

Imported food requirements: Spices – nutmeg

Recent Updates:

From 17 August 2009, imports of nutmeg do not require monitoring at the border and do not require NZFSA clearance for sale.

Date	Location	Information
1 July 2009	Section 1.0	Structure revised.

1.0 Scope

1.1 The purpose of this Imported Food Requirement is to provide administrative guidance to a Food Act Officer (FAO) as to the matters they may take into consideration when determining whether they have been satisfied by a person who imports food into New Zealand that the food complies in all respects with-

- (a) All relevant provisions of the Food Act 1981; and
- (b) All relevant provisions of any regulations made pursuant to the Food Act 1981; and
- (c) All applicable food standards.

Nothing in this Imported Food Requirement limits the powers of a FAO appointed under the Food Act 1981.

1.2 Legislative requirement: [Food \(Prescribed Foods\) Standard 2007](#)

- Products covered under the scope of these requirements are Prescribed Foods for the purpose of import into New Zealand (Section 11P, Food Act 1981).
- No person may import these products into New Zealand unless that person has satisfied an officer that the food complies.

1.3 This Imported Food Requirement sets out clearance options and procedures for importers of prescribed foods that an importer may follow when aiming to satisfy a FAO that the food complies with the Food Act 1981.

1.4 These clearance options and procedures apply in addition to and after a prescribed food has gained clearance from MAF Biosecurity New Zealand. Importers should check those requirements at: [MAF Biosecurity New Zealand](#).

1.5 Products include:

- Nutmeg.
- Whole, crushed, ground.

1.6 [Tariff codes targeted](#)

1.7 **Food safety hazard:** Mould and insects.

1.8 **Import permitted with conditions from:** All countries.

2.0 Importer Clearance Options

2.1 The clearance options and procedures in this Imported Food Requirement apply to **nutmeg products** and are in addition to clearance requirements detailed in the [Import Clearance Procedure](#).

2.2 Importers must also meet the requirements of the Food (Importer Listing) Standard 2008 and the Food (Importer General Requirements) Standard 2008. Importers should also read and understand the [Food Importer Standards Guidance](#) before sourcing products to import.

2.3 For **nutmeg products**, importers have a responsibility under the Food (Importer General Requirements) Standard 2008 to ensure imports are at minimal risk of insect contamination. Contamination of spices by moulds and insects can occur during post-harvest handling and in storage. Good manufacturing practices can greatly reduce the likelihood of contamination.

2.4 The following three options are available to importers when they are aiming to satisfy a FAO that the food complies with the Food Act and can therefore be cleared:

Option 1 - Acceptance of recognised assurances / certification

For **nutmeg products**, recognised assurances / certification may be accepted from:

- Australia – Manufacturer’s Declaration, where the manufacturer must declare that the product is of Australian origin. Products from Australia that are not of Australian origin must be sampled and tested.
- Department of Scientific Services, Institute of Science and Forensic Medicine, Singapore

Requirements to be met: Certification is required with each consignment.

Option 2 - Clearance sampling and testing on arrival in New Zealand

In the absence of recognised assurance / certification or a multiple release permit (MRP), **nutmeg products** are sampled and tested in New Zealand.

Products will be inspected for visual evidence of mould or insect infestation and tested for mould if required.

Sampling and testing should be in accordance with [NZFSA's sampling and testing protocol](#).

Option 3 - Multiple Release Permit (MRP)

MRPs are issued for imported prescribed foods that are:

- Inadvertently captured by the tariff codes monitored by the NZFSA, and /or
- From particular suppliers under an arrangement agreed to by the importer and NZFSA.

Importers wishing to apply for a MRP should contact the Advisor (Food Service, Sale and Import) in the NZFSA Approvals Group at (04) 894 2500 or email approvals.fssi@nzfsa.govt.nz to discuss their situation prior to completing a MRP application form.

3.0 Clearance Procedures

3.1 Documentation checks

All consignments accompanied by NZFSA recognised assurances / certification from the relevant competent authority are subject to 100% documentation checks.

