



1 March 2001

**BIOSECURITY  
AUSTRALIA**

**PLANT BIOSECURITY POLICY MEMORANDUM 2001/03**

**IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS -  
FRESH TABLE GRAPES FROM CALIFORNIA**

This Plant Biosecurity Policy Memorandum (PBPM) advises stakeholders of the status of the IRA and the recommendations by CSIRO scientists for further research following their visit to California to report on the spread of Pierce's disease and the glassy-winged sharp shooter status.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Australia (AFFA) completed an import risk analysis (IRA) on imports of table grapes from California, USA in January 2000. The IRA recommended that imports of Californian table grapes be permitted subject to a series of phytosanitary restrictions to address the risks of introduction of quarantine pests and diseases, including Pierce's disease (PD) and its vector the glassy-winged sharp shooter (GWSS).

An Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel (IRAAP) considered appeals received in relation to the IRA, including concerns about the efficacy data for methyl bromide treatment and the risk of introduction of PD. Biosecurity Australia released a supplement to the IRA in June 2000 addressing concerns identified by the IRAAP. Following consideration of the supplement, the IRAAP concluded in July 2000 that the IRA had been completed in accordance with the process outlined in *The AQIS Import Risk Analysis Process Handbook*.

Following outbreaks of PD and GWSS in California, the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine (the Secretary of AFFA) decided to seek clarification of the developments in California, including additional scientific information to assist him in arriving at a final policy determination. The Californian outbreaks were of such a scale that USA and California governments committed approximately US\$40 million for a pest management campaign.

In September 2000, AFFA sent an entomologist and a plant pathologist from CSIRO to visit California and meet with US experts to identify any relevant scientific/technical information additional to that considered in the IRA. The CSIRO scientists visited vineyards, observed field packing operations and discussed the current situation with USA experts.

CSIRO scientists recommended further research on the effectiveness of quarantine risk mitigation measures for GWSS in their report received by AFFA on the 15 February 2001.

Research was to include:

- . the survival time of GWSS at low temperatures:
- . the efficacy of methyl bromide on GWSS: and
- . the concentrations of methyl bromide achieved within bunches of grapes packed within plastic bags within the proposed packages within the containers to be sent to Australia.

A copy of the CSIRO report on PD and GWSS is enclosed and also available from the AFFA website at: [http://www.affa.gov.au/docs/market\\_access/biosecurity/plant/tgrape\\_usa\\_ira.html](http://www.affa.gov.au/docs/market_access/biosecurity/plant/tgrape_usa_ira.html).

The Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine considers that, in light of the changed risk profile, uncertainties about risk management measures need to be resolved before he is in a position to make a determination about the importation of Californian table grapes. Senior AFFA officials visited Washington on 21 February 2001 and held meetings with USA agencies to explain AFFA concerns over the changed risk profile of table grape pests in California, and AFFA's requirements for further research. Australian scientists will be working with counterparts in the US to develop and implement a research program to address Australian concerns regarding the efficacy of quarantine risk mitigation measures.

Biosecurity Australia will keep stakeholders informed of progress on this issue.

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