



24 August 2016

Biosecurity Advice 2016/29

Commencement of a review of biosecurity import requirements for fresh date fruit from the Middle East and North Africa region

This Biosecurity Advice announces the formal commencement of a regional review of biosecurity import requirements for fresh date fruit (greater than 30 per cent moisture content) from the major date growing areas of the Middle East and North Africa region (defined below).

This review is in response to import proposals for fresh date fruit (fresh dates) from the Arab Republic of Egypt (Egypt), the Republic of Iraq (Iraq), the Republic of Tunisia (Tunisia) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) will prepare a draft report which will be issued for stakeholder comment.

The formal commencement of this review of biosecurity import requirements (non-regulated risk analysis) is in response to formal requests for market access for fresh dates (greater than 30 per cent moisture content) from Egypt, the UAE, Iraq and Tunisia. The review will cover the Middle East and North Africa region which, for the purpose of this analysis, will include: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE and Yemen.

The department will be carrying out a regional review instead of individual reviews given pest statuses are similar across the region. All relevant pests in the region will be considered as part of the review.

Australia has established import conditions for fresh dates (greater than 30 per cent moisture content) from the USA (California) grown in areas free from fruit flies. Australia also has established import conditions for dried/semi-dried dates (30 per cent or less moisture content) that allow trade from all countries, providing certain risk management measures are undertaken.

A preliminary pest assessment for fresh dates from the Middle East and North Africa region has been undertaken. The assessment has found that (with one exception) the potential quarantine pests of concern identified so far are the same as, or similar to, pests that have been assessed previously by the department on dates (fresh, dried or semi-dried), or on other horticultural commodities, and that relevant risk management measures are already established. One new potential quarantine pest of concern has been assessed. The assessment has found that the likelihood and consequences of entry, establishment and spread are below Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP) and therefore this pest is not likely to require any risk management measures. This pest will be further assessed as

the review progresses. If new information about pests and diseases comes to light as the review progresses then this will be considered in the draft report.

Given the above, the risk analysis for fresh dates from the Middle East and North Africa region will be progressed as a review of biosecurity import requirements rather than a regulated Biosecurity Import Risk Analysis.

Further information on the review can be found in the Announcement Information Paper released with this advice notice and available at agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/memos/.

The next step is to prepare a draft report to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to comment on the review. The release of the draft report for comment is proposed for early 2017.

Another Biosecurity Advice will be issued to invite comment once the draft report has been completed and released on the department's website.

The department will share information and answer questions relating to this review at any time during the process. New scientific information will also be considered at any time.

If you have any further queries or require more information please contact us on plant@agriculture.gov.au.

Dr Marion Healy
First Assistant Secretary
Biosecurity Plant Division

Contact: Deb Langford
Telephone: +61 2 6272 5346
Email: plant@agriculture.gov.au