



Media statement

7 January 2017

Federal agriculture department suspends prawn imports

The Director of Biosecurity has suspended uncooked prawn imports into Australia. The Director took this action in response to information from the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources that the level of risk associated with uncooked imported prawns (including prawn meat) had become unacceptable.

All new shipments (departing overseas ports on or after 9 January 2017) of suspended imported prawn products that arrive in Australia will be required to be exported or destroyed. Imported prawn products currently in transit to Australia will be subject to a new and enhanced 100% inspection and testing regime.

The decision to suspend the trade has not been taken lightly. Australia is a trade-dependent nation with valuable and ongoing two-way trading relationships around the world.

The department recognises that this action is likely to have flow-on effects for Australia's consumers.

However the department has responsibility for safeguarding Australia's agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries worth over \$60 billion to our economy, which must take priority.

The suspension will remain in place until the Australian Government is satisfied that the risk associated with imported prawns is managed to an acceptably low level.

The suspension will take effect at 12.01 am AEDT Monday 9 January 2017.

Background

- The department reminds consumers this is not a food safety issue.
 - White spot disease does not present a risk to human health.
 - It is a disease that affects the mortality and production rates of prawns and other crustaceans.
- The department also reminds recreational fishers that prawns purchased from the supermarket for human consumption should never be used as bait or berley.
 - Unused prawns, or parts of prawns, should never be disposed of in Australia's waterways.
- The suspension applies to:
 - uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat; and

- uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat that have been marinated for human consumption.
- The following prawn products are exempt from the suspension:
 - uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat sourced from New Caledonia;
 - uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat processed into dumplings, spring rolls, samosas, other dim sum-type products and other similar products;
 - uncooked prawns and uncooked prawn meat which have been coated for human consumption by being breaded, crumbed or battered.