

Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission  
Report

New

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CHAPTER 2.3.X.

**MILKY HAEMOLYMPH DISEASE OF SPINY  
LOBSTERS**

Article 2.3.X.1.

For the purposes of the *Aquatic Code*, milky haemolymph disease of spiny lobsters (*Panulirus* spp.) (MHD) means *infection* with an unclassified rickettsial-like bacteria.

Methods for conducting surveillance and diagnosis of MHD are provided in the *Aquatic Manual* (under development).

Article 2.3.X.2.

**Scope**

The recommendations in this Chapter apply to: tropical spiny lobsters in the genus *Panulirus* spp., especially *Panulirus ornatus*, *P. homarus* and *P. simpsoni*. Common names for these and other potential *susceptible species* are listed in the *Aquatic Manual*. These recommendations also apply to any other *susceptible species* referred to in the *Aquatic Manual* when traded internationally.

For the purposes of this Chapter, the terms shrimp and prawn are used interchangeably.

Article 2.3.X.3.

**Commodities**

1. When authorising the importation or transit of the following *commodities*, the *Competent Authorities* should not require any MHD related conditions, regardless of the MHD status of the *exporting country*, *zone* or *compartment*.
  - a) For the species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. intended for any purpose:
    - i) *commodities* treated in a manner that inactivates the *disease agent* e.g. boiled, canned or pasteurized products and some ready-to-eat meals; and crustacean oil and crustacean *meal* intended for use in *feed*;

- ii) chemically extracted chitin;
  - iii) crustacean products made non-infectious through processing as dry *feed* (e.g. pelleted or extruded *feed*);
  - iv) biological samples preserved for diagnostic applications in such a manner as to inactivate the *disease agent*.
- b) [The following products destined for human consumption from species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. which have been prepared and packaged for direct retail trade:

For the *commodities* listed in point 1b), Members may wish to consider introducing internal measures to prevent the *commodity* being used for any purpose other than for human consumption (under study)].

2. When authorising the importation or transit of the *commodities* of a species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2., other than those listed in point 1 of Article 2.3.X.3., the *Competent Authorities* should require the conditions prescribed in Articles 2.3.X.7. to 2.3.X.11. relevant to the MHD status of the *exporting country, zone or compartment*.
3. When considering the importation/transit from an *exporting country, zone or compartment* not declared free of MHD of a *commodity* of a species not covered in Article 2.3.X.2. but which could reasonably be expected to be a potential mechanical vector for MHD, the *Competent Authorities* should conduct a *risk analysis* in accordance with the recommendations in the *Aquatic Code*. The *exporting country* should be informed of the outcome of this assessment.

#### Article 2.3.X.4.

### **Milky haemolymph disease free country**

A country may make a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD if it meets the conditions in points 1, 2, 3 or 4 below.

If a country shares a *zone* with one or more other countries, it can only make a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD if all the areas covered by the shared water are declared MHD free countries or *zones* (see Article 2.3.X.5.).

1. A country where none of the *susceptible species* referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. is present may make a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD when *basic biosecurity conditions* have been continuously met in the country for at least the past 2 years.

OR

2. A country where the *susceptible species* referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. are present but there has been no observed occurrence of the *disease* for at least the past 10 years despite conditions that are conducive to its clinical expression, as described in Chapter X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*, may make a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD when *basic biosecurity conditions* have been continuously met in the country for at least the past 2 years.

OR

3. A country where the last observed occurrence of the *disease* was within the past 10 years or where the *infection* status prior to *targeted surveillance* was unknown (e.g. because of the absence of conditions conducive to its clinical expression as described in Chapter X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*) may make a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD when:
  - a) *basic biosecurity conditions* have been continuously met for at least the past 2 years; and
  - b) *targeted surveillance*, as described in Chapters 3.3.1. of the *Aquatic Code* and X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*, has been in place for at least the last 2 years without detection of the bacterial agent of MHD.

