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Biosecurity Advice 2017/27

DRAFT REVIEW OF IMPORT CONDITIONS FOR CUCURBITACEOUS CROP SEEDS FOR SOWING INTO AUSTRALIA

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of the release of the *Draft review of import conditions for cucurbitaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia*.

This draft report identifies pathogens that require phytosanitary measures to manage the risk to a very low level in order to achieve Australia's appropriate level of protection.

This draft report is being issued for an extended 75 calendar day public consultation period from the standard 60 days, due to the Christmas/New Year holiday period. Stakeholder submissions are invited by 19 February 2018.

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders that the department has completed a draft review of import conditions for cucurbitaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia.

Australia relies on the overseas supply of seeds for cucurbitaceous vegetable crop production (such as cucumber, melon, pumpkin and zucchini). In recent years, seed-borne pathogens have increasingly been reported outside their known geographic distribution, partly due to increasing globalisation of the vegetable seed trade. Seed industry production practices are also changing and seed lots are now produced and multiplied in various countries. As such, this has increased the likelihood of the seeds' exposure to pathogens and the introduction of pathogens to new areas.

This review was initiated following recent incursions of some seed-borne pathogens in Australia, such as *Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus* (CGMMV), which infect cucurbitaceous crops, and is in keeping with the changing risk profile of cucurbit seeds. Other seed-borne pathogens associated with cucurbitaceous crop seeds have been identified that are of quarantine concern to Australia. These pests of quarantine concern include *Kyuri green mottle mosaic virus* (KGMMV), *Melon necrotic spot virus* (MNSV), *Phomopsis cucurbitae* and *Zucchini green mottle mosaic virus* (ZGMMV).

The draft report evaluates the effectiveness of existing risk management measures for identified biosecurity risks, and proposes additional mandatory measures to reduce the risk of introduction of the identified seed-borne pathogens to Australia.

The proposed additional mandatory measures are in addition to Australia's standard requirements for the importation of seeds for sowing (large and small seed lots) from all sources, and include:

- Mandatory testing or treatment (off-shore or on-shore) for seeds of *Citrullus lanatus* (watermelon), *Cucumis melo* (melon), *Cucumis sativus* (cucumber), *Cucurbita maxima* (squash), *Cucurbita moschata* (pumpkin), *Cucurbita pepo* (zucchini), *Lagenaria siceraria* (bottle gourd), *Trichosanthes cucumerina* (snake gourd), and any hybrid of these species as specified in this review.
- Seed lots tested or treated off-shore to be accompanied by an official government Phytosanitary Certificate endorsed with the additional declaration that the consignment has undergone mandatory treatment or testing in accordance with Australian import conditions.

Not all cucurbitaceous crop species reviewed were found to be affected by these pests of quarantine concern to Australia. The department proposes that the seeds of species not affected by quarantine pests can continue to be imported under Australia's standard requirements for the importation of seeds for sowing and will not require the additional mandatory measures of testing or treatment.

As a result of the draft review the department will introduce emergency measures on 31 January 2018, as an interim pending the final report recommendations being implemented. The emergency measures will require mandatory testing of cucurbit seeds associated with ZGMMV and KGMMV and mandatory fungicidal seed treatment for *Phomopsis cucurbitae*.

This review is the second in a series of vegetable seed policy reviews funded under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. Other families of vegetable seeds being reviewed are Apiaceae (carrot, celery, parsnip etc.), Brassicaceae (cauliflower, cabbage, etc.), and Solanaceae (capsicum, eggplant, tomato, etc.).

Information about the [vegetable seeds policy reviews](#) and the [risk analysis process](#) are available online. Printed copies of the review are available upon request.

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