



Release of the Final report for the non-regulated analysis of existing policy for the fresh lychee fruit from Taiwan and Vietnam

Questions and Answers – 16 April 2012

A non-regulated analysis of existing policy

Why was this analysis undertaken?

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) 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, DAFF has responded to formal market access requests for fresh lychee fruit from both Taiwan and Vietnam in 2003. Lychees are Taiwan's and Vietnam's top priority horticultural market access requests to Australia.

Why did DAFF consider the requests from Taiwan and Vietnam together in a single analysis?

Given the similarity of pests, dealing with requests from both Taiwan and Vietnam in a single analysis is the most efficient use of available resources and addresses the two top priorities at the same time.

Previously, longan and lychee access requests from China and Thailand were also considered together in a single analysis.

Why was the risk assessment done as a non-regulated analysis instead of an import risk analysis under the regulated process?

The import policy for fresh lychee fruit from China and Thailand was developed in 2004. Australia already allows fresh lychee fruit from China and Thailand to be imported subject to specific quarantine conditions.

A preliminary assessment of the pests and diseases of fresh lychee fruit from Taiwan and Vietnam did not identify any new pest or disease types that were not assessed during

the import risk analysis for fresh longan and lychee fruit from China and Thailand.

The importation of lychees from Taiwan and Vietnam should not pose significantly different quarantine risks, or require significantly different management measures, than those that apply to lychees from China and Thailand.

DAFF determined that the market access requests for lychees from Taiwan and Vietnam be conducted as a non-regulated analysis of existing policy, rather than a regulated import risk analysis (IRA).

What quarantine pests have been identified?

The pests of quarantine concern are two fruit flies, a fruit borer and seven mealybugs. They are:

Bactrocera cucurbitae (melon fruit fly)
Bactrocera dorsalis (oriental fruit fly)
Conopomorpha sinensis (litchi fruit borer)
Dysmicoccus lepelleyi (lepelleyi mealybug)
Paracoccus interceptus (intercepted mealybug)
Planococcus lilacinus (coffee mealybug)
Planococcus litchi (litchi mealybug)
Planococcus minor (passionvine mealybug)
Pseudococcus cryptus (citriculus mealybug)
Pseudococcus jackbeardsleyi (Jack Beardsley mealybug).

Are there any regional differences for Australian states?

Regional differences have been identified for one pest, a mealybug species. This pest has been identified as a quarantine pest for Western Australia.

The recommended biosecurity measures take account of this regional difference.



What biosecurity measures have been recommended for fresh lychee fruit from Taiwan and Vietnam?

The report recommends a combination of risk management measures and operational systems to reduce the biosecurity risk associated with importing fresh lychee fruit from Taiwan and Vietnam and achieve Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP). These measures include:

- pest management measures including:
 - cold disinfestation treatment or vapour heat treatment (VHT) for the management of fruit flies
 - cold disinfestation treatment; or orchard control, inspection and remedial action; or orchard freedom for the management of litchi fruit borer
 - visual inspection and remedial action for the management of mealybugs or
 - irradiation for the identified quarantine pests
- supporting operational systems for the maintenance and verification of phytosanitary status.

Will Australia be adequately protected from exotic pests?

A comprehensive risk assessment of pests of biosecurity concern has been undertaken and, where appropriate, risk management options have been recommended to address any risks of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia.

The assessment is based on the latest available scientific information and the measures recommended reflect Australia's overall approach to managing biosecurity risks.

Does this give the go-ahead for the importation of fresh lychee fruit from Taiwan and Vietnam?

The release of this final report is an administrative step and is not the final step in the entire import process. There are a number of other steps that must be completed before imports can commence. Importantly, a work plan will need to be developed with the biosecurity authorities of

Taiwan and Vietnam, respectively, for them to demonstrate that their phytosanitary systems comply with Australia's import requirements.

DAFF officers may visit Taiwan and Vietnam to audit the implementation of agreed import conditions and measures, including registration of production sites, operational procedures in packing houses and any treatment practices.

No import permit will be issued until DAFF is completely satisfied that import conditions are consistent with measures proposed to manage biosecurity risks, and that Taiwan and/or Vietnam are able to comply. The issuance of an import permit is a regulatory process that is subject to judicial review.

Does Australia allow any imports of fresh lychee fruit now?

Yes, Australia allows fresh lychee fruit to be imported from China and Thailand, subject to specific quarantine conditions.

Consultation

How does DAFF consult stakeholders?

DAFF consults with domestic and international stakeholders during the non-regulated analysis process.

DAFF consulted the lychee industry prior to the announcement of the non-regulated analysis of existing policy. They were advised prior to the release of the draft report and also this final report.

DAFF provided a draft pest categorisation table to the state and territory agriculture departments for advance consideration and identification of regional pests. Comments received were incorporated into the draft report. DAFF received four submissions on the draft report. All comments in these submissions were considered and where appropriate, were incorporated into the final 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

Will the potential imports from Taiwan and Vietnam impact on the domestic lychee industry?

The impact on the domestic lychee industry (if any) will be minimal. Potential export of fresh lychee fruit from Taiwan and Vietnam would be between May and August compared to domestic production available from October to March.

Does Australia export fresh lychee fruit to other countries?

Yes, Australia has been exporting fresh lychee fruit to many countries or regions, including Hong Kong, Singapore, French Polynesia, Fiji, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Lebanon, France, United Kingdom, Russia, Canada and New Zealand. The total export for 2010/2011 was 134 tonnes, about 4% of the annual production.

What is a risk analysis?

A risk analysis identifies the pests relevant to an import proposal, assesses the risks posed by them and, if those risks are unacceptable, specifies what measures should be taken to reduce those risks to an acceptable level.

What are the key aspects of a non-regulated analysis of existing policy?

The non-regulated analysis has the same level of scientific rigour and technical assessment

as a regulated analysis as described in the *Import Risk Analysis Handbook 2011* available at www.daff.gov.au/ba/ira/process-handbook.

Stakeholders are formally consulted in the same way as with a regulated import risk analysis.

The risk analysis report is circulated to stakeholders for comment during a formal consultation period. Any comments received during this process are considered prior to the report being finalised.