

RISK BACKGROUND

Fresh dates for human consumption

Overview



(Image: The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, *Permitted stem fragments on fresh dates (Phoenix dactylifera) from USA*)

Fresh dates (*Phoenix dactylifera*) for human consumption do not require an import permit but must be:

- sourced from California, United States of America (USA)
- free from stem fragments over 2cm in length
- subject to pre-export inspection by the exporting country
- accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate
- securely packaged (i.e. insect proof)
- inspected on-arrival.

The department has not developed import conditions for fresh dates from states or countries other than California, USA.

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

Fruit fly

Fresh dates are a host of fruit flies such as Mediterranean fruit fly ([Ceratitis capitata](#)), Caribbean fruit fly ([Anastrepha suspensa](#)) and peach fruit fly ([Bactrocera zonata](#)). Fruit flies are [national plant priority pests](#) for Australia as they are highly invasive due to their wide host range and potential to enter, establish and spread through the movement of infected fruit. Eggs are laid below the skin of host fruit where larvae feed and develop. Some necrosis may occur around the puncture site on affected fruit.

Area freedom phytosanitary certification requirements are in place to manage fruit fly risks on fresh dates sourced from California, USA.

Other pathway risks

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