

**TIAKINA AOTEAROA - PROTECT NEW ZEALAND: THE BIOSECURITY
STRATEGY FOR NEW ZEALAND**

Submission by New Zealand

The following communication, received on 13 October 2004, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In October 2001, New Zealand informed the SPS Committee (G/SPS/GEN/284), that the New Zealand Government was developing a "Biosecurity Strategy for New Zealand" which aimed to provide direction and guidance for all agencies involved in biosecurity.
2. The purpose of this submission is to provide an update on developments in the adoption and implementation of the Biosecurity Strategy for New Zealand.

II. BIOSECURITY STRATEGY FOR NEW ZEALAND

A. OUTCOMES

3. The Biosecurity Strategy concludes that New Zealand's biosecurity system is well developed with many activities in which it excels, from border inspection through to pest management. It also identifies areas, however, where improvement is required. These include (but are not limited to) a need for clarified roles and accountabilities, better coordination between and within the different levels of government, and improved prioritisation and decision-making.
4. Recommendations from the Biosecurity Strategy are provided in the form of ten "first steps" and a set of 57 "expectations". The first ten steps involve specific changes to the biosecurity system. They are to:
 - (a) Make Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) clearly accountable for overall management of the whole biosecurity system, on behalf of all New Zealanders;
 - (b) Put in place the necessary systems, structures and capabilities within MAF to support its role, starting with strong strategic capability;

- (c) Establish governance mechanisms (including a reconstituted Biosecurity Council and chief executives' forum) to support this strategy's implementation and monitor performance;
- (d) Encourage all New Zealanders to support and participate in biosecurity through a social marketing programme;
- (e) Identify ways to involve Maori fully in biosecurity issues and decisions, nationally and locally;
- (f) Identify, prioritize and review current and emerging risks – from pre-border to pest management and across aquatic and terrestrial environments;
- (g) Establish national leadership and coordination of pest management;
- (h) Recognize the contribution of science to biosecurity (strategically and operationally) and fund it properly;
- (i) Ensure decision-making processes take account of risks to a number of factors including the economy, biodiversity, and human health in setting priorities; and
- (j) Increase funding over the next five years for priority areas, and build organizational capability across the system.

B. ADOPTION

5. In August 2003, the Government endorsed the Biosecurity Strategy and agreed that the recommendations set out in the Biosecurity Strategy should form the basis for improvements to New Zealand's biosecurity system over the next five years.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

6. The Biosecurity Strategy outlined a comprehensive set of expectations of the future performance of the biosecurity system. Whilst acknowledging that the New Zealand biosecurity system is world leading in many respects, the Biosecurity Strategy also notes areas in which performance needs to be improved. Pressure on the system had been building from two main sources: more travellers, new markets and increased volume of trade; and greater expectations and scope, particularly around biodiversity and human health. The Biosecurity Strategy indicated that the biosecurity system had not adapted fast enough to these new challenges. Key concerns included inadequate information analysis and dissemination, weak strategic capability, unrealised opportunities for process improvement and failure to learn lessons from experience.

7. The biosecurity system is evolving and biosecurity issues and considerations have become increasingly complex and public. Public and political expectations about the nature of the system have changed, requiring changes in capability, resourcing and priorities.

8. Given this change in the environment and these expectations, it was clear that some far-reaching organizational change was essential. The current biosecurity structure and processes needed to be re-shaped and strengthened. The new structure aims to improve the consistency and quality of the provision of biosecurity services, in a newly-focused and functional manner. This will require growth in capability and in functions. Some additional funding has already been sought and obtained.

9. New ways of working, communication processes and behaviour will also be needed to successfully implement the Biosecurity Strategy. Improvements in quality and focus will occur not just because of additional resources, but importantly through working smarter and more effectively. The adoption of new ways of working, development and refinement of processes, more robust analysis of data, improved use of technology and formalising learning from experience will be needed to support the new structure. Formal project management disciplines and methodologies will be a key part of the operation of the new structure and will underpin many technical and management processes.

A. NEW BIOSECURITY AGENCY – BIOSECURITY NEW ZEALAND

10. The existing Biosecurity Authority within MAF will be restructured on a "points of intervention" approach based on three streams of activity – pre clearance, post clearance and policy and business development.

11. The Pre Clearance Directorate will have specific responsibility and accountability for managing biosecurity risks up to the point they enter New Zealand. For imported goods this corresponds to the time when they are given biosecurity clearance. For passively imported organisms this means the time before they arrive in New Zealand and begin to establish. This will include responsibility for new organisms enforcement and containment. The Pre Clearance Directorate is also accountable for the majority of the biosecurity-related services required for the export of New Zealand products.

12. The Post Clearance Directorate will be responsible for managing "residual" biosecurity risks, that is risks that cannot be managed by pre clearance activities or that remain after pre clearance conditions have been met, and/or where risk is already present within New Zealand. The broad categories of responsibility are: (a) surveillance; (b) incursion response; and (c) pest management.

13. The Policy and Business Directorate will be broadly responsible for providing a set of functions that integrate activities across the New Zealand Biosecurity Agency (NBA), that develop frameworks and processes to support the achievement of outcomes, and that provide management support. The key functions include: policy analysis, including economic impact analysis; biosecurity strategic science functions; biosecurity awareness and education; international coordination; advice on Maori responsiveness; business analysis; planning; co-ordination of corporate services and contract management. The Policy and Business Directorate will also provide a first point of contact and major link point for the relationship with the Biosecurity Strategic Unit.

14. The new structure, to be called Biosecurity New Zealand, will come into effect from 1 November 2004. Biosecurity New Zealand will remain an integral part of MAF.

B. BIOSECURITY STRATEGIC UNIT

15. The Biosecurity Strategy highlighted inadequate strategic capability in the biosecurity system. The Strategy stressed the need for this strategic capability to be introduced in a way that is demonstrably 'whole of system' in orientation. The Biosecurity Strategic Unit (BSU) is being established to fulfil this objective.

16. In May 2004, it was agreed that the BSU would operate as an independent group reporting directly to the Director-General of MAF for an initial period of at least eighteen months. It is considered desirable given that some of the staffing for the BSU consists of secondments from a variety of agencies with interests in the biosecurity system, including the Department of Conservation, the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Health.

17. The main focus and prime accountability of the BSU is supporting the leadership and governance of the biosecurity system. The BSU will be primarily accountable for:

- (a) Providing expert advice to the MAF Chief Executive and Chief Executives Forum on all components of New Zealand's strategic biosecurity direction, capability, frameworks, policies and priorities;
- (b) Ensuring that biosecurity-related marine, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, conservation, health, economic, social and cultural objectives are fully integrated within the "whole of system" biosecurity approach;
- (c) Championing the Biosecurity Strategy;
- (d) Defining roles, responsibilities and boundaries across the biosecurity system;
- (e) Managing stakeholder bodies and ensuring the coordination of input to various governance fora; and
- (f) Designing and managing relevant interdepartmental budget processes.

18. The BSU and Biosecurity New Zealand will work closely together to support the effective development and implementation of the Biosecurity Strategy.

IV. FURTHER INFORMATION

19. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.maf.govt.nz/biosecurity/bio-strategy/index.htm>
