

# Customs and AQIS working together—foot and mouth disease protection

The dreadful and tragic results of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Britain has seen a boosted Australian effort to stop the spread of it to this country.

Customs and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service have been working closely together since the first outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Britain. Customs is providing every possible assistance to Quarantine, offering all available resources at its disposal.

At the time of this issue going to press additional support to Quarantine by Customs include:

- questioning arriving travellers at the entry control point and while waiting for their baggage, about their possible exposure to the disease;
- referring those of possible interest to Quarantine for further action;
- staff to assist with marshalling duties and examination of baggage for possibly contaminated items;
- providing departing Australians with information on the disease and precautions to be taken on their return;
- assistance with targeting of high risk cargo;
- increased surveillance of containers on the wharf and assistance with examination of any containers identified as requiring cleaning;
- identification of vessels and crew that have recently travelled to countries deemed to be "at risk";
- providing X-ray equipment to increase Quarantine's capacity to screen goods;
- referring any mail from risk countries to Quarantine for inspection.

Customs is aware that the additional screening measures put in place cause some delays. However, along with government, the public and industry bodies, the measures are seen as absolutely necessary in the face of the threat posed if foot and mouth were to spread to Australia.



Quarantine officer Danielle Brady and Customs officer Alina Griffiths side-by-side at the border checking for items possibly exposed to foot and mouth disease.