

Biosecurity - Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy freedom assurance

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Management of the biosecurity risk

Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) also known as prion diseases, are a group of fatal, zoonotic diseases with no vaccine or treatment options available. Australia currently has a 'negligible risk' status (the lowest risk status) for TSEs designated by the World Organisation for Animal Health. This status helps to optimise market access and maintain consumer confidence in Australia's ruminant-sourced food commodities.

In order to maintain a negligible risk status Australia must:

- complete sufficient [surveillance](http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/) to meet international requirements (<http://www.oie.int/en/international-standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/> - (refer chapter 11.4 Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and chapter 14.8 Scrapie)
- demonstrate that no [restricted animal material](#) (RAM) is fed to ruminants
- manage risks posed by [animals imported](#) from countries that have had cases of TSE.

The purpose of this procedure is to describe how the NSW Government will contribute to maintaining Australia's 'negligible risk' international rating for TSE. Nationally, this is coordinated by Animal Health Australia (AHA) through the TSE Freedom Assurance Project (TSEFAP).

Scope

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) promotes biosecurity as a shared responsibility between government, industry and communities. This procedure is a State Priority for NSW and should be read in conjunction with the NSW DPI Surveillance for pests and diseases of animals policy. The procedure applies to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), an office within the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment, and Local Land Services (LLS) in their role as authorised officers under the Act.

Biosecurity legislation summary

TSE, BSE, chronic wasting disease of deer, feline spongiform encephalopathy and scrapie are listed as prohibited matter in schedule 2 of the Act. Provisions of the Act include the duty to notify the presence of prohibited matter and a duty to prevent, eliminate or minimise the risk posed by prohibited matter.

Mandatory measures regarding RAM are detailed in the Biosecurity Regulation (2017).

The collection, use and disclosure of information in accordance with this procedure, including any internal or external discussion or distribution of information, must be in compliance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* or be exempted by the operation of section 387 of the Act.

Section 387 (2) of the Act provides authority for the disclosure of information about a person, without the consent of the person: to a public sector agency, or to any other person, but only if the disclosure is reasonably necessary for the purpose of exercising a biosecurity risk function.

Work health and safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI and LLS) as a person conducting a business or undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this procedure must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NSW DPI and LLS will work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this procedure.

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Surveillance consistent with the National Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Surveillance Program procedure

1. Roles and responsibilities

1.1 Role of NSW Department of Primary Industries

The NSW State National TSE Surveillance Program (NTSESP) Coordinator:

- arrange for payment to eligible LLS veterinarians, private veterinarians and producers involved in specimen collection and submission as part of the NTSESP
- arrange for reimbursement from AHA for the payments made for eligible TSE submissions
- represent NSW on the TSE National Advisory Committee
- represent NSW on the TSE National Technical Committee
- advise LLS veterinarians, private veterinarians and staff at zoological parks of appropriate selection and submission of specimens for NTSESP targeted surveillance
- provide TSE submissions monthly updates by district to LLS veterinarians and private veterinarians
- provide relevant information to submitters concerning scientific/technical/market developments in control/monitoring and epidemiology of TSEs
- deliver specific training to private veterinarians regarding TSE detection and prevention measures including awareness of TSEs, nature of TSE diseases, selection of eligible animals and specimen collection and laboratory submissions. Appropriate training should ensure the occurrence of TSEs in Australian livestock can be excluded and alternative diagnoses confirmed whenever possible. <https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/disease-surveillance/tse-freedom-assurance-program/tse-surveillance-training/>
- maintain current advice on the TSE prevention and surveillance program on the NSW DPI web site
- applies device statuses to eligible cattle on NLIS.

1.2 Role of Local Land Services

The LLS Veterinarians:

- raise local awareness among producers and private veterinarians of the need to report nervous disease in cattle and sheep. Refer 'Bucks for Brains brochure'
- undertake surveillance of animals for TSE exclusion. The targeted surveillance program involves sampling animals showing signs clinically consistent with TSE and satisfying the NTSESP eligibility criteria, with the aim of excluding TSE and achieving an alternate diagnosis.

For selection criteria, brain removal techniques, fixing and dispatch of specimens and documentation requirements see 'NTSESP National Guidelines for Field Operations', (updated annually).

