RISK BACKGROUND

Fresh pomegranates for human consumption

Overview

(Image: U-surfer, (2016), *Pomegranate*, https://flic.kr/p/NbuJQQ (CC BY 2.0))

Whole fresh pomegranates (*Punica granatum*) for human consumption can be sourced from New Zealand (NZ) or Arizona, California or Texas in United States of America (USA) or India.

All pathways require the following:

- subject to pre-export inspection by the exporting country
- accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate
- securely packed (i.e insect proof)
- inspected on-arrival.

Only whole fresh pomegranates from India require a permit.

Pomegranates from the USA must be sourced from an area free from economically significant fruit flies. They also require mandatory pre-export methyl bromide fumigation to manage pests that include navel orange worm (*Amyelois transitella*) and omnivorous leafroller (*Platynota stultana*).

Whole fresh pomegranates from India required cold treatment to mitigate risks associated with fruit flies of economic significance.

The department has not developed import conditions for fresh pomegranates from states or countries that are not listed above.

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

Pomegranates are a host of fruit flies that are of economic significance to Australia, such as the Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*) and Oriental fruit fly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*). Fruit flies are highly invasive, have a large host range and have the potential to cause significant impact on Australia's horticultural industries. For this reason they are considered a national plant priority pest. Eggs are laid below the skin of host fruit where larvae feed and develop. Some necrosis may be occur around the puncture site on affected fruit.

As these fruit flies are not recorded in New Zealand, risk management measures for fruit flies are not required for this pathway. Fruit from the USA must be sourced from a state/county that is free from all economically important fruit flies or an area greater than 15 km from any fruit fly declared areas.

Fruit from India requires cold treatment.

Navel orange worm

The navel orange worm (*Amyelois transitella*) is present in the USA and is a pest of pomegranates, citrus, grapes, and a number of tree nut species. Larvae are internal feeders and can cause significant reductions to production yields. The biosecurity risk associated with *A. transitella* on pomegranates sourced from USA is managed by pre-export methyl bromide fumigation.

As navel orange worm is not recorded in New Zealand and India, risk management measures are not required for this pathway.

Omnivorous leafroller

The omnivorous leafroller (*Platynota stultana*) occurs in USA and is a pest of grapevines, citrus, cotton, apples and pears, stonefruit and kiwifruit. Larvae nest in shoot terminals before migrating to fruit and entering through the calyx where they feed on the kernels and pupate, which can lead to the development of disease and reduction in commercial quality. Measures such as Phytosanitary certification and inspection on-arrival manages the risk of this pest on fruit sourced from USA.

As the omnivorous leafroller is not recorded in New Zealand or India, risk management measures are not required for this pathway.

Other pathway risks

Fresh pomegranate 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 biosecurity risks are managed through the range of import conditions including but not limited to pre-export phytosanitary inspection.

Import conditions for whole pomegranates from India require agreed packing house practices (such as use of air guns) as well as phytosanitary inspection to manage a range of pests including but not limited to mites, scales, mealybugs.

Bacterial blight of pomegranate (*Xanthomonas axonopodis pv. punicae*) on fruit from India is managed by a systems approach that includes agreed infield and processing facility activities.