



Proposed changes to management of chemicals used in export registered meat and meat products establishments.

Approval of chemicals, such as lubricants, sanitisers etc, is an activity that AQIS was drawn into in the early nineteen eighties following a number of residue detection incidents, some of which implicated chemicals used at export meat establishments. In response to overseas market concerns AQIS implemented control measures that involved AQIS approving chemicals used in export meat establishments. A legislative base for the approval of chemicals was implemented.

In 2005 following consultation with the export industry the legislative requirement for AQIS to approve chemicals was removed during the review of the Prescribed Goods (General) Orders. Thus the current Orders, the *Export Control (Prescribed Goods-General) Orders 2005* which commenced on 1 July 2005 do not provide for a legislated chemical approval process.

In the interim AQIS has continued to provide a service to the export meat industry by assessing applications for chemical approvals from the chemical suppliers on a fee for service basis. This process has provided a level of assurance to industry and overseas markets, and a measure of national consistency in the types of chemicals used on export meat establishments.

When approving chemicals, AQIS is reliant upon the attestations of the chemist making the application on behalf of the chemical company as to the chemicals fitness for purpose. Amongst other things AQIS then assesses the information provided regarding the labelling for directions for use and to identify if there are substances likely to have an adverse effect if used in areas where prescribed goods are prepared. eg. the inclusion of perfumes in hand soaps used in production areas.

The AQIS chemical approval system is no longer a market access requirement. Additionally AQIS does not issue letters of acceptance for food additives or processing aids as these are provided for in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

AQIS is proposing that the use of chemicals on export registered meat establishments be managed through an establishments Approved Arrangement (AA).

Under the AA the occupier of the establishment is responsible for ensuring compliance with Australia's export legislation which incorporates importing country requirements and the Australian Standard AS 4696:2002.

Sections 4 and 5 of Part 2 of the standard cover operational Hygiene and Cross Contamination respectively.

At a recent Export Meat Industry Advisory Council (EMIAC) meeting on, AQIS sought agreement to the proposal that AQIS withdraw from the chemical approval process and that the use of chemicals on export registered meat establishments be managed through each establishments Approved Arrangement and through assurances provided by chemical manufacturers. This was agreed to by EMIAC.

AQIS is proposing that suppliers of chemicals to the export meat industry provide assurances to the industry through the use of a "declaration" regarding a chemical's fitness for use for specific purposes on export meat establishments.

Industry will be aware that the Instruments of Approval (IOAs) or more recently Letters of Acceptance (LOAs) were issued for a period of 5 years after which they expire.

All IOAs and LOAs will remain in place until they expire.

AQIS will maintain the list of chemicals on the AQIS website and as the IOAs and LOAs expire they will be removed.

A date is yet to be set for this change over but AQIS anticipates that this may be achieved by the end of June 2011.