For a video on TSE sample collection see <https://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/disease-surveillance/tse-freedom-assurance-program/tse-surveillance-training/>

- submit a completed NSW DPI laboratory services [veterinary specimen advice submission form](#) and a Form TSE clinical history/post mortem report (available on [NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet](#), Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page) for each submission
- generate an invoice for each submission and email to tse.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au.
- advise the stock owner of how to submit a claim for an incentive payment for eligible animals
- advise owners of cattle and sheep who have not previously made a claim for a TSE incentive payment to complete and submit the [National TSE Surveillance Program – Registration form](#)

- enter all farm visits, laboratory results and advisory events into Livestock Health Management System (LHMS) as per 6. Records and information management and the [LHMS field guide](#).

Conflict of interest – the submitting veterinarian must not have an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the recipient of any payment arising from the NTSESP (e.g. a financial or family link to them); or must satisfy NSW DPI that a clinically consistent animal could not have been reasonably submitted by an alternative veterinarian without an actual or perceived conflict of interest. If the submitting veterinarian (private or government) has any queries regarding a potential conflict of interest, the veterinarian must contact the SRC to discuss the matter.

2. Compliance with the Australian Ruminant Feed Ban

2.1 Role of NSW Department of Primary Industries

The State NTSESP Coordinator:

- report to AHA annually on outcomes of compliance inspections and stock food testing as per the annual Australian Ruminant Feed Ban (ARFB) National Uniform Guidelines. This is stored in RM8
- compiles a monthly RAM stockfeed audit summary from the stockfeed compliance reports and forwards to NSW DPI compliance manager. This is stored in RM8
- when required, supply an independent report to AHA regarding the industry quality assurance audit
- informs manufacturers, retailers and end users of the results of any stock feed testing results
- coordinates investigations into ruminant exposure to RAM and applies appropriate device statuses according to the national uniform guidelines
- informs the Commonwealth of any confirmed cases where ruminants have consumed RAM via email within three working days of receiving confirmation from NSW DPI compliance report.

LLS authorised officers:

- undertake compliance investigations in cases of suspect RAM consumption by ruminants as per the guidelines for management of ruminant animals that have consumed restricted animal material.
- enter details of the investigation in LHMS as per 6. Records and information management and [LHMS field guide](#).

The Biosecurity and Food Safety compliance unit authorised officer will:

- undertake compliance inspections of annually scheduled audits, as per the current ARFB National Uniform Guidelines for stock feed manufacturers, retailers and end users
- undertake sampling and testing of domestically produced ruminant stock feeds as per the ARFB National Uniform Guidelines
- accompany periodic industry based quality assurance auditors on audits as per the ARFB National Uniform Guidelines
- record compliance events in LHMS as per Appendix Two and the [LHMS field guide](#) and emailed reports to tse.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- submit all stock feed samples collected for testing to Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory (BSL) Queensland with a completed form TSE NSW DPI Stock food sample collection (available on [NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet](#), Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page) and a [BSL Queensland specimen advice sheet: Form A](#). On the BSL Queensland specimen advice sheet in the box submitters email record tse.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au. Email a copy of these two forms to: tse.admin@dpi.nsw.gov.au prior to dispatch of samples.

3. Imported Animal Quarantine Surveillance Scheme

- the aim of this program is to prevent cattle imported from countries with reported cases of BSE from entering the human or animal food chain. Cattle imported from BSE affected countries have been ordered into permanent lifetime quarantine under the Commonwealth *Biosecurity Act 2015*. **The owners have been given specific instructions that these cattle are not to enter the human or animal food chains. The conditions of the quarantine can be found in** the national Imported Animal Quarantine & Surveillance Scheme (IAQSS) Operational Plan. This Plan is reviewed every 12 months
- these cattle must be identified by RFID and have an IM1 device status on the NLIS. The quarantine does not apply to progeny, reproductive material, milk or milk products collected from the cattle
- NSW DPI/LLS regularly monitors these animals to minimise the risk of the animals entering the human and animal food chains as per the IAQSS Operational Plan.

3.1 Role of Local Land Services

The LLS Veterinarian:

- advise the State TSE coordinator by email of all notification re details of movements of IAQSS animals from their LLS region
- advise the State TSE coordinator by email of details of transfer of ownership information of any IAQSS animal within three business days
- provide advice to new managers or owners of all IAQSS animals re their obligations as detailed in the current IAQSS operational plan and provide owners with the commonwealth IAQSS Information Sheet (available on [NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet](#), Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page)
- organise a prompt surveillance visit to assess and collect samples for TSE exclusion of any IAQSS animals reported to be showing nervous signs such as incoordination, stumbling, abnormal reflexes, tremors or change in temperament
- witness the euthanasia of IM1 status animals
- photograph the carcass and NLIS tag of all IAQSS animals reported to have died or been euthanased
- supervise the disposal of IAQS animals by burial or incineration
- submit a completed form TSE -declaration of death report (available on [NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet](#), Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page) with accompanying photographs of NLIS tag and carcass, to the State NTSESP Coordinator
- assess and report by the end of July every year to NTSESP Coordinator on the quarantined animal's wellbeing in the previous 12 months, using the form TSE annual report re monitoring of cattle from TSE countries (available on [NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet](#), Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page).
- record all advice and reports in LHMS as per 6. Records and information management and the [LHMS field guide](#).

