

17 May 2000

ANIMAL QUARANTINE POLICY MEMORANDUM 2000/26

IMPORTATION OF SALMONID PRODUCT ADVICE ON QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS

This Animal Quarantine Policy Memorandum (AQPM) provides advice on the modification of quarantine conditions for the importation of salmonid product from countries other than New Zealand which come into effect from **1 June 2000**.

New quarantine policies for fish product including salmonid product came into effect on 19 July 1999. In January 2000 a World Trade Organisation panel found that one of the measures implemented by AQIS did not have an appropriate scientific basis. AQIS has modified the measure to comply with Australia's international obligations while fully protecting quarantine integrity. This memorandum advises of the modified conditions, which come into effect on 1 June 2000.

As the consumer-ready measures did not apply to New Zealand salmon, the conditions for the importation of this commodity are unchanged. The conditions for the importation of personal consignments of uncanned salmonid products, salmonid roe (caviar) and other thermally treated salmonid products (as outlined in AQPM 1999/84 and 1999/70 respectively) are also unaffected.

Current conditions for the importation of non-salmonid finfish product will be amended in line with the salmonid conditions; a memorandum on this matter will be issued in due course.

The modified conditions in Attachment 1 replace relevant attachments to AQPM 1999/51 and AQPM 1999/69. In order to minimise commercial disruption, AQIS will allow the importation of salmonid product that meets the pre-existing conditions (set out in AQPM 1999/69) until 31 July 2000. A flow chart summarising the steps involved in the importation of salmonid product is at Attachment 2.

As at 15 May, AQIS has recognised Competent Authorities in Canada, the US, New Zealand, Norway and Denmark. Previously agreed details of health certification will need to be modified in light of changes to the import conditions. AQIS has also commenced an assessment of the Competent Authorities of Ireland and Scotland.

AQIS cannot grant a permit for the importation of uncooked salmonid product from other countries unless and until relevant Competent Authorities are recognised. Importers wishing to import salmonid products from other countries should ask their prospective exporters to contact their relevant government authorities with a view to the

provision of information to AQIS. Guidelines on the information required by AQIS are at Attachment 3.

Importers can obtain applications for permits, details of fees and other relevant information from the **AQIS website: www.aqis.gov.au** or by contacting the AQIS Biologicals Section, GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601, fax: (02) 6273 2097; ph. (02) 6272 4578.

Confidentiality

Respondents are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1982*, all submissions received in response to Animal Quarantine Policy Memoranda will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports prepared on the subject matter of the Memoranda.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reveal the identity of a respondent unless a request for anonymity accompanies the submission. Where a request for anonymity does not accompany the submission the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 of the Privacy Act.

The contents of the submission will not be treated as confidential unless they are marked 'confidential' and they are capable of being classified as such in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

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CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF UNCANNED SALMONID PRODUCT FROM COUNTRIES OTHER THAN NEW ZEALAND

1 GENERAL

This policy applies to the commercial importation from countries other than New Zealand of uncanned non-viable salmonid product¹ for human consumption.

Policies for personal consignments of salmonid product, canned salmonid product, salmonid roe (caviar) and certain other thermally processed products and Pacific salmon from New Zealand are set out elsewhere.

- 1.1 These conditions apply to salmonid flesh including attached bone, cartilage, skin and blood.
- 1.2 The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) will normally allow the importation of salmonid product that is covered by:
 - a Permit to Import Quarantine Material issued by AQIS, and
 - an Official Certificate issued by an AQIS-recognised Competent Authority in the exporting country.
- 1.3 Based on the submission of relevant information, AQIS will make arrangements to recognise Competent Authorities with respect to:
 - surveillance and monitoring of salmonid health; and
 - approval and control of salmonid processing plants;and the provision of export certification in relation to these matters.
- 1.4 Salmonid product imported into Australia will normally be released from quarantine on arrival in Australia, if it is accompanied by the appropriate documentation as stated in 1.2 above and an importer declaration in relation to the destination of the product, is packaged in a manner appropriate to its intended end use and is in a head-off, gilled and gutted form or further processed.

