

QUARANTINE DURING THE COURSE OF IMPORTATIONS FROM OVERSEAS INTO SOUTH AUSTRALIA 1872–1929

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The annual reports of C.J. Valentine, who was Chief Inspector of Sheep from 1865, and then after 1888, Chief Inspector of Stock until 1905, are available from 1874 onwards. Valentine's reports contain the detailed records of the Intercolonial Stock Conferences held in 1874 (Sydney), 1886 (Sydney), 1889 (Melbourne) and 1892 (Wellington, New Zealand).

They also contain numerous references to quarantine problems and procedures, unilateral action by one or other of the colonies and the diseases present in other countries and their effect on stock imports. The records of importation of animals are such that one can only wonder at the good fortune responsible for the absence of other serious diseases than pleuro-pneumonia from Australian flocks and herds. It is only possible to include a general review and a few highlights in this article.

The first available record is in the *Adelaide Advertiser* dated 14 August 1872 which read 'the Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Surveyor-General and the Chief Inspector of Sheep and others visited various spots on Torrens Island with a view to fixing a suitable place for a cattle quarantine station'.

A severe epidemic of foot and mouth disease in Europe including Great Britain and reference to pleuro-pneumonia, swine fever and small pox in sheep in Turkey appears to have led to a prohibition of imports of stock except horses (and dogs) from 1872 until 1879. Reference was made to the prohibition against stock from Great Britain, Canada and the United States of America being removed as from 9 July 1879.

Torrens Island, although used in 1879 for the first time for the quarantine of 23 pure Shorthorn cattle, four Lincoln sheep and four Berkshire pigs for 90 days, was not ready when the stock arrived and temporary accommodation was arranged.

Valentine stated 'some slight additions would improve the arrangements and make it more complete ... water might be laid on from the well to the yards, and a short jetty to allow of landing and shipping stock at high or low water, and also for landing fodder'.

In 1881 five Shorthorn cattle and eight Berkshire pigs were imported from England, but in 1882 further imports were prohibited due to another epidemic of foot and mouth disease in the United Kingdom.

The prohibition appears to have continued until 1889 when the record shows 11 sheep and four cattle were imported. In the meantime, pigs were introduced from New Zealand, sheep from India, antelopes and wild hogs from Ceylon[now Sri Lanka], elephants from Siam [now Thailand], horses from Port Said and India and over 1000 camels from India.

The importation of camels appeared to have started some time prior to 1866 as the report for 1884 states 'In 1866 after one or two attempts, camels were first landed in any number in South Australia ... 109 were landed'. Mange or scabies was rife and the report states that only 62 were left alive. In 1884 a further 661 were imported and importations continued each year. In

view of the prohibition on cattle, sheep and pigs from England because of foot and mouth disease, the following abstract relating to camels from the 1884 report is strange reading:

The fact however that great losses have been sustained in India from foot and mouth disease and from tuberculosis has rendered it necessary as a protection to the now very important interest that the importation should be regulated to prevent any being landed suffering from either of these diseases ... and that any suffering from foot and mouth disease should be destroyed at the port. Regulations to this effect were published in the *Gazette* on 18th of last December (1883).

Later reports refer to a 90-day quarantine period for camels.

There is no direct reference to the first importation of ostriches but the report for 1883 states 'It is only a short time since a few birds were imported into the province'.

The report for that year also includes the first reference to the control of importation of dogs:

In consequence of representations from the New South Wales Government, suggesting that united action might be taken in prohibiting the importation of dogs into the Australian colonies to prevent the importation of hydrophobia, enquiries were made, and it is considered advisable to join the other colonies in prohibiting dogs, except under quarantine from all places beyond the Australian colonies and New Zealand, and action was taken to frame regulations under the *Public Health Act*. The orders provided for notice on arrival of a vessel with dogs in South Australian ports being given to inspectors and all dogs required to be examined by a veterinary surgeon; if they are healthy, they may be removed into quarantine on Torrens Island for a term of six months; ships' dogs are allowed to remain on board and vessel but must be carefully secured and no dogs allowed on board any vessel from land except under liability of being destroyed. All dogs arriving diseased will be destroyed; the term and expense of quarantine being long and heavy, none but valuable dogs are likely to be imported ... The master of one vessel was fined £5 for not giving notice as required.

At Port Adelaide four dogs were destroyed by owners rather than pay the examination fee and one was placed in quarantine. The report went on to say:

Not having an inspector constantly attending to duties in Port Adelaide, the regulations regarding dogs allowed to be kept on vessels whilst staying in port are not, I am afraid, strictly carried out and the question arises whether it would not be better to destroy all dogs arriving in Port Adelaide unless they are removed to quarantine.

