

BIOSECURITY ACT 2015

Discussion Paper: *Cysticercus bovis*

December 2015



Photo: © NSW Department of Primary Industries

Comments on this paper close on 12 February 2016

Email your comments to: submissions.biosecuritylegislation@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Post your comments to: Biosecurity Act 2015
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For more information

See: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact

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Summary

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) will repeal the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*, which currently includes regulatory controls with respect to *Cysticercus bovis* (*C. bovis*).

Having considered existing management arrangements and risks associated with *C. bovis*, it is proposed that the management of *C. bovis* under the Act will be under the **General Biosecurity Duty (GBD)**, with a supporting **mandatory measure** to notify.

Background Information

C. bovis (also called Beef Measles) causes small cysts in the muscles of cattle and their presence can lead to all or part of the carcass being condemned. Cattle can get *C. bovis* from eating foodstuffs contaminated with human faecal material containing *C. bovis* eggs .

What is the problem?

C. bovis is the intermediate stage in the life cycle of a human tapeworm (*Taenia saginata*). An affected person can remain infested for life unless treated. Humans can become infested with the tapeworm after eating rare beef that may contain cysts and cattle can become infested after consuming feed that is contaminated with tapeworm eggs. When people consume live cysts, the cysts develop into a tapeworm in their small intestine. Sometimes the tapeworm affects human health, but often it goes undetected. In rare cases the cystic intermediate stage can lodge in the brain of people and cause serious disease.

Why is it important?

NSW farmers produce a significant amount of beef. The high health status of the NSW cattle herd means that NSW farmers have access to a wide range of markets. It is important that consumers of this meat are confident it will not contain *C. bovis* cysts.

What is the outcome we are seeking?

The desired outcome is that we prevent NSW cattle being exposed to land contaminated with *C. bovis* eggs and ensure that *C. bovis* does not restrict access to markets for NSW cattle.

Current management arrangements

C. bovis is declared as a notifiable disease under the *Stock Diseases Act 1923*. If an outbreak of *C. bovis* is notified and confirmed, there are powers that allow for actions such as to declare quarantine areas, accept undertakings that outline an agreed management plan for affected land or cattle and impose movement controls.

Proposed Management under the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

It is proposed that the risk of *C. bovis* in NSW will be managed under the **General Biosecurity Duty** with a **mandatory measure** to notify the presence or suspected presence of *C. bovis* in cattle.

The Act introduces the concept of shared responsibility via the inclusion of a GBD. The GBD requires that anyone who deals with biosecurity matter (e.g. cattle) or a carrier of biosecurity matter (e.g. cattle feed) and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with that dealing must take measures to prevent, minimise or eliminate those risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

In the case of *C. bovis*, a cattle producer can discharge his or her biosecurity duty by preventing, minimising, or eliminating the risks as far as reasonably practicable. For example, cattle should not be allowed to graze on land that has been contaminated with human faecal material, overflowing domestic sewage systems or irrigation with inadequately treated reclaimed sewage water.

There is a shared responsibility to address risks of disease under the GBD and all people dealing with cattle should take reasonable precautions against the introduction and spread of diseases. Requesting a National Cattle Health Statement when purchasing or agisting cattle will assist to manage this risk.

Authorised officers have powers under the Act to respond to circumstances where diseases such as *C. bovis* are not being dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act. For example, they may issue a biosecurity direction to or accept a biosecurity undertaking from a person requiring that person to take specified action.

How you can discharge your GBD may be outlined in Industry Standards, Codes of Practice, guidelines or through other advisory or education material.

What do you think?

We value your comments on how we can improve our biosecurity system and look forward to receiving your input into this important process.

Please complete the following survey on '*C. bovis*' at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Cbovis1>.

Alternatively, submit your feedback **by Friday, 12 February 2016** via [email](#) or post to:

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For more information about the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and regulatory framework, please visit www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact.

Appendix

Summary of current and proposed management of *C. bovis*