3.2 Role of NSW DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety

The State NTSESP Coordinator:

- notify LLS of any IAQSS animals that move into their region within three business days
- report on the health status of all IAQSS animals in the previous 12 month period to AHA by the end of July
- ensure that the NLIS database is updated on death or movement of animals.

4. Definitions and acronyms

AHA	Animal Health Australia
ARFB	Australian Ruminant Feed Ban

BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
BSL	Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory
DPI	NSW Department of Primary Industries
IAQSS	Imported Animal Quarantine and Surveillance Scheme
LHMS	Livestock Health Management System
LLS	Local Land Services
NLIS	National Livestock Identification System
NTSESP	National Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Surveillance Program
RAM	Restricted animal material
RFID	radio frequency identification tag
TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy
TSEFAP	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Freedom Assurance Project

5. Documentation

Animal Health Australia: [TSE Freedom Assurance Project](#)

[ARFB National Uniform Guidelines 2016-2017](#)

[Bucks for Brains brochure](#)

[Biosecurity Sciences Laboratory specimen advice sheet: Form A](#)

[Form - TSE clinical history and post mortem report INT17/44836](#)

[Form - TSE Declaration of death of cattle imported from BSE countries- INT17/44832](#)

[Guidelines for management of ruminant animals that have consumed restricted animal material – INT17/59825](#)

[Imported Animal Quarantine & Surveillance Scheme 2016 – 2017 Operational Plan](#)

[Information sheet for owners of imported cattle INT17/61404](#) (available on NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet, Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page)

[Form - TSE annual report re monitoring of cattle from TSE countries INT17/59841](#)(available on NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet, Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page)

[National TSE Surveillance Program – Registration form – INT17/28993](#)

NSW DPI laboratory services [veterinary specimen advice submission form](#)

[NTSESP Field Guidelines 2016-2017](#) NTSESP Training Guide for Veterinarians and animal health officers

[Form - TSE stock food sample collection compliance INT17/61376](#) (available on NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment intranet, Biosecurity Act 2015 Forms landing page)

[TSE Sample Collection Training Video](#)

Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)

Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)

Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)

Policy -Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)

Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

6. Records and information management

Record all on-farm visits by LLS in LHMS as per below and as per the LHMS field guide.

6.1 Livestock Health Management System entry for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy surveillance by LLS

1. Select “diagnostic” event
2. In the “Program” bar select “TSE and surveillance”
3. In the “Differential diagnosis” bar, input “scrapie” or other species appropriate TSE, as a differential diagnosis, in addition to other differential diagnoses
4. Tick the “EAD” box under the “Notes to lab” bar
5. In the “Evidence based exclusions” box, include the appropriate TSE (e.g. scrapie for sheep) as a rule out
6. Attach the “Clinical history/post mortem report” form at the “Clinical exam” tab
7. Attach laboratory results on the “Lab tests” tab.

6.2 Livestock Health Management System entry for Australian Ruminant Feed Ban by B&FS compliance staff

1. Enter the Property identification code or non PIC contact
2. Select “Compliance” event
3. In “Program” bar select “TSE”
4. Select appropriate species
5. In “Method” bar select “RAM Inspection”
6. Complete “Compliance findings” section (if a breach is being investigated)
7. Attach scanned compliance report and stock food sample collection form and BSL specimen advice sheet (if applicable).

6.3 Livestock Health Management System entry for Imported Animal Quarantine & Surveillance Scheme activities

Annual health visits and deaths:

1. Select “Certification” event
2. In “Certification type” select “Health certificate”
3. In “Program” select “TSE”
4. Complete remainder of fields and specific notes
5. Attach any forms generated from the visit (e.g. TSE monitoring of cattle imported from BSE countries, TSE declaration of death of cattle imported from BSE countries, and photographs of carcase and ear tags).

Visits due to imported animal displaying neurological signs should be entered as a diagnostic event as per Appendix One.

Stock food audit reports stored in RM8

7. Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	01/07/2017	Substantially revised procedure in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare
2	19/07/19	Changed “Department of Industry” to “Department of Planning, Industry & Environment”	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare

8. Contact

Biosecurity NSW – General Enquires
1800 808 095
biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au