



Recognition of Export Controls and Certification Systems for Animals and Animal Products

Guidance for Competent Authorities of Exporting Countries

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1 Introduction

This document provides guidance to competent authorities of countries interested in exporting animals and animal products to New Zealand, such as live animals, meat and meat products, poultry and poultry products, seafood products, milk and milk products, bee products and germplasm.

Risks to animal and public health associated with the importation of any animals and animal products into New Zealand are managed under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and the Food Act 2014, respectively, both of which are administered by New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

Official certification is required for the importation of certain animals and animal products into New Zealand. Certification may cover biosecurity and/or food safety requirements depending on the import conditions applicable to the commodity. Official certification arrangements must be agreed between New Zealand and the exporting country prior to commencing trade. This will usually involve:

- an assessment of information provided by the exporting country's competent authority regarding its systems for managing animal and/or public health, export, and official certification;
- recognition by MPI of the exporting country's systems as meeting New Zealand's requirements; and
- negotiation of specific biosecurity and/or food safety conditions under which importation of a particular commodity from the exporting country will be authorised.

1.1 BIOSECURITY REQUIREMENTS

Animals and animal products may be subject to biosecurity import conditions which are specified in the relevant Import Health Standard (IHS) issued under New Zealand's Biosecurity Act 1993. Where an IHS requires an exporting country to provide evidence of the country's export and certification systems prior to trade commencing, the competent authority of that country must provide the information that is required by the IHS. Section 4 of this document outlines the types of information considered by MPI in making an assessment of an exporting country's systems.

MPI's biosecurity assessment process is based on the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (the *Code*) Section 3: *Quality of Veterinary Services*.



1.2 FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

All foods imported into New Zealand must be safe and suitable for human consumption, and meet relevant New Zealand food standards, including the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#). In addition to these general requirements, specific foods identified as “High Regulatory Interest” (HRI) or “Increased Regulatory Interest” (IRI) require border clearance for entry into New Zealand. These specified foods and their corresponding clearance requirements are indicated in the [Importing Food Notice](#) (IFN).

The IFN provides for the use of official certification as a means of ensuring that specified imported foods and their production systems meet New Zealand requirements. To facilitate the assessment of an exporting country’s systems and negotiation of official certification arrangements, MPI may request the exporting country’s competent authority to provide information related to its systems for food production and processing, export and certification.

For more information please contact animalimports@mpi.govt.nz.

2 Competent authority

Exporting countries seeking to have their export and certification systems recognised by MPI, in view of negotiating official certification, should have a competent authority responsible for implementing its national systems covering animal and/or public health, as appropriate to the commodity intended for export to New Zealand. The competent authority must be empowered and capable of providing credible certification and other assurances for commodities exported to New Zealand.

All bilateral negotiations and other relevant communication with MPI should be undertaken by the exporting country's competent authority. Interested parties and private businesses from the exporting country should contact their competent authority and communicate with MPI through this channel.

3 Steps of the recognition process

The recognition process involves the following steps:

- 1) The exporting country's competent authority informs MPI of its interest to export a particular animal(s) or animal product(s) to New Zealand, and requests a copy of the relevant commodity-specific questionnaire and any other related information. Communication should be addressed to:

Director, Animal and Animal Products
Regulation and Assurance Branch
Ministry for Primary Industries
New Zealand
Email address: animalimports@mpi.govt.nz
- 2) MPI sends a copy of the commodity-specific questionnaire to the exporting country's competent authority. The questionnaire is intended to facilitate the compilation of information necessary for MPI to undertake an assessment of the country's systems against requirements of the relevant IHS and/or the IFN.
- 3) The exporting country's competent authority completes the questionnaire and submits it, together with supporting evidence, to MPI. The questionnaire and all supporting documents should be in English, or be accompanied by certified English translations.
- 4) MPI assesses the information provided by the exporting country's competent authority. MPI may request additional information for clarification, as necessary.



