

Dear

IMPORT RISK ANALYSIS FOR TABLE GRAPES FROM THE USA

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the outcome of the first round of consultation on the import risk analysis (IRA) for table grapes from California, USA.

In my letter of 3 March 1998, all stakeholders were invited to provide written comments on the type of process to be followed for this proposal. AQIS proposed that the routine IRA process would be appropriate in this case.

After careful consideration of all comments received AQIS has decided to proceed with the IRA using the routine process. This decision is based on the strong support of stakeholders for the routine process, and consideration that this proposal does not require assessment of significantly greater or different risks than those AQIS has previously examined.

AQIS will now form an in-house team of scientists with expertise relevant to table grapes. The team will conduct the routine IRA using procedures based on international standards. During this process, AQIS will seek input from stakeholders and external technical experts if this proves necessary.

AQIS wrote to the USA recently seeking further information in support of the proposal. While the risk analysis will proceed in the absence of this information, it is possible that the release of the draft IRA could be delayed if a response is not received from the US within the next few months. If the information is provided, I would expect the draft IRA to be released in January 1999. You will be informed if there are any significant variations to this timeframe.

AQIS expresses its appreciation to all stakeholders who contributed to this consultation phase.

Yours sincerely

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Director
Policy and International Division

12 October 1998