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## Animal Biosecurity Advice 2021-A03

# Guidelines for the evaluation of overseas compartments exporting uncooked prawns to Australia

This Animal Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of the release of *Guidelines for the evaluation of overseas compartments exporting uncooked prawns to Australia*.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment has developed guidelines to provide Australia's trading partners with the principles and criteria that will be used to evaluate overseas competent authorities (CA) to administer a compartment for improved market access for uncooked prawns exported to Australia for human consumption. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the compartmentalisation, CA, disease surveillance and disease-specific chapters of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Aquatic Animal Health Code.

The department's *Review of the biosecurity risks of prawns imported from all countries for human consumption* (prawn review) draft report was released for stakeholder comment in September 2020. The prawn review identified known disease agents (hazards) of biosecurity concern that may be associated with imported prawns and provided recommendations about if and how prawns can be imported in a manner that achieves Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP). One of the measures that was recommended to reduce the overall risk associated with those hazards to a level that achieves Australia's ALOP was sourcing uncooked prawns from disease-free populations, including compartments. This recommendation is consistent with Australia's obligations under Article 6 of the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) and the principles defined in the relevant chapters of the OIE Aquatic Code (4.2 and 4.3) for an importing country to recognise the existence of compartments when appropriate measures are applied and the CA of the exporting country certifies that this is the case.

Uncooked prawns sourced from a compartment may be exported in a range of forms, including whole, partially peeled, peeled or 'other'. To provide Australia with ongoing assurances, uncooked prawns exported from a compartment will be subject to a risk-based rate of interventions and verification testing on-arrival in Australia.

To recognise a compartment, the department will need to undertake an evaluation of the exporting country's CA. The CA of the exporting country must formally register their interest with the department to have a disease-free compartment assessed. The department will determine timing to commence an assessment and provide a comprehensive questionnaire for the CA's completion. The CA will be requested to provide a detailed submission in English for the department's evaluation. CA assessments are time-consuming and require a detailed desk-based audit of submitted

documentation followed by an in-country verification visit. Please note that department assessments of overseas compartments exporting uncooked prawns to Australia will remain on hold until the prawn review is finalised.

This Animal Biosecurity Advice is available via the [department's website](#). Please pass this notice to other interested parties.

If you would like to request a copy of the compartment guidelines or have any questions, the department's prawn import policy team is the first point of contact and can be contacted at [AquaticAB@awe.gov.au](mailto:AquaticAB@awe.gov.au).

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