Deanna Emms:

Welcome to the Australian Biosecurity Series. Studying in Australia. Know what you can and cannot bring in. Hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment in partnership with study Australia. I'm Deanna Emms and I will be facilitating today's forum. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to join us. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to the elders past, present and future. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's attending today. I'd like to remind people, we are recording this webinar and it will be available to view on our website later. We have an extraordinary mix of listeners tuning in from around the world, including India, Nepal and Indonesia. Our topic today examines what you can and cannot bring and send to Australia and explaining why. We'll hear from two key speakers who have extensive experience on what can and cannot come into Australia.

Deanna Emms:

Both at the border with incoming travellers and at the international mail centre. We'll be showing two short videos asking you some questions using Mentimeter to help us understand your needs a little bit better. We will shortly hear from Lisa Jones. Team leader in the Detector Dog Operations at the international airport in Brisbane. During her time as a biosecurity officer, Lisa has seen firsthand high risk items coming into the country. She has been on the very popular Australian TV series, Border Security. And today she will talk to us about what you can and cannot bring into Australia and why. Following Lisa, we'll have a few more questions through Mentimeter, watch a short video and then hear from Adrian McIntosh a manager in Mail Operations Management. He will take us through what can and cannot be sent to Australia via mail and why. We then look forward to answering your questions as part of the Q&A session.

Deanna Emms:

Now I've hope you've all moved to Mentimeter. So let's get started. Many of you have travelled or are travelling to Australia from your home country to study. Can you please share with us via Mentimeter what your home country is? Oh, I can see a lot of you are tuning in from Australia and where else have we got there? I can see some China. Some people are joining us from China and some people from India as well. That's really exciting to see such a good global presence. Okay. While I give everyone an opportunity to answer, I just wanted to say it's so great to see so many people tuning in and eager to participate today. We are thrilled the borders are open and we are now free to travel again and welcome you all to our beautiful country.

Deanna Emms:

Okay. Let's move on to the next question. Outside of COVID 19, how often each year would you travel internationally? Oh, so we have some people travelling a bit. Some people travelling not so much. It looks like we're all starting to plan our travel for the future and getting back to, I suppose, travel as normal. I hope everyone gets the chance to travel internationally soon. Let's move on to our next question. This question is going to help shape today. How well do you think you know what you can and cannot pack in your bag when you're travelling to Australia? I can see a good mix there. That's really great to see. And look, if you don't know, that's okay. That's what today is here for. We are here to share some of that information with you and for those of you that know very well, we're here to help reinforce some of this knowledge for you.

Deanna Emms:

This next question, I'm really interested to see what you have to say. Do you understand what the term biosecurity means? Okay. Looks like a lot of you have heard about biosecurity and you may have heard of this during the COVID times, talking about human health. Today, we are going to be talking about biosecurity in terms of plants and produce. So maybe a little bit different to what you've heard in the past and last but not least for this round of Mentimeter questions. Where have you seen information about what you can and cannot bring into Australia? Please select all that apply. It's great to see so many of you have seen some of our information. I'll let that sit there for a second, but I will say thank you for all your answers. They are very helpful. And it's been great to hear your thoughts on these areas. Please remember not to close out of Mentimeter as we'll be back here with some more questions for you later.

Deanna Emms:

So let's start with a short video of Lisa and her Detector Dog, Petal, where they give us an overview of their job and why their role is so important in protecting Australia.

Lisa Jones:

Hi, my name's Lisa and this is Petal and we work for biosecurity here in Australia. Our job is to screen incoming passengers and their baggage at international airports for biosecurity risk, to protect Australia's agriculture, unique environment, wildlife and way of life from exotic pests and diseases. We heard you're coming to Australia to study. So it's important that you understand our biosecurity rules when packing your bags. This will help make your trip easier by making sure you don't bring any biosecurity risk materials, or items that could be taken from you. It could also save you from being penalised or potentially having your visa cancelled. Some food, plant material, animal products from overseas are not allowed into Australia. Meat, including pork products, fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices, including herbal or traditional medicines, grains and pulses, eggs, dairy and home cooked meals. As well as plants, flowers and seeds should not be packed.

