



Review of biosecurity regulations: what it means for cattle

Cattle ticks

Queensland is the largest beef-producing state or territory in Australia, with approximately 12.2 million head, representing almost 50 per cent of Australia's total beef gross value in production each year. Cattle tick (*Rhipicephalus (Boophilus) microplus*) is regarded as a significant economic pest of the Queensland cattle industry because of its parasitic nature and transmission of diseases. This parasitic pest has been endemic in Queensland since the 1890s.

Cattle tick has a range of hosts, including cattle, buffalo, deer (primary host species), horses, sheep, goats and alpacas (secondary host species). Cattle tick prefer to inhabit areas with an annual rainfall above 500 mm and usually does not thrive in areas with an annual rainfall below 500 mm. This climactic preference creates a natural tick line between areas with an annual rainfall above 500 mm and areas with lower than 500 mm. The movement of cattle around Queensland is subject to restrictions contained in the Stock (Cattle Tick) Notice 2005 (the Notice). The Notice prescribes a tick line, which creates a boundary largely between the tick-infested and -free areas, with movement restrictions between the two areas.

The primary aim of biosecurity management for cattle tick in Queensland is to maintain the tick-free area.

A new Act for improved biosecurity

A new Biosecurity Act for Queensland must commence no later than 1 July 2016, but planning is underway to have it commence by the end of 2015. The *Biosecurity Act 2014* (the Act) will replace six existing Acts, and significant parts of three other Acts that contain obsolete and obscure provisions, and overlapping and inconsistent approaches to biosecurity.

The Government is more committed than ever to biosecurity in Queensland and wishes to better target its efforts. The new Biosecurity Act makes it clear that biosecurity is everybody's business, and introduces the General Biosecurity Obligation; which means that everyone in the community must take reasonable steps to prevent or minimise biosecurity risks. This obligation will also simplify the legislation. Everyone must prevent or minimise the risks posed by cattle ticks so it will not be necessary to maintain some of the current prescriptive requirements for doing this.

Before commencement of the Act, the current subordinate legislation (lower-level laws made under the current Acts) will need to be reviewed and recast under the framework provided by the new Act. As part of this review, the government is considering the regulation for cattle tick under the Stock (Cattle Tick) Notice 2005.

An initial review of the provisions relating to cattle tick has been completed. The provisions have been categorised as suitable for considering regulatory or non-regulatory approaches.

Property registration

The new Act will maintain the provisions contained in the Stock Identification Regulation 2005, which require mandatory registration of properties (referred to as 'registrable entities' under the Biosecurity Act) where a threshold number of livestock are kept. The threshold number includes one or more buffalo, bison, bee hives, cattle, deer, goats, members of the camel family (e.g. alpacas, Arabian camels and llamas), members of the family *Equidae* (e.g. horses, ponies, donkeys, mules and zebras), pigs or sheep, or 100 or more poultry or other captive birds.

Have your say

A Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) has been released for public comment. You are invited to comment on alternative options for managing cattle ticks, and on the distribution of public and private benefits of property registration.

The RIS proposes three options for a property registration fee. These three approaches weigh the public and private benefits of the proposed property registration system.

Cattle tick

Listed below are the proposed options for managing cattle tick. We would like to hear from you on your preferred option.

Options for managing cattle tick:

The RIS considers three options for the future management of cattle tick:

- **Option 1** is to maintain the current provisions.
- **Option 2** is to create two biosecurity zones (infested and free), with movement restrictions on host species travelling from the infested area to the free area based on risk of spread.
- **Option 3** is to rely on the general biosecurity obligation.

Property registration

We would like to hear your preference for a fee for property registration.

Options for a property registration fee:

Currently no fee is charged for property registration in Queensland. The RIS considers three options for a property registration fee:

- **Option 1** is to continue to provide property registration services without charging a fee (the fee would be set at \$0).
- **Option 2** is to introduce a fee for property registration based on the full cost of providing the service (the fee would be based at \$357.55 for 3 years).
- **Option 3** to introduce a fee for property registration that recognises both public and private benefits are derived from property registration and, as such, a fee should be subsidised at 66 per cent (the fee would be \$119.20 for 3 years)
 - Options 2 and 3 will only apply to those who meet the Australian Taxation Office ruling of carrying out the business of primary production.

How to have your say

To provide comment on the options listed, or for more information about them and proposed regulation for other biosecurity risks, including banana pests, bees, mango pests and fees:

Visit: www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au

Contact: Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or email BiosecurityAct@daff.qld.gov.au