



# Stakeholder Response Summary

## Addition of Canada as an applicant country for the import of fresh beef and beef products into Australia

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry received 11 stakeholder submissions on the report. Ten submissions were from members of the public and producers, and one submission was from Cattle Australia.

<i>Questions and Comments</i>	<i>Department Response</i>
<p>What happens next? Can Canada now export beef to Australia?</p>	<p>The addendum adds Canada as an applicant country to the 2017 biosecurity report, Fresh (chilled or frozen) beef and beef products from Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United States and Vanuatu.</p> <p>The next step in the process is for the department to conduct a competent authority assessment to determine if Canada’s official animal health, export control, and supervision systems will ensure that Australia’s biosecurity and food safety requirements will be reliably met.</p> <p>To date, the department has completed two other competent authority assessments for an applicant country from the 2017 review. Japan and the United States of America have undergone assessment and are approved to export fresh beef derived from cattle born, raised, and slaughtered in their countries to Australia. New Zealand has always had uninterrupted access to the Australian market for fresh beef.</p>
<p>Why is the Government allowing beef imports from Canada when we produce so much beef in Australia?</p>	<p>Australia is a trading nation. International trade and investment are critical to the Australian economy, creating jobs and prosperity, and opening up opportunities for Australian businesses to expand. The Australian Government supports international trade consistent with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and guidelines.</p> <p>As a signatory to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Australia has rights and obligations including assessing requests from our trading partners for access to the Australian market.</p>



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## Questions and Comments

There have been recent outbreaks of exotic pests and diseases like white spot disease, red imported fire ants and varroa mites. How can the Australian Government ensure that there are no future outbreaks?

## Department Response

As demonstrated in Australia and overseas, preventing the entry of exotic pests and diseases cannot be completely guaranteed, even in countries with advanced animal and plant health systems, surveillance, and effective controls, like Australia. However, the Australian Government remains committed to maintaining a strong focus on biosecurity and managing potential threats.

Biosecurity has played a critical role in reducing risk and shaping our nation to become one of the few countries in the world to remain free from the world's most invasive pests and diseases.

Our biosecurity system protects agriculture, forestry and fisheries export industries worth \$51 billion; a tourism sector worth \$50 billion; environmental assets worth more than \$5.7 trillion; and more than 1.6 million jobs.

While our status as an island nation has been a key factor in maintaining this position a number of factors, including growth in trade volumes are putting pressure on the system.

Australia has over 60,000 kilometres of coastline offering a variety of pathways for exotic pests, weeds, and diseases to enter the country. The department screens, inspects and clears millions of mail parcels, cargo containers, plants, and animals, and of course people are no exception. Using x-ray machines, pre-and post-entry quarantine and surveillance programs and detector dogs, our border security is our first line of defence for protecting our environment and social amenity.

To protect Australia, we apply biosecurity measures offshore, at the border and onshore. Investing in research and new ways of understanding and detecting risks, sharing international resources and intelligence, and continually reviewing our risk settings helps prevent the introduction, establishment and spread of pests, weeds, and diseases in Australia. The use of surveillance and monitoring of the highest risk areas is critical along with border control activities, which focus on managing potential biosecurity threats at airports, seaports, and mail centres.

Integral to the overall biosecurity approach is an effective, ongoing, collaborative partnership of the Australian Government with Australian industry and the public, working together to manage biosecurity threats. This represents a key ongoing component of Australia's success in maintaining our favourable animal health status.



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## Questions and Comments

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## Department Response

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Beef imports will impact negatively on Australian farmers, why allow it?

Australia's cattle farmers benefit from international trade. In 2023, Australia exported AUD \$11.5 billion of beef to over 70 countries with around 70 percent of the beef produced in Australia being exported. As an exporting nation, it is important for Australia to assess other countries market access requests in a manner consistent with WTO rules and guidelines.

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How does the Australian Government check that import conditions are met?

As noted above, the department is undertaking a competent authority assessment of Canada. In addition to this, the imported beef is subject to import clearance processes on arrival to check that biosecurity and food safety requirements have been met.

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Applicant countries must have traceability systems, with demonstrated equivalence to Australian standards.

Information regarding Canada's national livestock identification program can be found on the [Canadian Cattle Identification Agency \(CCIA\)](#) website and information about traceability of animal products can be found in section 90 of the [Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#).

Canada's traceability systems will be assessed as part of the competent authority assessment mentioned above to ensure that they can meet Australia's biosecurity and food safety requirements.

