



**Australian Government**

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

23 December 2003

Mr Geoff Dawson  
Acting Secretary  
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committees  
SG 62 Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Dawson

Thank you for your e-mail advice of 18 December 2003 that the Senate Committee for Regional and Rural Affairs and Transport is to hold an enquiry into "the administration of Biosecurity Australia with particular reference to the assessment, methodology, conclusions and recommendations contained in the draft import risk assessment analysis report on the generic Import Risk Analysis for pig meat dated August 2003 and related matters".

The generic pig meat import risk analysis (IRA) was commenced in 1998 as a result of formal market access requests from Brazil, Canada, Chile, European Union (EU) Member States, Hungary, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Taiwan and the United States of America (USA).

A risk analysis panel of specialists in quarantine and pig diseases has been carrying out the IRA and produced the draft IRA report that was released by Biosecurity Australia in August 2003. The stakeholder comment period for the draft IRA report closed on 13 October 2003. A number of submissions were received on the draft report. The panel has considered these and is taking them into account in preparing the final IRA report.

The IRA process is transparent and science-based and has involved extensive consultation at each stage of the pig meat IRA including public meetings to allow producers and others to question members of the risk analysis panel and to have input into the analysis. The next step in the process will be the release by Biosecurity Australia of the final IRA report, which will include a section that documents the issues raised by stakeholders on the draft report and the panel's response to them.

For the purposes of your Committee's enquiry, the key document would appear to be the draft IRA report of August 2003. I have attached a copy of that report and copies of all the submissions received on it. The report includes detailed information on the background to the pig meat IRA and the process undertaken. I have also enclosed copies of Biosecurity Australia's Import Risk Analysis Handbook that sets out the administrative procedures we follow in conducting an IRA.

I would be pleased to provide further information should you require it and to accept your invitation to attend the public hearing in Canberra on 9 February 2004.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Harwood".

MARY HARWOOD  
Executive Manager  
Biosecurity Australia