OR

4. A country that has previously made a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD but in which the *disease* is subsequently detected may make a *self-declaration of freedom* from MHD again when the following conditions have been met:
  - a) on detection of the *disease*, the affected area was declared an *infected zone* and a *buffer zone* was established; and
  - b) infected populations have been destroyed or removed from the *infected zone* by means that minimize the *risk* of further spread of the *disease*, and the appropriate *disinfection* procedures (see *Aquatic Manual*) have been completed; and
  - c) *targeted surveillance*, as described in Chapters 3.3.1. of the *Aquatic Code* and X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*, has been in place for at least the past 2 years without detection of the agent of MHD; and
  - d) previously existing *basic biosecurity conditions* have been reviewed and modified as necessary and have continuously been in place for at least the past 2 years.

In the meantime, part of the non-affected area may be declared a free *zone* provided that such part meets the conditions in point 3 of Article 2.3.X.5.

Article 2.3.X.5.

### **Milky haemolymph disease free zone or free compartment**

A *zone* or *compartment* within the territory of one or more countries not declared free from MHD may be declared free by the *Competent Authority(ies)* of the country(ies) concerned if the *zone* or *compartment* meets the conditions referred to in points 1, 2, 3 or 4 below.

If a *zone* or *compartment* extends over more than one country, it can only be declared an MHD free *zone* or *compartment* if all the relevant *Competent Authority(ies)* confirm that the conditions have been met.

1. A *zone* or *compartment* where none of the *susceptible species* referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. is present may be declared free from MHD when *basic biosecurity conditions* have been continuously met in the *zone* or *compartment* for at least the past 2 years.

OR

2. A *zone* or *compartment* where the *susceptible species* referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. are present but in which there has not been any observed occurrence of the *disease* for at least the past 10 years despite conditions that are conducive to its clinical expression, as described in Chapter X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*, may be declared free from MHD when *basic biosecurity conditions* have been continuously met in the *zone* or *compartment* for at least the past 2 years.

OR

3. A *zone* or *compartment* where the last observed occurrence of the *disease* was within the past 10 years or where the *infection* status prior to *targeted surveillance* was unknown (e.g. because of the absence of conditions conducive to its clinical expression as described in Chapter X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*) may be declared free from MHD when:
  - a) *basic biosecurity conditions* have been continuously met for at least the past 2 years; and
  - b) *targeted surveillance*, as described in Chapters 3.3.1. of the *Aquatic Code* and X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*, has been in place, through the *zone* or *compartment*, for at least the past 2 years without detection of the agent of MHD.

OR

4. A *zone* previously declared free from MHD but in which the *disease* is subsequently detected may be declared free from MHD again when the following conditions have been met:
  - a) on detection of the *disease*, the affected area was declared an *infected zone* and a *buffer zone* was established; and
  - b) infected populations have been destroyed or removed from the *infected zone* by means that minimize the *risk* of further spread of the *disease*, and the appropriate *disinfection* procedures (see *Aquatic Manual*) have been completed; and
  - c) *targeted surveillance*, as described in Chapters 3.3.1. of the *Aquatic Code* and X.X.X. of the *Aquatic Manual*, has been in place for at least the past 2 years without detection of the agent of MHD; and
  - d) previously existing *basic biosecurity conditions* have been reviewed and modified as necessary and have continuously been in place for at least the past 2 years.

Article 2.3.X.6.

### **Maintenance of free status**

A country, *zone* or *compartment* that is declared free from MHD following the provisions of points 1 or 2 of Articles 2.3.X.4. or 2.3.X.5. (as relevant) may maintain its status as MHD free provided that *basic biosecurity conditions* are continuously maintained.

A country, *zone* or *compartment* that is declared free from MHD following the provisions of point 3 of Articles 2.3.X.4. or 2.3.X.5. (as relevant) may discontinue *targeted surveillance* and maintain its status as MHD free provided that conditions that are conducive to clinical expression of MHD, as described

in Chapter X.X.X.. of the *Aquatic Manual*, exist, and *basic biosecurity conditions* are continuously maintained.

However, for declared free *zones* or *compartments* in infected countries and in all cases where conditions are not conducive to clinical expression of MHD, *targeted surveillance* needs to be continued at a level determined by the *Competent Authority* on the basis of the likelihood of *infection*.

Article 2.3.X.7.

