

## Standard Management Rule 23: Hijiki Seaweed

**From the 1st July 2009 NZFSA replaced this SMR with a standardised format for all Imported Food Requirements.**

**For the current version refer to the Imported Food Requirement for Hijiki Seaweed.**

### Recent Updates:

Date	Location	Information
1 July 2009	All	Made obsolete refer to the Imported Food Requirement for Hikiki Seaweed.
20 July 2007	<a href="#">Section 3.4</a>	Sampling and Inspection costs have been updated
05 April 2005	All	The permanent food standard came into effect
08 February 2005	<a href="#">Section 1.0</a>	New tariff code specific to hijiki created by Customs. General tariff codes for seaweed removed.

### Background Information:

#### SUMMARY OF HAZARD:

Hijiki seaweed was included as a prescribed (high risk) food following the detection of high levels of inorganic arsenic in its products.

Hijiki seaweed (*Hizikia fusiforme*) is an uncommon variety of seaweed harvested mainly from the seas off Japan and Korea. It is imported into New Zealand in its dried form where it is also known as 'mehijiki, 'hiziki' or 'hijaki' seaweed. Hijiki seaweed is easy to distinguish from other seaweeds as it is almost black and in a shredded form. It is sold for use in some soups, salads and vegetable dishes and is used mainly as an appetiser or starter in some Japanese restaurants. It is not used

in Chinese restaurants, sushi or rice crackers. Hijiki does not appear to be used as an ingredient in any other foods.

Arsenic occurs in both the organic and inorganic forms. Inorganic arsenic is the toxic form of arsenic for humans. Inorganic arsenic is a known carcinogen in humans and exposure to high levels has been linked with gastrointestinal effects, anaemia and liver damage. Inorganic arsenic has not been found in other seaweeds used in food.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION ON AGENCY ROLES:**

##### **New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA):**

NZFSA was established on 1 July 2002 as a semi-autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The Authority has responsibility for the food functions previously managed by MAF and the Ministry of Health. Establishment of NZFSA provides a more integrated approach to food safety in New Zealand. NZFSA is the controlling authority for imports of food and sets policies, criteria and procedures to monitor the safety of imported food for human consumption and for food containers (see [www.nzfsa.govt.nz](http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz)).

- **Auckland Central Clearing House (ACCH):**

ACCH is part of the Auckland Regional Public Health Service, and is contracted by NZFSA to carry out day to day operational procedures. The ACCH provides the initial point of contact for information to importers and customs brokers throughout New Zealand. It facilitates the inspection and clearance services of identified imported products.

- **Public Health Units (PHU):**

Food and Health Protection Officers (Food/HPOs) employed by the various public health services are responsible for the inspection and sampling of high-risk imported foods under the coordination of the ACCH.

##### **Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry – Biosecurity NZ:**

Biosecurity NZ leads New Zealand's biosecurity and animal welfare programmes. One of its key missions is to protect New Zealand's unique biodiversity by managing risks to plant and animal health and animal welfare – this includes managing the risk of all imported products including foods. Biosecurity NZ's work in New Zealand is mandated by two key pieces of legislation: The Biosecurity Act 1993 and the Animal Welfare Act 1999. Importers should contact Biosecurity NZ directly to check their requirements: [www.biosecurity.govt.nz](http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz).

## Import Criteria Applying to Hijiki Seaweed

### 1.0 Products targeted:

Prescribed foods are targeted at the border using the New Zealand Customs tariff code system. Products classified with the following tariff codes are captured under this rule:

Tariff codes targeted for Hijiki seaweed	
1212 Seaweeds and other algae	
1212.20.00.11F	Hijiki (Mehijiki, Hiziki, Hijaki) Seaweed ( <i>Hizikia fusiforme</i> )

#### INADVERTENT CAPTURES:

This is no longer an issue with the establishment of the above tariff code for Hijiki seaweed.

### 2.0 Clearance options:

The following is the only option available to clear consignments captured under this rule:

#### 2.1 Clearance sampling and testing on arrival in New Zealand:

All Hijiki seaweed is sampled and tested in New Zealand according to the sampling and testing protocol in the table below.

### 3.0 Sampling and testing protocol:

#### 3.1 Chemical and Inspection criteria:

In order to ascertain if a consignment is safe samples are taken for laboratory testing. The following criteria are used when deciding if a consignment captured by this rule is safe to be released:

- Less than 1 mg/kg of inorganic arsenic
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## 3.2 Sampling requirements:

### 3.2.1 When to sample consignments:

ACCH identifies which consignments are to be sampled and tested.

