

Requirements for Processing of Donkeys for Export

Background

Large populations of feral (undomesticated) donkeys are located on pastoral leases and aboriginal land trust lands in central and northern Australia. They are considered a pest by pastoralists and have been harvested for pet meat. Over recent years there has been interest in utilising hides and meat for both human consumption and other non-edible products.

In the Northern Territory (NT), donkeys and related species are gazetted as livestock under the NT *Livestock Act and Regulations* and there are legislative requirements for capturing, farming and transporting these animals.

The following guidelines are provided following consultation with Department of Agriculture Water Resources (DAWR):

Domestic Sector

There is currently no domestic market for donkey meat or hides in Australia.

Export Sector

The export sector is regulated by the Australian Government under the *Export Control Act and Regulations*. DAWR are tasked under this legislation to enforce Importing Country Requirements (ICR) and Australian Standards (AS). DAWR Area Technical Managers are best able to advise on export protocols however the following information is a guide to the requirements.

Non-edible Hides (Non Prescribed Product)

Hides from donkeys for the production of non-edible products may be field shot, with hides salted and folded and exported as non-prescribed product following the issue of an import permit from the importing country. DAWR will issue without inspection a modified health certificate via the Export Documentation System (EXDOC) which indicates that Australia is free of exotic and notifiable diseases outlined by the importing country for a specified period. Prior to shipment the skins must be free of extraneous matter including offal. All meat derived by this type of production is considered unhygienic and unfit for human consumption and cannot be sold domestically or exported.

Skins and Meat for Human Consumption

Hides and meat intended for human consumption, i.e. for the production of Ejiao, must be derived from animals slaughtered in a DAWR listed Tier 2 abattoir. Tier 2 abattoirs are export facilities which are listed for unrestricted export of meat and meat products. These facilities must have an Approved Arrangement Food Safety program and a veterinarian onsite at all times when processing is occurring.

A protocol with the People's Republic of China which allowed for the importing and sale of hides from Australia for human consumption previously existed but lapsed and would need to be reinstated. The process could take quite some time and needs to be initiated by Chinese authorities.

No protocol currently exists for the export of donkey meat to China from Australia. This is a major process and would take considerable intergovernmental negotiation, would likely take a long time period and would require an inspection of the slaughter facility by China authorities prior to being accepted.

It would be necessary to construct a new abattoir in the NT if production of hides and/or meat for human consumption is considered as a feasible export option. Old or existing facilities in the NT would be unlikely to gain this listing as most would contain a large amount of wood and possibly asbestos which would require significant upgrade. Refrigeration technology in these existing facilities would also likely be outdated and expensive to operate.

All abattoir facilities developed in the Northern Territory will need to comply with land zoning and environmental legislation. It is recommended that contact is made with the NT Environmental Protection Authority to gain an understanding of the processing and waste management requirements and the application and approvals processes required to operate. Please refer to: www.ntepa.nt.gov.au.

It is recommended that a DAWR Field Operations Manager be contacted to seek technical assistance and protocol advice. Contact details:

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Further details can also be obtained from:

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