

GUIDE FOR PRE-EXPORT ISOLATION / QUARANTINE FOR LIVE ANIMALS

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Explanatory note

Several legal instruments underpin the Official Assurance Programme for Live Animals and Animal Germplasm. The Programme brings these instruments together in a cohesive manner. As such, the Programme cannot be regarded as the actual legal document, hence the disclaimer above. The instructions in the Programme mirror the legal instruments, therefore any deviation from these instructions is likely to cause a consequent breach of the statutory requirements. In case of doubt, the reader should consult the legal instruments.

1 INTRODUCTION

Countries importing live animals from New Zealand often require that the animals spend a specified period of time immediately prior to export in 'isolation' or 'quarantine'. Importing countries may specify their own conditions for the isolation or quarantine, they may require that it takes place in a MAF-approved facility, or they may simply state that the animals must be isolated or quarantined.

This standard recognises that there will be differences in isolation requirements for each export consignment, depending on the export conditions and the species being exported. It requires exporters, in consultation with the accredited person dealing with the consignment, to develop an **isolation plan** that manages the animal health risks of concern to the importing country. Points that must be considered when developing an isolation plan are given. In many cases, requirements are to be included in the plan where appropriate, allowing judgement to be exercised according to the specific circumstances of each consignment, taking into account the epidemiology of the diseases of concern.

Note:

While this standard covers requirements for isolation and quarantine, the generic term 'isolation' will be used to avoid the document becoming unwieldy.

1.1 Application

This standard sets out the minimum requirements for pre-export isolation for live animals where export conditions require isolation. All parties involved in pre-export isolation of live animals must follow these requirements.

1.2 Definitions

Accredited person

A person accredited, pursuant to section 103 of the Animal Products Act 1999, to undertake pre-export preparation of live animals or animal germplasm.

Animal (Animal Products Act 1999)

Any member of the animal kingdom, including:

- any mammal, bird, finfish, shellfish, reptile, amphibian, insect, or invertebrate
 - any other creature or entity that is declared by the Minister by notice in the Gazette to be an animal for the purposes of this Act,
- but not including a human being.

Authorised person

A person, employed by MAF, and authorised, pursuant to section 65 of the Animal Products Act 1999, to issue official assurances. An authorised person must provide the issuing signature on an export certificate, thus, issuing it as an official assurance.

Authorised persons may also be accredited where they are required to undertake pre-export preparation of live animals and animal germplasm.

Export animals

Those animals that enter the facility to undergo pre-export isolation. They are not necessarily exported, as animals may not be eligible for export for commercial or other reasons by the time the isolation period is complete.

Export certificate

A certificate setting out the conditions agreed between New Zealand and the importing country to be met regarding the live animal or animal germplasm to be exported. Once the certificate is completed, signed by an authorised person, and stamped with that authorised person's signatory seal, it becomes an official assurance.

Facility

Buildings, yards, paddocks, apiaries, etc. used for the specific purpose of pre-export isolation of live animals.

International Animal Trade (IAT) Section

The section within MAF Biosecurity Authority responsible for the development and negotiation of export certification procedures for live animals and animal germplasm.

MAF

New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Official assurance

A general statement to a foreign government, or an agent of a foreign government attesting that certain conditions apply in respect of any animal material or product. In the context of live animal and animal germplasm export, this includes, but is not limited to, statements regarding New Zealand's animal health status, the residency, isolation, health, testing, treatment and inspection status and transportation of the exported commodity.

The form of an official assurance is an export certificate. Once the certificate is completed, signed by an authorised person, and stamped with that authorised person's signatory seal, it becomes an official assurance.

Operator

The person who has overall responsibility for the facility, its maintenance and operation.

Premises

Property on which the facility is located. There may be more than one facility on a premises, each facility being separate from the others and each maintaining separate records.

Supervising veterinarian

A veterinarian directed by the accredited person to supervise a pre-export isolation period of animals other than bees.