Lisa Jones:

Airport clearance is quicker if you don't bring these items and most of them can be easily purchased here in Australia. Any meals or snacks that you receive on your flight must be left on the plane. And if you bring any sporting equipment or footwear, you make sure it's clean and dry. When you arrive in Australia, we'll check your incoming passenger declaration. And we might use our x-ray machines or Detector Dogs like Petal to look at your bags. If you bring any food, plant material or animal parts with you, you must declare them or dispose of them in the bins located at the airport. If you don't, you may receive an infringement notice of up to $2,664. Your visa may be cancelled. And if so, you may be refused entry into Australia. Items that don't meet our requirements may be treated, exported or destroyed. Those that don't pose any biosecurity risk will be returned to you after inspection.

Lisa Jones:

Remember everything in your bag is your responsibility. You must pack your own bag and be aware of everything inside. The same strict biosecurity rules apply to items that your family and friends might send to you by mail during your stay in Australia. It's important to remind your friends and family overseas about our biosecurity rules and ask them not to send you food, plant material or animal products. We need your help to protect our agriculture unique environment, wildlife and way of life. So please think about what you pack. For more information. Visit our website at: awe.gov.au/studying

Deanna Emms:

Petal was great to see in action and a great overview of what you can and cannot bring and the risks certain items posed to Australia. Lisa, please kick us off today.

Lisa Jones:

Thank you. And welcome. Thank you having me here today. It's good to have the opportunity to speak to everybody and discuss about biosecurity here in Australia. A little about myself. I'm a team leader of the Detector Dog Operations team at Brisbane International Airport. It's my job with the assistance of my dog Petal, as you would see in the video before, to screen incoming passengers and their luggage arriving into Australia. Over the years, I've also spent time in our international mail centres, clearing mail and also in my time as a biosecurity officer spent time at our international wharfs, clearing vehicles and machinery. So as you just saw on the video, all travellers arriving into Australia are subject to biosecurity control, which can involve screening and inspections of your luggage. This reduces the risk of any unwanted pests and diseases entering the country and helps to protect our unique environment, our animals, our plants and our human health as discussed earlier. Various food items and certain foods, plant materials and animal products from overseas may not actually be permitted into Australia.

Lisa Jones:

Many of these items were shown in that video you've just viewed before. To prevent this happening in preventing disease and risk coming into Australia, your bag may be assessed or identified to identify items of biosecurity risk when you're travelling to Australia. This may include a biosecurity officer like myself, questioning you further. We may utilise x-ray machines, Detector Dogs. We may physically perform an inspection of your luggage as you arrive into Australia. Obviously our Detector Dogs are extremely well trained and they're able to smell even the smallest of items that are hidden in your baggage. They're a very important part of our screening tools and they are very important to help protect Australia from any exotic plants and diseases. When you arrive into Australia, the most important thing is to declare any food, plant material or animal products that you're bringing into the country. Don't be sorry as the sign says there, just declare it. So to do this complete your incoming passenger declaration card.

Lisa Jones:

Note here, you will not be penalised if you declare and present all of the goods that you are bringing into the country, even if they're not actually allowed to come in. If your items do not meet Australian requirements, they may be directed for a treatment for destruction or re-export. And that will be at your expense. If your items do not pose a biosecurity risk, after inspection they will be released to you. If however you fail to declare any items or provide a false declaration, you could be penalised. Now, that could be an on the spot infringement notice of up to $2,664, or it could be more serious. Your visa may also be cancelled. And if so, you maybe refuse entry into Australia.

Lisa Jones:

So I'm going to talk further about how we can avoid all this from happening. So what items can't bring into the country and why and why are we worried about? So there are many harmful pests and diseases that may arrive via travellers coming to Australia via your clothing or via your luggage. Some examples are on the screen here now. So look at foot and mouth disease. First. So foot and mouth disease is a highly contagious viral disease that affects animals, including Buffalo, pigs, cattle, sheep, deer, camlets and goats. An uncontrolled outbreak of foot and mouth disease would be devastating and could lead to the death of many cows, sheep and pigs resulting in these products being unavailable for purchase here in Australia.

