



## **HORSE INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Meeting 2**

**Wednesday 29 October 2008  
10:00am – 1:00pm  
AQIS Victoria – Regional Office**

#### **Attendees:**

Ann McDonald	AQIS - Chair
Paul Hickey	Quarantine and Expert Advisory Committee
Chris Burke	International Racehorse Transport
Quentin Wallace	International racehorse Transport
Crispin Bennett	Crispin Bennett International Horse Transport
Josh Murphy	New Zealand Blood Stock
Franz Venhaus	Equestrian Federation of Australia
Patricia Ellis	Australian Horse Industry Council
Barry Smyth	Australian Horse Industry Council
Paul O'Callaghan	Racing Victoria Limited
John Peatfield	Thoroughbred Breeders Australia
Andrew Kelly	Harness Racing Australia
Sarah Renner	Melbourne Airport
Geoff Chubb	Biosecurity Australia
Phillip Widders	AQIS – NSW
Daryl Crump	AQIS – VIC
Richard Shutt	AQIS – Business and Finance
Murli Baker-Gabb	AQIS – Horse Imports
Scott Channing	AQIS – Horse Imports
Morgan Kiely	AQIS – Horse Imports
Kate Savage	Melbourne University – Other Business only

#### **Apologies:**

Frank Mondello	Sydney Airport Corporation Limited
Kevin Doyle	Australian Veterinary Association

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed and thanked those in attendance for their participation at the second Horse Industry Consultative Committee (HICC) meeting, especially the new members Dr Paul O'Callaghan,

Mr Paul Hickey, Dr Barry Smyth and Dr Geoff Chubb attending for Biosecurity Australia.

## **2. Minutes and Action Items**

The Chair called for any further comments on the minutes from the first HICC meeting. The minutes from the first HICC meeting were accepted. The Chair discussed the action items from the first meeting and noted that all items had been completed or were the subject of items to be discussed at the meeting. It was further agreed that the non-AQIS personnel documents (Meeting 1 – Action Item d.) should be available on the AQIS website.

### **Action:**

- a. AQIS to ensure the freighter aircraft operations and importer responsibilities documents are available on the AQIS website.**

## **3. Update on Implementing the Government's Response to the Equine Influenza Inquiry**

The Chair advised the meeting of progress with implementing the Government's response to the Equine Influenza Inquiry recommendations including:

- revised interim quarantine measures issued by Biosecurity Australia (BA) on 18 September 2008;
- commencement of the import risk analysis for horse imports on 30 September 2008;
- updates to AQIS import conditions and finalisation of instructional material;
- the introduction of new fees at the quarantine stations in line with Commission Callinan's recommendation 38;
- establishment of new pre export quarantine procedures and checklist;
- the work that has been undertaken by the Interim Inspector General of Horse Importation and Expert Group (discussed further under Agenda Item 4);
- Professor Shergold's meeting with AQIS, BA, other Departmental staff, and Dr Hugh Millar of the Expert Group, to assess implementation of the Government's response.

The Chair clarified the different roles of Professor Shergold, who has been engaged by the Department to assess progress with the implementation of the Government's response to the Equine Influenza Inquiry, and the Interim Inspector General of Horse Importation who has been appointed to inspect and audit operations and procedures applying to horse imports including pre export quarantine, import conditions, inspection and clearance at the airport and post arrival quarantine.

#### **4. Update on the Expert Group and Interim Inspector General of Horse Imports workshop**

HICC discussed the work of the Expert Group and their visit to Melbourne on 10-12 October 2008 to inspect facilities at Melbourne Airport, Spotswood and Sandown Quarantine Stations. Members were advised that it was anticipated that a draft of the Expert Group's report would be provided to stakeholders for comment in mid-late December 2008. The final report was due to the Executive Director of AQIS in February 2009.

The Chair advised that in addition to the Expert Group, BA was reviewing operations and procedures at the airport and quarantine stations and was also due to provide advice to AQIS in February 2009. The Chair confirmed that AQIS is not intending to further change work instructions until formal advice from the Expert Group and BA had been received and considered.

