

Biosecurity Levy: Consultation – have your say before May 31st

April 2019

Consultation with the New Zealand Equine industry is open until the 31 May 2019 for feedback on the proposal for a Biosecurity Levy to allow the sector to meet readiness and response costs to any equine exotic disease under the Government Industry Agreement ([GIA](#)).

On behalf of the equine industry, the New Zealand Equine Health Association (NZEHA) has prepared an application for a levy under the Biosecurity Act 1993 to meet the industry obligation under the Equine GIA for Biosecurity Readiness and Response.

Details covering the composition, administration and management of a Biosecurity Levy are now available to members of the equine sector and the NZEHA needs your feedback.

The greatest threat to the equine sector is the introduction of a new equine pest or disease, such a biosecurity incursion could affect all horses. An incursion does not respect horse type or use boundaries. The New Zealand horse population enjoys an enviable status with respect to being free from diseases that are common around the world. However we import and export horses regularly. A recent review of factors resulting in equine disease events following international movement of horses and germplasm (semen and embryos) from 1995 to 2014, identified from the databases of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and international surveillance reports identified 54 disease events. Seven were contained in post arrival quarantine and the others resulted in the introduction of pathogens into importing countries. For 81% of the introductions, the OIE recommendations applicable to the diseases involved had not been complied with. Eighty-eight percent (36/41) of the regulated movements that resulted in introduction of pathogens into the importing country involved infected horses that showed no clinical signs at the time of import (asymptomatic carriers,

inapparent infection or horses incubating a particular infection)
The importation and exportation of horses is an activity that is undertaken across many sectors of equine activity. No sector is excluded from the market.

Those importing and exporting horses, semen and embryos (germplasm) will be the persons responsible for paying the levy. Owners who export equine germplasm and equines have gained benefit in terms of less disease, less cost and more movement flexibility for their horses arising from New Zealand's enhanced equine biosecurity. Those that import horses and germplasm are bringing relatively high risk items into the New Zealand equine biosecurity landscape so a small levy (in comparison to the cost of the animal or germplasm and the transportation costs) on risk exacerbators is not unreasonable.

The Biosecurity Act specifies that the application organization must state a maximum amount that could be levied and if the organization seeks to raise it above this amount then it must reapply to the Minister and any agreed change requires Cabinet approval. For this reason the NZEHA have set the maximum at a high rate in the hope that the order will not need review for decades to come. The actual rate charged can be set each year and can vary from zero to an amount below the maximum, as agreed by the industry based on their projected readiness and response budget.

The levy application document is available for reading at <https://nzeha.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/draft-levy-applicationnzeha09042019.pdf>.

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