Lisa Jones:

Looking at African swine fever. So African swine fever or ASF is a highly contagious viral disease of domestic and wild pigs. There is currently no vaccine and it kills four out of five pigs that it infects. An outbreak of ASF here in Australia would have significant impacts on our pig production, pig health and pig meat exports.

Lisa Jones:

And to the right on the screen, Khapra beetle. Khapra beetle has the ability to destroy grains quality, making it unfit for human consumption, which therefore if Khapra was to get into our grains and rice and nut industry, it can have effect where there may be no flour, rice, or other similar products on our shelves here in Australia for purchase. Eating or handling products infested with Khapra beetle can cause stomach, breathing and skin irritations and problems in humans. Items that could contain Khapra that are biosecurity risk for Australia include things like rice, chickpeas, lentals and various beans, seeds and nuts.

Lisa Jones:

So here is a list of goods that present potential biosecurity risks to Australia. You can see on the top to the top left hand corner, there's airline food just listed there. So airline meals, we ask that you leave them on the plane, or if you must bring them off, declare them. You'll also see items like food as in fruit, eggs, vegetables, meat, seeds and nuts on there, as well as flowers, dirty shoes. So soil on shoes. And also take notice about the home cooked meals. Top right hand corner of the slide there. So you might be thinking how does the salami I bring into Australia, have the potential to kill four out of five pigs if it got into Australia? So we'll look at the example. If you bring salami into Australia, say you'd only eat half of the salami stick and you throw the rest of the salami into the bin.

Lisa Jones:

This bin could end up... Item in the bin could end up at our waste disposal places and then unintentionally be eaten by wild pigs, which could then spread it into our pig farms where 80% of all our pigs could die. This is a flow on effect where we'll have shortage of pork products and we all enjoy our pork. So we don't want to miss out on that food item. So basically we take our role really seriously. When we are expecting luggage and looking for biorisk items, we are looking at the end result. By preventing these items coming in, how we are looking after Australia?

Lisa Jones:

Here's a list of items you can bring in. So many of these items are safe to bring. They're items such as commercial prepared and produced breakfast cereals, chocolate, coffee, including instant and ground or roasted coffee beans. However, don't bring any luwack coffee, if you know what that is. Confectionary, including Indian dairy sweets and meat based sweets can be allowed. Instant noodles, muesli bars, plain bread and also things like bag tea. So black and green tea only are all acceptable and it can be brought. You can bring household items and clothing. They're also permitted, obviously. These items, whoever must be clean and free of seeds, soil, bark, any potential insects and food residues. We also want to ensure there's no animal tissues on your household items or any plant debris that could propose other biosecurity risk and have otherwise serious material.

Lisa Jones:

We don't want to bring any that sort of stuff to Australia. Be aware that some of your toys and things like heat pillows, snow domes and souvenirs may contain materials that is subject to import conditions such as waste removal and cleaning when you arrive. So things like waste cotton and waste grains and seeds. Beans can actually be inside some of these cushions and pillows. So be aware of that. And as I said earlier, just declare anything you bring and we'll inspect and let you know if you can or cannot bring some to the country.

Lisa Jones:

So if you'd like anymore information on what you can and cannot bring into Australia, there's some great resources around that you can use. You can visit the Department of Agriculture website, which is department of Agriculture, Water and Environment. The address is awe.gov.au/studying. You can also get your hands on the studying in Australia brochure and you can also watch the film again. Watch our Australian Biosecurity Information for International Students video again. So thank you for that guys, if you've missed any of that information, there will be links available later on in the webinar today that you can jot those notes down and get the website address and that again. I look forward to answering these specific questions later on. Thank you.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Lisa. Some great tips to consider when travelling to Australia. It's an important message that there is no penalty that if you declare and if in doubt, that is the best approach. Now we all love receiving mail and packages, but similar to when you travel, you need to check what you are sending or being sent, meets Australian biosecurity requirements. You are the person responsible.