In 1889 Valentine again referred to dogs on ships and stated:

The arrangements for dogs arriving in ports and not intended to be landed are not altogether satisfactory, as they are only noted by Customs Officers, who have other duties to perform. The system requiring a bond from the Captain as at present in force in Victoria will, if adopted here, be of considerable advantage and give a little more protection. The absence of rabies in the colonies has a tendency to cause people to think the restrictions uncalled for and too strict.

The reports indicate that Western Australia did not join in with other colonies entirely, as in 1889 Valentine's list of imports included five Berkshire pigs 'which were admitted through Western Australia after performing quarantine in that colony; the prohibition having been evaded by this means, stock from Western Australia not being prohibited'.

In 1890 he reported that 'as Western Australia has not joined with other colonies in the prohibition and quarantine of foreign stock, all stock are now prohibited from being introduced from the colony into this province'.

The term 'Clean Australasian Vessel' appears to have followed the Australasian Stock Conference held in Melbourne in 1889 and was repeated again at the conference in Wellington New Zealand in 1892. At the conference, conditions were agreed to for the movement of stock between clean colonies, including New Zealand, provided they were carried on vessels that have had no stock on board within the preceding three months other than from a clean Australasian colony.

The periods for which imported stock should be quarantined varied considerably over the years. The conference of 1874 agreed to a period of 50 days at least with the proviso that:

on the expiry of the existing prohibition (on the importation of sheep cattle and pigs) it is again renewed and maintained until it is ascertained that no foot and mouth disease, rinderpest nor sheep pox, nor any infectious or contagious disease in stock not known in Australia, exists in Great Britain and Ireland.

Those animals that arrived in 1879 were quarantined for 90 days.

The 1886 conference in Sydney, which agreed to remove the prohibition on the imports of cattle and sheep following separate action by the governments of Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, agreed to quarantine periods of 120 days for cattle, 90 days for sheep and 6 months for dogs. All sheep and cattle had to be shipped from the port of London.

The conference held in Melbourne in 1889 recommended that 'the quarantine for several animals shall date from the date of landing and shall be as follows: horses 14 days, cattle including buffalo 60 days, sheep 90 days, camels 90 days, goats, deer llamas antelopes and any other ruminant 60 days dogs 6 months'. Swine were prohibited. All foreign sheep were to receive two or more dressings with tobacco and sulphur or lime with sulphur. That conference also resolved that all animals and things should be prohibited except cattle and sheep from Great Britain and Ireland, unless they had been 14 days in those countries, ruminants such as goats, deer etc. from all countries unless for a zoological society; and all fodder and litter with which foreign animals had been in contact and from any foreign vessel. Horses, camels and dogs were permitted from any country. Glasgow was included as a port for shipment.

The 1892 conference in Wellington, New Zealand repeated the above resolutions but reduced the period for sheep to 60 days and included swine which were also quarantined for 60 days.

In 1899 it was reported the term of quarantine on sheep and swine from Great Britain had been reduced to 30 days, but 'special introduction of stock from beyond Great Britain is allowed with quarantine for 60 days'.

From 1899 on, the reports on importation of stock from overseas other than to list those animals introduced contain no items of interest until 1915 when it is recorded that:

owing to the presence of foot and mouth disease in England, and the war, no stock were imported. During the year, the Quarantine Regulations were amended and strengthened, further safeguarding against the introduction of disease. A firm step was taken inasmuch that performing animals from other parts of the world are to remain in permanent quarantine during their sojourns in the Commonwealth.

As a finale, the quarantine report for 1929 is reproduced in full:

Work carried out for the Commonwealth under the Quarantine Act 1929

Stock: Seven horses, two dogs and five pigs were quarantined as prescribed by the Quarantine Regulations at Torrens Island.

Imported by Zoological Gardens: One tiger, six bears, two monkeys, three deer, two peccaries, two tortoises, two ducks, two geese, 43 birds.

Other importations: One cat, 50 fowls, 41 pigeons, 233 finches, 33 canaries, 14 parrots, 820 waxbills, 90 lovebirds, 14 small birds, 20 water lizards

Animal Products: Inspected – 851 hides, 16,005 furred skins, 200 fox tails, three parcels ostrich feathers, one box natural history specimens

Other importations: 290 tons 7 cwt 2 qrs blood and bone manures, 446 bales wool, 40 bags milk minerals, one case horse medicines halters and ropes, six bundles of chains, two bags of buckets, one bag of forks, 5 snaffle-bits.

Theatres Licenses under the Commonwealth Quarantine Act: The following premises are licensed for the purpose of accommodation of animals for performing and zoological purposes: Zoological Gardens, Theatre Royal, West's Olympia, Regent Theatre, York Theatre and Majestic Theatre.