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Plant Biosecurity Advice 2019/P02

RELEASE OF THE FINAL 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 *Final report for the review of biosecurity import requirements for fresh dates from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region*.

The final report recommends that the importation of loose, fresh dates (fruit with greater than 30 per cent moisture content) from all commercial production areas of the MENA region be permitted, subject to a range of biosecurity requirements.

The final report takes into account comments received from stakeholders on the draft report released on 31 July 2018.

The department announced the commencement of this risk analysis on 24 August 2016 (via [Biosecurity Advice 2016-29](#)) and released the draft report for public consultation on 31 July 2018 ([Biosecurity Advice 2018-17](#)). Comments from stakeholders on the draft report were taken into consideration in preparing the final report.

This risk analysis was conducted to assess market access requests from Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, and was expanded to cover the MENA region.

For the purposes of this analysis, the MENA region is taken to comprise Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the UAE and Yemen.

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

Eight quarantine pests have been identified in this risk analysis as requiring risk management measures to achieve Australia's appropriate level of protection. All of these pests are arthropods.

The eight quarantine pests requiring risk management measures are:

- Fruit flies: Oriental fruit fly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*), peach fruit fly (*Bactrocera zonata*) and Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*)
- Mites: spider mite (*Eutetranychus palmatus*), date dust mite (*Oligonychus afrasiaticus*) and Banks grass mite (*Oligonychus pratensis*)

- Mealybugs: vine mealybug (*Planococcus ficus*) and citriculus mealybug (*Pseudococcus cryptus*).

The final report recommends risk management measures, combined with operational systems, to reduce the risks posed by the eight quarantine pests to achieve the appropriate level of protection for Australia. These 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).

The final report, stakeholder comments and the department's response, and information about the risk analysis process are available from the [department's website](#). 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 online [subscription](#) service. By subscribing to [Biosecurity Risk Analysis Plant](#), you will receive Biosecurity Advices and other notifications relating to plant biosecurity policy.

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