

Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee

Working Group-Apples/New Zealand

Date: 22 April 2004

Senator Heffernan
Chair
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Room SG.62
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Heffernan

Inquiry into Import Risk Analysis on Apples from New Zealand

In October 2003, the Department of Primary Industries, Water, and Environment, Tasmania (DPIWE), formed the Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee which, in turn, convened a government/industry working group to assess the draft revised import risk analysis report for apples from New Zealand. That Committee is currently assessing the report and cannot provide details at this stage in relation to that assessment, as its findings are not yet complete.

The findings of the TBC working group will form the basis of a government submission to Biosecurity Australia and that submission will be the official view of the Tasmanian Government after formal approval by the Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee, Secretary (DPIWE), and Minister

An opportunity to present a full and proper submission at a later date would be appreciated. However in the interim the following comments are made. These must be regarded as those of the technical working group. **They should not be viewed as the official view of either the DPIWE or Tasmanian Apple and Pear Growers Association.** This letter is designed primarily to inform the Senate Inquiry of the process underway in Tasmania and the general areas of the IRA report that are proving of particular interest to the Committee.

Areas of specific interest:

(Please note this list is only indicative of the areas of interest to the working group and is neither inclusive nor exclusive).

- Numerical levels of risk allocated to certain events and ultimate effect on risk assessment (probability rules)
- The actual risk analysis process and calculations via the spreadsheet and '@Risk' software
- Rigour of science underlying draft IRA eg. chlorine efficacy.
- Implications of failure of any of the phytosanitary requirements on level of risk
- Issues of trash and relationship between trash and insect pest harbour.
- Definitions in relation to SPS agreement
- Likely inspection process (workplan details) to ensure ALOP is met.
- Impacts of regional differences on risk eg. extensive plantings of alternative host plants such as hawthorn/cotoneaster hedgerows in Tasmania

- Conditions of process/pack lines in New Zealand-exclusive pack lines, hotspot possibilities for bacteria etc.

Future opportunities

If the opportunity arises the working group would be pleased to provide a detailed written submission once our evaluation process has been completed and has been authorised to provide details. This may be in printed or oral form and we would welcome the opportunity to present an oral submission as appropriate in the future.

Margaret Williams
Chair
Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee Working Group (Apples/New Zealand)

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Attachment 1

Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee Working Group - Apples/New Zealand-

The Tasmanian Government, via the DPIWE, has established a consistent process to respond to Biosecurity Australia consultation requests and Import Risk Analysis reviews. Given the science/technical-based nature of this work, an important component of the State's Biosecurity response is the establishment of a Tasmanian Biosecurity Committee (TBC).

TBC Working Groups

Much of the function in relation to IRA assessment will be dealt with by a TBC working group consisting of TBC members, additional relevant experts, and industry representatives. This paper outlines the membership and Terms of Reference for a TBC working group to evaluate an IRA dealing with New Zealand's application to export apples to Australia, and assess the WTO Appellate Body decision with respect US apples to Japan. The Working Group will report to the TBC in the first instance.

TBC Working Group (Apples/New Zealand) Primary* Membership

TBC role	Person	Organisation
Chair	Margaret Williams	DPIWE (Manager, Diagnostic Services)
Executive Officer	Andrew Bishop	DPIWE (Senior Scientific Adviser, Biosecurity)
Member	Peter Brown	DPIWE Quarantine
Co-opted Member	Wayne Boucher	DPIWE(Manager, Horticulture Branch)
Co-opted Member	Kathy Evans	Plant Pathologist
Industry Representative	Mark Salter	Tasmanian Apple & Pear Growers
Industry Representative	Thomas Frankcombe	Tasmanian Apple & Pear Growers

*Additional members/expertise as deemed necessary

Terms of Reference

1. Critically review processes and procedures used by Biosecurity Australia in assessing environmental/economic risks posed by, or as a result of NZ apple imports, that has relevance to the biosecurity of Tasmania.
2. Assess the scientific validity of IRA findings, identify if there are additional issues of biosecurity concern to Tasmania in relation to the IRA, and provide review findings to Biosecurity Australia.
3. Additional external expertise may be co-opted from a range or relevant branches, divisions, agencies or institutions for the purposes of critically reviewing the IRA or associated documents if deemed necessary by the TBC Working Group.
4. Assess the report of the WTO Appellate body in relation to US apples to Japan and determine relevance/implications for Tasmania.
5. **TBC deliberations will remain confidential until final assessments/advisories are completed and cleared by Minister, DPIWE.**

6. TBC Working Group (Apples/New Zealand) role and terms of reference will be maintained until final decisions have been made on the import application.
7. If this time period exceeds 12 months these terms of reference will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the biosecurity interests of Tasmania.