Deanna Emms:

So let's kick off with our first question. Do you know what can and cannot be sent via mail to Australia? What a great mix. And for those of you that are not confident, we will be talking you through that really, really soon. So great to have you on here today. Great to see a lot of you are confident and I'm sure that what we've got to tell you this afternoon, will just reinforce what you already know.

Deanna Emms:

So, okay. For a little bit of fun, which one of the following can be sent via mail to Australia. There might be more than one correct answer. So select all that you think you can send. Oh, good to see some answers coming in there. Would we like to see the correct answers, everybody? Okay. So the correct answers are the ones that you guys have picked. So congratulations. Well done.

Deanna Emms:

And for our final Mentimeter question for today, how would you like to receive information on what you can and cannot send? Some of the ways in which we share our information through social media, webinars, podcast. Yep. Email, definitely email flyers and through university. So I'm seeing everyone likes to be online, which is great. That's where you guys are joining us from for today. There's some really interesting answers in there and fantastic to see. Thank you everybody. Just a quick reminder to ask any questions you have in the question box below at any time during today's presentation. Before we hear from Adrian, we are going to watch another short video. This time on international mail. This tells us why it's so important you and your family carefully consider what they are sending to Australia in the mail.

Voice over:

Did you know, Australia is at risk from pests and diseases arriving in mail from overseas? Say you order something online. It might come from overseas, which means you might have to pay a little extra for postage. But what are the real costs of ordering goods from overseas? Some things can pose a biosecurity security risk to Australia, like plant material and animal products. They could carry serious pests or diseases, which could have devastating impacts on Australia's agriculture, environment and our way of life. That's why we have strict biosecurity laws that control the type of goods that can be sent to Australia. International mail is carefully screened at our border by x-ray and highly trained Detector Dogs. Our biosecurity offices also inspect items to look for risk material. Goods that don't meet import conditions are either treated, exported or destroyed as biosecurity waste, depending on the risk they pose. Don't waste your time and money. Check before ordering goods online and tell family and friends overseas about our biosecurity laws. Help protect Australia's unique environment and agricultural industries from pests and diseases. Visit awe.gov.au/mail to learn more.

Deanna Emms:

Adrian, thanks so much for joining us today. Can you tell us about the work you do at the International Mail Centre and why it's so important?

Adrian McIntosh:

Yes, certainly. Thank you very much for that introduction and good afternoon to everybody. My name's Adrian and I currently work in the mail program. I'm an operations manager. I'm working at the Sydney Gateway Facility. Daily, I'm responsible for all operations within the Sydney Gateway Facility. This includes the use of our x-rays, deployment of our Detector Dogs and all facets of our inspections and everything that comes after that. Over the last 20 years, I've worked in the airports program, cargo, imported foods, shipping, air cargo and the assessment services group. The video you just saw provides a good overview of what happens when you order or receive goods from another country. When the international mail arrives, we use different techniques to detect if there is biosecurity risk material in your package. This includes x-ray screening, Detector Dog screening and visual assessment by our biosecurity officers. If screening identifies possible risk material, the article is opened and is inspected to ensure what the contents are.

Adrian McIntosh:

You may see a note in your parcel that shows that it was opened by us. If risk material is found, we determine the best way to manage the risk in line with our biosecurity import conditions. This way... Sorry, this may be to export the article back overseas, destroy the goods, or treat the goods if it's applicable, at your expense. If we find biosecurity risk material in a mail article, we send a letter to advise the receiver of the action taken on their goods. As you've seen in the video and Lisa's presentation, there are quite a few items that are not allowed into Australia. Some of these are on your screen now for you. I won't go over these again, as we will share how you can find out more, a little later. It doesn't matter whether these items or these types of goods are sent from your family, overseas or order online. We'll check the contents for risk items.

