



MAA 2020-09: China: Fish: Border measures – Letter of Guarantee

Date of issue: 22 June 2020

Date of effect: Immediate

Previous advice: MAA2020-08

Attention:

Industries—Industry bodies - Seafood Export Consultative Committee

Export establishments

Licensed exporters

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment —Central and Regional offices

Purpose

This Market Access Advice (MAA) provides information to exporters, which may be used to respond to potential requests for additional guarantees regarding the safety of exported fish and fish products.

Summary of key points

The department has received advice from exporters that Chinese authorities are seeking declarations from Australian export fish establishments, in the form of a Letter of Guarantee that fish and fish products exported comply with China's laws, regulations and standards and the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) advice on 'COVID-19 and food safety: guidance for food businesses'.

The Letter of Guarantee further requires fish establishments to take all necessary measures to eliminate food safety risks and protect consumer health and safety if cases or suspected cases of COVID-19 are detected at the establishment.

The General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) has also requested the department note the WHO and FAO advice on 'COVID-19 and food safety: guidance for food businesses' and provide assurances on managing food safety during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The department is responding promptly to GACC to reiterate previous assurances and that the department supports the advice of the World Health Organization (WHO), that transmission through food is highly unlikely and there is no evidence of this occurring with SARS-CoV-2 globally to date.

Furthermore, Australia has a strong regulatory system that requires all Australian facilities involved in the processing and export of food to implement appropriate hygiene and contamination control measures to mitigate the risk of the potential spread of COVID-19 within the scope of their activities. The Australian food industry responded quickly by implementing strict processing controls to manage the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. These controls are best practice in terms of personnel and workplace hygiene, social distancing, use of personal

protective equipment, health checks and contact tracing and are consistent with the “COVID-19 and food safety: Guidance for food businesses” published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and World Health Organisation.

In the event that a new case/suspected case of COVID-19 is detected in a food enterprise, Australian health and food authorities will follow WHO guidelines to ensure that all necessary measures to eliminate any food safety risks and to protect consumer health will be taken.

The department understands that the situation is subject to change, and therefore urges exporters to work closely with their importers prior to dispatching consignments.

Further updates will be provided as these become available.

The information provided in this advice is current at the time of writing and is intended for use as guidance only and should not be taken as definitive or exhaustive. The Commonwealth endeavours to keep information current and accurate, however, it may be subject to change without notice. Exporters are encouraged to verify these details with their importers prior to undertaking production/exports. The Commonwealth will not accept liability for any loss resulting from reliance on information contained in this notice.

Further information

Contact exportstandards@awe.gov.au if you have any queries.