



Release of the *Draft import risk analysis report for fresh salacca (snake fruit) from Indonesia*

Questions and Answers – 6 February 2014

The Import Risk Analysis process

Why is this risk analysis being undertaken?

The Department of Agriculture helps people and goods move in and out of Australia while keeping Australia safe and protecting our industries from pests and diseases that exist in many other parts of the world.

As part of this role, the department is responding to a market access request from Indonesia in 2011 for fresh salacca (snake fruit).

What is an import risk analysis and how does it work?

An import risk analysis (IRA) is a process that identifies and assesses the risks posed by the pests and diseases relevant to an import proposal. The process is regulated by the Quarantine Regulations. If the risks associated with a proposed import exceed Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP), the IRA specifies what measures should be taken to reduce those risks to an acceptable level. The IRA process is described in the Import Risk Analysis Handbook (2011), available on the Department of Agriculture website.

The IRA process involves issuing a draft report for a 60 day stakeholder comment period, considering and incorporating the comments into a provisional final report. The provisional report is then published for a 30 day appeal period. Any appeals are considered by the Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel, which is independent of the department.

A final report is published after a policy determination is made by the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.

What quarantine pests have been identified?

The draft report identifies four pests of potential quarantine concern. They are mealybugs from three genera (*Dysmicoccus* sp., *Planococcus* sp., *Pseudococcus* sp.) and one fungus (*Marasmius palmivorus*).

What quarantine measures have been proposed for fresh salacca fruit from Indonesia?

Pest risk assessments were conducted for the four pests identified as potential quarantine pests. The assessments conclude that the overall risk does not exceed Australia's ALOP.

The draft report proposes that Indonesia's existing commercial production practices for the production of fresh salacca fruit for export, combined with a system of operational procedures to ensure quarantine standards are met, will provide an appropriate level of protection against the quarantine pests. In particular:

- Salacca fruit is to be produced in accordance with Indonesia's national standard for farm certification of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) with specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the production, pest management, harvesting, packing, inspection and certification of salacca fruit.
- Salacca fruit must originate from orchards and packing houses registered with and audited by the Indonesian Agricultural Quarantine Agency.
- Salacca fruit must be undamaged, clean and free from any pests, soil and other plant materials.
- Supporting operational systems will verify the phytosanitary status of exported salacca fruit. This includes the provision of phytosanitary certificates by the Indonesian Agricultural Quarantine Agency.



Will Australia be adequately protected from exotic pests?

A comprehensive risk assessment of pests of quarantine concern has been undertaken. The pest risk assessments conclude that the Indonesia's existing commercial production practices and standard quarantine operational procedures will provide an appropriate level of protection to address any risks of exotic pests or diseases entering Australia.

The assessment is based on the latest available scientific information and reflects Australia's conservative approach to managing biosecurity risks.

Can Australia have zero risk?

A 'zero risk' stance is impractical, as it would mean no tourists, no international travel and no imports of commodities. Nevertheless, Australia adopts a conservative approach to quarantine to ensure that risks are managed to a very low level.

Science-based risk analysis provides an important foundation for safe trade. Australia only accepts imports once we are confident that the risks of pests that could be associated with specific imports can be managed appropriately, in accordance with Australia's appropriate level of protection.

Australia exports almost two thirds of its agricultural produce. The future of our agricultural and food industries, including their capacity to contribute to growth and jobs, depend on Australia's capacity to maintain good animal and plant health status. Our future also depends on the conditions our industries face overseas.

Therefore, it is very important to Australia that fair and consistent trading rules are in place around the world, as provided by the World Trade Organization. Australia cannot expect trading partners to take our export produce if we are not prepared to apply consistent rules to imported products, nor could Australia be optimistic about opening up new export markets.

Consultation

Have stakeholders been consulted during the development of the draft report?

The department consulted with stakeholders both prior to commencement and during the drafting of the report to allow stakeholders the opportunity to raise any concerns and maintain awareness of the progress and outcomes of the analysis.

Stakeholders were given drafts of the pest categorisation table to review and provide comment on. The comments they provided during that consultation process have been incorporated into the draft report.

Meeting Australia's food standards

Does imported food need to comply with Australia's food standards?

Imported food for human consumption must satisfy Australia's food standards. Australian law requires that all food, including imported food, meets the standards set out in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is responsible for developing and maintaining the Code, including Standard 1.4.2, maximum residue limits. The standards apply to all food in Australia, irrespective of whether it is grown domestically or imported.

Background information

What is salacca fruit?

Salacca is a tropical fruit that grows from a very spiny, short stemmed palm. The fruit grow in bunches at the base of the plant. The individual fruits are the same size and shape as a fig.

The fruit's skin is covered with scales giving the appearance of a reptile skin, hence the name 'snake fruit'.



Does Australia currently allow any imports of fresh salacca fruit?

The importation of fresh salacca (snake fruit) for wholesale or retail sale is not permitted from any country currently.

Does Australia export fresh salacca?

Australia does not export fresh salacca (snake fruit).

Although the salacca palm is occasionally grown in northern Australia, there is no local industry producing salacca fruit for retail sale in Australia.