- 5) Once MPI is satisfied with the information provided, MPI and the exporting country's competent authority can negotiate and agree on the specific conditions under which exports from the country will be authorised. The two parties may also agree on any required official certification.
- 6) MPI adds the exporting country's name and the agreed country-specific certificate to the relevant IHS or associated guidance document, and, if applicable, in the IFN.

4 Information considered by MPI

This section outlines the information that MPI will take into consideration when assessing an exporting country's systems. The table below summarises the typical import scenarios, in terms of clearance requirements and official certification, and the information that should be provided by the exporting country's competent authority to MPI.

The table serves as a generic guide only as some sections may not be relevant to all commodities. On request, a commodity-specific questionnaire will be provided by MPI which contains the applicable information needed by MPI in order to undertake an assessment of the exporting country's systems.

A. Live animals, germplasm and animal products that are not for human consumption		
Certification requirement	Clearance required for entry into New Zealand	Information to be provided by the exporting country
Required by IHS	Biosecurity	Sections 4.1 to 4.7 <i>Note: Some elements of 4.8(2) may apply to pet food.</i>
B. Animal products for human consumption		
Certification requirement	Clearance required for entry into New Zealand	Information to be provided by the exporting country
Required by both IHS and IFN	Biosecurity and food safety	Sections 4.1 to 4.8
Required only by IHS	Biosecurity	Sections 4.1 to 4.7 and 4.8(1) and (2)
Required only by IFN	Food safety	Sections 4.1 to 4.4 and 4.8

4.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) The countries to which the commodity(ies) under consideration are exported by the country under assessment (if applicable).
- 2) OIE membership and participation in OIE activities, including reporting obligations and any performance assessments (e.g. Performance of Veterinary Services) of the exporting country which have been undertaken.

4.2 EXPORTING COUNTRY'S OFFICIAL CONTROLS

- 1) The competent authority or authorities responsible for the exporting country's official controls for animal health and food safety, and for export and certification systems of animals and animal products.
- 2) The organisation of the competent authority or authorities, including the:
 - a) organisational structure;
 - b) chief official responsible for animal health;
 - c) chief official responsible for food safety;
 - d) roles and responsibilities of all relevant parties;
 - e) technical positions held by veterinarians, including Official Veterinarians carrying out export-focussed duties; and
 - f) training and competency requirements for positions with key roles in the implementation of official controls for animal health and food safety.
- 3) The responsibilities and capabilities of the competent authority to:
 - a) contribute to and participate in the development, implementation and enforcement of relevant legislation, policies and official controls;
 - b) establish animal health and food safety requirements, and programmes based on scientific information, evidence and/or risk analysis principles, as appropriate;
 - c) conduct equivalence and official certificate negotiations; and
 - d) maintain independence and credibility of the official certification system.
- 4) The legal and administrative structures for ensuring the stability and integrity of national systems and policies, including:
 - a) freedom from improper or undue influence or conflict of interest; and
 - b) independence of long-term strategies and policies from current leadership, political climate, domestic conflicts, etc.



- 5) The legal and administrative arrangements for accrediting external agencies or private bodies to provide services or perform specific tasks related to official controls (e.g. inspection, pre-export testing, surveillance, certification) on behalf of official agencies, including:
 - a) the circumstances and conditions under which official accreditation is given to external agencies;
 - b) the criteria against which external agencies are assessed to be officially accredited; and
 - c) assessment of the performance of accredited agencies undertaken by the competent authority.

4.3 LEGISLATION

- 1) The legislation underpinning the:
 - a) responsibilities, authorities and powers of the competent authority; and
 - b) setting, implementation and enforcement of animal health, biosecurity and food control systems and programmes, including those listed in sections 4.6 to 4.7.

4.4 EXPORT CERTIFICATION

- 1) The legal basis for issuing official certificates.
- 2) The procedures for ensuring the integrity, impartiality and independence of the official certification system.
- 3) The training and competencies of certifying officers.
- 4) The procedures for ensuring the authenticity and validity of official certificates, including the:
 - a) identification and numbering system;
 - b) security and issuing arrangements and records management; and
 - c) use of official marks.

