and was the highest average figure recorded since the surveys commenced back in 1999. This improvement was put down to three main factors: staff being more approachable, and communicating better with clients, staff understanding business, and staff having more contact with clients and forming more personal service relationships. As was the case with broker clients, the most frequently reported suggestion for improvement were having better trained staff with specialist knowledge, having more staff, and more efficient and faster processing.

Air Cargo

About 92% of AQIS's **Air Cargo** clients were satisfied with the services provided by AQIS, well up on the 73% figure recorded in 2003. The average result of 7.4 showed a similarly

large increase, up from 6.4 in the previous year. This result continued the upward trend in satisfaction levels, which have only decreased once in the past seven surveys. According to respondents, the main factors contributing to this increase were better staff training, better communication and improved electronic systems and technology. The survey also indicated that further improvements could be made by increasing staff numbers and through faster processing of forms and queries.

Biologicals

The overall satisfaction levels of **Biologicals** clients were also very high, averaging 7.1 out of 10 in 2004. This average figure was unchanged from that recorded in 2003. Of those clients whose overall satisfaction levels increased, the majority attributed this improvement to better efficiency and responsiveness to queries, and better communication. Clients also suggested that more work could be done in terms of having better trained and more knowledgeable staff, faster processing, being more contactable and providing more information updates.

✦ New AQIS Biologicals website

The AQIS Biologicals Unit has recently updated its webpage to improve information accessibility for clients. The Biologicals Unit oversees quarantine conditions for the importation of a wide range of biological products, such as therapeutics, laboratory materials, and vaccines derived from animals or micro-organisms.

The new structure contains a host of new information to help importers, brokers and users of imported biological materials and foodstuffs. It also provides links to various other import and export-related groups within AQIS (such as Plant Programs and Live Animal Imports) and external groups and organisations (such as Biosecurity Australia and the Biologicals Consultative Group (BCG)).

Another important section of the site for industry is an in-depth list of frequently asked questions (FAQs), which covers many of the common issues related to:

- The import clearance procedure,
- The permit application process, and
- Other factors, such as audit procedures and certification.

Click here to access the new website (www.aqis.gov.au/biologicals).

✦ Summary of documents and alerts released by AQIS Cargo Management in October 2004

Reference Number	Document (Clicking on the links below will take you to the relevant page of the AQIS website)	Overview
1	List of Quarantine Approved Premises (QAPs) for Automatic Entry Processing (AEP) 1 September 2004	Updated list of QAPs with AEP approval
2	Containerised Cargo Clearance (CCC) manual amendment 1/09/04 - Chapter 1 Section A	Table of Amendments 2004, which lists the most recent amendments to the Containerised Cargo Clearance Manual
3	CCC manual amendment 1/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 4	Packing Declarations (Annual packing declarations)
4	CCC manual amendment 1/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 7	AQIS Approved Treatments (Addition of acceptable heat treatment program)
5	CCC manual amendment 1/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 14	Acceptable Indonesian and Italian Treatment Providers List
6	CCC manual amendment	Unacceptable Treatment Providers

Reference Number	Document (Clicking on the links below will take you to the relevant page of the AQIS website)	Overview
	1/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 15	List
7	Public Quarantine Alert (PQA) 0351	Dispensation requests to the Biologicals Unit
8	PQA 0368	Revised conditions for untanned crocodile skins from Papua New Guinea
9	PQA 0339	New Import Conditions for Pig Meat
10	PQA 0362	Changes to the approval system for countries exporting dairy products to Australia
11	PQA 0369	New website providing updated information about importing biological products
12	PQA 0306	Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) - Indonesia
13	List of QAPs for AEP 15 September 2004	Updated list of QAPs with AEP approval
14	CCC manual amendment 15/09/04 - Chapter 1 Section A	Table of Amendments 2004, which lists the most recent amendments to the Containerised Cargo Clearance Manual
15	CCC manual amendment 15/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 4	Packing Declarations (ISPM 15 changes)
16	CCC manual amendment 15/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 7	AQIS Approved Treatments (Methyl Bromide fumigations below 10 degrees Celsius)
17	CCC manual amendment 15/09/04 - Chapter 3 Section 14	Acceptable Indonesian and Italian Treatment Providers List
18	PQA 0370	Updated Notice to Industry - NT container inspection procedures for Giant African Snail (GAS)
19	PQA 0371	Procedure for Tailgate Verification of Cargo in Shipping Containers
20	PQA 0033	Harrod's Christmas Hampers
21	PQA 0350	New AGAL fees for ruminant DNA testing for stockfeed
22	PQA 0370	Updated Notice to Industry - NT container inspection procedures for Giant African Snail (GAS)

.....
 ✦ Contact cargobulletin@aqis.gov.au if you have any queries, suggestions or requests for further information

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry seeks to publish its work to the highest professional standards. The Commonwealth does not warrant the accuracy or currency of the information which comes from third parties. Readers should rely on their own skill and judgement in applying any information to particular issues or circumstances. To the maximum extent permitted by law, the Commonwealth disclaims all liability for any loss, damage, expenses and costs incurred by any person arising out of using or relying on any part of the information provided in this eBulletin.