Adrian McIntosh:

As an international student, you've travelled to Australia to study. You may fly in and out of the country regularly. Your family and friends may visit you or send you items from overseas. You may think these products you receive are okay. However, often pests and diseases are not visible to the naked eye. Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility and Australia has strict biosecurity laws. Please tell your family and friends what they can and what they can't bring or send to you overseas. Oh, sorry. From overseas. This could avoid them sending items to you that we may need to destroy. Here are biosecurity risk goods that were detected in the highest volumes between June 2021 and May 2022. As you can see our top three biosecurity risk detections for this period were seeds, plant products, which includes wooden articles and bark and meat products. Other animal products include things like pet food, animal bones, hides and skins.

Adrian McIntosh:

In 2021, we seized almost nine tonnes of pork products coming into the country, which is almost the same weight of two male hippopotamuses. As an international student living in Australia, you have a responsibility to be biosecurity aware and ensure that any goods sent to you from overseas or ordered online, meet Australia's biosecurity requirements. You can use a biosecurity import condition system, BICON, to determine whether a commodity intended for import into Australia is permitted, is subject to import conditions, requires supporting documentation, requires treatment, needs an import permit. The department's website also provides detailed information about mailing goods to Australia. If you find live animals, insects, soil, plant material, or other unsolicited biosecurity risk items in imported goods, report it immediately to the department via our See. Secure. Report. hotline. Call 1800-798-636. You can also report for our online reporting form, which is available at the link on your screen. Your help to protect Australia is greatly appreciated and we are here to help you understand what you can and can't do. Like Lisa mentioned earlier, if you have missed any of this information, it will be up again at the end of the webinar.

Deanna Emms:

What a great lineup of speakers. Thank you, Lisa and Adrian for your time today and sharing your insights. Now it's time for our Q&A, where you can ask the questions of our experts. I can see a fair few questions have come in already. So for our first question. Adrian, are plant seeds allowed. I think you may have already answered this one for us.

Adrian McIntosh:

So a lot of plant seeds are allowed and a lot of plant seeds are not allowed. This is something you would have to check on BICON and BICON's updated regularly to give you the latest information on and on the products and the latest information on any requirements that may be required. This may include manufacturers, declarations, seed purity, declarations from the manufacturer or the seed supplier. So please get the species name and have a look at the species name in BICON.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Adrian. Now, Lisa, I've got one coming your way. Can I declare and pack lentils, pulses like yellow gramme and dried beans? Will I get a penalty for declaring something that isn't allowed?

Lisa Jones:

Great question there. So provided that you actually declare your items. You will not get fined. And as we say, declare and present all items that you're bringing into the country, you will not get fined if it is not allowed. As per lentils and pulses like your yellow gramme and your dried beans, it is best to refer to our website before travelling, because conditions can change. If you could, head to the awe.gov.au website and a section, sorry, called BICON. It's our import conditions database. You can search on the most current ruling on that, but if not, declare it and present it and we'll let you know on the day, if you can or can't.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks, Lisa. It looks like a lot of the advice we're getting is declare it if you're unsure. I think that's probably the safest thing to do. We have had a lot of questions about bringing and sending in medicine, including both prescription and traditional. Lisa or Adrian would you like to respond?

Adrian McIntosh:

The best thing is to do is to obviously to declare those articles with traditional medicines. You'll have to include an ingredient list with those products. And it's best to have that commercially manufactured products sent through as we can't determine a lot of the time with things which are made from home or aren't made and manufactured commercially. So that's my advice for prescription medication. That's something you would have to have a look on the Australian Border Force website for, to ensure you're not bringing in some of those ingredients, which may be prohibited on the Border Force side of things.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks, Adrian. Lisa, is there anything from the traveller section that might be a little bit different or is it the same for you?

Lisa Jones:

Basically exactly the same. So it's best that everything can be commercially prepared and packaged. Any of your prescribed actual drugs or medicines. You need to contact or get onto the AVF website for that as well to check their conditions, but just declare it and we'll help you out on the day.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you. And before we move on Lisa, I've got another question here for you. Can I bring in pork jerky?

