



1 November 2017

## **ANNOUNCEMENT INFORMATION PAPER – COMMENCEMENT OF A REVIEW OF BIOSECURITY IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF FRESH STRAWBERRY FRUIT FROM JAPAN**

The commencement of this risk analysis is in response to a request for market access for fresh strawberry fruit (*Fragaria x ananassa*) from Japan into Australia. At bilateral discussions in March 2017, Japan informed Australia that strawberries was their highest priority request for horticultural market access.

There are two main types of risk analyses used by 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.

Australia has long standing import conditions for strawberries from New Zealand and the USA (California). The department published a review of existing policy for strawberries from the Republic of Korea in January 2017 and import conditions were finalised in August 2017.

A preliminary assessment of the pests associated with strawberries from Japan indicates they are the same as, or similar to, quarantine pests of strawberries from New Zealand, the USA (California) and the Republic of Korea.

The potential arthropod pests or pest groups of quarantine concern are: spotted wing drosophila, thrips and mites. The potential pathogens of quarantine concern are: angular leaf spot and brown rots.

Given the similar pests of concern and that there are appropriate risk management measures for these pests, the risk analysis for strawberries from Japan will be progressed as a review of biosecurity import requirements (a non-regulated risk analysis), consistent with the [Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis Guidelines 2016](#).

### **Strawberry industry in Japan**

Japan is the world's seventh largest producer of strawberries. Although strawberry production has decreased in the last 10 years, the productivity of farms has significantly increased due to changes in farming practices.

Strawberries are produced throughout Japan; the main production areas are Tochigi, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Shizuoka and Nagasaki prefectures.

The majority of strawberry production in Japan is conducted in greenhouses providing control for temperature, moisture and pest management. Fruits are typically harvested from November to May.

Japan produces a large variety of strawberries with several types achieving high prices for their unusual characteristics such as the white strawberry (Hatsukoi no Kaori). Prefectures compete to develop premium varieties which are marketed as gifts rather than for general consumption.



Japanese varieties of strawberry are soft and have to be harvested and packed by hand to prevent damaging the fruit. Producers and researchers are developing improved shipping methods and new varieties with longer shelf life to address these issues.

In 2014, Japan exported 205 tonnes of strawberries to Hong Kong (85 per cent), Taiwan (12 per cent), Singapore (one per cent) and Thailand (one per cent).

**Australian strawberry imports**

Australia has permitted the importation of strawberries from New Zealand and the USA (California) for human consumption for over 20 years, as well as strawberry nursery stock (tissue cultures) for propagation purposes.

Import volumes from both of these countries have been low and largely opportunistic.

**Table 1 Fresh strawberry imports to Australia from 2012 to 2016**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
New Zealand	35	22	23	Nil	Nil
USA (California)	Nil	2.6	Nil	Nil	Nil

Figures are in metric tonnes.

Import conditions for strawberries from the Republic of Korea were published on the department’s import conditions database (BICON) on 25 August 2017.

The decision to import strawberries from the Republic of Korea (or other approved country) to Australia is a commercial decision between an importer in Australia and supplier in the Republic of Korea who is able to meet Australia’s import conditions. The department recently issued the first import permit for strawberries for the Republic of Korea following an application from an importer.

**Strawberry industry in Australia**

Strawberries are grown in all states in Australia; Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia account for 89 per cent of production.

Strawberries grow best in cool moist conditions and production mainly occurs in Beerwah-Wamuran in Queensland, Yarra Valley in Victoria, Wannaroo and Albany in Western Australia, Adelaide Hills in South Australia and Camden in New South Wales. The majority of production occurs in open fields aided by protected cropping systems such as the use of plastic tunnels.

The peak production period in Australia is June to October for Queensland and Western Australia, and October to May in southern areas of Australia.

The Australian strawberry industry is strongly domestic. In 2015–16 Australia produced 72,075 tonnes of strawberries. Of this figure, 3,010 tonnes of fresh product and 55 tonnes of frozen product were exported. For the same period, Australia imported no fresh product and 5,907 tonnes of frozen product.



Western Australia is the primary exporter of strawberries from Australia to markets in the Middle East and Asia.

### **Trade between Australia and Japan**

Japan is Australia's third largest market for agricultural products (including fisheries and forestry), with \$4.7 billion worth of trade in 2016-2017. Japan was Australia's second largest export destination for beef in 2016, valued at \$1.8 billion, and was the third largest destination for seafood valued at \$229 million. Other key exports from Australia to Japan include wheat and barley, wine and horticulture (oranges, mandarins, macadamias, table grapes and asparagus). In 2015-16 agricultural imports from Japan were worth \$236 million.

The Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA) signed in January 2015 has delivered significant benefits for Australia's export industries. Since the last round of tariff reductions implemented 1 April 2017, more than 97 per cent of Australia's exports to Japan are duty-free or incur reduced tariff rates.

Japan has few natural resources and their agricultural sector remains primarily focused on the domestic market.

### **Next steps**

The department will undertake a comprehensive review of pests associated with strawberries in Japan and prepare a draft report. These findings will be published on the department's website.

Stakeholders will be able to comment on the draft report during a public consultation period. The department will consider all comments and, where relevant, changes will be incorporated into the final report.

The Biosecurity Liaison Officer will be the first point on contact for risk analysis enquiries and is an initiative the department is trialling to assist stakeholders.

The Biosecurity Liaison Officer's contact information is as follows:

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