3.2 Physical inspections

Acceptance under recognised assurances / certification

Recognised assurance / certification may be verified by physical inspection of the consignment. Consignments imported under certification are verified by testing at intervals. The standard testing rate used to verify certification which applies to most prescribed foods is 1 in every 20 consignments where consignments are more frequent than 20 in a six month period. Where consignments are less than 20 in a six month period, they are tested every six months.

3.3 Clearance sampling and testing on arrival in New Zealand

Sampling and testing should be in accordance with [NZFSA's sampling and testing protocol](#).

Samples:

- Whole nutmegs are visually inspected only.
- Crushed or ground nutmeg are visually inspected and microbiologically tested for mould.
- Samples should be taken for each product type, eg, state = whole, crushed, powder, ground etc.
- At least 100 whole nutmegs should be visually inspected.
- Samples of ground nutmeg for microbiological mould analysis must weigh at least 100g.
- Number of samples per lot should be calculated from the table below:

Number of units / sacks per lot	Whole Nutmeg Number of units to be inspected and sampled	Ground Nutmeg Samples for microbiological analysis
<50	5 units	5 units
>50	10%	10 units

- Individual units or packets should be sampled if these are available.
- The laboratory may not composite samples.

Clearance criteria: The following criteria should be used when deciding if a consignment captured by these requirements is safe to be released:

- No visual evidence of mould.
- Insect infestation or evidence of insect frass should not exceed 15%.
- If mould or insects are detected during visual inspection of ground nutmeg, the lot should be rejected and samples will not need to be taken and submitted for microbiological mould testing.
- Microbiological mould analysis should not exceed $n=5$, $c=2$, $m=50$ (5×10^2), $M=50,000$ (5×10^4)*.

* where n = the minimum number sample units which must be examined from a lot of food, c = the maximum allowable number of defective sample units, m = the acceptable microbiological level in a sample unit and M = the level which when exceeded in 1 or more samples would cause the lot to be rejected.

Reject criteria:

- FAO may REJECT lots that:
 - Show visual evidence of insect infestation.
 - Show visual evidence of mould.
 - Exceed microbiological mould criteria.
- FAO may reject any untested lots in the consignment.
- Procedures for rejected lots and untested lots are described in [NZFSA's sampling and testing protocol](#).

3.4 Multiple Release Permit (MRP)

For holders of an MRP, the import agent will use the permit number to clear the products. Holders of an MRP should maintain an agreed imported food surveillance (sampling and testing) programme for the products covered by the MRP.

3.5 Management of non-compliant consignments

When clearance cannot be given because of non-compliance with import requirements, all determinations on disposition of non-complying consignments should be made in full consultation with NZFSA (or a representative nominated by NZFSA). This will facilitate appropriate corrective action and communication with relevant entities.

3.6 Contact details for border clearance agency

First stop for importers seeking more information.

Central Clearing House

NZFSA Verification Agency

Level 1, 96 New North Road, Eden Terrace, Auckland

PO Box 3540, Eden Terrace, Auckland

Email: imported.food@nzfsa.govt.nz

Fax: 09 909 6208

Phone: 09 909 6210 or 09 909 6211

To be notified of changes and updates to NZFSA's website, including import requirements, go to the [NZFSA website Notifications page](#).

4.0 Tariff Codes Targeted

Prescribed foods are targeted at the border using the New Zealand Customs tariff code system.

A tariff code is a number used for Customs purposes to classify goods. An import agent or customs broker may be able to assist with interpretation of the tariff code.

Importers who are importing **nutmeg** under tariff codes not listed below should notify NZFSA Central Clearing House. CCH will notify NZFSA of the need to review the tariff codes targeted.

Inadvertent captures

As the tariff classification system is not designed specifically around the imported food regime, some food products may be inadvertently captured by the targeted tariff codes listed. If this is the case, products will not be subject to the requirements outlined in this document. Importers may apply to NZFSA for a multiple release permit (MRP) to facilitate clearance.

Products classified with the following tariff codes are captured under this requirement:

Tariff codes targeted for nutmeg	
0908 Nutmeg, mace or cardamons	
0908.10.01.00D	Nutmeg Neither Crushed Nor Ground
0908.10.09.00E	Nutmeg Crushed Or Ground