1.3 References

- MAF Animal Biosecurity Official Assurance Programme: Official Assurances Programme for Live Animals and Animal Germplasm

2 RESPONSIBILITIES

- The exporter is responsible for ensuring that export animals requiring isolation are isolated only in facilities and under conditions that meet this standard.
- The operator of a facility is responsible for meeting the requirements relating to the physical and operational specifications in this standard and for advising the accredited person if these requirements are not met.
- The exporter, in consultation with the operator, is responsible for ensuring that the facility and isolation conditions are approved by an accredited person prior to animals for export commencing the isolation period in that facility.
- The exporter, in consultation with the operator, is responsible for arranging for an accredited person to undertake overall supervision of each pre-export isolation period, and for ensuring that only animals that meet the conditions set down by the importing country are presented for export.
- The exporter, in consultation with the accredited person, is responsible for developing and documenting a plan setting out the conditions for isolation of the export consignment in question. That plan must take into account the requirements in this standard.
- The accredited person is responsible for approving the facility and its operation before isolation begins, and for supervising the facility and its operation during the pre-export isolation period. The accredited person must be satisfied that the requirements of this standard and the isolation plan are met throughout the isolation period.
- The accredited person may direct a supervising veterinarian to perform the day-to-day supervision of pre-export isolation (except for bees) where allowed by importing country's requirements. The accredited person must direct any supervising veterinarian in accordance with the MAF Animal Biosecurity Official Assurance Programme: Official Assurances Programme for Live Animals and Animal Germplasm. The supervising veterinarian must follow the directions of the accredited person and must report any non-compliances with this standard to the accredited person. The accredited person remains responsible for the overall supervision of the facility.

3 APPROVAL AND SUPERVISION OF A FACILITY

3.1 Inspection and approval

- 3.1.1 The accredited person must inspect the facility prior to, or at, the beginning of the isolation period and ensure that it meets the physical specifications in the isolation plan and that, as far as can be determined prior to use, the operational specifications (including documentation) are being, or are able to be, carried out. This will include checking that the facility staff have a thorough, relevant knowledge of the isolation plan and their duties in relation to it. The accredited person must document the findings of this inspection and state whether the facility is approved. This document must be kept as supporting documentation for any eligibility document based on it.
- 3.1.2 Approval of an isolation facility does not guarantee that the facility will meet the requirements of all importing countries.

3.2 Supervision

- 3.2.1 The accredited person (or supervising veterinarian, where one is being used) must visit the facility at the beginning of the isolation period and sufficiently frequently thereafter to inspect the animals for export, observe the operation of the facility and review the records held to ensure compliance with the isolation plan. Inspection of the facility and its records must be sufficient to satisfy the accredited person that the requirements of the isolation plan are being complied with and to allow the accredited person to assure the authorised person of that. The accredited person must maintain records of visits and all relevant observations.
- 3.2.2 Where the importing country requires certain activities to be undertaken, e.g. testing and treatment, before the animals enter isolation, the accredited person (or supervising veterinarian, where one is being used) must confirm, on the first visit, that those requirements have been met.
- 3.2.3 Where the physical or operational specifications of the facility fall below the requirements of this standard, the accredited person must be notified and must decide whether the failure warrants the voiding of the isolation period. Failure of isolation of the animals automatically results in the isolation period being voided. A correctable failure in, for example, record-keeping does not. Consultation between the accredited person and the National Manager, International Animal Trade is appropriate where circumstances are uncertain.

4 ISOLATION FACILITY

Export animals may be isolated in a range of facilities depending on the species involved, the requirements of the importing country, and the diseases of concern. This standard takes into account that each importing country/species combination could result in different isolation requirements. Its basic premise is that animal health risks of concern to the importing country must be identified and managed, and that the management must be documented in an isolation plan.

4.1 General

For isolation to be undertaken, an area must be established where the export animals will be kept, a space created around that area and procedures put in place to prevent contact with other animals likely to present a relevant animal health risk to the export animals.

4.2 Isolation plan

- 4.2.1 Prior to the beginning of each isolation period, the accredited person and the exporter must examine the export certificate for the consignment in question. They must develop and document an isolation plan, outlining the physical and operational specifications of the facility required to manage animal health risks of concern to the importing country, taking into account the epidemiology of the diseases of concern. Where the importing country has provided specific requirements, the isolation plan must include those requirements. Points to consider when developing the isolation plan are given in section 4.3. The isolation plan must be approved by the accredited person.
- 4.2.2 Where multiple facilities are to be used for one consignment, an overall plan may be applied to all facilities or separate plans may be developed that achieve the same outcome.
- 4.2.3 The isolation plan developed for each consignment must be documented for the purposes of directing any supervising veterinarians and operators, and for audit purposes.
- 4.2.4 The exporter must provide the operator of the facility with the isolation plan and ensure that it can be met for the consignment in question.

4.3 Physical and operational specifications of a facility

Exporters and accredited persons must have regard to the following matters when developing an isolation plan. The outcome required is adequate isolation to manage, and to be seen to manage, the animal health risks of concern to the importing country. When developing the isolation plan, specifications for record keeping must also be agreed. Records must be sufficient to demonstrate that the requirements of the isolation plan are

being complied with. Records must be in a form that will allow subsequent auditing. Exporters and accredited persons must have regard to the following matters when developing an isolation plan.

4.3.1 Location

- 4.3.1.1 The facility should be located within a reasonable road journey of the port of departure to facilitate the movement of animals and the maintenance of isolation conditions.
- 4.3.1.2 Where surrounding areas contain, or have recently contained, other animals that present an animal health risk to the export animals, the facility must be sited to prevent ingress of drainage or surface run-off from those areas.

4.3.2 Type of facility

- 4.3.2.1 Consideration must be given to whether an outdoor, indoor or combination facility is required to provide sufficient isolation.
- 4.3.2.2 The facilities provided should be consistent with adequate husbandry requirements of the animals being isolated, and must have appropriate amenities to undertake any testing, treatment or inspections required to be carried out during isolation.

4.3.3 Staffing of the facility

- 4.3.3.1 The operator must be suitably qualified/experienced in the husbandry of the species being isolated or must employ an experienced stockperson for daily supervision of the facility. The stockperson must report any problems promptly to the operator.
- 4.3.3.2 Adequate staffing levels for the operation must be specified and the staff must be suitably trained in the animal husbandry and management practices. All staff must be able to demonstrate a thorough knowledge and application of the isolation requirements and the proper sanitation procedures required on the facility for each consignment.

4.3.4 Access to the facility

- 4.3.4.1 Consideration should be given to the restriction of entry of persons, animals and/or vehicles to the isolation facility. As a general rule only persons, animals or equipment required to be on the isolation facility should be allowed entry. Signage should be sufficient that persons intending to enter the property will be aware that the facility is a pre-export isolation facility and that no unauthorised entry is permitted.

Where access to the facility is to be allowed, consideration should be given to:

- visitors being required to sign the diary for that day or the visitor's book, giving their name, organisation represented (where applicable) and reason for entering the facility

- visitors being escorted throughout their visit, onto and off the premises, by the operator or a facility staff member
- if visitors have been in contact with animals of the same species as the export animals, or species that present an animal health risk to the export animals, they may be required to wear clean footwear and outer clothing during their visit.

4.3.5 Prevention of direct/indirect contact

- 4.3.5.1 Consideration must be given to whether indirect contact with other animals must be prevented in order to avoid transmission of diseases of concern, or whether prevention of direct contact is sufficient.
- 4.3.5.2 The export animals must be isolated from other animals of the same species that are not of known equivalent health status and from animals of other species that may present an animal health risk. Facility boundaries must prevent entry of such animals. Entry of any such animals into the facility will invalidate the isolation period.
- 4.3.5.3 Different consignments of animals of the same species may be held on a single isolation facility but the isolation period for any consignment on the facility must be counted as starting from the day on which the last group of animals entered the facility. All animals in isolation in the one facility must meet the combined animal health requirements of all destination countries.
- 4.3.5.4 No export animal that leaves the facility during the isolation period may re-enter during that time unless specific arrangements are noted in the export certificate.
- 4.3.5.5 A distance of at least 2 metres must be maintained between the export animals and other animals of the same species that are not of known equivalent health status and animals of other species that may present an animal health risk. The ability of some species of animals to lean over certain types of fences must be taken into account when ensuring the maintenance of this separation. Separation can be achieved by leaving suitably sized paddocks around the isolation area empty. Suitable solid boundaries may be used in lieu of the 2 metre separation where appropriate.
- 4.3.5.6 Isolation facilities must not provide identifiable pre-existing sources of infection. Cleaning and disinfection of animal accommodation areas and handling facilities adequate to manage animal health risks must be undertaken prior to entry of each new consignment. It may be appropriate in an indoor facility with floors of sand or clay to renew the surface with clean, fresh material for each consignment.
- 4.3.5.7 Where the sharing of amenities (laneways, crushes, loading ramps, water troughs, feed troughs) with other animals presents an animal health risk, export animals should use separate amenities. Where amenities must be shared, cleaning and disinfection adequate to manage animal health risks must be undertaken between use by the different groups of animals.
- 4.3.5.8 Equipment and vehicles must not provide sources of infection. Cleaning and disinfection of equipment and vehicles used in animal accommodation or handling areas

