



Biosecurity Fact Sheet

Cucurbitaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia

December 2017



Key points

- The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is reviewing the import conditions of four vegetable seed groups to safeguard Australia from exotic pests and diseases.
- On 6 December 2017, the department released the *Draft review of import conditions for cucurbitaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia*.
- Comments on the draft report are welcome by 19 February 2018.

Rationale for the review

Australian vegetable producers rely on the overseas supply of seeds for sowing vegetable crops. In recent years, seed-borne pathogens have increasingly been reported outside their known distribution, in part linked to the increasing globalisation of the vegetable seed trade.

To address this risk, the department is conducting a [vegetable seed policy review](#), funded under the Australian Government's Agriculture Competitiveness White Paper, and is one means by which Australia is strengthening its biosecurity.

The vegetable seed policy review is focused on four families including Apiaceae (carrot, celery etc), Cucurbitaceae (melon, cucumber etc), Brassicaceae (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage etc), and Solanaceae (tomato, capsicum etc). The review will facilitate the trade of vegetable seeds, whilst protecting Australia from the threat of exotic pathogens that could cause significant economic impacts to crops.

The [draft review of import conditions for apiaceous crops seeds for sowing in Australia](#) was issued for stakeholder comment in September 2017. The comment period closed in November 2017 and the review is now being finalised.

The second in the series of vegetable seed reviews, the [review of import conditions for cucurbitaceous crop seeds for sowing into Australia](#) is focused on nine sub-families of cucurbitaceous crops. In 2015–16*, the cucurbitaceous vegetable industry was valued at \$458.7m, including the most valuable crops of watermelons/melons (\$165.8m), cucumbers (\$164.2m), pumpkins (\$68.2m) and zucchinis (\$60.5m).

The review was initiated following an incursion of *Cucumber green mottle mosaic virus* (CGMMV) into Australia in 2014, and the subsequent introduction of emergency measures for CGMMV, which were later also introduced for *Melon necrotic spot virus* (MNSV).

* *Horticulture Innovation Australia—Australia Horticulture Statistics Handbook (2015–16)*.

Progress of the review

The draft report identifies, in addition to CGMMV, four potential quarantine pests associated with cucurbitaceous crop seeds for sowing, these being: *Kyuri green mottle mosaic virus* (KGMMV), *Melon necrotic spot virus* (MNSV), *Phomopsis cucurbitae* (PC) and *Zucchini green mottle mosaic virus* (ZGMMV).

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

- Mandatory testing or treatment (off-shore or on-shore) for seeds of *Citrullus lanatus*, *Cucumis melo*, *Cucumis sativus*, *Cucurbita maxima*, *Cucurbita moschata*, *Cucurbita pepo*, *Lagenaria siceraria* and *Trichosanthes cucumerina* 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 quarantine pests. The draft review proposes that the crop species not affected by these quarantine pests continue to be imported under Australia's standard requirements for the importation of seeds for sowing and will not require the additional measures of mandatory testing or treatment.

As a result of the draft review the department intends to introduce emergency measures on 31 January 2018 as an interim pending the final report recommendations being implemented, requiring mandatory testing of cucurbit seeds associated with KGMMV and ZGMMV, and mandatory fungicidal seed treatment for *Phomopsis cucurbitae* in *Cucumis melo* melon seeds, as shown below*.

Table 1: Testing requirements for quarantine pests of cucurbitaceous crop seeds

HOST SPECIES	CGMMV	MNSV	KGMMV	ZGMMV	PC
Regulatory status	Currently tested	Currently tested	Mandatory testing*	Mandatory testing*	Fungicidal treatment*
<i>Citrullus lanatus</i> (watermelon)	√	√	√	√	
<i>Cucumis melo</i> (melon)	√	√			√
<i>Cucumis sativus</i> (cucumber)	√		√		
<i>Cucurbita maxima</i> (squash)	√				
<i>Cucurbita moschata</i> (pumpkin)	√				
<i>Cucurbita pepo</i> (zucchini)	√		√	√	
<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i> (bottle gourd)	√				
<i>Trichosanthes cucumerina</i> (snake gourd)	√				

Next steps

Public comment on the draft report is welcome by 19 February 2018. The final report will be published after consideration of stakeholder submissions.

Stakeholders can make their submission and gain further information about the review via the department's website: agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/plant/cucurbitaceous-crop-seeds. Register your interest in import risk analyses to receive regular updates via the department's website at agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/stakeholder

 Biosecurity Plant Division +61 6272 5094

 plantstakeholders@agriculture.gov.au

 agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity