



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture
and Water Resources

30 June 2017

BIOSECURITY ADVICE 2017/12

END OF PRAWN SUSPENSION AND IMPORT CONDITIONS FOR PRAWNS AND PRAWN PRODUCTS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders that:

1. The import suspension on uncooked prawns will lapse on 6 July 2017.
2. Enhanced import conditions will be implemented on 7 July 2017, to allow for safe trade in prawns and prawn products, to meet Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP).

The enhanced import conditions for prawns and prawn products are outlined in the attached '*Biosecurity requirements for the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption*' ([Attachment A](#)).

From 7 July 2017, uncooked prawns, marinated prawns and Australian prawns processed overseas (excluding those processed in an Australian government approved supply chain) will be consolidated into the one product class – uncooked prawns. These prawns will be subject to strict testing requirements to ensure biosecurity risks are managed.

Existing permit holders will be contacted by the department prior to 6 July 2017 regarding the implementation of revised import conditions.

The *Biosecurity (Suspended Goods – Uncooked Prawns) Determination 2017*, signed by the Director of Biosecurity on 6 January 2017, suspended imports of uncooked prawns for a period of six months. The import suspension will lapse on 6 July 2017. Enhanced import conditions ([Attachment A](#)) will be implemented on 7 July 2017 to allow for safe trade in prawns and prawn products. From 7 July 2017, previous classes of prawn products, namely uncooked prawns, marinated prawns, and Australian prawns processed overseas in a non-Australian government audited supply chain will be consolidated into one product class. Prawns within this class must be uncooked, frozen and have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted). These prawns will all be subject to the same import conditions.

A key import condition for the new class of uncooked prawns is that exporting countries will be required to certify that the prawns have been found to be free of white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) and yellow head virus (YHV) based on sampling and testing methods recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Pre-export sampling and testing is to be conducted post-processing and prior to export to Australia.

Uncooked prawns will be subject to 100 per cent secure seals intact inspection on-arrival in Australia and testing for WSSV and YHV at an Australian screening laboratory. Only those prawns which pass testing for both WSSV and YHV at an approved screening laboratory will be released from biosecurity control.

Some specific import conditions for marinated prawns and Australian prawns processed overseas have been removed because the department considers that a combination of pre-export and on-arrival testing adequately addresses the biosecurity risk.

For prawns that are marinated, the competent authority will no longer need to certify that the prawns have been adequately marinated, and on-arrival assessments to check marination will not be undertaken by the department.

For Australian prawns processed overseas in a non-Australian government audited supply chain, the competent authority will no longer be required to certify that the prawns have been processed in a premises it has approved, with procedures in place to ensure product segregation throughout transport, processing and storage.

Breaded, battered and crumbed prawns are considered a lower biosecurity risk and will not be subject to pre-export or on-arrival testing. However, this product will continue to be subject to 100 per cent secure seals intact inspection on-arrival to ensure minimum coating requirements are met.

Australian prawns processed overseas through a department-approved supply chain (as exists for Thailand) are also considered a lower biosecurity risk and will not be subject to pre-export testing and need not have heads and shells removed. However, this product will continue to be tested on-arrival for WSSV and YHV.

Import conditions will remain in place pending the outcomes of the review of the biosecurity risks of, and import conditions for, prawns and prawn products, which was announced by the department on 16 May 2017. If, during this time, the biosecurity risks for these products change, the department may amend the import conditions to ensure that biosecurity risk meets Australia's ALOP.

The department will be working closely with import permit holders and trading partners to ensure trade can be resumed promptly after the import suspension lapses on 6 July 2017. The department has written to our major trading partners advising them of the new import conditions. Trading partners that can meet the import conditions have been requested to notify the department in writing as soon as possible in order to give the department sufficient time to process import permits before the suspension lapses.

Australia will notify the World Trade Organization (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Committee to confirm the suspension will lapse on 6 July 2017, and to advise of the import conditions for all prawns and prawn products. This notification will include a link to the updated model export health certificate.

This Biosecurity Advice is available via the department's website: agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/memos. Please pass this notice to other interested parties.