The Chair informed HICC of the work being undertaken by the Interim Inspector General of Horse Imports including visits to Eastern Creek Quarantine Station, Spotswood and Melbourne Airport. HICC members also noted his visits to inspect pre export quarantine (PEQ) facilities in the UK, Singapore and Macau. The Chair confirmed that the focus of the Interim Inspector General would be on the most frequently used PEQ facilities although not all facilities are likely to contain horses at the time of his inspections. It was advised that AQIS would need to work closely with industry stakeholders to establish the most frequently used PEQ facilities. Members were advised that should they wish to raise any issues with the Interim Inspector General, AQIS could liaise with the Department's Corporate Policy Division to facilitate this discussion.

Concern was raised with the import of horses from the United Arab Emirates during and following the World Cup Race and associated events as it will be difficult for importers to be able to meet the new import conditions. AQIS will work with IRT and BA to consider the issues.

#### **5. Horse Imports Program Finance Report**

The Chair introduced the Horse Import Program finance report which showed that as at 30 September 2008 the Program had a deficit of approximately \$292,000. The Chair acknowledged that as a cost recovered Program, revenue and expenditure was a key issue for industry stakeholders.

The Chair advised HICC that the three main sources of expenditure for the Program were:

1. Property and Accommodation including property leasing costs, security guards and portable showers;
2. Employee expenses; and
3. Technical and Operational costs including overalls, laundering, gumboots and Vircon.

This expenditure was offset by three main sources of revenue for the Program including import permit fees; fee for service for the clearance of horses on arrival; and quarantine station stabling fees. The Chair informed members that the figures in the finance report were indicative as the Program had only recently been established and she could not be sure that all program revenue and expenditure was accurately recorded against the current codes at this time. A detailed analysis of expenditure and revenue would be undertaken as part the mid-year review in January and February 2009 and figures would be accurate at this point.

The Committee was advised that the costs associated with Professor Shergold and the Interim Inspector General of Horse Importation were not part of the Program's expenditure and were currently covered by the Department's Corporate Policy Division.

Concern was expressed by importers regarding the invoicing that is received from AQIS and the difficulty understanding what the expenses relate to. AQIS advised that they were preparing a cover note for horse import invoices that would better explain the expenses charged to importers and improve transparency. Horse importers also advised that there was likely to be a decline in horse imports in the near future due to the current global economic slowdown. However the extent of the impact was difficult to assess.

Given the importance of the Program's budget, the Chair suggested the establishment of a HICC Finance Sub-committee to provide advice to AQIS on a range of budget and finance issues. This proposal was supported by HICC and it was agreed that International Racehorse Transport, Crispin Bennett International Horse Transport and New Zealand Bloodstock would comprise the HICC Finance Sub-committee. The AHIC would consider whether or not they would attend. It was further agreed that the first meeting of the sub-committee should be a face-to-face and take place in March 2009 following the mid-year review.

**Action:**

- b. HICC Secretariat to liaise with Finance Sub-committee members and arrange a meeting in Canberra for March 2009.**

## **6. Biosecurity Training for AQIS and Private Vets**

The Committee discussed biosecurity training for AQIS and private vets and the importance of their awareness of broader biosecurity issues. AQIS confirmed that their vets performed physical checks on individual horses at least twice during post arrival quarantine.

AQIS outlined the equine training course that had been developed for private vets that attended Government quarantine stations. The training course was delivered by AQIS vets. AQIS also advised that consideration was being given to having an epidemiologist assist with the delivery of the training and for elements of the Accreditation Program for Australian Vets (APAV) module to be incorporated into the course if appropriate. At the completion of the course participants are approved by the regional AQIS Veterinary Officer, which permits access to the quarantine station (subject to the required importer and Quarantine Station Manager approvals and induction) for a period of one year.