Lisa Jones:

Answer that is you cannot bring pork jerky into the country, due to the risk of African Swine Fever, like I mentioned in my discussion earlier and also foot and mouth disease. So these diseases are not present in Australia, as I discussed before. And obviously an outbreak would cause sickness in a variety of animals and it would greatly impact on Australian meat, beef, lamb, pork and our dairy farmers. So definitely not. We can't risk our Australian trade markets. So no.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Lisa. And I don't think that anyone would want to risk that. Adrian, can you please tell us why are Australia's biosecurity laws so strict?

Adrian McIntosh:

Australia's fortunate of being free from many diseases that affect animals and plants elsewhere. And we want to keep it that way. Our strict rules are designed to protect our delicate ecosystem that sustains many vulnerable and endangered species, also to protect our agricultural industry.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you very much. We are getting so many questions and it's great to see if you have any more questions, please do put them in the chat and we will keep going. Lisa, are spices and tea allowed to be carried? They will be packed and sealed with labels.

Lisa Jones:

So you can purchase most spices and teas here in Australia. Spices pose a risk of introduction of things like Khapra beetle, other exotic pests and they must meet strict import conditions to come to the country or into Australia I should say. These conditions may include, being commercially prepared and packaged, as you've suggested. They need to meet weight restrictions and they need to be free of contamination and obviously meet our preparation requirements. So any particular spices you'd like to bring, I said, you more than likely can purchase them here. If you do bring them refer to our Biosecurity Import Conditions database to check the current conditions. But generally we'll have to inspect those items and we'll release if we can. And if not, you'll have to re-export or destroy those items at your expense, but just declare.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Lisa, once again. Declare to be safe. Adrian, if there is a risk item in my package, will the whole package be seized or will just the item be removed?

Adrian McIntosh:

So yes, depending on the risk of the goods, the biosecurity officer will take action to reduce the risk, the treatment or documentation... Sorry, if treatment or documentation is required for the goods, then the department will contact you to seek that information or seek payment for the treatment.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks, Adrian. Lisa, another one for you. Is it strictly prohibited to bring home cooked food to Australia? If not, what are the necessary actions we should take before bringing them inside the country other than declaring?

Lisa Jones:

It is best to basically not bring home prepared and cooked meals. Saying that though, a cake may be permitted or cookies or items like that. Your home prepared sweets should be safe. Obviously, as you always said, declare it's the biggest thing. Always declare and present these items for inspection. But at the end of the day, generally we do advise to not bring home prepared and home cooked items of any sort, best to avoid it.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks, Lisa. I'm sure everyone is probably missing some home cooked meals, but as you said, declare and probably best not to bring. Okay, Adrian, can students bring or send in COVID-19 protection masks and RAT test kits. If so, is there a limit of how many you can bring or send?

Adrian McIntosh:

For biosecurity, there's no restriction on the amount you can bring in, but this is something set by the Australian government and that's something that Border Force, Australian Border Force, their website will be the best place for that information as they're the regulators and screeners for that type of material.

Deanna Emms:

I think this one's going to go to you, Adrian, but Lisa, please shout out if you think this... You can answer this one too. My parents want to send or bring me some home furnishing like blankets and my favourite childhood toy. Will that be allowed into Australia?

Adrian McIntosh:

So toys, household items made from or containing wood, feathers, et cetera, must be declared for inspection. Other items are permitted. If they are clean and free from seeds, soil, bark, insects, food residue, animal tissue and plant debris and any other risk material prior to arrival in Australia. Be aware that some toys, including heat pillows, snow domes and souvenirs may contain material that is subject to import conditions such as waste cotton or raw cotton, wheat grains, seeds, bean, soil, straw, or even water.

Deanna Emms:

Wonderful. Thank you, Adrian. Lisa, coming to you now. I have a lot of expedition equipment like shovels, dive knives, multi tools, machetes, camping and camping axes. Why do you care about the dirt? Do I just have to make sure that they're cleaned?