For the purpose of this policy, an importer would be required to provide a declaration in relation to each imported consignment of salmonid product that such product will only be sold for *commercial processing* at AQIS approved premises, for *processing for retail sale* or for *direct retail sale*. This declaration will be part of the “Quarantine Entry” that must be completed by the importer/customs broker for each consignment imported into Australia.

¹ For the purpose of these conditions, ‘salmonid’ means a fish of the family Salmonidae or the species *Plecoglossus altivelis*.

Commercial processing is defined as the processing undertaken at a commercial premises that produces product for sale at another premises or location.

Processing for retail sale is defined as the processing undertaken at the premises (eg fishmongers, restaurant, hotel or institution) where the resulting product will be directly sold to or used by consumers.

Direct retail sale is defined as the sale to or use by consumers at a premises (eg supermarket, delicatessen, hotel, restaurant or institution) where the product is marketed or used in the same form (ie without processing) in which it was imported into Australia.

Premises that receive imported product must be registered with AQIS.

Registration forms are available on the AQIS Internet site at www.aqis.gov.au.

These may be completed and forwarded electronically. Alternatively please call the AQIS Biologicals Unit on (02) 6272 4578 and a registration form can be faxed or mailed to you. Registration of premises will not require prior inspection and no fees will be charged.

- 1.5 AQIS requires that all imported salmonid product is packaged in a manner that is appropriate to its intended end use.

For processing for retail sale and direct retail sale:-

- Head-off, gilled and gutted fish (trunks) may be individually packaged in plastic sleeves. Alternatively multiple trunks for retail sale may be packaged in a plastic bag within a plastic tote, cardboard or polystyrene container with maximum weight 60lb (27.3kg).
- Pieces such as fillets and cutlets that are fresh may be individually packaged in plastic sleeves. Alternatively, they may be loose packed within a plastic bag in a plastic tote, cardboard or polystyrene container with maximum weight 60lb (27.3kg).
- If frozen, portions and pieces may be individually packaged in plastic sleeves. Alternatively, they may be individually quick frozen (IQF) or vacuum packed in plastic or coated with frozen brine (glaze) and packed within a plastic bag in a plastic tote, cardboard or polystyrene container with maximum weight 60lb (27.3kg).

For commercial processing:-

- Product of head-off, gilled and gutted form or further processed may be packed in plastic totes, cardboard or polystyrene containers with no weight restrictions.

- 1.6 *Commercial processors* must enter into a compliance agreement with AQIS. A compliance agreement would also be required for premises *processing* imported product *for retail sale*, where such processing would lead to the generation of volumes of waste comparable with that produced in commercial processing (ie the processing of more than 300kg of imported salmonid product per day at a single site).

Guidelines on compliance agreements may be obtained from the AQIS Biologicals Section (phone 02-6272-4578).

- 1.7 AQIS is prepared to approve compliance agreements for premises that dispose of wastes via municipal and commercial systems for the disposal of sewage and solid wastes provided that such disposal does not present an unacceptable risk to significant salmonid populations² or create significant new exposure pathways³.
- 1.8 Equivalent approaches to managing risk may be accepted generally or on a case by case basis. Exporting countries seeking to use alternative risk reduction measures should provide a submission for consideration by AQIS; such proposals should include supporting scientific data that clearly establish equivalence.

2 DOCUMENTATION

- 2.1 The importer must obtain a permit to import salmonid product into Australia from the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine (herein called the Director) prior to the product first being imported.
- 2.2 Each application for an import permit must include the following details:
 - salmonid species;
 - country of export;
 - country of origin of salmonid fish (if not exported from the country of origin); and
 - product presentation/form.
- 2.3 The type of product exported must correspond exactly to that approved by the Director.
- 2.4 Consignments exported to Australia must be accompanied by an official certificate, in English and, where appropriate, the language of the exporting country, confirming that:
 - the fish were derived from a population for which there is a documented system of health surveillance and monitoring administered by the Competent Authority
 - the fish were not derived from a population slaughtered as an official disease control measure
 - the fish have been eviscerated;
 - the head and gills have been removed and internal and external surfaces thoroughly washed;
 - the fish are not juvenile salmonids⁴ or sexually mature adults/spawners⁵;

² As provided in the IRA, approval will not be given to processing plants within the Delatite and Murrindindi Shires in Victoria (see Map 1), the Snowy Mountains region of New South Wales (see Map 2) and Tasmania.