The frequency of sampling is based on the sampling and testing history developed by each importer for a specific product. A “specific product” means a product that is exactly the same i.e. the same size bottle/packet, variety, brand, and is manufactured by the same company. As a compliant history is developed, the frequency of sampling and inspection is reduced for the importer for that specific product. This reduction is governed by the “switching rule”, which follows the steps below:

- Sampling initially starts out at the *tightened* level (where 100% or every consignment is sampled and tested) until 5 compliant consignments have been cleared, when:
- Sampling is then lowered to the *normal* level (where 20% or 1 consignment in 5 is sampled and tested), until another 5 compliant consignments have been cleared, when:
- Sampling is then lowered to the *reduced* level (where 10% or one consignment in 10 is sampled and tested).
- The frequency of sampling returns back to the *tightened* when a product is tested and found not to comply.

ACCH selects the frequency of sampling that is to apply to an imported product at any particular time using the *Switching Rule*. However, application of the *Switching Rule* may also be affected by the difficulty of managing the hazards applying to particular food products e.g. peanuts & pistachios are not able to be tested at a *reduced* level. Importers can contact their local PHU to discuss application of switching rules.

### 3.2.2 Who samples consignments:

Sampling must be carried out by PHUs, who will arrange for one of their Food/HPOs to inspect and sample any consignment identified as requiring testing.

### 3.2.3 Products to be sampled:

Samples should be taken for each specific type of product (e.g. same size packet, variety, brand, and is manufactured by the same company).

### 3.2.4 Number of lots to be sampled per consignment:

Food/HPOs select the lot(s) to be inspected and sampled. Where a consignment contains more than one lot, the number of lots to be sampled is calculated using the table below. This table is standard for all prescribed foods.

Number of lot codes in consignment	Number of lots to sample	Reject lots if $n$ samples fail
1	1	$n = 1$
2 - 8	2	$n = 1$
9 - 15	3	$n = 1$
16 - 25	5	$n = 1$
> 26	8	$n = 1$

Obsolete

### **3.2.5 Number of samples to take per lot:**

Each product has its own sample requirements. For Hijiki seaweed the number of samples to take per lot is:

- One sample per lot

### **3.2.6 Sample weight:**

- One packet/sample (weighing a minimum of 10g)

## **3.3 Testing requirements:**

### **3.3.1 NZFSA approved laboratories:**

Samples of imported food can only be tested by laboratories approved by NZFSA. At present only laboratories that are accredited by International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) to do the relevant test are approved by NZFSA.

The following laboratory is approved to test food samples for INORGANIC ARSENIC:

- ESR Mt Albert, Ph 09 815 3670, Auckland

### **3.3.2 Methodology to be applied by laboratories:**

The preferred method of INORGANIC ARSENIC ANALYSIS is:

Acid extraction of inorganic arsenic following methodology by Vaessen and van Ooik, Z. Lebensm. Unters. Forsch. (1989) 189: 232-235; followed by Quantisation of inorganic arsenic by hydride generation atomic absorption spectroscopy.

### **3.3.3 Compositing samples:**

Samples CANNOT be composited for inorganic arsenic analysis.

## **3.4 Sampling and testing costs:**

All sampling and testing is at the importers expense. Permit and sampling costs are listed below, are in New Zealand dollars and include GST:

- Permit application assessment : \$48 per line assessment + \$96/hour
- Sampling and inspection: \$96 per hour payable in 15-minute units

For laboratory costs, contact NZFSA approved laboratories.

### 3.5 Reject criteria:

PHUs will apply the following criteria to lots after inspection and sampling:

**REJECT** when samples contain equal to or more than 1 mg/kg of inorganic arsenic

- When lots fail the import criteria, those lots and any untested lots in the same consignment are rejected.
- Lots that fail the import criteria are not re-tested.
- Importers have the option of having any untested lots sampled and tested, and if any of these lots pass they can be cleared. Any untested lots in the same consignment of a reject lot must be sampled for clearance at the rate detailed in *Inspection Requirements and Testing Requirements* above.

### 3.6 Special conditions that may apply:

In unique or out of the ordinary situations, NZFSA reserves the right to either stop trade or replace the above sampling regime with another programme of testing in order to regain confidence in a product.

Obsolète