



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

1 July 2020

The following import conditions will apply to the importation of prawns and prawn products for human consumption (other than shelf-stable prawn-based food products<sup>1</sup>) from 1 July 2020. 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, Water and the Environment 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<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 the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (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 (CA)).

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

### 2. IMPORT CONDITIONS – UNCOOKED PRAWNS IMPORTED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Uncooked (raw) prawns may be imported into Australia under the following conditions:

#### 2.1. Uncooked prawns

**Description:** Uncooked prawns are prawns which have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted), are deveined, 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 CA.

All imported prawns must be free from both WSSV and YHV1.

<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, shrimp paste).

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

The CA 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) are deveined (removal of the digestive tract to at least the last shell segment)
- c) product from each batch has been found post-processing to be free of WSSV and YHV1 based on a sampling and testing method recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for demonstrating absence of disease;
- d) have been inspected and graded in a premises approved by and under the control of the CA;
- e) are free from visible signs of infectious diseases;
- f) are fit for human consumption;
- g) 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 YHV1 at an approved screening laboratory.

## 2.2. Highly processed prawns

**Description:** Uncooked highly processed prawns are prawns which have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted) and the raw prawn meat is processed into dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dim sum-type product.

The CA 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 CA;
- b) are free from visible signs of infectious diseases.

## 2.3. Breaded, battered and crumbed prawns

**Description:** Breaded, battered and crumbed prawns are prawns which have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted), are coated for human consumption by being breaded (crumbed) or battered and have undergone a par-cooking step during processing.

**Par-cooking definition:** A processing step involving the application of heat (for example, pre-frying, baking) to ensure the coating is set into a solid form and fully adheres to frozen and thawed prawns.

The CA in the exporting country must certify on an official government health certificate that:

- a) the breaded, battered and crumbed prawns have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the CA;
- b) the prawns are free from visible signs of infectious diseases prior to coating;
- c) the breaded, battered and crumbed prawns have undergone a par-cooking step to solidify and adhere the coating to the prawn (for example, pre-frying<sup>3</sup> or baking) during processing.

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<sup>3</sup> The Codex definition of pre-frying is: “*Frying of breaded and battered fishery products in an oil bath in such a way that the core remains frozen*” (Codex Alimentarius, Code of practice for fish and fishery products, CAC/RCP 52-2003, fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/codex-texts/codes-of-practice/en/).

Note – prawn products that do not meet all the import conditions outlined above for BBC prawns will be subject to the import conditions for ‘Uncooked prawns’ (see **Section 2.1** above)

#### **2.4. 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 CA to approve the trade.

If assessed and approved by the department, the CA 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, zone or compartment within country} which is free from the following pathogenic agents;
  - i) white spot syndrome virus (WSSV)
  - ii) yellow head virus genotype 1 (YHV1)
  - iii) Taura syndrome virus
  - iv) *Enterocytozoon hepatopenaei* (EHP)  
(**AND** if the product is not frozen i.e. the product is chilled)
  - v) necrotising hepatopancreatitis bacterium (NHPB).
- b) have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the CA;
- 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*”.

#### **2.5. 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 CA 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 CA to process Australian prawns for export to Australia.

If assessed and approved by the department, the CA 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 CA-approved establishment in accordance with the biosecurity integrity program agreed with the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.
- 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 YHV1 at an approved screening laboratory.

### **3. IMPORT CONDITIONS – COOKED PRAWNS IMPORTED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION**

Cooked prawns may be imported into Australia under the following conditions.

### **3.1. Cooked prawns**

**Description:** Minimum cooking times and temperatures are not specified for cooked prawns, however the CA 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 proteins in prawns and prawn products is cooking prawns to a minimum 70°C core temperature for at least 11 seconds.

The CA 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 CA 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, Water and the Environment 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.

### **4.1. Verification testing**

The testing used in approved laboratories will be based on the polymerase chain reaction 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 per cent confidence of detecting the agent if present at 5 per cent 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, Water and the Environment for that purpose.

## **5. 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 CA), 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 CA verifying the number of batches in the consignment must be provided to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. 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 ALOP<sup>3</sup>. Verification may include an appropriate level of on-arrival testing at a rate considered appropriate by the department.

## **6. 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.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.