

MAF 153 Series Standards

Summary of Changes between Version 1 and Version 2

General

A generic approach

When the MAF 153 Standards were first developed, the number of investigations per year was in the order of tens, and most were for suspect vesicular disease¹. In recent years MAF has been investigating over 100 animal disease incidents per year, for a very wide range of suspect organisms. Much has been learnt during this time, and during responses to organisms such as *Varroa destructor*, *Trichinella spiralis*, *Mycoplasma mycoides mycoides* (large colony), *Brucella suis*, and Red Imported Fire Ant. These organisms differ from the vesicular diseases in that they are more slow-moving, and have less immediate catastrophic economic impacts. Nevertheless, their impacts may be major, and there are many more of these disease threats than there are of the high risk/ low likelihood diseases such as foot and mouth disease (FMD). It is therefore crucial that New Zealand is prepared to detect and respond to these as well as to suspect cases of FMD.

Many of the approaches described in the first issue of the MAF 153 Standards were, and remain, appropriate for investigation and response to suspect FMD. The new edition of the Standards, Issue 2, however, attempts to balance this high risk/ low likelihood scenario with the full range of other possible scenarios, ensuring systems are described generically but avoiding prescriptions that may not be appropriate in all circumstances.

In several places, the Standards describe factors to be taken into account in decision-making. As well as associated the public health, animal health, environmental and/or trade impacts of an outbreak, the new Standards include the animal welfare, social and economic impacts as factors to be considered.

Also in several places, the new Standards make clear the need to liaise with both processing and production sectors of industry regarding standards, readiness and preparedness

Terminology

Organisation and job titles have been updated to be consistent with current usage.

Definitions

The definitions section has been updated to ensure terminology in current usage is defined. In particular, terminology has been included relating to:

- describing the health and regulatory status of places and areas
- the document management system within the response programme.

¹ The vesicular diseases include foot and mouth disease, and several other diseases that resemble it.

Related documents

Memorandums of understanding with Department of Conservation, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Fisheries and New Zealand Police have been recognised. The MAF Biosecurity *Policy statement on responding to an exotic organism incursion* has been included for convenience, and replaces the draft version that appeared in the first issue.

Updating and Distribution

Controlled copies will no longer be distributed. The latest version of the Standards will be available on the MAF website. Key stakeholders will be advised when significant changes are made and will usually be consulted when revisions are undertaken. When significant alterations are made to the Standards, a summary of the changes will be placed on the MAF website.

Standard 153.01: General requirements for all suppliers

The *Outline of Investigation and Response* process has been re-written to bring the Standard into line with how systems within the programme are currently operating, and to implement recommendations made subsequent to the anthrax simulation in November 2002.

The types of documents produced are defined in order to standardise document management throughout the programme. Post-response phase activities are expanded upon, and include sections describing records management, de-briefing, post-response surveillance, and publications.

The processes operating during Investigation Phase, as described in detail in subsequent Standards, are represented diagrammatically in a new figure 1. These processes reflect the roles of the Response Centre (EDRC) Controller, the MAF Biosecurity Programme Coordinator and investigators, and the options for how an investigation may be conducted. The discretion that roleholders currently exercise during Investigation Phase to evaluate risk, formulate investigation plans and place other roleholders on stand-by (or not) has been recognised.

The response command and control system is represented diagrammatically in figure 2.

The Quality Assurance Requirements now require audit of suppliers at least every two years, rather than annually as previously. Increasing levels of activity, providing greater opportunities for contact between MAF Biosecurity and all suppliers, make annual audits unnecessary. A two-year audit cycle reflects current practice and increases efficiency without compromising standards.

The Standard provides that, where the circumstances of an investigation indicate that there is a significant risk of a serious incursion, or that assistance from industry or other stakeholders may be of value, industry and other stakeholders (as appropriate) should be notified without delay. The new Standard notes that, at the commencement of a response, a communications plan is developed, and provides some detail about processes of communication with stakeholders.