Lisa Jones:

That's a great question. So why are we worried about the dirt and why worry about them being clean. So for me, these items, as you just suggested, have or can be on farms or rural areas or out in the wilderness areas, you may have used them. And so they could be contaminated with potential like foot and mouth disease or anthrax. So foot and mouth disease can survive in the soil in your shoes and obviously, or your shovels or your machetes or any of your camping equipment. And obviously then can be transported into Australia. So hence why we need those items clean and I'll keep harping on about always declare them and present them to us so we can do a thorough inspection on your arrival.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Lisa. Okay. And I think this might be for both of you. Can I bring or send in mooncakes?

Adrian McIntosh:

Yeah, I'll answer that one. So mooncakes that contain meat are not permitted and they will be destroyed. Mooncakes that contain egg must be commercially prepared and packaged as well as being declared.

Deanna Emms:

Lisa, is there anything to add from your part?

Lisa Jones:

No. We often see mooncakes, especially during the Chinese moon festivals. So as long as we declare them, as Adrian said, no meats permitted and yeah, always declare. And they're always in commercial packaging.

Deanna Emms:

Adrian, I think this one might go to you. Can I bring in specific plants and flowers? What is the risk that a plant or a flower might bring to Australia?

Adrian McIntosh:

So again, that's something you'd have to consult BICON for. Each individual plant species poses its own risk and that's been risk assessed and all that information is held within BICON. And so it will also depend on how you're bringing that in whether it's a live plant, a cut flower. So there's a number of different conditions that are specified in BICON. Best way is to get the species of the plant that you're wishing to bring in and have a look at all the conditions there that are very easy to understand on BICON.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Adrian. And I do know that we have some national issues with some plants and risks in that plant world. So if you are after more information, please do check our website for that. Lisa, I think this one might come to you. Is it prohibited to bring pickles, both homemade and store bought and bottled fruits and vegetables or canned fruits and vegetables into Australia?

Lisa Jones:

Another great question. So it will depend on the item specifically that you're referring to. It is always best to refer to import conditions database BICON. Generally, commercial prepared and packaged jars and bottles can be permitted. As we said before, avoid bringing home prepared and home cooked items. Not all pickles are prohibited, but best thing, as I said before, declare it, present it on arrival. And if you're unsure potentially even leave it at home or contact us via the email links you'll see at the end of this presentation.

Deanna Emms:

This is the one we haven't haven't talked about today. I am from Vietnam and I want to ask if I can bring my pet dog to Australia. Can you please tell me what I need to do?

Lisa Jones:

First of all, you'll need to contact our office in Canberra and the, I think it's the animal program. So I jump at the end of this presentation, head onto our website, head onto the BICON again, the informations database and all the relevant links you'll need will be through there. You'll actually need to apply for a permit and you'll need to provide a lot of documentation, but jump on that website at the end and follow the links that way. But at this generally straight off the top of my head, not straight away. No. Without these permits and declarations you'll need to do.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks, Lisa. I'm sure lots of people will be looking at that. Okay. Adrian, are we allowed to bring in packaged meat floss? Why is meat restricted?

Adrian McIntosh:

Depends on the origin of the meat. Currently no pork products are permitted entry into Australia due to the risk of foot and mouth disease, African Swine Fever. For the other flosses, please consult BICON. Because this is something which is changing regularly and the best up to date information of the day will be held on BICON. So just in case, we give you the wrong advice. Check BICON prior to sending.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Adrian. And we will have a link to BICON at the end of this presentation. So please look out for that. Lisa and Adrian, this is one for you both. And I think this one's going to get very interesting. What is the most common seized item at the airport or in the mail centre?

Lisa Jones:

I'll start off there. So generally at the airport, we generally seize mainly on a day to day basis, fruit and vegetables. Obviously as well currently with the different disease outbreaks from the world, we're also like African Swine Fever, as mentioned earlier and foot and mouth disease. Our meat products. There's quite a high level of those products that are seized daily. Sometimes we've also seizing our spices at the moment. Quite high levels of that. So, but generally fruit, vegetables, unprepared fresh items are the main items we seize on a day to day basis.

Deanna Emms:

Adrian, what is the most commonly seized item that you see?