³ Practices that present an unacceptable risk are the sale of fresh, chilled or frozen scraps of imported salmon to fishing bait stores and commercial ventures based on feeding wild birds/fish on scraps of imported salmon.

⁴ Defined as fish that weigh less than 200g in head-off, gilled and gutted presentation.

⁵ Defined as fish with developed gonads.

- the fish were processed in premises approved by and under the control of a Competent Authority;
- the fish were subjected to an inspection and grading system supervised by a Competent Authority;
- for Atlantic salmon and rainbow trout: the fish did not come from a farm infected by or officially suspected of being infected by infectious salmon anaemia virus (ISAV) or waters within 10 kilometres or one tidal interchange (whichever is greater) of an infected farm; and
- the product is free from visible lesions associated with infectious disease and fit for human consumption.

The certificate must bear the name(s), address(es) and approval number(s) of establishment(s) at which the salmonid product was processed and the name and address of the consignor and the consignee. The certificate must be signed by a person authorised by the Competent Authority and bear an impression of the official stamp on each page.

3 VERIFICATION

AQIS will take steps to confirm that imported product meets Australian requirements, including:

- (1) An authorised quarantine officer may check the presentation/form of the imported product on arrival in Australia by reference to documentation or by conducting random physical inspections of shipments on arrival in Australia;
- (2) At the discretion of the Director, premises processing salmonid product for export to Australia may be inspected/audited to confirm that product for export meets these requirements.

4 OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Imported product must comply with the *Imported Food Control Act 1992* and the Food Standards Code made under the *Australia New Zealand Food Authority Act 1991*. AQIS may inspect, sample, hold and test imported salmonid product for microbial agents or residues of public health concern as provided for by this legislation. Imported foods may also be inspected, or inspected and tested, for compliance with labelling, packaging and food composition standards. Information on the Food Standards Code may be obtained from the Australia and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA).

Consignments may be inspected and sampled/tested under the AQIS Imported Food Inspection Program (IFIP).

