ANNOUNCEMENT INFORMATION PAPER – COMMENCEMENT OF A REVIEW OF BIOSECURITY IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR FRESH CHINESE JUJUBE FRUIT FROM CHINA

The commencement of this risk analysis is in response to a request for market access for fresh Chinese jujube fruit (Ziziphus jujuba Mill.) from China into Australia. Fresh Chinese jujube fruit is China’s highest new horticultural market access priority.

There are two types of risk analyses conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department):

- a Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis (BIRA) which is conducted through a regulated process provided for in the Biosecurity Act 2015 and the Biosecurity Regulation 2016, and
- a non-regulated risk analysis, such as a review of biosecurity import requirements.

A preliminary assessment of pests associated with fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China has identified that potential pests of biosecurity concern are the same, or of the same pest groups, as those that have been assessed previously by the department on other fresh horticultural goods.

Given the similarity of pests of concern, and that there are appropriate risk management measures already established for these pests or pest groups, the risk analysis for fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China will be progressed as a review of biosecurity import requirements (a non-regulated risk analysis), consistent with the Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis Guidelines 2016.

Chinese jujube industry in China

Chinese jujube fruit, also commonly referred to as Chinese dates, is indigenous to China and has a history spanning over 4000 years. It is one of the most important fruit crops in China, having been consumed as a food and used in traditional Chinese medicines for thousands of years.

China is the largest producer of Chinese jujubes in the world. In 2015, China produced around 9 million tonnes of Chinese jujube from an area of around 3 million hectares. Major production regions of Chinese jujube include Shandong, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan, Hebei, and Xinjiang, which account for approximately 90 per cent of total Chinese jujube production. The main Chinese jujube cultivars in China include Dongzao, Lizao, Junzao, Zuhhuang Dazao, Sushui Cuizao, Jinsi Xiaozao and Hupingzao. The highest producing cultivar, Dongzao, is cultivated on over 106,000 hectares in China and has a total harvest of approximately 410,000 tonnes. All Chinese jujube cultivars from China will be considered in the risk analysis.

China currently has market access for fresh Chinese jujube fruit to South Africa and Thailand, and a number of non-phytosanitary requirement countries. China also exports dried Chinese jujube to the United States of America, Germany, Thailand, Australia, South Korea, Israel, Singapore, Japan, the European Union and many other countries.
China’s main fresh Chinese jujube export season is typically from August to October with a peak harvesting period of September. The production and harvest seasons for Chinese jujube in China is counter-seasonal to the production and harvest season of Chinese jujube in Australia.

**Jujube industry in Australia**

Australia’s jujube industry is relatively small and new. Chinese jujube is considered a new horticultural crop in Australia with successful cultivation taking place since 2000, and considerable increase in plantings of Chinese jujube trees since 2010. Chinese jujube is well suited to Australia’s climate and soil types, growing in a range of areas. Chinese jujube cultivation has become increasingly popular in Australia because of its drought tolerance, easy management, high fruit bearing ability, and nutritional value.

Chinese jujubes are grown in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, with the majority of production in Western Australia. There are approximately 40 commercial jujube growers in the Perth Hills, the Wheatbelt and the South West region, with an estimated 12,500 trees planted on 20 hectares in 2017.

The main Chinese jujube cultivars grown in Australia are Chico, Suimen, Li, Don Polenski and Admiral Wilkes. Depending on the cultivars and maturing stages, jujube fruits are harvested from February to April.

**Australian fresh Chinese jujube imports**

Australia currently does not import fresh Chinese jujube fruit from any countries. However, Australia has import conditions for dried jujube for human consumption and jujube plants for use as nursery stock.

**Trade between Australia and China**

On 20 December 2015, the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement (ChAFTA) came into force. The Agreement supports the growing trade and investment relationship between China and Australia and ensures the competitiveness of Australia’s agricultural and manufacturing industries and services.

China is Australia’s largest two-way trading partner in goods and services, valued at $155.2 billion in 2016. China is Australia’s largest export market ($93 billion in 2016) and largest source of imports ($62.1 billion in 2016). In 2015-16, Australia’s total agricultural imports were valued at $24.8 billion. Of these imports, around 11 per cent ($2.73 billion) were from China.

China is Australia’s largest agriculture, forestry and fisheries export market valued at $10.3 billion in 2016. There is a growing demand for high-quality agriculture and food products in China. China is a rapidly growing market for Australian horticulture goods, with exports worth $276 million in 2016. The major Australian horticultural goods exported to China are citrus, macadamia, table grapes, cherries, stone fruits (nectarines, peaches and plums), walnuts, and processed fruits.
Preliminary assessment of pests on fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China

A preliminary assessment identified that the pests associated with fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China do not pose different biosecurity risks to those associated with other horticultural commodities.

The preliminary assessment of the pests associated with fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China identified the potential pests of biosecurity concern to be a mealybug, a fruit-boring moth, fruit flies and scales. All of these pests are from pest groups that have been previously assessed, including for Chinese apples, stone fruit (peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums), table grapes, pears, and longans and lychees. Risk management measures are established for these pests and pest groups.

The identified pests of biosecurity concern associated with fresh Chinese jujubes fruit from China (as assessed to date) are expected to require similar risk management measures to those already used to control these or similar pests on other horticultural commodities.

Next steps

A draft report of this review of biosecurity import requirements will be published on the department’s website, [www.agriculture.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.gov.au). Stakeholders will have an opportunity to submit comments on the draft report for a period of 60 calendar days.

All comments will be assessed and, where relevant, amendments will be incorporated into the final report.

The recommendations in the final report will reflect the completion of the risk analysis for fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China. The recommended measures will have been assessed as scientifically sound and appropriate to manage any potential risks to Australia’s biosecurity presented by the import of fresh Chinese jujube fruit from China.

If you would like to know more about this review or the risk analysis process please email [plantstakeholders@agriculture.gov.au](mailto:plantstakeholders@agriculture.gov.au) or phone +61 2 6272 5094.