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Proposed changes

External Territories import of prawns and prawn products



The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment is proposing changes to import conditions for prawns and prawn products for human consumption, brought or imported into the Australian external territories of Norfolk Island, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

The changes are proposed to protect the unique crustacean species present on Australia's territorial islands (including Christmas Island red crabs and robber crabs, mantis shrimp and mud crabs) from exotic crustacean diseases such as white spot disease. All decapod (10-legged) crustaceans are susceptible to infection with the virus that causes white spot disease, including prawns, crabs and crayfish, both marine and freshwater, or terrestrial (land dwelling). White spot disease is not dangerous to humans, however the disease can have a significant impact on crustacean populations once introduced.

By ensuring Australia's import conditions are applied consistently we can help to maintain our disease-free status and protect the health of Australia's farmed and wild crustacean populations.

For more information on white spot disease visit: agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/infection-white-spot-syndrome-virus.pdf.

Prawns sourced from mainland Australia¹

Uncooked prawns, cooked prawns, breaded, battered and crumbed (BBC) prawns, and highly processed prawn products (including dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dim sum-type product) imported or brought into Norfolk Island, Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands from mainland Australia will not require an import permit but must be accompanied by evidence (such as a commercial receipt) that the prawns were sourced and/or purchased in mainland Australia. The goods may also be subject to physical inspection.

Prawns sourced from countries other than mainland Australia

Uncooked prawns imported directly into Norfolk Island, Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands from countries other than mainland Australia will require an import permit and must meet specified import conditions to manage biosecurity risks. Consignments must be accompanied by an official government health certificate signed by the competent authority in the exporting country attesting to the uncooked prawn import conditions. These conditions include that the uncooked prawns:

- are frozen and have had the head and shell removed (the last shell segment and tail fans permitted)
- have been deveined (removal of the digestive tract to at least the last shell segment)
- product from each batch has been found post-processing to be free of white spot syndrome virus (WSSV) and yellowhead virus genotype 1 (YHV1) based on a sampling and testing method recognised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for demonstrating absence of disease

¹ Prawns and prawn products sourced from mainland Australia include prawns farmed or caught in Australia and prawns imported into Australia that have been released from biosecurity control.

- have been inspected and graded in a premise approved by and under the control of the competent authority
- are free from visible signs of infectious diseases
- are fit for human consumption
- each package is marked with the words “*for human consumption only-not to be used as bait or feed for aquatic animals*”.

On arrival, each batch of uncooked prawns will be subject to seals intact inspection and testing for WSSV and YHV1 at an approved screening laboratory.

Cooked prawns imported from countries other than mainland Australia may be imported directly into Norfolk Island, Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands if accompanied by an official government health certificate signed by the competent authority in the exporting country stating the following:

- the prawns 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
- the cooked prawns are fit for human consumption.

Breaded, battered and crumbed prawns (BBC) and highly processed prawn products² may be imported directly into Norfolk Island, Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands from countries other than mainland Australia but will require an import permit and must be accompanied by an official government health certificate signed by the competent authority in the exporting country stating the following:

BBC prawns

- the BBC prawns have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority
- the BBC prawns are free from visible signs of infectious diseases prior to coating
- the BBC prawns have undergone a par-cooking step (for example, pre-frying or baking) after the prawns have been coated, to solidify and adhere the coating to the prawn.

Highly processed prawns

- the uncooked highly processed prawns have been processed, inspected and graded in premises approved by and under the control of the Competent Authority
- the uncooked highly processed prawns are free from visible signs of infectious diseases.

² Uncooked highly processed prawns include prawns whereby the raw prawn meat is processed into dumpling, spring roll, samosa, roll, ball or dim sum-type product.

