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Biosecurity Advice 2018/17

RELEASE OF THE DRAFT REPORT FOR THE REVIEW OF BIOSECURITY IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR FRESH DATES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of the release of the *Draft report for the review of biosecurity import requirements for fresh dates from the Middle East and North Africa region*.

This draft report proposes that importation of fresh date fruit to Australia from all commercial production areas of the Middle East and North Africa region be permitted, subject to a range of biosecurity requirements.

The draft report is being issued for a 60 calendar day public consultation period. Written comments are invited by 28 September 2018.

This risk analysis is being conducted in response to market access requests from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia for fresh (greater than 30 per cent moisture content) date fruit (*Phoenix dactylifera*) to Australia.

This risk analysis was expanded to cover the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. For the purpose of this risk analysis, the MENA region includes the above listed countries as well as Algeria, Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Syria, Turkey and Yemen.

The MENA region produces the majority of the world's date fruit. A preliminary assessment of the pests associated with fresh date fruit that are of biosecurity concern to Australia found that the pests in most date producing areas in the MENA region are the same or of the same pest groups.

Grouping these market access requests into one risk analysis, and expanding it to cover a geographic region, is an innovative approach to conducting risk analyses. This innovative approach has been funded through the Australian Government's [Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper](#) to strengthen biosecurity surveillance and analysis.

The draft report identifies eight quarantine pests associated with fresh dates from the MENA region, that require risk management measures in combination with operational systems to achieve Australia's appropriate level of protection.

The pests associated with fresh dates from the MENA region requiring risk management measures are spider mite (*Eutetranychus palmatus*), date dust mite (*Oligonychus afrasiaticus*), Banks grass mite (*Oligonychus pratensis*), vine mealybug (*Planococcus ficus*), citriculus mealybug (*Pseudococcus cryptus*), Oriental fruit fly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*), peach fruit fly (*Bactrocera zonata*) and Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*).

The proposed risk management measures include:

- consignment freedom for spider mites and mealybugs verified by pre-export visual inspection, and remedial action if found
- area freedom for fruit flies, which may include specifically identified pest free areas, pest free places of production, and/or pest free production sites, or fruit treatment considered to be effective against all life stages of fruit flies (for example, cold disinfestation treatment or irradiation).

Stakeholders are invited to have their say on the draft report. The closing date for submissions is 28 September 2018. The department will consider all stakeholder comments received during the public consultation period in preparing a final report.

The draft report and information about the [risk analysis process](#) are available online. Printed copies of the report are available on request.

Stakeholders interested in receiving information and updates on biosecurity risk analyses are invited to subscribe via the department's new online [subscription](#) service. By subscribing to [Biosecurity Risk Analysis Plant](#), you will receive Biosecurity Advises and other notifications relating to plant biosecurity policy, including this risk analysis

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