5 REVIEW

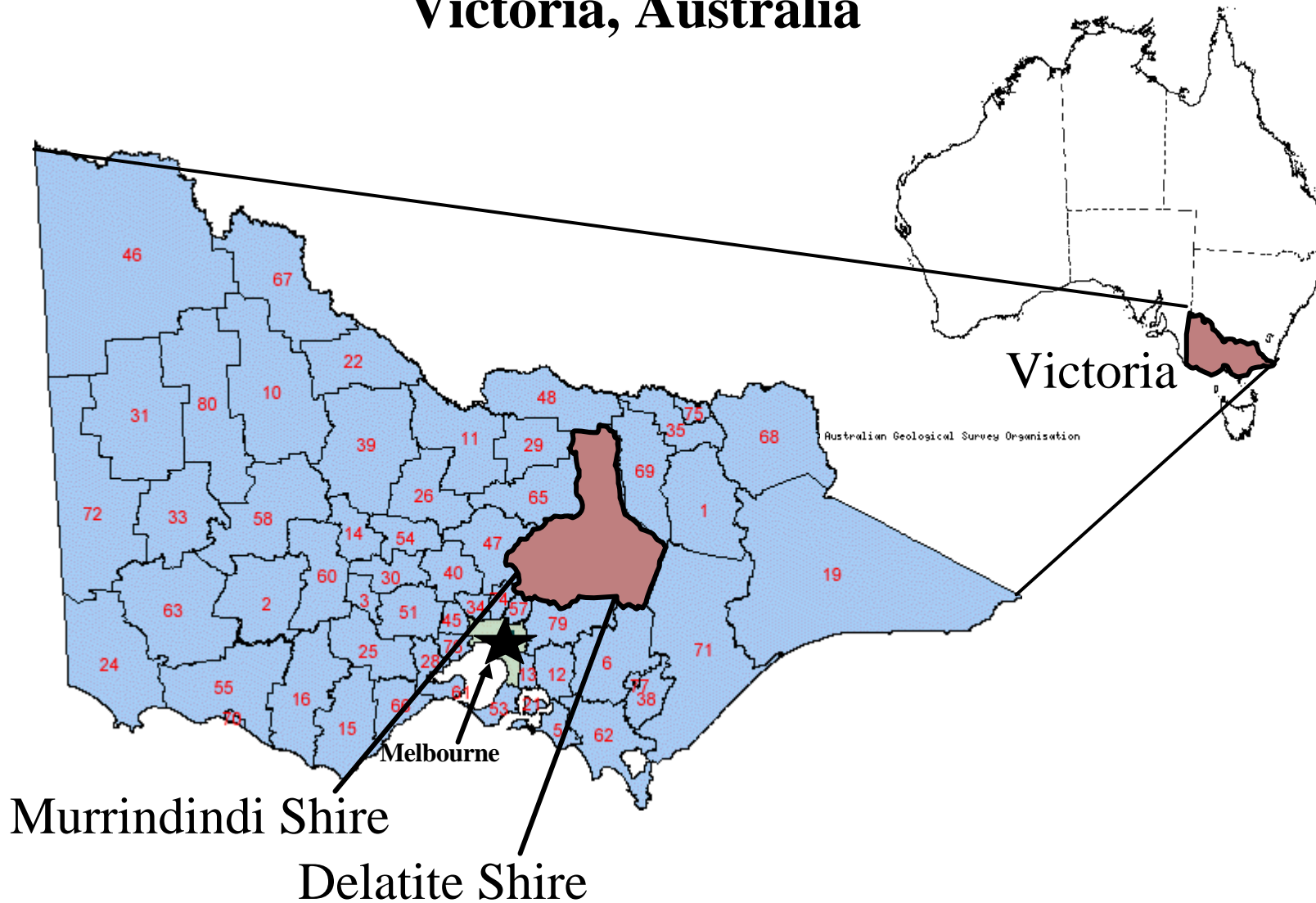
The Director may suspend or revoke import permits and/or review these conditions as warranted in the light of new information and, in particular, significant changes in factors relating to quarantine risk.

SARAH KAHN
Assistant Director
Animal Quarantine Policy Branch

Map 1

Shires of Murrindindi (56) and Delatite (18)

