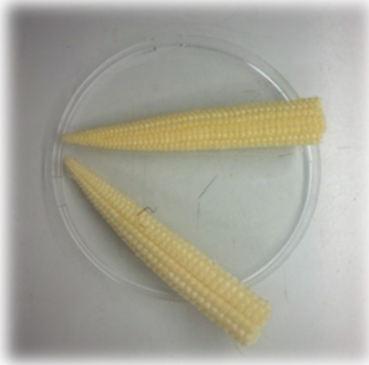


RISK BACKGROUND

Fresh corn for human consumption

Overview



(Image: Immature corn (*Zea mays*), The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, (2018))

Fresh sweet corn and immature corn (*Zea mays*) for human consumption does not require an import permit but must be:

- free from husks and silks
- subject to pre-export inspection by the exporting country
- accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate
- securely packaged (i.e. insect proof)
- inspected on-arrival.

Immature corn can be imported from any country. The department has not developed import conditions for sweet corn from countries other than New Zealand.

Importers and department staff should ensure that the BICON conditions are met and that fruit is free from biosecurity risks, as well as the key risks described below.

Key risks

Arthropod pests

Imported corn can carry a number of arthropod pests including mites, ants and thrips.

- Thrips are plant feeding insects can vector orthotospoviruses which may cause considerable economic consequences across a wide range of fruit, vegetable, legume and ornamental crops. For this reason, many thrips are considered to be actionable for Australia.
- Armyworms from the Noctuidae family, such as the fall army worm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) are a pest associated with corn. Armyworms are general feeders that can cause damage to plant foliage such as the whorl, leaves, husks and cobs

To reduce the biosecurity risks associated with arthropods, Australia requires that sweet corn and immature corn are de-husked and de-silked which removes host sites for arthropods and aids with inspection. Consignments will also be inspected on-arrival to confirm freedom from arthropod pests.

Pathogens

Sweet corn can introduce pathogens of concern such as boil smut, bacterial wilt and seed-borne viruses. The department currently only permits sweet corn grown in New Zealand which is free from these pathogens and their vectors. The risk of seed-borne pathogens being introduced on immature corn is adequately managed as this type of corn cannot germinate. Imported corn will be inspected on-arrival in Australia to ensure that the consignment is free from disease symptoms.

Other pathway risks

Fresh corn for human consumption may contain a range of other biosecurity risk material including other live insects, disease symptoms, and contaminants such as soil, weed seeds, hitchhiker pests and trash. These risks are managed through the range of import conditions outlined above