

**AUSTRALIAN QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPORTATION  
OF COOKED CHICKEN MEAT (G/SPS/N/AUS/72)**

Statement made by the European Communities  
at the Meeting of 15-16 September 1998

**I. GENERAL REMARKS**

1. The European Communities consider the recommended temperature/time requirements applicable to the treatment of processed cooked poultry meat are so extreme as to create unnecessary barriers to trade.
2. A thorough examination of available scientific data led the European Communities to the conclusion that the Australian requirements are more restrictive than required in order to protect animal life and health, are not based on scientific grounds and are not justifiable.
3. Australia indicates that chicken meat must come from clinically healthy birds which originate in the country of export and from a flock in which Newcastle Disease, avian influenza and fowl cholera has not been reported. If the country of origin is in a position to meet such a requirement the time/temperature treatments would be unnecessary and burdensome.
4. In the light of the above and in consideration of Article 5.8 of the SPS Agreement, we would appreciate receiving the complete risk assessment carried out by Australia in support of such a stringent measure.
5. Australia claims that standards of construction and facilities of slaughter and processing establishments must be equivalent to those found in Australian establishments. It is therefore our understanding that each country wishing to export will have to engage in equivalency discussions with Australia to reach a definition of equivalence of the respective systems and until an agreement has been reached trade may not take place, no matter what guarantees are given by the exporting country. We would like a clarification of the above.

**II. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS OF  
THE NOTIFICATION**

- 1.c. How may exporters know in advance whether or not they have met all Australian requirements, when the Director of AQIS may impose "any other" conditions of import?
- 1.d. How is an exporter to know what is an "approved product"?
- 2.b. Why is only de-boned chicken allowed?
- 2.c. Does "country of import" cover the whole European Communities or only individual member States?

2.d. How is the approval of the Director obtained?

What information is available to exporters to judge "equivalence" with standards "found" in Australian establishments? Are inspection or audit reports of Australian establishments available?

2.e. Are officials of the Australian veterinary authority present at all times in Australian establishments when slaughtering chickens and processing cooked chickens for the Australian market?

2.g. What is meant by "physical means"? A single rail? A wall? Locked doors?

2.h. What is an "AQIS-approved" time and temperature recording system? Does AQIS recognize approvals by other competent authorities as equivalent? If not, why not?

2.i. What are "quality assurance principles"? Are these international standards? If so, which?

3.2. (i) See query under 2.c. re "country of export". Is ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection under official veterinary supervision performed on all chickens slaughtered in Australia for domestic consumption?

(iii) Why is this separation necessary in cases where the same hygiene standards prevail, even if some of the poultry is ineligible for export to Australia for reasons unconnected with health?

(iv) See comment under 2.g.

(v) What is the justification for these time and temperature requirements? Is chicken cooked to this extent acceptable to Australian consumers?

(vi) How is temperature-recording equipment to be checked during the cooking process?

(vii) Does this mean that samples for residue testing must be taken from each consignment for export to Australia? Must they be tested for the presence of residues which are not forbidden in Australia? What microbial standards are required for Australian chicken produced for the domestic market?

(viii) See question under (iii). What is meant by "physically separated" during storage?

(xi) Why should a container not contain product ineligible for Australia but intended for another destination?

---