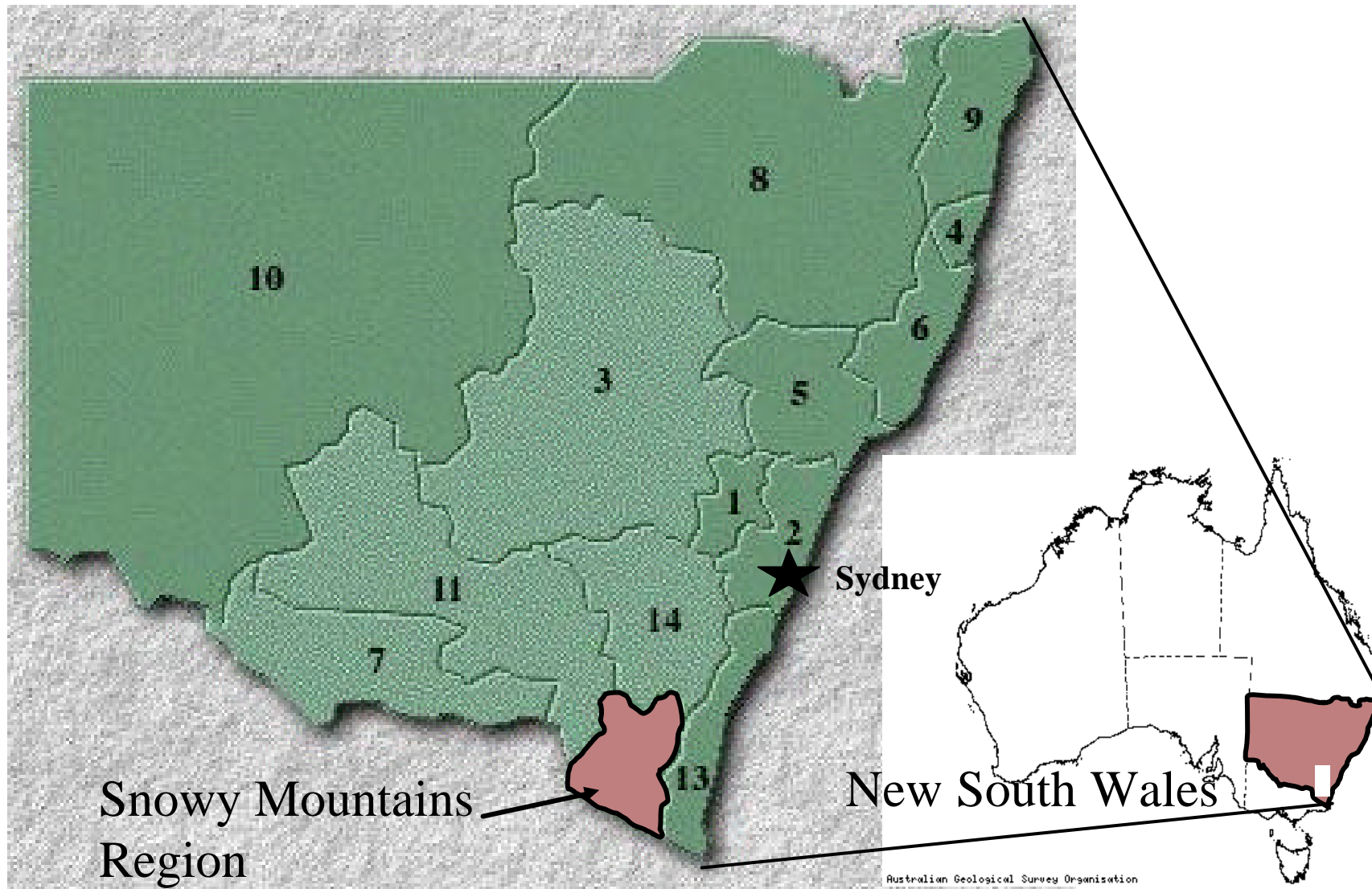
Victoria, Australia



Map 2

Snowy Mountains Region (12)

New South Wales, Australia



THE IMPORTATION OF SALMONID PRODUCT TO AUSTRALIA

Exporting Country approved by AQIS



Importer applies for an import permit



Permission to import granted subject to the product meeting conditions specified on the permit



Product exported to Australia. Random documentation and product checks performed at border



Eviscerated Pacific salmon from New Zealand



Released for processing or retail sale



Individually wrapped or loose packed in containers of weight equal to or less than 60lb



May be sent for commercial processing, processing for retail sale or for direct retail sale



All commercial processors and processors processing more than 300kg per day for retail sale must have a compliance agreement with AQIS and meet relevant conditions

EDMUND BARTON BUILDING BARTON ACT



Loose-packed product in containers of any weight



Must be sent to an approved commercial processing premises with a compliance agreement and meet relevant conditions

EVALUATION OF COMPETENT AUTHORITIES FOR THE EXPORT OF SALMONID PRODUCT TO AUSTRALIA: GUIDELINES ON INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Certification by the competent authority of the exporting country is an important component of Australia's risk management policy for the importation of salmonid products. Following a request from a potential exporting country for recognition of the competent authority, AQIS will evaluate and may, if appropriate, formally recognise the competent authority of exporting countries in relation to:

- surveillance and monitoring of salmonid health; and
- approval and control of salmonid processing plants;

and the provision of export certification in relation to these matters.

