



Australian Government
Biosecurity Australia

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**IMPORTATION OF PRAWNS AND PRAWN PRODUCTS: AMENDED INTERIM
QUARANTINE MEASURES**

This Biosecurity Australia Advice notifies stakeholders of amended interim quarantine measures for the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption. Following advice from the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer, as chair of the Aquatic Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (AqCCEAD) on Australia's changed aquatic animal health status with regard to infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis virus (IHHNV), the quarantine measures for IHHNV have been removed from the interim requirements.

Existing permit holders will be contacted directly by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) regarding the implementation of the amended measures.

The AqCCEAD (made up of the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer, state or territory Chief Veterinary Officers or Directors of Fisheries, and representatives from Biosecurity Australia, AQIS and the CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory) has considered the results of recent testing of samples from Queensland prawn farms. The testing has confirmed that Australia has a newly identified strain of the prawn virus, IHHNV. The virus is not a problem for food safety or public health.

The newly identified strain has been identified in a small proportion of black tiger prawns in a number of aquaculture farms along the Queensland coast; from Brisbane to northern Queensland. The newly detected strain of IHHNV is very similar to IHHNV strains that occur in the Asian region.

The AqCCEAD concluded that it is not feasible to undertake a national eradication or control program. Individual states and territories will continue normal prawn health monitoring and may monitor broodstock for the new strain of IHHNV.

Following consideration of the above advice Biosecurity Australia has reviewed the current quarantine measures in relation to IHHNV for the importation of prawns and prawn products, and has concluded that the requirements for IHHNV should be removed (announced 24 July 2007 under Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum 2007/16). Advice to this effect has been provided to AQIS, which is responsible for issuing import permits.

Details of the amended interim measures are attached. They include requirements that imports should:

- . be sourced from a country or zone that is recognised by Australia to be free of white spot syndrome virus (WSSV), yellowhead virus (YHV) and Taura syndrome virus (TSV); or
- . be 'highly processed' – head and shell off (except for the last shell segment and tail fans) and be coated for human consumption by being breaded or battered, marinated in a wet or dry marinade, marinated and placed on skewers or processed into dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dimsum-type product; or
- . having the head and shell removed (except for the last shell segment and tail fans) and each batch tested on arrival and found to be free of WSSV and YHV (if not from a disease free source); or
- . be cooked.

Biosecurity Australia has indicated previously that it will consider alternative risk management measures that provide an equivalent level of quarantine protection. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis and a detailed submission supporting their use will be required.

Biosecurity Australia is continuing to finalise the import risk analysis. Once completed, a draft final IRA report will be reviewed by an independent Eminent Scientist Group. A final IRA report will then be issued and, following any appeal process (and implementation of appeal outcomes if required), will be provided to Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine with recommendations for a quarantine policy determination.

Further information on the amended requirements and on import permits can be obtained from AQIS through its website (www.aqis.gov.au) or by contacting the AQIS Biologicals Program on telephone (02) 6272 4578 or facsimile (02) 6273 2097.

Information on IRAs and policy reviews being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on the internet (at: www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au).

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should get in touch with the contact officer (details below).

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