

CBFCA/AFIF/AQIS Regional Consultative Meeting

- AQIS Centre Board Room, 42-44 Qantas Drive on Wednesday 9 July 2003 @ 10am

Attendees:

CBFCA - Chris Powell, Brad Phillips, Darren Tomkinson, Brian Booth, David Lawson & Rachel Wylde, John McNally

AFIF - Jodi Latham

AQIS - Tony Redrup, Greg Johnston, Kieth Murray, Janet Stodulka, Paula Coutts & Rozie Davies.

Apologies: Stephen Goener

Agenda Items

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Acceptance of Minutes of previous meeting moved by Brad Phillips and seconded by Chris Powell

2. Follow-up Items stemming from previous meeting

Feedback: Greg Johnston reported that Canberra have advised electronic submission of documents eg scanned documents is not an option at this stage. There are still some concerns with maintaining integrity of some documents. This issue is under review as part of the CMR process.

Action: Darryl Hudson (AQIS) will contact Brad Phillips and arrange a visit to PNC to observe the scanning and storage process.

Darryl Hudson to finalise a checklist for brokers completing quarantine clearances.

Action: Chris Powell to supply Jodie Latham with an electronic copy of the finalised front counter personal effects handout.

3. LCL & AEP Issues

Rozie Davies advised of current LCL situation. All countries now part of the scheme. By all accounts, LCL is working well.

AEP uptake is still low. Industry encouraged to make use of this low cost, automated service to hasten processing times for non-commodity entries.

Charges for AEP discussed and clarified. The \$10 assessment fee will only be applied to AEP entries (as opposed to manual assessment fee of \$35.50).

4. Mobile X-Ray Unit

Kieth Murray provided the meeting with an update on progress with an AQIS Project that is investigating the most effective and efficient manner of operating the AQIS

Mobile X-Ray Units. This includes working with Customs to screen air cargo and the screening of some personal effects consignments at HVSO premises

5. Co-Regulation Issues

Paula Coutts advised the meeting that she had recently moved to position of Co-Regulation Manager. Paula provided an brief update on current co-regulation activities including a review of some current arrangements like RAPID's and AQIS' move to cancel existing AQD's and move to new Compliance Agreement arrangement.

6. Timber Clearances and Surveillance

Greg Johnston advised the meeting that work has finalised on the procedures applicable to the clearance of timber and timber products that are cleared on certification but subject to surveillance before they can be removed from the wharf. In sum, Sea cargo holds will be removed at the time of clearance. AQIS will still coordinate surveillance in the normal fashion and notify Brokers when this is complete but this change means that there will be no delay between when surveillance is completed and the Sea Cargo hold is lifted. This should reduce costs and delays for importers while still satisfying quarantine requirements.

Action: Greg Johnston advised that this will take effect on Monday 14 July, 2003. Greg will formally advise Chris Powell when this takes effect. (Done).

7. ECIR Trial Progress

Greg Johnston advised that AQIS is currently working with Patrick's to trial increased on-site cleaning of low level contamination on the external surfaces of containers as they exit the wharf gates. The aim is to minimize the number of containers ordered for washing. Greg will report on progress of the trial at the next meeting.

8. OH&S Issue – AQIS Staff entering Containers

Tony Redrup advised that an incident had occurred recently where an AQIS Officer had suffered some illness as a result of entering a container when the unpacking process commenced. Tony advised that AQIS has clear instructions which prohibit staff entering container unless they are fully unpacked and aired or have a gas-free certificate. AQIS has reminded all staff to comply fully with this instruction. Tony advised the meeting that industry must be wary of pressuring AQIS staff to enter containers

9. Washing of Used Motor Vehicles prior to AQIS inspection

Chris Powell queried the need for AQIS inspection of used vehicles prior to washing. AQIS advised that an initial inspection of all used machinery, including vehicles must be conducted to verify freedom from insect infestation. In addition, used equipment must be assessed against national standards to confirm that contamination is not so

gross as to warrant re-export. For these reasons, vehicles must be inspected by AQIS prior to any treatment (including washing) is performed.

10. LCL Surveillance at Depots

Brian Booth raised the issue of surveillance intensity by AQIS staff at some depots. Explained that AQIS allocates a high priority to surveillance and it will continue at current rates (may even increase if risk is perceived to increase). Recent findings confirm the need to continue surveillance at depots despite the fact that these premises have co-regulatory arrangements in place with AQIS.

11. Removal of Contaminants from containers on Wharves

Chris Powell sought clarification on the legalities of truck drivers removing soil and other contaminants from containers prior to inspection by AQIS staff. AQIS advised that the containers are subject to quarantine and it is an offence under the Quarantine Act for any unauthorised person to interfere with goods subject to quarantine. Chris referred to a letter issued by Brett Boatfield on this matter which outlined penalties.

Action: Chris will supply Tony Redrup with a copy of this letter. Tony to verify accuracy and then may be re-issued through CBFCA to members.

12. Proposed 'Up-Front' Payments of AQIS Fees

Chris Powell referred to an e-mail from Hart Krtschil on a proposal by AQIS to move to system whereby fees paid by broker at time of clearance. This system already in place and appears to be working well in Sydney and Melbourne. Offers advantages to brokers in terms of clear indication of actual costs at time of lodgment of entry. Also has the potential to significantly reduce AQIS overheads in terms of costs associated with bad debts and overdue payments.

Darren Tomkinson also raised the issue of being unable to secure a final release for consignment from AQIS Sydney until all fees paid up-front.

Action: Greg Johnston to speak with Steve Tonkin in AQIS Sydney regarding this matter. Done – Steve advises that this is not AQIS policy – was an error on the part of one officer. Steve will address the issue.

13. Performing Rural Tailgates off Fisherman Island

Chris Powell queried why all rural tailgates must be performed at Fisherman Island. AQIS advised that significant numbers of containers ordered for tailgate fail to present and instead are delivered. This bypass represents a high risk leakage area for AQIS and the insistence of performing tailgates at Fisherman Island is one effective means of minimising the risk. Darren Tomkinson requested that AQIS consider allowing rural tailgates to be performed at locations close to Fish Island eg Hemmant.

Action: Greg Johnston will investigate this issue including the rationale for the current arrangements and the practices in other Regions. Greg will report back at the next meeting.

14. Broker Reports

Chris Powell sought feedback on progress with the new Broker Report system. AQIS advised Broker Reports will allow brokers to easily and quickly query charging anomalies. AQIS also advised that a trial is currently being conducted with a number of brokers. Feedback to date indicates poor uptake. It has been suggested that broker management supportive but staff performing task see this as onerous and don't understand full benefits. Hart Krtschil to progress this matter with broker management.

15. Other Business

AQIS advised that it is conducting a review of operations at Fisherman Island. This area has grown rapidly over the last few years and AQIS now has a large number of staff posted at this site. AQIS is committed to reviewing operations to ensure that effective service is being delivered in the most cost efficient manner possible. This review involves consultation with relevant industry stakeholders. AQIS will provide feedback on progress of the review at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

Wednesday October 8, 2003 at 10.00 am – AQIS Centre Board Room