HICC acknowledged the value of the course and suggested that consideration be given to extending it and the associated accreditation to other professions that attend the quarantine station including grooms, farriers and truck drivers. AQIS will consider extending training of relevant people when they are in Australia and able to attend.

### **Action:**

- c. AQIS to consider extending the equine training course and associated accreditation to other people accessing the government quarantine stations e.g. grooms, drivers, farriers. Consideration will also be given to delivering the training for vets and other personnel at private quarantine stations.**

## **7. Horse arrivals at Ports other than Sydney and Melbourne**

The Chair discussed the development of a protocol to address situations when horses arrive at a port other than Sydney or Melbourne airports. Such a protocol would be address recommendation 17 of the Equine Influenza Inquiry report.

The Committee noted that in the past few years there had been two instances of aircraft with horses being diverted from Melbourne to Adelaide. In one case the horses stayed on the aircraft until it was able to resume its flight to Melbourne and in the other instance the horse was unloaded and contained in a bond store until the aircraft was able to resume its flight to Melbourne the following morning. A groom was in attendance at all times.

Importers cautioned that it would be extremely difficult to develop a prescriptive protocol as there were a large number of variables that needed to be considered and not every eventuality could be anticipated. It was agreed that a protocol should consist of key principles that would apply should horses land at a port other than Sydney or Melbourne. Some suggested principles included horse importers being responsible for:

1. advising AQIS of any diversions as soon as practicable and putting in place necessary arrangements;
2. supervision of the horses and provision of water, hay and other animal welfare requirements; and
3. organising alternative transport if required.

It was agreed that AQIS would develop an initial draft of the protocol and circulate it to HICC members out-of-session for comments. It was also agreed that the final protocol would be submitted to the Animal Health Committee for endorsement.

**Action:**

- d. AQIS to draft a protocol on horse arrivals as ports other than Sydney and Melbourne and circulate it to members out-of-session.**

## **8. Biosecurity Australia Update**

BA provided an update on a number of issues including the release of revised interim quarantine measures for horses on 18 September, visits to overseas pre-export quarantine facilities and the review of post arrival quarantine operations and procedures at Melbourne Airport and Spotswood Quarantine Station.

A concern was raised with the current work procedures and the relevant authorisation relating to grooms not having contact with other horses outside the quarantine station. The Chair advised that this issue was being considered by BA as part of the Import Risk Analysis for horses although AQIS would discuss the matter with them further.

The Committee also sought clarification on the importation of horses from Japan. BA advised that horse imports from Japan would be addressed through the IRA and that bilateral meetings with Japanese authorities had taken place and that Japanese had agreed to provide information including on their surveillance for equine influenza to assist BA undertake their risk analysis. BA also advised that BA staff

would also have to visit Japan as part of the assessment process. This may include visits to potential pre export quarantine facilities in Japan.

## **9. Other Business**

### **a. Surgical Services to Horses in Quarantine in Victoria**

The Chair advised that consideration needed to be given to surgical facilities at the quarantine stations and what would be needed for vets to confidently carry out surgery. AQIS has held discussions with Melbourne University and the matter would be discussed at a separate meeting with Dr Kate Savage from the University at the conclusion of the HICC meeting.

### **b. Disinfectants on Aircraft**

The Chair advised that a letter had been sent to BARA for advice on disinfectants, other than Waterglass, that are appropriate for use on aircraft. AQIS was still waiting for a response.

### **c. Work Instructions**

The Chair confirmed that the work instructions relating to aircraft operations, importer and groom responsibilities were currently 'final' documents. However, they would be subject to amendment over time especially as the various reviews come to hand. The Chair confirmed that any future changes to non-AQIS work instructions would be provided to HICC for consideration and comment.

### **Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next HICC meeting would be 22 April 2009 in Sydney at the AQIS Regional Office in Rosebery. Members were advised that Professor Shergold would be invited to the next meeting. Members were able to arrange meetings with Professor Shergold before this date, through AQIS, if they wished.