



Submission No 84

Review of Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

Organisation: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry -
Answers to Questions on Notice

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND
TRADE

Reference: Australia's relationship with the countries of Africa

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Supplementary Questions

Role of AQIS

1. The submission from the Kenyan High Commission states (Sub. 25, p. 2):

... there is need for the Australian government to ensure that the functions of [AQIS], though critical in protecting the boundaries of Australia, do not constitute barriers to trade. There is potential for AQIS to collaborate with approved organisations in Africa, such as the internationally accredited Kenya Plant Health Inspection Services to conduct a pre-shipment inspection and other phyto-sanitary services for consignments destined for Australia so as to reduce the delays at Australian ports and thus causing loss of business.

- Would you respond to the implication that the activities of AQIS constitute a barrier to trade?
- Would you respond to the suggestion that the Kenya quarantine service could undertake pre-shipment quarantine inspections of consignments destined for Australia?
- Would you brief the Committee on the discussions you have had with the Kenya quarantine service on this matter?
- Are there opportunities for the accredited quarantine inspection services of other African countries to conduct pre-shipment inspection of consignments destined for Australia? If yes, would you brief the Committee on any negotiations with those countries?

Answers:

Q1

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's Biosecurity Services Group (BSG), which includes the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS), ensures that import procedures do not constitute an unnecessary barrier to trade by developing import conditions based on science, and in line with Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP). This approach is consistent with the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).

Australia is transparent in undertaking risk analyses and developing and implementing quarantine policy, for example, through its regulated import risk analysis process. Australia complies with the WTO framework for developing import conditions and implementing quarantine requirements.

Q2

There are currently 38 Kenyan organisations approved by AQIS to undertake pre-shipment treatment and inspection for exports of Kenyan cut flowers to Australia.

Q3

AQIS is working with the Kenyan quarantine service (KEPHIS) to progress accreditation requests from additional Kenyan companies to undertake pre-shipment devitalisation on roses and other propagatable flowers for export to Australia.

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Q4

BSG develops biosecurity and quarantine policy, and establishes risk management measures, including pre-border aspects such as pre-export inspection.

AQIS approves organisations in other countries to conduct pre-shipment inspection, as in the case of Kenya. However, before approval is granted, AQIS must complete a risk assessment of the organisation's ability to deliver a pre-shipment inspection system that meets the biosecurity and quarantine outcomes required by Australia. The risk assessment includes a review of the exporting country's competent authority.

AQIS has also accredited companies in other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ethiopia and Tanzania, to undertake pre-shipment devitalisation. Australian requirements for pre-shipment devitalisation treatment and phytosanitary certification requirements under these arrangements, including for African countries, are listed on the AQIS website at www.aqis.gov.au/ICON.