Table 1: Categorisation for exotic diseases and pests of animals

Two redundant columns in the table were removed. Q fever's de-listing by the OIE has been recognised.

Standard 153.02: National Co-ordination Centre

Development of procedures for the NCC and their implementation during responses and simulations has greatly improved understanding of the functions, systems and roles within the NCC. Standard 153.02 has been substantially re-written to accurately and comprehensively describe the NCC requirements during Maintenance, Investigation and Response.

The new Standard includes a more comprehensive list of government agencies with interests in exotic disease response issues.

Standard 153.03: Response Centre (EDRC)

Skills in communication and dealing with people in stressful situations have been added to the expected competencies for exotic disease investigators.

As noted above, *Chapter 2 Investigation Phase* has been substantially re-written to account for current systems, in particular the range of investigation scenarios and options open to the EDRC Controller. The EDRC Controller is expected to observe approved Standard Operating Procedures or develop and agree an investigation plan with the MAF Biosecurity Programme Coordinator. The issues and criteria to be considered during this process are detailed. The discretion currently being exercised, to use alternative investigators with appropriate skills and to place other roleholders on stand-by (or not) dependent on the risk profile of the notification, is formalised.

Chapter 3 Response Phase adopts the flexible and scaleable model for the EDRC and Field Operations Response Teams (FORTs) proposed following the anthrax simulation in November 2002. Groups structures, positions and roles developed by National Centre for Disease Investigation in simulation de-brief materials are incorporated. Groups are re-named and re-organised to more clearly reflect functions in relation to likely response objectives and policies. Hence, Movement Control, Surveillance and Disease Control Groups and Group Managers are introduced under the Operations Group Manager. The changes at the EDRC and in the FORT to the management of Disease Control functions are probably the most significant change within the response structure in recent times. All Disease Control activities, including Restricted Place Management, Valuation, Slaughter and Disposal are brought into a new line of control, with appropriate elements at the EDRC and FORT.

Chapter 3 now requires that Industry Liaison Officers be appointed at the EDRC for relevant support industries such as the livestock transport industry.

Two diagrams are included that show group structures within the EDRC and FORT, at two different scales of response.

Chapter 4 Surveillance and *Chapter 5 Post-response phase* expand on and clarify service requirements for these two areas of activity.

Chapter 5 provides for industry participation in debriefings where appropriate.

Standard 153.04: Initial Investigation Veterinarians

The Standard now suggests that industry assistance may be sought in dealing with situations where livestock owners may be uncooperative.

The most significant changes are to *Chapter 5 Training*, in which the current systems for training 100 Patrol Vets on a three yearly cyclical rotation are noted. Induction requirements for Patrol Vets in a response are also included.

Standard 153.05: Field Operations Response Team (FORT)

As discussed above in relation to the EDRC, the structure of functional groups in the FORT has been substantially changed in both *Chapter 1: Maintenance Phase* and in *Chapter 3: Response Phase*. The diagrams in 153.03 are relevant to the FORT also.

Chapter 3: Response Phase specifies that the FORT Logistics Manager should be responsible for occupational safety and health including stress management for FORT personnel.

Standard 153.06: Response services in specific sectors

The way in which Standard 153.06 is presented has been substantially changed.

Chapter 1 presents general requirements for all suppliers of services for specific sectors, and adopts across the board the successful model developed within the dairy industry and applied in aquaculture and wool/hides/skins. Specific requirements for each sector are in subsequent chapters. Some of these changes will mean significant change in the way current services are delivered in some sectors.

Chapter 8 provides guidance for national associations representing animal-based sectors or stakeholders for development of industry-based plans that can be integrated with MAF's programme under the 153 Standards, to foster an inclusive and consultative approach to planning and responding.

Chapter 9 now indicates that industry organisations include those representing infrastructure providers such as transporters, stock and station agents and veterinarians.

Legal Forms

Minor changes have been made to clarify meanings and to improve readability.