

# Biosecurity - Heavy Metal Contamination in Fertilisers, Liming Materials and Trace Elements

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CATEGORY: Operations and Industry	REVIEW DATE: 01/07/2018

## 1. Purpose

This policy describes how the NSW Government will manage the risks posed to the economy, environment and community of NSW by heavy metals in fertilisers, liming materials and trace element products. Heavy metals may result in contamination of the environment and are potentially harmful to the health of humans, animals and ecosystems.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to the staff of NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), an office within the NSW Department of industry, and Local Land Services (LLS) in their roles as authorised officers as described under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act).

For the purpose of this policy, the maximum concentrations permitted for heavy metal contaminants are as specified in:

- Biosecurity Regulation 2017 (the Regulation) - clause 39 (link to be included when available).
- Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code - schedule 19 - maximum levels of contaminants and natural toxicants (<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016C00197>).

Requirements for the labelling of parcels are contained within clause 40 of the Regulation.

## 3. Outcomes

### 3.1 NSW manages chemical contaminant threats to biosecurity through consistent, robust and systematic decision-making processes.

- a. NSW DPI actively contributes to international and national programs and agreements. These ensure international market access and optimal plant health, animal health and environmental health through the prevention of heavy metals contaminating livestock, livestock products, plant products and the environment.

#### Activities

- NSW DPI has endorsed the *National Code of Practice for Fertilizer Description and Labelling*; parcel labelling requirements are contained within clause 40 of the Regulation (3.1a)
- NSW DPI will represent NSW on the Australian Agriculture Senior Officials Committee, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Task Group and working groups that sit under the Task Group (3.1a)
- NSW DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety Chemical Residues Coordinator and State Coordinator for Veterinary Chemicals will represent NSW on the National Residue

Committee, the National Registration Scheme and to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (3.1a).

### **3.2 NSW DPI and LLS activities minimise the risk of contamination by cadmium, mercury and lead of food-producing animals, animal and plant food commodities, and the environment in NSW.**

- a. Australian agricultural industries benefit from maintained optimal market access for food and fibre
- b. NSW fertiliser, liming materials and trace element manufacturers benefit from maintained optimal market access
- c. The Australian community benefits from an environment free of cadmium, mercury and lead contamination due to the use of fertiliser, liming materials, and trace element products
- d. Consumers will have confidence that food commodities produced in NSW meet national food standards 1.4.1 (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>).

#### **Activities**

- The State Residue Coordinator from NSW DPI coordinates the investigation of contaminants identified in NSW food producing animals and animal food commodities, in collaboration with the National Residue Survey and LLS (<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/food/nrs/about-residues-and-residue-testing#residue-testing-programs>) (3.2a)(3.2c)
- NSW DPI and LLS staff investigate contaminants identified in the field and liaise with the State Residue Coordinator as per the procedure for chemically affected food producing animals and animal food commodities (3.2a)(3.2c)
- NSW DPI and LLS maintains accurate, up-to-date records of chemically affected animals, in accordance with the procedure for animal surveillance (3.2a)(3.2c)
- NSW DPI investigates reports of non-compliance with fertiliser regulations (3.2b)
- NSW DPI works with the Environment Protection Authority to ensure that legislation relating to recycled and waste products approved for use on agricultural land under the *Protection Of Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014* that meets the definition of fertiliser, liming material or trace element product complies with biosecurity best practice (3.2b)(3.2c)(3.2d).

### **3.3 Stakeholders are empowered to undertake best practice plant and animal biosecurity practices**

- a. Stakeholders understand their obligations to prevent, eliminate or minimise the risk of contamination by cadmium, mercury or lead from the use of fertiliser, liming materials or trace element products in food producing animals, plant and animal food commodities and the environment.

#### **Activities**

- NSW DPI and LLS provides advice and creates advisory material for stakeholders about their obligations to minimise the risk of contamination by cadmium, mercury or lead from the use of fertiliser, liming materials or trace element products in food producing animals, plant and animal food commodities and the environment (3.3a).

## **4. Related Procedures**

Procedure - Contaminants in food producing animals and animal food commodities

Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Procedure - Lead affected food-producing animals

Procedure - Identifying and investigating heavy metal contamination of fertiliser, liming materials and trace element products above prescribed limits

## 5. Definitions and acronyms

DPI Department of Primary Industries  
LLS Local Land Services  
NRS National Residue Survey

## 6. Legislation

*NSW Biosecurity Act 2015*

NSW Biosecurity Regulation 2017

*Local Land Services Act 2013*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

*Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (New South Wales) Act 1994*

*Food Act 2003*

*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

## 7. Other Related Documents

National Code of Practice for Fertiliser Description and Labelling  
Australian Code of Good Manufacturing Practice for the Feed Milling Industry  
List related documents not covered above (e.g. State plans, guidelines)  
Work Health and Safety Policy (IND-P-185)  
Code of Conduct Policy (IND-P-184)  
Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)  
Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)  
Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)  
Policy - Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)  
Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

## 8. Revision History

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	01/07/2017	New policy developed in response to the <i>Biosecurity Act 2015</i> .	Technical Specialist Farm Chemicals

## 9. Contact

Technical Specialist Farm Chemicals  
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