



Risk Management Proposal

Guinea Pigs from Australia

17 March 2015

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1 Purpose

- (1) The purpose of this document is to:
 - a) present the risks associated with the importation of guinea pigs from Australia.
 - b) outline options considered for managing those risks.
 - c) show how these options have been assessed.
 - d) provide recommendations for import requirements to be included in the import health standard (IHS).
- (2) The import health standard (IHS) is developed under Section 24 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.
- (3) For a detailed risk assessment of the identified hazards, refer to the Import Risk Analysis (IRA): Guinea pigs (*Cavia porcellus*) from Australia. A copy can be viewed at the following link:
<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/importing/overview/import-health-standards/risk-analysis/>

2 Background

- (1) In 2013 a request for the development of an import health standard for the importation of pet guinea pigs from Australia was submitted.
- (2) An IRA for guinea pigs from Australia has been done by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) with the objective of mitigating risks associated with importing this commodity. The IRA is the basis for the guinea pig risk management measures discussed in this document.
- (3) The IHS for guinea pigs from Australia will be based on risk decisions from the IRA.

3 Objective

- (1) The objective of the risk management measures proposed for the IHS is to manage, to an acceptable level, the biosecurity risks posed by the import of guinea pigs into New Zealand from Australia.
- (2) From the IRA, the following was classified as a potential hazard in the commodity and identified for risk management.
 - a) Weed seeds

4 Recommendations for identified risk organisms

- (1) The diseases that were considered as potential hazards are those that could be transmitted by guinea pigs and may infect domestic and feral /wild animals, or humans in New Zealand.
- (2) The following was considered a potential hazard in the commodity and will be considered in this risk management proposal.

4.1 Weed seeds

- (1) The following points have been considered when drafting options to manage the risks associated with the introduction of weeds and weed seeds in the commodity:
 - a) Weed seeds could be introduced attached to imported guinea pigs hair, within skin folds, or in their faeces.
 - b) The IRA on the importation of weed species by live animals recommended that animals should be held, pre shipment, in areas free of weed species and fed on clean pasture or high quality feed. During transportation, provision of high quality feed with little or no weed species contamination or feed that has been treated in such a way as to render seeds non- viable would mitigate the risks associated with the importation of live animals. Faeces produced during transport could be safely disposed of, either enroute or on arrival in New Zealand.

4.1.1 Risk management options for weed seeds from risk assessment

Options are:

- (1) The guinea pigs could be thoroughly groomed and inspected for contaminating plant material on the day of export. This would be in conjunction with an owner's declaration that the animals have been fed on a high quality diet not including weed seeds for the past 3 days.
- (2) Guinea pigs could be quarantined for 3 days where they have access to only high quality hay (without seeds), fresh fruit and vegetables or processed pellets. The guinea pigs would be housed in cages with wire mesh floors without bedding or bedding materials such as wood shavings, sawdust or blankets.

4.1.2 Recommended option

- (1) The guinea pigs must be certified by the Official Veterinarian to be free from obvious contamination with dirt, plant material and other organic material on the day of export. An owner's declaration will attest that the animal has been fed on a high quality diet not including weed seeds for 3 days prior to export. Quarantining the guinea pigs is not a practical option and is not consistent with other current IHS conditions for pet animals from Australia.