The department's Prawn Liaison Officer is the first point of contact and can be contacted as follows:

Email: prawnliaisonofficer@agriculture.gov.au



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BIOSECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPORTATION OF PRAWNS AND PRAWN PRODUCTS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

7 July 2017

The following import conditions will apply to the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption (other than shelf-stable prawn-based food products¹) from 7 July 2017. These import conditions are issued under the authority of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

NOTE: Imported food, including prawns and prawn products must comply with the *Imported Food Control Act 1992* and the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSC)* in its entirety. Under the *Imported Food Control Act 1992*, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources may inspect, or inspect and analyse imported prawns and prawn products to determine compliance with the FSC. These food safety and labelling requirements are separate from, and additional to, Australia's biosecurity requirements. Information on the FSC may be obtained from Food Standards Australia New Zealand².

1. Import permit

The importer must obtain a permit to import all *uncooked* prawns and prawn products into Australia for human consumption from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department), before the goods are imported.

The application to import must include:

- the name and address of the importer and exporter; and
- a description of the commodity to be imported.

The application will be assessed on the above information as well as any other criteria deemed relevant by the Delegate of the Director of Biosecurity.

Cooked prawns and prawn products do not require an import permit but will be required to meet conditions that are specified in the *Biosecurity (Prohibited and Conditionally Non-prohibited Goods) Determination 2016*. These conditions specify that the *cooked* prawns are accompanied by a certificate from a body listed in the List of Overseas Authorities—Aquatic Animals for Import (also known as a competent authority).

For further information on import permits see Australia's Biosecurity Import Conditions database (BICON): bicon.agriculture.gov.au/BiconWeb4.0

2. Import conditions – uncooked prawns imported for human consumption

All imported *uncooked* prawns must be:

1) Sourced from a country, zone or compartment that is recognised by Australia to be free of pathogenic agents of biosecurity concern

Description: Prawns sourced from disease free countries, zones or compartments may be exported to Australia as whole prawns, partially peeled, peeled or highly processed. To recognise this condition, the department would need to undertake an evaluation of the exporting country's competent authority to approve the trade.

If assessed and approved by the department, the Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify on an official government health certificate that the prawns or prawn products:

- a) have been sourced from {insert country} which is free from the following pathogenic agents;

¹ Shelf-stable prawn-based food products include dried prawns, canned prawns or condiments containing prawns as an ingredient (e.g. prawn balachan, shrimp paste).

² Available at: www.foodstandards.gov.au

- i) white spot syndrome virus (WSSV)
- ii) yellowhead virus (YHV)
- iii) Taura syndrome virus (TSV)

and if the product is not frozen (i.e. the product is chilled)

- iv) necrotising hepatopancreatitis bacterium (NHPB).
- b) have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority;
- c) are free from visible signs of infectious diseases;
- d) each package is marked with the words "*for human consumption only-not to be used as bait or feed for aquatic animals*".

2) Highly processed prawns

Description: Uncooked highly processed prawns include prawns which have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted) and are coated for human consumption by being breaded (crumbed) or battered OR prawns whereby the raw prawn meat is processed into dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dim sum-type product.

The Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify on an official government health certificate that the uncooked highly processed prawns or prawn products:

- a) have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority;
- b) are free from visible signs of infectious diseases;

3) Uncooked prawns

Description: Uncooked prawns are prawns which have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted) and may be marinated prawns, or Australian prawns processed overseas in facilities which have not been assessed and approved by the department through an official evaluation of the exporting country's Competent Authority.

All imported prawns must be free from both white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) and yellow head virus (YHV).

The Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify on an official government health certificate that the uncooked prawns:

- a) are frozen and have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted);
- b) product from each batch has been found post-processing to be free of white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) and yellow head virus (YHV) based on a sampling and testing method recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for demonstrating absence of disease;
- c) have been inspected and graded in a premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority;
- d) are free from visible signs of infectious diseases;
- e) are fit for human consumption;
- f) each package is marked with the words "*for human consumption only-not to be used as bait or feed for aquatic animals*".

On arrival in Australia each batch of uncooked prawns will be subject to seals intact inspection and testing for WSSV and YHV at an approved screening laboratory.

4) Uncooked wild-caught prawns of Australian origin processed overseas in approved premises

Description: Uncooked wild-caught prawns of Australian origin must have been processed at a Competent Authority approved establishment, in accordance with the agreed biosecurity integrity program. For example, Thai Union Frozen Products Public Company Ltd has been approved by both the department and Thailand's Competent Authority to process Australian prawns for export to Australia.