**Importation of live aquatic animals from a country, zone or compartment declared free from milky haemolymph disease**

When importing live *aquatic animals* of species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. from a country, *zone* or *compartment* declared free from MHD, the *Competent Authority* of the *importing country* should require an *international aquatic animal health certificate* issued by the *Competent Authority* of the *exporting country* or a *certifying official* approved by the *importing country* attesting that, on the basis of the procedures described in Articles 2.3.X.4. or 2.3.X.5. (as applicable), the place of production of the *aquatic animal* is a country, *zone* or *compartment* declared free from MHD.

The *certificate* should be in accordance with the Model Certificate in Annex 4.1.3.

This Article does not apply to *commodities* listed in point 1 of Article 2.3.X.3.

Article 2.3.X.8.

**Importation of live aquatic animals for aquaculture from a country, zone or compartment not declared free from milky haemolymph disease**

1. When importing, for *aquaculture*, live *aquatic animals* of species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. from a country, *zone* or *compartment* not declared free from MHD, the *Competent Authority* of the *importing country* should assess the *risk* and, if justified, apply the following *risk* mitigation measures:
  - a) the direct delivery to and lifelong holding of the consignment in biosecure facilities for continuous isolation from the local environment; and
  - b) the treatment of all effluent and waste materials in a manner that ensures inactivation of the agent of MHD.
2. If the intention of the introduction is the establishment of a new stock, the Code of Practice on the Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms of the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) should be followed.
3. For the purposes of the *Aquatic Code*, the ICES Code (full version see: <http://www.ices.dk/indexfla.asp>) may be summarised to the following main points:
  - a) identify stock of interest (cultured or wild) in its current location;
  - b) evaluate stock health/disease history;
  - c) take and test samples for the agent of MHD, pests and general health/disease status;
  - d) import and quarantine in a secure facility a founder (F-0) population;

- e) produce F-1 generation from the F-0 stock in *quarantine*;
- f) culture F-1 stock and at critical times in its development (life cycle) sample and test for MHD and perform general examinations for pests and general health/disease status;
- g) if the agent of MHD is not detected, pests are not present, and the general health/disease status of the stock is considered to meet the *basic biosecurity conditions* of the *importing country*, *zone* or *compartment*, the F-1 stock may be defined as MHD free or specific pathogen free (SPF) for the agent of MHD;
- h) release SPF F-1 stock from *quarantine* for *aquaculture* or stocking purposes in the country, *zone* or *compartment*.

This Article does not apply to *commodities* listed in point 1 of Article 2.3.X.3.

#### Article 2.3.X.9.

### **Importation of live aquatic animals for human consumption from a country, zone or compartment not declared free from milky haemolymph disease**

When importing, for human consumption, live *aquatic animals* of species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. from a country, *zone* or *compartment* not declared free from MHD, the *Competent Authority* of the *importing country* should assess the *risk* and, if justified, require that:

1. the consignment be delivered directly to and held in isolation until *processing* and/or consumption; and
2. all effluent, dead *aquatic animals* and waste materials from the *processing* be treated in a manner that ensures inactivation of the agent of MHD.

Members may wish to consider introducing internal measures to prevent such *commodities* being used for any purpose other than for human consumption.

This Article does not apply to *commodities* listed in point 1 of Article 2.3.X.3.

#### Article 2.3.X.10.

### **Importation of aquatic animal products from a country, zone or compartment declared free from milky haemolymph disease**

When importing *aquatic animal products* of species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. from a country, *zone* or *compartment* declared free from MHD, the *Competent Authority* of the *importing country* should require an *international aquatic animal health certificate* issued by the *Competent Authority* of the *exporting country* or a *certifying official* approved by the *importing country* attesting that, on the basis of the procedures described in Articles 2.3.X.4. or 2.3.X.5. (as applicable), the place of production of the consignment is a country, *zone* or *compartment* declared free from MHD.

The *certificate* should be in accordance with the Model Certificate in Annex 4.2.2.

This Article does not apply to *commodities* listed in point 1 of Article 2.3.X.3.

Article 2.3.X.11.

**Importation of aquatic animal products from a country, zone or compartment not declared free from milky haemolymph disease**

When importing *aquatic animal products* of species referred to in Article 2.3.X.2. from a country, *zone* or *compartment* not declared free from MHD, the *Competent Authority* of the *importing country* should assess the *risk* and apply appropriate *risk* mitigation measures.

This Article does not apply to *commodities* listed in point 1 of Article 2.3.X.3.