



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment**

WORK INSTRUCTION

FOOD - Assessing applications for cheese and butter

Direction to staff

This document is instructional material for the Department of Agriculture (the department) under its Practice Statement Framework. All staff must comply with it.

Summary of main points

This document outlines the procedures to assess import permit applications for cheese and butter for human consumption. This includes cheese and butter from New Zealand; cheese and butter from FMD-free countries and cheese from countries not recognised as FMD free.

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Purpose of this document

These work instructions are designed to assist assessing officers to assess import permit applications for cheese and butter goods and recommend to the delegate whether to grant an import permit, including what conditions, if any, may limit the biosecurity risk to one that is acceptably low:

This document includes:

- Cheese and butter from foot and mouth disease (FMD) free countries
- Cheese from countries not recognised as FMD free
- Composite cheese and butter.

This document does not include:

- Butter from countries not recognised as FMD free (Refer to the dairy assessment guidelines).

Roles and responsibilities

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities undertaken in this work instruction.

Role	Responsibility
Assessing officer	This document must be read, understood and used as a guideline.
Delegate	This document must be read, understood and used as a guideline. Training must be based on this guideline. Delegates are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of this document.

s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Note**FSANZ**

Under [Food Standards Australia New Zealand](#) (FSANZ) guidelines, only heat treated (including pasteurised) cheeses and butter were allowed to be imported. In recent years a wider range of non-heat treated cheeses are allowed import; many of these are exported from Europe. This is due to FSANZ recognising other parameters (e.g. curd cooking) as mitigating risk. There are now many unpasteurised cheeses being imported. For this reason the import conditions covers both the pasteurised and non-pasteurised cheese options.

The department's Imported Foods Program is responsible for enforcing Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) requirements for imported food. However, please note that just because goods may not be able to meet FSANZ requirements – this does not mean that we have any legal basis to deny a biosecurity import permit.

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Cheese and butter – Personal consignments – All countries

If the goods are ...	If from...	Then...	Notes
Non-commercial (Personal) cheese and butter	All countries	No permit required Refer to the BICON web case	Products may be imported from all species as the GD states “dairy” only. For import conditions, please select the BICON pathway ‘Other dairy products (including infant formula)’ and then select either FMD free countries or not. Note: Import conditions differ between countries recognised and not recognised as FMD free, e.g. volume restrictions. These import conditions are supported by the alternative conditions in Section 16 the GD.

Cheese and butter – Commercial consignments – FMD free countries – Non composite

Eligibility – cheese and butter
<p>To be eligible for import under these conditions the cheese and butter must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> derived from bovines (including buffalo), ovines and/or caprines only <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> made from dairy which has been sourced, manufactured (all stages of manufacture, including packaging etc.) and exported from FMD free countries.

This is a CONTROLLED document. Any documents appearing in paper form are not controlled and should be checked against the IML version prior to use.

Heat treatment

The IRA (and subsequent policy advice) allows the dairy, from which the cheese and butter is made, to be non-heat treated. However, cheese and butter made from non-heat treated dairy must not be released from biosecurity control until at least 30 days after curd set.

[From the IRA]

AQIS acknowledges that importation from FMD-free countries poses some, albeit small, risk in that milk could be collected in the period immediately after an FMD incursion and prior to detection/official notification. Milk produced during the prodromal period can contain FMDV. To manage this risk, AQIS recommends that for all dairy products the milk should be pasteurised or the imported milk/milk products should not be released from quarantine control until at least 30 days from the date of manufacture.

If the goods are ...	If from...	Then...	Notes
Commercial cheese and butter	FMD free s. 22(1)(a)(ii) s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	Permit is required BICON STND permit case: 93880 BICON permit NON-STND case: 447854 contains variables if required for alternative heat treatments etc.	Non-composite goods: This STND permit is for the cheese and butter only. Composite products such as cheese Danishes and cheese products which are blended with dairy (cheese sticks etc.) are not eligible for import under these conditions. [If provided on the STND application] Check that the goods are not composite products, if they are, contact the importer to advise them that the goods will be assessed and that additional fees apply. FMD free countries: [If provided on the STND application] Check that the country of source, manufacture and export are all FMD free countries. However, there is no need to seek this information if it is not provided, as the Health Certificate will ensure this. If one of the countries is not recognised as FMD free, contact the importer to advise them that the goods will be assessed and that additional fees apply. s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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