

Quarantine and Biosecurity Review Secretariat1. Incoming Aircraft Passenger Cards is Inadequate

During the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's I was a member of several Agricultural Consulting Missions in the Near East/North African Region. These missions were sponsored by the World Bank and other United Nation agencies and involved field work in 22 countries from Morocco to Pakistan and from Turkey to the Sudan and gave ample insight into farm, abattoir and market practices related to large livestock and poultry. My conclusion from these visits is that the question on Incoming Passenger Cards relating to farm visits is quite inadequate because exotic livestock diseases are easily contacted and transported in footwear worn on roads and streets in villages and towns especially in wet weather. The problem is aggravated by the habit of farmers sending ailing farm livestock for slaughter markets often have several continents of slush on floors - a potent source of disease.

While I always discarded working clothes including footwear before returning to Australia many travellers were observed with muddy footwear. This is a major hazard: footwear needs to be inspected and treated in the case of passengers from disease-risk countries.

2. Training of Australian Quarantine Officers

Over the years I have noted that Quarantine Inspectors were unaware of the widespread occurrence of exotic animal diseases in many countries of the Near East/North Africa which limited their questioning ability. However, perhaps this problem has, more recently, been rectified.

Edward S. Carter

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