If assessed and approved by the department, the Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify on an official government health certificate that the uncooked prawns:

- a) are wild caught prawns of Australian origin, processed at a Competent Authority approved establishment in accordance with the biosecurity integrity program agreed with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.
- b) each package is marked with the words "*for human consumption only-not to be used as bait or feed for aquatic animals*".

On arrival in Australia each batch of uncooked prawns will be subject to seals intact inspection and testing for WSSV and YHV at an approved screening laboratory.

3. Import conditions - cooked prawns imported for human consumption

All imported *cooked* prawns must be:

1) Cooked prawns

Description: Minimum cooking times and temperatures are not specified for cooked prawns, however the Competent Authority must be able to certify that all the protein in the prawn meat has coagulated and no raw prawn meat remains. An example of a cooking time considered necessary to achieve coagulation of all proteins in prawns and prawn products is cooking prawns to a minimum 70°C core temperature for at least 11 seconds.

The Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify on an official government health certificate that the cooked prawns:

- a) have been cooked in premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority and as a result of the cooking process, all the protein in the prawn meat has coagulated and no raw prawn meat remains.
- b) are fit for human consumption.

4. Verification of import conditions

NOTE: Imported food, including prawns and prawn products must comply with the *Imported Food Control Act 1992* and the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (FSC)* in its entirety. Under the *Imported Food Control Act 1992*, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources may inspect, or inspect and analyse imported prawns and prawn products to determine compliance with the FSC. These food safety and labelling requirements are separate from, and additional to, Australia's biosecurity requirements. Information on the FSC may be obtained from Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

On-arrival in Australia, consignments of prawns will be verified through inspections and/or testing.

Uncooked prawns and prawn products are inspected by the department to ensure that the imported commodity and documentation complies with the import permit conditions. Secure seals intact inspections and an appropriate level of on-arrival verification testing will be applied to consignments of uncooked prawns.

Cooked prawns will be inspected by the department on a random basis to ensure compliance with biosecurity attestations required on government health certificates.

Verification testing

The testing used in approved laboratories will be based on the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests in the current version of the *OIE Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals* or equivalent, and a sampling regimen that would provide 95% confidence of detecting the agent if present at 5% prevalence.

All consignments of prawns to be tested on-arrival in Australia will be sampled through secure seals intact inspections, and held under biosecurity control until the results of the tests are available. Testing will be applied to each batch of uncooked prawns. Batches that return positive results must be re-exported, destroyed or further processed (i.e. cooked) in a facility approved by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources for that purpose.

Batch definition

For the purposes of testing prawns for disease agents of biosecurity concern, a batch may be defined by one of the following (to be determined by the competent authority), but in any case, a batch cannot exceed 1 shipping container.

- product from a single line in a single processing run
- product harvested from a single aquaculture pond - (i.e. prawns harvested from separate ponds are considered separate populations for the purposes of defining a batch)
- one species of prawn wild caught during one continuous fishing period;

Each consignment (container) will be considered as one batch unless multiple batches are specified in the container. If a batch is shipped in two containers each container will be considered a single unrelated batch. In addition, each batch in a consignment must be labelled and clearly identifiable.

Documentation from the exporter, supplier or the Competent Authority verifying the number of batches in the consignment must be provided to the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources. This documentation must clearly detail the labelling of each batch in the consignment. If the number of batches cannot be determined from documentation, full unpacking and inspection may be required in order to determine the number of batches. This may result in additional testing and inspection costs.

If uncooked prawns are sourced from a country, zone or compartment recognised by Australia to be free of disease, batch testing for disease agents of biosecurity concern pre-export and on-arrival in Australia is not an import requirement. However, verification activities may be implemented at the border to provide Australia with ongoing assurances that trade in uncooked prawns aligns with Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection³ (ALOP). Verification may include an appropriate level of on-arrival testing at a rate considered appropriate by the department.

5. Review

Import conditions may be reviewed if there are any changes in the source country's import policy or its animal disease status, or at any time at the discretion of the Director of Biosecurity.

³ Australia's ALOP is expressed as providing a high level of sanitary and phytosanitary protection aimed at reducing risk to a very low level, but not to zero