

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Budget Estimates Feb 2006

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: AQIS 01

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Export of Tasmanian Devils

Hansard page: 67

Senator Milne asked:

- (1) In relation to the permit for the export of Tasmanian devils—the christening present to Denmark—has that been dealt with?
- (2) What is the export process?
- (3) Facial Tumours.

Answer:

(1) No Tasmanian devils have been exported from Australia to Denmark as of 3 March 2006. There is a consignment of Tasmanian devils in preparation destined for Copenhagen Zoological Garden, Denmark, scheduled to be exported in late March 2006.

(2) The export process for the Tasmanian devils involves two government departments, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH).

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) within DAFF is responsible for issuing export permits and health certificates for all live animals leaving Australia.

Export documentation is only issued when the certifying officer has determined that the consignment meets all health and quarantine requirements of the importing country and any relevant Australian legislation or standards.

The import conditions issued by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration state *i) the animals are to be examined by the veterinarian for the establishment of origin prior to dispatch and found to be healthy and free of clinical signs of infectious disease and ii) the animals are vaccinated against rabies or origins from an establishment where there has been no cases of rabies in the last 12 months before dispatch.*

The Tasmanian devils will be examined at the establishment of origin by the establishment's veterinarian, who will be required to declare that the Tasmanian devils were examined and no clinical signs of disease were detected before AQIS is able to issue any export certification.

DEH manages the conservation and welfare issues associated with the export of Australian native animals. The application to export a native animal is assessed against the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

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(3) AQIS has been advised by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment that the animals sourced for export are from a captive breeding program and no animals within the facility have ever shown signs of devil facial tumour disease. The facility is located in a region well away from the area where the disease has occurred.

Question no: AQIS 02

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Importation of Sample Shipments by Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd

Hansard page: 73

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—I have an AQIS document headed 'Import case details public listing—commodity: animal or plant specimens preserved or fixed' and dated 15 December 2002. It refers to condition C5407, so that is the condition that was in place, I take it, at the end of 2002?

Answer:

The document "Import case details public listing – commodity: animal or plant specimens preserved or fixed", dated 15 December 2002 is a printout from the ICON database on the AQIS website and is for a specific end use of in vitro only (not bait). The specific condition that any importer, including Marnic Worldwide may import fixed and preserved specimens for in vitro end use only is C5407. This import condition read in December 2002 as:

Documentation or labelling indicating the preservative used must accompany the consignment.

Must be preserved in 2% gluteraldehyde, 70% alcohol, 10% formalin or 4% formaldehyde.

For phytoplankton and zooplankton, refer to ICON case "Phytoplankton and Zooplankton - Preserved and fixed" for alternative preservative: Lugol's iodine.

For fixed specimens on glass or plastic slides refer to ICON case "Microscope slides".

Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd imported five (5) trial shipments of worms prior to the issuance of their import permit on 7 April 2003 using this import condition. These shipments were legally imported as fixed and preserved animal tissue for display purposes and could not be used for bait.

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Question no: AQIS 03

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Importation of Sample Shipments by Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd

Hansard page: 75

Senator Heffernan asked:

Was the sample that came out originally a pallet full or a tonne or a handbag full?
[What quantities of worms did Marnic Worldwide originally import?]

Answer:

Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd imported a total of 10 trial shipments of worms. Five (5) trial shipments of worms were undertaken prior to the issuance of their import permit on 7 April 2003. These shipments were legally imported as fixed and preserved animal tissue for an end use of in vitro only and not to be used for bait.

Following the issue of an import permit for worms for bait on 7 April 2003, Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd imported five further consignments. All importations were samples of small quantities less than 16 Kg.

The following table summarises all imported consignments, including the quantities imported.

Date of Importation	Quarantine Entry Number	Exporter	Quantity (Kgs)
31/1/03	W030000739	Topsy Bait, Holland	2.0
04/02/03	W030000831	Aquatic Indonesia	3.0
04/02/03	5I30340445D	Qingdao Seacul Turbot Research Institute Co. China	6.0
22/02/03	W030001214	Qingdao Marine Fisheries Corporation, China	3.0
18/03/03	5I30770224N	Indonesia Aquarium	8.0
Import permit issued 7 April 2003			
21/8/03	5I32330111E	Indonesia Aquarium	10.0
22/8/03	5I32330255M	Qingdao Marine Fisheries Corporation, China	16.0
22/8/03	5I32330256N	Qingdao Seacul Turbot Research Institute Co. China	16.0
04/10/03	W030006516	Indonesia Aquarium	5.0
25/10/03	W030006968	Qingdao Seacul Turbot Research Institute Co. China	6.0

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Question no: AQIS 04

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Importation of Sample Shipments by Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd

Hansard page: 83

Senator O'Brien asked:

What were the details of the shipments, specifically those that pre-date the issue of an import permit?

Answer:

The Australian Quarantine Inspection Services (AQIS) has records of all importations by Marnic Worldwide Pty Ltd and are summarised in a table in the answer to AQIS question 03.

Marnic imported a total of 5 samples for display purposes only (in vitro end use) prior to the issuance of an import permit. AQIS's records confirm the first importation was a non commercial display sample of 2 kg weight on 31 January 2003.

