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## Pork IRA must be withdrawn

Yesterday's announcement by the Australian Government withdrawing the draft import risk analysis for apples has prompted the pork industry's national representative body, Australian Pork Limited (APL), to call for the immediate withdrawal of the new quarantine standard for imported pork.

APL Deputy Chairman Nigel Smith says the new quarantine standard for imported pork, which was adopted by the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine on 10 May, is based on the same flawed processes Biosecurity Australia (BA) exhibited with bananas and apples.

"We have said all along that the pigmeat IRA is a fundamentally flawed document. On 13 May, the all party Senate Rural and Regional Affairs Committee vindicated our concerns and recommended the new quarantine regime for imported pigmeat be withdrawn on the basis of inadequate methodology, as well as inadequate risk assessment and risk management strategies.

"It seems only logical in the circumstances that the pigmeat IRA should be withdrawn as well," Mr Smith said.

"We also have significant concerns that the Department is actively preventing proper public scrutiny of its actions. While lawyers for the Director of Quarantine have provided APL's lawyers with copies of BA's spreadsheets and associated verification, the Department has insisted that APL not refer to the contents of those documents except in Court."

"Back in March, the IRA Appeals Panel called for the spreadsheets to be made publicly available. APL has twice written to BA requesting the urgent release of these spreadsheets. Here we are five months later and BA and the Director of Quarantine are still saying no. Why?

"I cannot understand the need for all the secrecy. This whole process is meant to be transparent. Surely if you're doing everything right then you have nothing to hide.

"APL has demonstrated that the final pigmeat IRA is dangerously deficient with independent modelling by CSIRO showing it gives rise to a 95-99 per cent likelihood of exotic disease outbreak within the next ten years.

"If Australia's quarantine regime is to maintain any credibility at all, then there must be consistency in its application. Australian pig farmers should not have to go to Court to fight against a decision which is every bit as flawed as the draft IRA for apples," Mr Smith said.

# Media Release



“If the Government is concerned about getting quarantine right for one Australian agricultural industry, it should get it right for them all.

“The Government has done the right thing in withdrawing the draft IRA for apples. It now needs to do the right thing by the pig industry. The health of Australia’s pig herd and Australia’s \$2.6 billion pork industry deserves the same degree of protection,” Mr Smith said.

*ENDS*

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