



**Australian Government**  
**Biosecurity Australia**

24 July 2007

**BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA POLICY MEMORANDUM 2007/16**

**IMPORTATION OF PRAWNS AND PRAWN PRODUCTS  
- REVISED INTERIM QUARANTINE MEASURES**

This Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum (BAPM) informs stakeholders that Biosecurity Australia has concluded that revised interim quarantine measures need to be implemented to manage the altered quarantine risk associated with the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption.

The revised measures are intended to reduce quarantine risks to a *very low* level in order to achieve the Appropriate Level of Protection determined by Australian Government policy and in line with Australia's conservative approach to quarantine. The revised interim quarantine measures will now be taken into account by decision makers when considering import permits for prawns and prawn products in accordance with the *Quarantine Act 1908* and *Quarantine Proclamation 1998* as amended.

These revised measures are expected to take effect by the end of September 2007. Existing permit holders will be contacted directly by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) regarding the orderly implementation of these revised measures.

Once completed, a draft final IRA report will be reviewed by an independent Eminent Scientists Group. A final IRA report will then be issued and, following any appeal process (and implementation of appeal outcomes if required), will be provided to Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine with recommendations for a quarantine policy determination.

As foreshadowed in BAPM 2007/13 of 20 June 2007, Biosecurity Australia has carefully considered more than 50 stakeholder submissions received in response to the *Revised Draft Generic Import Risk Analysis Report for Prawns and Prawn Products* that was issued on 23 November 2006. Discussions have also been held with some stakeholders regarding the issues raised in their submissions.

Biosecurity Australia has now concluded that revised interim quarantine measures are required to manage the altered quarantine risk associated with imported prawns and prawn products. Advice to this effect is being provided to AQIS, which is responsible for issuing import permits. Biosecurity Australia is recommending that these revised measures be implemented as soon as practicable pending finalisation of the import risk analysis (IRA). Existing permit holders will be contacted directly by AQIS regarding the orderly implementation of these revised measures.

Australia already has in place interim quarantine measures for imported prawns and prawn products that were first introduced in 2000 and strengthened in 2001. These interim conditions include health certification, post-arrival inspection and white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) testing of uncooked whole prawns.

Details of the revised interim measures are attached. They include requirements that imports should:

- be sourced from a country or zone that is recognised by Australia to be free of WSSV, infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis virus (IHHNV), yellowhead virus (YHV) and Taura syndrome virus (TSV); or
- be ‘highly processed’, head and shell-off (except for the last shell segment and tail fans), and coated for human consumption by being breaded or battered, marinated in a wet or dry marinade, marinated and placed on skewers or processed into dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dim sum-type product; or
- have the head and shell removed (except for the last shell segment and tail fans) and, if not from a disease free source, have each batch tested on arrival with negative results for WSSV, IHHNV and YHV; or
- be cooked.

Biosecurity Australia will consider alternative measures that provide an equivalent level of quarantine protection. These may include such things as compartmentalisation (stock accreditation schemes), defined auditable market chain arrangements including end-use, and off-shore pre-inspection arrangements. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis and a detailed submission supporting their use will be required.

The imposition of requirements for cooking or being highly processed are to reduce the likelihood of exposure, that is to reduce the product’s attractiveness/value, for use as bait or aquatic feed.

Biosecurity Australia will re-assess the quarantine risk if legislation were to be introduced and enforced in all States and Territories to prevent the practice of feeding prawns to crustaceans in hatcheries, farms, research institutions and public aquaria.

In addition to these quarantine measures, imported prawns must also comply with human health requirements under the *Imported Food Control Act 1992* and the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

As indicated, the revised interim conditions outlined take account of submissions and comments from stakeholders on the revised draft IRA Report. Having taken those submissions into account, Biosecurity Australia has concluded that:

- no additional risk management is required for necrotising hepatopancreatitis bacterium (NHPB), as the disease agent will be inactivated in frozen product;
- importation under the description ‘highly processed’ of marinated (wet and dry) head and shell-off product will be permitted subject to case-by-case assessment; and
- cooking times and temperature requirements will be amended to reflect commercial practices.

## **Next steps**

Biosecurity Australia will assist AQIS with the implementation of these revised interim measures. Conditions for specific countries or zones will be applied based on their aquatic animal health status. Countries claiming freedom (or zone freedom) from the diseases of concern will need to provide supporting data for assessment.

Information on AQIS import permits can be obtained from AQIS through its website: [www.aqis.gov.au](http://www.aqis.gov.au) or by contacting the AQIS Biologicals Programme on facsimile (02) 6273 2097. AQIS will directly contact existing permit holders.

Once completed, a draft final IRA report will be reviewed by an independent Eminent Scientists Group. A final IRA report will then be issued and, following any appeal process (and implementation of appeal outcomes if required), will be provided to Australia's Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine with recommendations for a quarantine policy determination.

