

# RISK BACKGROUND

## Feathers and manufactured items containing feathers

### Overview



(Image: Arthur Mostead, Turkeys)

Feathers, and manufactured items containing feathers, 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.

An import permit is generally not required, however the feathers must be free of all animal tissue and other biosecurity risk material. The feathers must be contained within a finished manufactured product or have undergone an approved treatment.

Feathers and articles containing feathers may be inspected on arrival to verify they are free from biosecurity risk material. Where risk material is found the goods may be directed for treatment prior to release from biosecurity control.

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 feathers include:

Notifiable avian influenza viruses (HPAI and LPNAI)	Infectious bursal disease
Newcastle disease virus	Salmonella of biosecurity concern

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

Feathers must be free of tissue and other biosecurity risk material, this reduces the risk that disease agents will be present.

Feathers are often contained within manufactured articles such as pillows, doonas and jackets and are normally cleaned during the manufacturing process. Where the feathers are clean and fully contained, the likelihood of relevant disease agents surviving the manufacturing process and coming into contact with a susceptible species is very low.

For other products such as loose feathers, feather boas, costume wings and dream catchers applying a treatment such as gamma irradiation, moist heat, autoclave sterilisation or formaldehyde fumigation can inactivate the relevant disease agents and reduce the biosecurity risk to a very low level.

Products that contain imported feathers, or derivatives of feathers, must not be used in animal feed, veterinary therapeutics/medicines, fertilisers, bioremedial products or for growing purposes unless they have been imported using a permit that allows for this. Using imported feathers in this way provides a direct pathway for a disease agent to come into contact with susceptible species, the biosecurity risk is unacceptably high.