4.5 LABORATORIES

- 1) The national animal health laboratories and other veterinary diagnostic laboratories, and their function in relation to animal and/or public health testing and monitoring.
- 2) Access to an overseas OIE accredited or equivalent veterinary diagnostic laboratory where none is present in the exporting country.
- 3) The capability of national animal health laboratories and other veterinary diagnostic laboratories, in relation to animal and/or public health (e.g. types of diagnostic testing and methodology, sampling, etc).
- 4) Quality control and validation programmes for assessing the performance of veterinary diagnostic laboratories to ensure competency to perform tests and calibrations.

- 5) Current accreditation to recognised standards (e.g. OIE accreditation) of the national animal health laboratories and other veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

4.6 OFFICIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STATUS AND SYSTEMS

- 1) The general animal health status of the exporting country, with reference to the country's official OIE disease status as applicable (e.g. bovine spongiform encephalopathy risk status).
- 2) The notifiable animal diseases relevant to the commodity(ies) intended for export, and the systems for reporting of these diseases within the country and to the OIE, including routine reports on the absence or presence of disease.
- 3) The systems for animal disease prevention and control, including:
 - a) agency(ies) responsible for implementing animal disease prevention and control plans;
 - b) details of prevention and control plans in relation to:
 - i) epidemiological surveillance and monitoring;
 - ii) criteria for initiation of disease outbreak control(s);
 - iii) emergency measures to prevent disease spread, including movement control and traceability;
 - iv) simulation exercises and other training for disease prevention and control plans;
 - v) establishment, maintenance and certification of disease free zones or compartments in response to an outbreak;
 - vi) compensation for animal owners affected by emergency measures; and
 - vii) legislation and systems to ensure compliance with these emergency measures.
 - c) any current or previous outbreaks or incursions, the epidemiology of the outbreaks (trace back) and how they are/were managed.
- 4) The legislation and systems for managing:
 - a) the use of veterinary medicines, biologicals and genetically modified organisms; and
 - b) animal feed safety (e.g. controls for ruminant protein feeding of ruminants).
- 5) The biosecurity import controls in the exporting country, including:
 - a) the development and implementation of risk management measures based on risk assessments;
 - b) quarantine procedures; and
 - c) border controls to prevent entry and spread of animal diseases.
- 6) The general export controls in place that meet international standards and overseas market access requirements.



4.7 BIOSECURITY CONTROLS

- 1) The biosecurity control measures for managing each of the animal diseases identified in the relevant IHS as posing a biosecurity risk (i.e. with risk-mitigation requirements specified in the IHS), including:
 - a) current disease status;
 - b) surveillance (active/passive/ad hoc) and monitoring reports;
 - c) current disease control measures in place (as applicable to the exporting country's health status), including regular testing and treatment; and
 - d) any applicable disease free zones or compartments established in accordance with the *Code* recommendations for the relevant disease.
- 2) The premises for export, including:
 - a) details of the premises currently licenced to export, or intending to export, including full physical address, and evidence of approval, registration or license issued by the competent authority; or
 - b) evidence that the competent authority has a register of licensed export premises/facilities.

4.8 FOOD SAFETY CONTROLS

- 1) The systems for approval, registration and inspection of export food processing and manufacturing premises.
- 2) The systems for implementing and monitoring of:
 - a) ante-mortem and post-mortem examination of food animals; and
 - b) Good Hygienic Practices (GHP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) in processing and manufacturing premises.
- 3) The programmes for verifying the effectiveness of food control measures, such as surveillance and monitoring programmes (e.g. pathogen monitoring programmes, chemical residue monitoring programmes and microbiological surveys), and their outcomes.
- 4) The inspection and export systems for ensuring that food intended to be exported to New Zealand conforms with:
 - a) relevant standards of the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#) and other New Zealand food standards, and
 - b) any food safety criteria set in the [Importing Food Notice](#).
- 5) The systems for approving, accrediting and monitoring the performance of food analytical laboratories.