Information on IRAs and policy reviews being conducted by Biosecurity Australia is available on the internet at [www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au](http://www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au).

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should get in touch with the contact officer (details below).

## **Confidentiality**

Stakeholders are advised that, subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, all submissions received in response to policy memoranda will be publicly available and may be listed or referred to in any papers or reports prepared on the subject matter of the memoranda.

The Commonwealth reserves the right to reveal the identity of a respondent unless a request for anonymity accompanies the submission. Where a request for anonymity does not accompany the submission the respondent will be taken to have consented to the disclosure of his or her identity for the purposes of Information Privacy Principle 11 of the Privacy Act.

The contents of the submission will not be treated as confidential unless they are marked 'confidential' and they are capable of being classified as such in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

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## **Interim quarantine measures for the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption**

These quarantine requirements apply to the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption (other than shelf-stable prawn-based food products<sup>1</sup>), and are issued under the authority of *Quarantine Proclamation 1998*.

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 Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) 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, Australian quarantine requirements. Information on the FSC may be obtained from Food Standards Australia New Zealand<sup>2</sup>.

### **1 Import Permit**

The importer must obtain a permit to import all *uncooked* prawns and prawn products into Australia for human consumption from AQIS, 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 Australian Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.

*Cooked* prawns and prawn products do not require an import permit but will be required to meet conditions that will be specified in the *Quarantine Proclamation 1998* (see point 3).

### **2 Uncooked prawns**

#### **2.1 All imported *uncooked* prawns must:**

- be sourced from a country or zone that is recognised by Australia to be free of ALL the following pathogenic agents:
  - White spot syndrome virus (WSSV)
  - Infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis virus (IHHNV)
  - Yellowhead virus (YHV)
  - Taura syndrome virus (TSV);

OR

- be highly processed, i.e.: the head and shell removed (last shell segment and tail fans permitted) and;

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

<sup>2</sup> Available at: [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

- coated for human consumption by being breaded (crumbed) or battered, or
- coated for human consumption by being marinated in a wet marinade (the marinade must be no less than 12% of the total weight of the product), or
- coated for human consumption by being marinated in a dry marinade (the marinade must be clearly seen to cover the product), or
- coated for human consumption by being marinated and placed on skewers (the marinade must be clearly seen to cover the product), or
- the raw prawn meat processed into dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dim sum-type product,

OR

- have had the head and shell removed (last shell segment and tail fans permitted) and each batch tested on arrival in Australia and found to be free of WSSV, IHNV and YHV.

Batch testing for a pathogenic agent does not occur if sourced from a country or zone recognised by Australia to be free of that agent.

Testing is based on the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests in the current version of the World Organisation for Animal Health (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 will be held under quarantine control in Australia where they will be sampled for testing. Prawns will remain under quarantine control until the results of the tests are available. Batches that return positive results must be re-exported, destroyed or further processed (i.e. cooked) in a facility approved by AQIS for that purpose.

For the purpose of this testing, a batch is defined as a population from a different pond population or fishing period population. Documentation from the exporter, supplier or Competent Authority verifying the number of batches in the consignment must be provided to AQIS. 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.

**2.2** For all *uncooked* prawns and prawn products (including those that are considered to be highly processed, as defined in Section 2.1), the Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify that the prawns or prawn products:

- are fit for human consumption, and
- have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority, and
- are free from visible signs of infectious disease.

In addition, for *uncooked* prawns that are not considered to be highly processed (as defined in Section 2.1), the Competent Authority must certify that:

- each package is marked with the words '*for human consumption only — not to be used as bait or feed for aquatic animals*'.

**2.3** *Uncooked* prawns that are considered to be highly processed (as defined in Section 2.1) will be randomly inspected by AQIS to ensure the imported commodity complies with the product description on the import permit and health certificate.

### **3 Cooked prawns**

For *cooked* prawns and prawn products, the Competent Authority in the exporting country must certify that the prawns or prawn products:

- are fit for human consumption, and
- have been cooked in a premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority to a minimum time and temperature standard\* where all the protein in the prawn is coagulated and no raw meat remains.

\* To comply with a minimum time and temperature standard the core temperature of the prawn or prawn product must reach 75°C for a specified time depending on the size of the prawn. Smaller grade prawns (66/88 pieces per kilogram) must be cooked for a minimum of 2 minutes at a core temperature of 75°C or equivalent time and temperature. Medium grade prawns (44/66 pieces per kilogram) must be cooked for a minimum of 2 minutes 15 seconds at a core temperature of 75°C or equivalent time and temperature. Larger grade prawns (35/44 pieces per kilogram) must be cooked for a minimum of 3 minutes at a core temperature of 75°C or equivalent time and temperature.

### **4 Review**

Conditions for importation 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 Australian Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine.