

# 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 may require an import permit dependent on country of origin. The following also apply:

- Import conditions are for loose single fruit only.
- Small lengths of stem and fruit cap are permitted
- Subject to pre-export inspection by the exporting country
- Accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate
- Fruit requires a phytosanitary measure to manage the risk associated with fruit flies of economic importance.
- Securely packaged (i.e. insect proof)
- Inspected on-arrival.

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*), Peach fruit fly (*Bactrocera zonata*), Oriental fruit fly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*). 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 is in place to manage fruit fly risks on fresh dates sourced from California, USA.

Fruit from the Middle East and North Africa region require a phytosanitary treatment to manage fruit fly risks.

#### Other pathway risks

Fresh dates for human consumption may also contain spider mites and mealybugs that are managed through pre-export inspection and remedial action if live pests are detected.

A range of other biosecurity risk material including live insects, disease symptoms, and contaminants such as soil, weed seeds, hitchhiker pests and trash are managed through the range of import conditions and inspection on arrival.

The Australian date industry has raised concerns regarding the red palm weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*). This pest does not have a life stage associated with the fruit and adults would be visible at phytosanitary inspection.