

RISK BACKGROUND

Finfish (excluding salmon)

Overview



Imported finfish have the potential to introduce a number of significant exotic diseases to Australia. The consequences of an exotic disease outbreak would be severe and would impact upon the Australian community, environment and economy.

Finfish which have been processed to an acceptable level do not require a permit to be imported. If the fish has not been processed adequately, a permit must be obtained. Permits contain conditions that must be met to manage the risks associated with the goods, and can include:

- The fish are processed in an approved facility under the control of the competent authority.
- The fish were inspected and found to be free from visible lesions.

The departments import permit assessment includes an analysis of the species intended for import, to determine the correct conditions depending on the fish's disease risk, and the country from which it is sourced.

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

Key risks

Examples of exotic disease pathogens that could be introduced via imports of finfish can include:

- *Aquabirnaviruses*
- *Photobacterium damsela piscicida*
- *Red Sea Bream Iridovirus*
- *Viral haemorrhagic septicaemia virus*

Risk mitigation

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

Processing the finfish in an approved facility, under the control of the competent authority, reduces the chance that diseased fish will be exported to Australia.

Removing the head, gills and viscera takes away tissues that may contain high concentrations of infectious agents. Fish which are processed to at least this level are permitted to be imported without an import permit.

Inspection of the fish and checking no visible lesions are present provides assurance that the fish have not been exposed to infections which could be caused by an exotic disease.

Imported finfish, and products containing imported finfish for human consumption, must not be used as bait or feed for animals. This applies even if the product is safe for human consumption. Using finfish as bait or feeding it to animals creates a direct pathway for a disease agent to come into contact with a susceptible species.