

RISK BACKGROUND

Dairy Products

Overview



(Image: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, *Different types of cheese*)

Dairy products such as milk, protein powders, cheese, yoghurt or composite products containing these ingredients can pose a risk of introducing a number of exotic diseases to Australia. The consequences of an exotic disease outbreak in Australia would be severe and would impact upon the Australian community, environment and economy.

Commercial consignments of product containing greater than 10% dairy from countries other than New Zealand require an import permit. The import conditions generally require a government certificate from the country of export. The following are common requirements for managing risk on these certificates:

- Species of origin
- Disease freedom of the country of origin
- Milk was collected from healthy animals
- Disease freedom of the country of manufacture
- Date of manufacture
- Milk was pasteurised.

Importers and department staff should always refer to BICON for the current conditions and ensure these are met.

Key risks

Some examples of exotic diseases that could be introduced by dairy products include:

Foot and mouth disease	Brucella abortus
Peste des petits ruminants	Brucella melitensis
Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia	Mycobacterium bovis
Lumpy skin disease	Contagious agalactia
Sheep Pox	Maedi-visna
Goat Pox	Jembrana disease.
Camel Pox	

We use multiple controls that work together to ensure the biosecurity risk associated with imported dairy products meet Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection (ALOP) which is very low risk but not zero.

Sourcing milk from healthy animals reduces the risk that disease agents will be present in the milk.

Manufacturing processes such as pasteurisation, retorting or ripening (cheese) can inactivate some disease agents to levels sufficient to mitigate their risk.

Where a disease risk is not adequately mitigated by processing, it can be reduced by requiring the export chain (country of origin, manufacture, export and transit) to be free from disease.

Products that contain imported dairy ingredients must not be fed to animals unless they have been imported using a permit that allows for this. This is the case even if the product is safe for human consumption. Feeding dairy products to animals creates a direct pathway for a disease agent to come into contact with susceptible species.