



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service



# Cargo Management eBulletin

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**Providing information to the Cargo and Shipping industries on the latest AQIS developments**

## ◆ Implementation of AFAS India

The Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) has now been implemented for India.

Prior to 1 September 2006, AQIS accepted documentation from all Indian methyl bromide treatment providers, providing the company was not listed on AQIS's Offshore Treatment Providers List as 'Under Investigation', 'Unacceptable' or 'Suspended'. But from **1 September 2006**, fumigation certificates from Indian treatment facilities with fumigation dates of 1 September 2006 or later will only be acceptable if they are valid and from companies on the List of Acceptable Indian Treatment Providers or are issued by the Indian Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DoAC).

Following a long period of capacity building and training, and in consultation with AQIS, DoAC developed a Register of Indian treatment providers that have demonstrated their capacity to perform methyl bromide treatments in accordance with Australian fumigation standards. AQIS has used DoAC's register of accredited methyl bromide treatment providers to develop a List of Acceptable Indian Treatment Providers for import clearance activities. The list is available on the AQIS website at [www.aqis.gov.au/afastp](http://www.aqis.gov.au/afastp).

Industry should note that the current List of Acceptable Indian Treatment Providers is not exhaustive, and it is expected that additions will be made. AQIS recommends checking this list for updates on a regular basis.

India will join Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, which have all already implemented AFAS systems. Development is also underway in China and the Philippines, with both countries expected to implement AFAS systems in 2007.

## ◆ AEP Expansion

AQIS is continuing to expand the Automatic Entry Processing (AEP) for Commodities scheme, and is trialling its use for a range of new commodities in September 2006.

AEP for Commodities allows accredited brokers to assess documentation, report quarantine non-commodity and commodity concerns and direct those consignments for quarantine action. The scheme enables brokers to direct entries without the need to send documents to AQIS offices and have one of its front counter officers process the entry. Brokers instead can assess the documents themselves and select an appropriate Integrated Cargo System (ICS) processing type to reflect the documentation assessment outcomes.

AEP for non commodity concerns (ie for FCL and LCL containers) has been in place for some time. On the commodity side, an initial trial took place in 2004 and involved three commodities, namely new tyres, finfish from New Zealand and dairy products from New Zealand.

AQIS has already made contact with a range of brokerages to participate in the new trial. Commodities to be examined include used cars, plywood and veneer, manufactured wooden articles and non-passenger vehicles. An online training package covering AEP for Commodities has also been tested as part of the trial. The training package is completed online, and is similar in format to the existing broker accreditation online training package.

The main benefits of AEP to industry include:

- a reduction in the time taken to process an entry, by avoiding the need to attend the AQIS office or send documents for assessment by zetafax;
- a lower entry processing cost for an AEP entry, as opposed to an entry processed at the AQIS office, and
- the ability to complete entries outside normal business hours.

The system also benefits AQIS in a number of ways. For example, AEP frees up resources and enables it to concentrate on service delivery, high-risk activities and surveillance activities such as the Import Clearance Effectiveness (ICE) programme.

It should be noted that AEP does not necessarily mean that consignments will be cleared without any AQIS involvement. Industry will perform the documentation assessment in accordance with processes defined in a Compliance Agreement, and the directions applied under AEP will be consistent with those that would otherwise be applied by front counter staff. Once the trials have been successfully concluded, assessed and requisite changes made, the scheme will be rolled out to wider broking community.

#### ✦ **Transshipping Containers from Giant African Snail (GAS) Countries**

AQIS has implemented a new policy covering the inspection or exemption of transhipped containers from Giant African Snail (GAS) countries. Unlike GAS cargo destined for an Australian address which requires a full GAS inspection, transhipped GAS cargo may be granted exemption from this inspection requirement. The new policy which standardises AQIS's transhipment approach came into effect **1 September 2006**.

AQIS established the GAS National Co-ordination Centre (GAS NCC) in January 2005 to facilitate improved and consistent GAS screening for all vessels arriving in Australia. Based on operational issues the NCC identified with transhipment of GAS cargo, the new policy should result in a more consistent approach across the country.

The most important aspects of the new policy are as follows:

- The container operator agent for the vessel must notify the AQIS GAS Regional Contact at the port of discharge of any cargo intended for transhipment. The request for approval to tranship (i.e. exemption from GAS inspection) must be provided to AQIS in writing.
- AQIS will individually review each request for transhipment. If AQIS approves the transhipment of GAS cargo without inspection, AQIS will provide written confirmation.
- Approved cargo must be segregated on the wharf and surrounded by an uninterrupted salt barrier or AQIS approved repellent. This cargo will also be subject to routine quarantine surveillance.
- Approved cargo must be loaded directly aboard the stated carrier vessel and shipped directly overseas.
- If the carrier vessel is calling at other Australian ports before leaving Australian waters, GAS segregation requirements will apply to the vessel and its cargo. When transhipment has been approved, the GAS NCC will then obtain relevant Bay Plans of the ship to ensure cross contamination of Australian bound cargo has not occurred. The GAS NCC will advise subsequent Australian ports if discharging cargo on the carrier vessel has been cross contaminated and will provide a list of cargo requiring inspection.

AQIS will not approve transhipment where:

- The container operator agent has not provided all information necessary for AQIS to make an assessment.

- The cargo is being taken from a vessel at one wharf to be placed on another vessel at a different wharf, regardless of the vessels final destination. In this situation, the GAS inspection will take place at the discharge wharf.
- The cargo is discharged from one vessel to be transhipped to another Australian port. A GAS inspection will take place at the first port of discharge and not the final destination.

**Click here for further information regarding the procedures for transshipping GAS cargo.**

Alternatively, please contact the GAS NCC via email at [gas.screener@aqis.gov.au](mailto:gas.screener@aqis.gov.au) or telephone on (07) 3637 7730.

### ✦ Improved Container Cleaning Procedures to Save Industry \$3 Million Annually

Joint efforts by AQIS and the AICCC have delivered significant savings to industry through a reduction in the number of imported containers with external contamination being sent for cleaning.

AQIS introduced the External Container Inspection Regime (ECIR) back in 2001 as part of the Federal Government's Increased Quarantine Intervention initiative. ECIR involves examining the external surfaces of imported shipping containers as they leave the wharf area. Where practical, contamination identified is removed by AQIS before the container leaves the wharf. However, in situations where gross contamination is detected, such as soil, plant matter etc, the container is instead directed for cleaning at a Quarantine Approved Premises (QAP). This cleaning step results in additional time and financial costs for the importer.

In 2001-02, about 3.9% of all imported containers were directed for cleaning nationally. This fell to about 1.7% by 2004-05. Nonetheless, during 2005 AQIS and the AICCC agreed to a review of the ECIR process to identify improvements to the process that might further reduce the number of containers sent for cleaning.

The review, conducted at the end of 2005 and early 2006, saw the introduction of revised work practices and improved utilisation of infrastructure at ECIR inspection points. As a result of these changes, the proportion of contaminated containers which are cleaned on site has increased. For example, the number of containers directed for off site cleaning across Australia fell by about 1000 per month between the beginning and the end of 2005-06. Over an entire year, this reduction would correspond to a saving of well over \$3 million to importers.

Despite the improvements, it should be noted that there will always be a requirement for some imported containers to be sent for cleaning, due to levels of contamination that cannot be safely or effectively removed at the ECIR point. Importers are also encouraged to continue to inform their suppliers about external container cleanliness requirements, which may help to further reduce potential costs and delays.

### ✦ Summary of August 2006 AICCC Meeting

The second AICCC meeting for 2006 was held on 16 August 2006 in Sydney, with the major topic of discussion being the AICCC strategic plan. Co-regulation was supported as an important initiative between AQIS and industry, with several major projects currently underway to further develop the concept. Given the focus on cost recovery, AQIS was keen to remain transparent on revenue and costs and to continue providing industry with a range of information. AQIS IT developments were also considered to be a priority, with industry involvement and consultation forming an important part of future developments. Other issues considered included maintaining the AICCC secretariat as the major contact point with industry on a wide range of issues, the exchange of staff between AQIS and industry to promote greater understanding, as well as reconsidering the membership of the committee to ensure all relevant industry and government groups were represented.

Other significant issues included:

- **Timber quarantine:** A number of timber issues had been progressed, including the development of a standard for low risk wooden articles, and ongoing breaking bundle surveys of bulk imported timber.
- **Communications research:** The results of an AQIS survey of the Australian cargo and importing community were discussed in order to gain a better understanding of awareness and attitudes to quarantine issues

- **Financial reports:** The Import Clearance Programme and Seaports Programme both recorded a small surplus in 2005-06, with increased revenues and expenses forecast in the current financial year as a result of increased business activity.
- **Fee adjustments:** Fee adjustments were considered for a number of AQIS services as a result of continued improvements in efficiency and changing operational requirements. Some of the fees to be examined included those associated with the Imported Food Inspection Scheme, Self Assessed Clearance (SAC) fees and Quarantine Approved Premises (QAP) fees.
- **Intervention and effectiveness:** A review of External Container Inspection Regime (ECIR) practices had had a positive impact on container cleaning rates. Intervention rates for vessels and passengers, as well as contamination rates for air cargo containers and high volume low value goods were also discussed.
- **Other issues:** A range of other matters were reported and discussed, including a review of the Giant African Snail (GAS) Country Action List, status reports from the Import Clearance, Imported Food and Seaports Programmes, the development of new IT systems, reports from other consultative committees and the results of the 2006 Client Satisfaction Survey.

♦ **Summary of documents and alerts released by AQIS Cargo Management in August 2006**

Reference Number	Document	Overview
1	<a href="#"><u>Notice to Industry 3, 2006-07</u></a>	Implementation of eLodge facility for Industry
2	<a href="#"><u>Notice to Industry 4, 2006-07</u></a>	Change to AQIS profiles for Fertilisers - Mined & Chemical - Bags of less than 100kg in weight
3	<a href="#"><u>Notice to Industry 5, 2006-07</u></a>	Implementation of Giant African Snail (GAS) Cargo National Transhipment Policy
4	<a href="#"><u>Notice to Industry 6, 2006-07</u></a>	Implementation of the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) in India - Reminder
5	<a href="#"><u>Notice to Industry 7, 2006-07</u></a>	Implementation of the Australian Fumigation Accreditation Scheme (AFAS) in India - Commencement
6	<a href="#"><u>Public Quarantine Alert (PQA) 0488</u></a>	Amendments to Documents for the BAS CCC Schemes
7	<a href="#"><u>PQA 0489</u></a>	Notice to AQIS staff and Nursery Stock Industry: Revised Phytophthora host list
8	<a href="#"><u>PQA 0491</u></a>	Chilean table grapes imports approved
9	<a href="#"><u>PQA 0492</u></a>	Live Ornamental Fish - Certification Requirements
10	<a href="#"><u>PQA 0493</u></a>	Changes to Schedule 5 of the Quarantine Proclamation August 2006

♦ **Contact [cargobulletin@aqis.gov.au](mailto:cargobulletin@aqis.gov.au) if you have any queries, suggestions or requests for further information**

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♦ **DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY** ♦