AQIS has prepared these guidelines for the information of countries proposing to export salmonid products to Australia. Competent authorities seeking recognition for the purpose of exporting salmonid product to Australia should provide a submission to AQIS addressing the issues set out below and any other information the authority considers to be relevant to the submission.

Surveillance and monitoring of salmonid health

- Brief description of salmonid fisheries
 - eg salmonid species in country of export; commercial production systems and salmonid species; size and structure of industry;
- Roles and responsibilities of relevant government authorities
 - eg interaction between Federal and State/Provincial Governments, industry and research organisations and the respective roles of each organisation in surveillance and monitoring of salmonid health;
- Arrangements for notification of significant salmonid diseases
 - eg the system for reporting and disseminating information about significant disease events nationally and internationally;
- Structure of surveillance and monitoring program
 - eg how the salmonid health surveillance and monitoring program operates; the frequency and rate of sampling; the diseases included in the program;
- Role and capability of diagnostic laboratories
 - eg the capabilities of diagnostic laboratories, including quality control procedures; number and location of laboratories, training of staff;
- Status of salmonids for significant salmonid diseases
 - eg occurrence and prevalence of diseases, including the diseases/disease agents listed by the OIE as 'notifiable' and 'other significant' and diseases of quarantine significance to Australia⁶;

⁶ For the importation of salmonid product to Australia, specific risk management measures apply in relation to infectious haematopoietic necrosis virus (IHNV), infectious pancreatic necrosis virus

- Regulation of significant salmonid diseases
eg legislation covering reporting and control of diseases;
- Health controls on the importation of salmonids and salmonid product
eg legislation and policies covering the importation of live salmonids, their genetic material and non-viable products;
- Measures for dealing with foreign diseases and pests
eg legislation for reporting of diseases; policies for response, including arrangements for eradication/control of foreign diseases;
- Any other relevant information
eg information on research programs; emerging diseases/disease syndromes; arrangements for zoning⁷ or regionalisation of diseases;
- System for certification of exports in relation to salmonid health
eg legal basis for issuing certificates; instructions to certifying officers; flow of information to support the provision of certification.

The submission should be supported by published information including relevant legislation, notifiable diseases of salmonids, annual reports, special reports, and supporting scientific references where appropriate.

Processing and certification of salmonid product for human consumption

- System for approval of processing plant, including standards on which approval is based; arrangements for licensing/approval of plants and revocation of licence or approved status;
- Requirements for construction, equipment and operational standards of plants, including transport and storage facilities;
- System of product inspection, standards that apply and arrangements in the event of non-compliance;
- Application of quality management systems, including performance standards and arrangements for auditing plants for compliance with requirements;
- System for certification of exports eg legal basis for issuing certificates; instructions to certifying officers; system for the provision of information to support the provision of certification.

2 REFERENCE INFORMATION

Import risk analysis on non-viable salmonids and non-salmonid marine finfish (July 1999).

Animal Quarantine Policy Memorandum (AQPM) 1999/62 'Guidelines for the approval of countries to export animals (including fish) and their products to Australia' (31 August 1999).

AQPM 1999/69 'Importation of uncanned salmonid product' (13 October 1999).

OIE International Aquatic Animal Health Code (1997).

OIE Diagnostic Manual for Aquatic Animal Diseases (1997).

(IPNV), infectious salmon anaemia virus (ISAV), *Aeromonas salmonicida*, *Renibacterium salmoninarum*, *Yersinia ruckeri* (Hagerman strain) and *Myxobolus cerebralis*.

⁷ If an exporting country seeks AQIS recognition of the regional or zonal distribution of salmonid diseases as a basis for modification of the measures to apply to salmonid exports to Australia, the exporting country should clearly explain the basis for the claim and the measures to be modified.