Adrian McIntosh:

The main things we see is our seeds. So there's a huge amount of seeds that we detain daily, as well as plant material. Wooden articles, bark and unidentified plant materials. And then the next one would be our meat products. So lots and lots of different meat products.

Deanna Emms:

Looks like we're getting a lot of the same answers here, which is I suppose, interesting to see. So I think another question is for both of you here. Can I bring in instant noodles and should they be declared?

Lisa Jones:

Instant noodles can be brought to the country. We always suggest to declare if you're unsure. They are generally provided. Don't have any meat sachets in them at all. They are considered as a quarantine free listed item. However, we always suggest you declare and present every type of food item you're bringing into the country. But they can be brought.

Deanna Emms:

Adrian, this one is for you. I'm a musician. Can I ship over my drums from the UK? Some of them have raw hide skins on them.

Adrian McIntosh:

So again, please consult BICON with your raw hide drums. We need a declaration from the manufacturer stating if there's had any treatment to those raw hide skins, as well as if they, or that the drums are more than 10 years old. So you'd have to provide a receipt with a specific... Like a link to that individual article. But again, please consult BICON and have a look there. As a general rule, if they're commercially manufactured, you should be able to get those items through if you have the correct documentation.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks Adrian. I can imagine it might be a noisy journey for them. Okay. Lisa, can I bring shoes in my luggage?

Lisa Jones:

Absolutely. You can bring your shoes in your luggage. So before you leave your country of origin, ensure your shoes are clean as best as possible. And if you're concerned or unsure how clean they are. If you may have been out running in a park area beforehand, even if you're not sure if they're not clean enough, just declare them. We'll have a look at them. We'll assist with getting them clean and determine it free before you enter the country.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Lisa. And I think this one's going to come to you again. Can I bring in dairy products like dried cheese and eggs?

Lisa Jones:

Once again, I'm going to say I refer to BICON before you travel. There will be various factors. The different disease outbreaks around the world and different countries when we can allow certain products to come into the country. So, as I said before, we travel, jump on, check out, BICON. And if you really must bring items, just declare them and we'll assess them on the day with the current rulings and requirements required to get into the country.

Deanna Emms:

Thank you, Lisa. Okay. I think we'll go to Adrian for this one first. And Lisa, you might have something to add. I have scuba diving gear that has been used in California. Can I send or bring this equipment in?

Adrian McIntosh:

Yes, you can. As long as it's fully dry and it's clean. We need to make sure that you're not bringing in any plant materials, especially around your boots. If you've been kneeling anywhere. So around the knee patch areas and elbows, as well as hooked up on any of your BC regs mask, et cetera. So ensure it's a hundred percent clean. No plant material. No mud, dirt, soil, or anything like that attached to your boots. And it must be thoroughly dry.

Deanna Emms:

And quickly before we finish up for the day. Do either of you have any final comments or takeaways that you would like to say?

Lisa Jones:

I guess, if we harped on a lot about a lot about this whole webinar today, always just declare any items you're unsure about. If you must bring them into the country, if you really must have them, that is so otherwise leave them at home and yeah, we'll see you when you're over the airport, but just declare them and then present them to us so we can let you know if you can or cannot bring them into the country.

Deanna Emms:

Thanks Lisa. Anything to add, Adrian?

Adrian McIntosh:

Certainly. If you're sending goods from overseas, please ensure that they're commercially manufactured. They're written in plain English so that the ingredients can be reviewed and reviewed and ensure that there's no biosecurity risk in those and for your own, I suppose, for your own costs and benefit, please ensure you check BICON prior to sending or having family members send anything over, because it could result in your goods being exported back to the sender or it could be destroyed or you may have to pay for some form of treatment. So save yourself the money. Just have a good check through BICON for all the articles you wish to send.

Deanna Emms:

Well thank you both for joining us today. Our time is up. On the screen, we have some links for further information to connect and to connect to us on social media. Thank you, Lisa, Adrian and everyone who has attended for your time and engagement. It's been a great session today and we look forward to talking with you in the future.