

Submission by the International Meat Trade Association on the
Quarantine and Biosecurity Review

IMTA has been operating for over 100 years and represents mainly UK but also some non-UK companies that import and export meat. Our members account for an annual import trade in meat and meat products of over £800 million.

Many of our members have long established trading ties with Australian companies and we would like to import more beef and sheep meat from Australia. Part of our difficulty is the quota and duty systems operated by the EU and we continue to battle against this. However with beef the current HGP controls severely limit potential beef supplies out of Australia.

For a number of years, whenever we approach the EU authorities to discuss more flexibility in technical arrangements we find they are reluctant to consider any changes. They regard Australia's quarantine system as unreasonably restrictive, keeping out perfectly safe European products. We are then told that they await a relaxation in Australia's systems before they are willing to consider any help towards ensuring additional access for Australia product into the EU.

There are significant opportunities for Australia to increase business with our members both for beef and sheep meat, but whether we talk to market policy or veterinary personnel in the EU Commission, the response is always the same.

It is therefore imperative that Australia's quarantine systems facilitate imports as far as possible without creating undue risk of disease introduction and to consider the full range of measures to reduce risk to acceptable levels.

On our part we will continue to lobby the EU to take decisions based on sound science, linked to a realistic evaluation of risk.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to your review and are happy to respond to any queries you might have.
