Disease control legislation

The two main legislations that relate to animal disease control are:

- Animal Research Act 1985
- Exotic Diseases of Animals Act 1991
- Quarantine Act 1908
- Stock Diseases Act 1923.

All Acts are relevant to your work in the animal industry, whichever animal workplace you choose to work in. It is important to be aware of them and how to apply them to your work.

**Quarantine Act 1908**

The *Quarantine Act 1908* sets restrictions on, and quarantine periods for, the movement of animals and plants, and their products, into and out of Australia. Some animals and some products cannot be brought into the country at all while others need to be quarantined first.

The Act is relevant for all animal care workers because:

- they may be asked questions by clients about importing or exporting animals or animal products.
- it is essential that up to date information be obtained prior to giving any advice, because the disease status of countries can change, resulting in overnight changes in quarantine requirements. Failure to follow the correct procedure can result in the euthanasia of animals.
- they need to notify any suspected breaches of the Act.

**Exotic Diseases of Animals Act 1991**

The purpose of the *Exotic Diseases of Animals Act in 1991* is to help to keep certain exotic diseases out of Australia. It is concerned with the movement of plant and animal materials, including live animals and their products, into Australia. The Act has determined which diseases are considered to be of greatest risk to Australia and provides for contingency plans for dealing with an outbreak.
Animal care workers need to:

- always consider the possibility of an exotic disease occurring
- where necessary, be involved in disease control measures if an exotic disease outbreak does occur
- be involved in discussing the control measures with clients
- encourage compliance with the Act and notify authorities if any breaches of the Act are suspected.

**Stock Diseases Act 1923**

The *Stock Diseases Act 1923* is concerned with the responsibility of stock owners to look after their animals and have them cared for if they are ill. It also puts responsibility on veterinarians to notify the relevant government authorities if certain diseases occur or are suspected.

Animal workers need to be aware of this Act because they may be working in rural practices where they may:

- be handling phone calls from stockowners
- need to be aware of possible notifiable diseases
- be involved in sample collection and testing for various diseases.

**Rural Lands Protection Act 1998**

The *Rural Lands Protection Act 1998* is concerned with agricultural districts and the control of stock, pests and diseases in those areas, including things like weeds. It is also concerned with movements of stock and agricultural machinery in and out of the area.

Animal care workers need to be aware of this Act because many work in rural areas and must be aware that restrictions apply to moving stock. They may be involved in local disease control measures.