Following the issue of an import permit for bait on 7 April 2003, five further consignments were imported with the first on 23 August 2003. All importations were of small quantities less than 16 kg.

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Question no: AQIS 05

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Survey of imported horticultural products

Hansard page: 85

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—What were the pesticides found in? Tomatoes and garlic?

Ms Goodchap—I believe that fenvalerate was found in the garlic. It is a chemical which is widely used in Australia as well as overseas. In the sun-dried tomatoes I believe it was a chemical called procymidon.

Senator O'BRIEN—I am not familiar with either. Can you be a little more helpful?

Ms Goodchap—We can take those on notice for you.

Senator O'BRIEN—Thank you. I am sure Hansard will want to know how to spell them!

Senator Abetz—What in particular do you want to know about them?

Senator O'BRIEN—What their properties are. It is fine to say there is a chemical residue. I presume they are agricultural chemicals, not just residual chemicals in a soil that was used for planting in. The Fijian samples were the cassava leaf, drumstick leaf and other specialist items we were talking about. The other items were from Thailand and Romania?

Ms Goodchap—No, China.

Answer:

Fenvalerate, and the closely related esfenvalerate, are non-systemic insecticides that are registered for use in Australia and in many other countries. Uses in Australia include on field crops, pastures and vegetables for the control of various insects including *Helicoverpa* species, as a veterinary external parasiticide for buffalo fly control and as an insecticide in commercial, industrial and domestic situations for control of various insects including ants and cockroaches.

Fenvalerate and esfenvalerate share the same residue definition of *fenvalerate, sum of isomers*, and Australian Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) are established for a range of commodities including cereals, oilseeds, meat and a number of vegetables.

Procymidone is a systemic fungicide that is registered for use in Australia and a number of other countries. Uses in Australia include on field crops, fruits and vegetables and for the control of various fungal pathogens including *Sclerotinia* species (*Sclerotinia* rot) and *Botrytis* species (e.g. chocolate spot and grey moulds).

Australian MRLs for procymidone are established in a wide range of field crops and vegetables, including tomatoes at 2 mg/kg.

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Question no: AQIS 06

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Survey of imported horticultural products

Hansard page: 85

Senator O'Brien asked:

There is a lot of Chinese garlic in supermarkets, but that does not mean that is where it was from.

Answer:

Garlic for human consumption is permitted to be imported into Australia, subject to import permit requirements set by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), as provided for in the *Quarantine Act 1908*. In addition to the quarantine requirements, all foods imported into Australia must meet the requirements of the *Imported Food Control Act 1992*. The *Imported Food Control Act 1992* references the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, which sets out food standards that are applicable to all food available for sale in Australia, whether produced domestically or imported. Once the food has been cleared by AQIS for quarantine and imported food concerns, it may be freely distributed within Australia.

As part of the imported horticultural products survey conducted by AQIS in 2005, one consignment of garlic from China was found to contain fenvalerate at 0.14 mg/kg. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) advised AQIS that this was unlikely to be any risk to public health.

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Question no: AQIS 07

Division/Agency: Exports and Animal Programs AQIS

Topic: Export of Tripe to China

Hansard page: 86

Senator O'BRIEN asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Minister McGauran issued a press release on 9 November relating to the Australian Meat Exports to China. The press release states that AQIS is developing the necessary documentation for opening up the Chinese market for Australian tripe. Is this a big market we are looking at? It is a big country.

Mr Read—I do not have the quantum of the potential of that tripe market in China, but it is a sizeable market.

Senator O'BRIEN—The press release says that Chinese authorities are hoping to finalise the tripe protocol as soon as possible. Can you tell me where that process is up to?

Mr Read—The protocol is currently with the Chinese authorities. We are waiting for further discussion as to the suitability of that protocol.

Senator O'BRIEN—Perhaps you can get us some information on the potential market.

Mr Read—Certainly.

Mr Yuile—To the extent that the statistics are available, I will certainly try. My understanding is that it is not just the size of the market, but also the economics for the operators of being able to take additional product out of carcasses.

Answer:

Australia exported approximately 9000 tonne of tripe annually to China in 2003 and 2004 at an estimated annual value of AUD \$13.5 million. In 2005 exports dropped to approximately 3000 tonnes and has stopped while the protocol is being negotiated. Once the protocol is negotiated and signed and trade resumes, industry predicts that the trade in tripe to China has the potential to grow to around 15 000 tonnes annually with a value of approximately AUD \$22.5 million.

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Question: AQIS 08

Division/Agency: AQIS

Topic: Enforcement of Ballast Water Regulations

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Milne asked:

1. Who enforces compliance with the regulations relating to the exchange of ballast water in cargo ships?
2. Do the empty tankers entering the port at Newcastle to take on coal cargo fully exchange ballast in accordance with the regulations?
3. How many occasions has compliance with the ballast regulations been checked at Newcastle port over the past 3 years?

Answer:

1. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) ensures compliance with the international ballast water requirements under the provision of the *Quarantine Act 1908*.
2. All international vessels entering the port of Newcastle are required to comply with the international ballast water requirements.
3. During the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005, 2,875 international vessels entered the port of Newcastle and in each case, compliance with the quarantine requirements was checked.