

RISK BACKGROUND

Ration packs for international military and rescue groups

Overview



Ration packs may contain a range of animal and plant ingredients that could introduce exotic pests and 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.

In most cases a permit is required to import ration packs containing animal and plant material. The following are common requirements for ration packs being used by visiting international groups:

- Ration packs are strictly for the use of military groups or rescue taskforces for whom they were imported.
- Ration packs must not be sold or gifted to the Australian public.
- Any unused ration packs must be exported with the group that imported them.
- Components in the ration packs that contain animal ingredients above specified thresholds must be retorted and shelf stable.
- The ration packs must not contain fresh fruit, vegetables or raw nuts.
- Dried fruit must not contain skin or seeds.

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

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Key risks

Some examples of exotic diseases that could be introduced by ration packs include:

Foot and mouth disease	Infectious bursal disease
Notifiable avian influenza (HPAI and LPNAI)	African swine fever
Newcastle disease	Classical swine fever
Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)	Lumpy Skin Disease

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

Retorting components containing animal or plant ingredients inactivates most disease agents (with the exception of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies) to levels sufficient to mitigate their risk.

Fresh fruit, vegetables and raw nuts can harbour plant pathogens or be capable of germinating and becoming an invasive species. Ensuring ration packs are free of these ingredients reduces this risk.

Ration packs imported using these conditions are only for the use of visiting international groups, must not be sold to the public and any excess must be exported with the group. This reduces the risk that ration packs will come into contact with the environment or animals that may be susceptible to residual disease agents.

Imported ration packs must not be fed to animals. This is the case even if the products are safe for human consumption. Feeding ration packs to animals creates a direct pathway for a disease agent to come into contact with susceptible species.