adequate to manage animal health risks must be undertaken prior to entry of each new consignment and, if the equipment or vehicles are removed, they must be similarly treated before re-entry to the facility.

- 4.3.5.9 Feed and drinking water supplied to export animals must be so derived that it does not constitute an animal health risk.
- 4.3.5.10 Where wildlife pose an animal health risk to the export animals via feed, feed stores must be protected from such wildlife. A programme to control vermin may be required.
- 4.3.5.11 Action must be taken to ensure that disease agents of concern are not transmitted from animals outside the facility to the export animals. The types of action required may include changing outer clothing and footwear worn when in contact with animals outside the facility before handling those in isolation, washing hands between handling different groups of animals, etc.

4.3.6 Health of the export animals

- 4.3.6.1 Provision must be made for diagnosis of illness affecting export animals.
- 4.3.6.2 Any health problems in the export animals or breaches in isolation must be recorded and immediately reported to the accredited person (or supervising veterinarian, where one is being used).

4.3.7 Departure from the isolation facility

- 4.3.7.1 Loading at the facility must occur only when authorised by the accredited person.
- 4.3.7.2 The transport of the animals to the port of departure must be by the most direct route and be in cleaned and disinfected vehicles. During transport, the export animals must not come into contact with animals not similarly certified for export.

4.3.8 Miscellaneous

- 4.3.8.1 The facility should remain available for an appropriate period after removal of the export animals in case it is necessary to return them to the facility for any reason, e.g. in case of aircraft delay.
- 4.3.8.2 When the facility does not contain a consignment for export, it may be used for other purposes. The use of the facility during such times must not compromise its use for pre-export isolation. The facility documentation must contain the measures to be undertaken to ensure that there is no compromise.

5 DOCUMENTATION

In order to ensure that consistent practices are followed during isolation, and to enable the approval and audit of a facility, written procedures and records of events must be kept, and made available for inspection. Procedures for activities undertaken at a facility form part of the isolation plan.

- 5.1 The isolation plan must include a site plan of the property, which shows the location and design of the facility (including how isolation is maintained) and the entrances to the site.
- 5.2 Contact details of the accredited person and, where one is being used, the supervising veterinarian must be available as part of the isolation plan.
- 5.3 The authority and responsibilities of all facility staff involved with the consignment must be clearly documented in the isolation plan.
- 5.4 Procedures that address the requirements for the maintenance and operation of the facility must be developed, maintained and used. These procedures, and any amendments, must be approved by the accredited person as part of the approval of the facility. All facility staff must have knowledge of, and must follow, the relevant procedures.
- 5.5 The isolation plan must document any requirements for:
 - restricting access to the facility and the conditions under which entry is allowed
 - authorisation of entry to the facility
 - managing health problems in the animals for export
 - cleaning and disinfection
 - vermin control
 - actions required to ensure that a facility that is used for other purposes between consignments is not compromised as an isolation facility.
- 5.6 Records must be maintained to demonstrate that the requirements of the isolation plan have been met. Such records may include:
 - details of all consignments of export animals, including numbers, identification, dates of arrival, dates of release, destinations, exporter details and veterinary inspections relating to each consignment
 - details of transporters, including names, contact details and dates of transport
 - details of cleaning and disinfection dates and programmes, including products used, methods and concentrations
 - details of vermin control programmes
 - details (including dates) of any testing and treatments performed on export animals
 - details of any health problems in the export animals (including dates these were reported to the accredited person/supervising veterinarian) and any testing or examination results and diagnoses
 - details of any incidents and corrective actions
 - details of visitors, including names, addresses and reasons for entering the facility.

The isolation plan must specify who is responsible for record keeping and the location of the records.

- 5.7 At the end of the isolation period, these records must be supplied to the accredited person who will keep them as supporting documentation relating to that consignment.