

Submission relating to Biosecurity within Australia and borders

I would like to submit our concerns regarding the importation of Bees within Australia. We live in the Northern Territory and are currently running 500 hives with the hope of expanding our business to possibly 1500 hives within the next three years.

The reason for our concerns is the number of diseases that are currently not within our borders that affect bees and their hives and my husband and other beekeepers livelihoods. The diseases are as following:

- Small hive beetle
- American Foul Brood
- European Foul Brood

The beekeepers within the Territory met at Katherine Research Farm along with Brian Randunz (Chief Vet Officer) and Vicki Simlesa (Technical Officer, Crocodiles and Apiary Officer) in 2007 to discuss the pollination issues arising from two of the Territories biggest beekeepers now residing in Queensland.

After discussing this issue the beekeepers asked that the Government close our borders restricting the import of bees for pollination for a period of five years with a review to be held in three years to see how many hives are available for pollination at the end of this period.

In August 2007 Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Christopher Natt amended the Stock Diseases Act to read as the following:

- Under section 23(1) of the *Stock Diseases Act*, restrict, by imposing the conditions specified in the Schedule 1, the entry or importation into the Territory of the following:
 1. bees from state or Territory:
 2. Equipment, from a State or Territory, that has been used in connection with bees:
 3. Beeswax:
 4. Bee candy or bee-collected pollen

Under Schedule 1

Conditions relating to bees

2. It is a condition of the entry or importation into the Territory of bees from a State or Territory that the bees must be honeybees that are:

- (a) Hand picked queen bees or escorts; or
- (b) Package bees from Western Australia from a package bee supplier, accompanied by a certificate from an independent laboratory stating that, at the date of certification, honey tested negative for American foul brood and European foul brood.

3. It is a condition of the entry or importation in to Territory of equipment that has been used in connection with bees from a State or Territory that all parts of the equipment:
 - (i) that are metal – must be irradiated with 15 kilo Gray or steam cleaned to the satisfaction of an inspector; and
 - (ii) that are not metal – must be irradiated with 15 kilo Gray or dipped in hot was or caustic solution, in either case to the satisfaction of an inspector.
4. It is a condition of entry or importation into the Territory of beeswax from a State or Territory that, before entering the Territory, the beeswax must be heated to melting point.
 5. It is a condition of entry or importation into the Territory of bee candy or bee-collected pollen from a State or Territory that, before entering the Territory, the candy or pollen must be irradiated with 15 kilo Gray.

This amended act can be viewed in the Northern Territory Government Gazette No.G32, 8 August 2007.

However since this has been implemented Western Australia now has reported cases of both Small hive beetle and American Foul Brood. The beekeepers in the Northern Territory now have requested that the current act be changed to cease all bar the import of hand picked mated breeder queens and their escorts from Queensland with certificate of health signed to enable the Northern Territory beekeepers to remain free of these diseases.

If nothing is put in place for the protection of our bee industry and these diseases are allowed to enter the Territory the agricultural industry as well as our business will be threatened and possibly become non-existent.

I believe that the Territory and Local Governments are not held accountable even if it is within their responsibly to ensure that all animal and plant diseases do not enter our borders.

With regards and awaiting your response

Karen