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Imported beef must be subject to regulations equivalent to those imposed on Australia with respect to restricted animal material.

Restricted Animal Material (RAM) refers to animal meals that cannot be fed to ruminants, being any meal derived from vertebrate animal origin, including fish and birds. Since 1996, the Australian Ruminant Feed Ban has helped prevent the establishment of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Australia.

The Australian government's BSE food safety policy requires that all countries exporting or seeking to export beef or beef products to Australia have a risk assessment by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). On 2 August 2024, FSANZ published its [BSE food safety risk assessment report and category status for Canada](#).

FSANZ assigned Canada category 1 status for its BSE food safety risk meaning there are comprehensive and well-established controls to prevent both the introduction and amplification of the BSE agent in a country's cattle population, and contamination of the human food supply with the BSE agent. Beef and beef products exported from category 1 countries are regarded as posing a negligible risk to public health.



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## Questions and Comments

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## Department Response

Imported product must have appropriate labelling consistent with Australian consumer law, identifying the country of origin.

Imported product must not be re-labelled or re-exported as fresh Australian beef or Australian beef product.

The Country-of-Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016 requires most foods that are offered for retail sale, including beef, to have information on the country where the food was grown, produced, or made. Further information is available on the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission website: <https://www.accc.gov.au/business/advertising-and-promotions/country-of-origin-food-labelling>.

Products exported from Australia are not required to comply with the standard, however, businesses that choose to voluntarily adopt the labelling set out in the standard are required to comply with the standard.

Beef export abattoirs seeking approval to export to Australia should be subject to audit and inspection equivalent to those applied to Australian abattoirs, including animal traceability systems.

As noted above the department is conducting an assessment of Canada's official animal health, export control, and supervision systems. This will include assessment of oversight by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA - Canada's competent authority) of beef export abattoirs and traceability systems.

The department will require that establishments where the cattle, from which the meat was derived, were slaughtered and where the meat was prepared for export to Australia, have current approval from and are under the supervision of CFIA and that official veterinarians are present throughout the slaughtering and processing chains.

Imported beef must be subject to regulations equivalent to those imposed on Australia with respect to banned substances, including beta-agonists. Beef imported to Australia must be of the highest hygienic standards and pose no risk to Australian consumers or beef producers, or Australia's international or domestic trade.

Imported beef will be subject to the requirements of the Imported Food Control Act (1992). All beef and beef products are currently classified as a risk food. Beef can only be imported from a country with a satisfactory BSE risk status from Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

Imported raw beef will also be subject to inspection and testing as follows:

DAFF refers consignments of raw chilled or frozen beef and beef products for analytical testing at the rate of 5%. During inspection, we will also conduct a visual and label assessment.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/import/goods/food/type/raw-beef>

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**Tests that will be applied and permitted results for each food type**

Food Type	Test Applied	Permitted Result
Raw (chilled and frozen) beef <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carcasses</li> <li>• Whole muscle meat</li> <li>• Bone-in-cuts</li> </ul>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>  Meat antimicrobial screen	n=5, c=3, m=10, M=100  Refer to <a href="#">meat and edible offal</a>
Raw (chilled and frozen) beef <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground or trim for grinding</li> </ul>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>  <i>Salmonella spp. / 25g</i>  Shiga toxin-producing <i>E. coli</i> (STEC)/g Includes STEC 026, 045, 0103, 0111, 0121, 0145, 0157  Meat antimicrobial screen	n=5, c=3, m=100, M=1000  n=5, c=0, m=0  n=15, c=0, m=0  Refer to <a href="#">meat and edible offal</a>

n = the number of sample units that must be examined from a lot of food.

c = the maximum allowable number of defective sample units, that have counts between ‘m’ and ‘M’.

m = the acceptable microbiological level in a sample unit.

M = the level, which when exceeded (the level is greater than M), in one or more samples would cause the lot to be rejected.



### Antimicrobial tests applied and permitted results

Test Applied	Permitted Result
<p>Meat antimicrobial screen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fluoroquinolones (Ciprofloxacin, Enrofloxacin, Gatifloxacin, Levofloxacin, Moxifloxacin, Norfloxacin, Ofloxacin, Sarafloxacin)</li><li>• Cephalosporins (Ceftiofur)</li><li>• Streptogramins (Virginiamycin)</li></ul>	<p>The Food Standards Code lists maximum residue limits in <a href="#">Schedule 20</a>.</p>