

Imported Food Requirements: Fish – species susceptible to production of histamine

Recent Updates:

Date	Location	Information
November 2009	Section 3.2	Clarification of verification of recognised assurances/certification.
17 August 2009		Clarification of products targeted, removal of import clearance requirements for product exported from Australia, clarification of EU verification rate.
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:

- Tuna (all species)
- Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*, *Scomber australasicus*, *Scomber japonicus*)
- Amberjack (yellowtail kingfish) (*Seriola lalandei*)
- Mahi mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*)
- Bluefish (*Pomatomas saltatrix*)
- Sardine including pilchard (*Sardinia pilchardus*, *Sardinops spp.*, *Sardinella spp.*)
- Herring (*Clupea harengus*, *Clupea pallasii*)
- Chilled and frozen fish
- Whole, headed and gutted, fillets
- Smoked, dried, in brine, in oil, in sauce or salted
- Retorted product in cans, jars or pouches
- Fish pastes and pates.

1.6 Imports of smoked fish products **must also** meet [NZFSA Import Requirements](#) for smoked vacuum-packed fish.

1.7 [Tariff codes targeted](#)

1.8 **Food safety hazard:** histamine.

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

- Histamine susceptible fish products imported into New Zealand from Australia are not subject to NZFSA import clearance requirements. This applies to food produced in Australia and to food imported into Australia.

2.0 Importer Clearance Options

2.1 The clearance options and procedures in this Imported Food Requirement apply to **histamine susceptible fish** 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 **histamine susceptible fish** products, importers have a responsibility under the Food (Importer General Requirements) Standard 2008 to ensure that imports do not have excessive histamine levels. Selected species of fish (e.g. species of finfish listed in section 1.5) are more susceptible to microbiological spoilage and the production of histamine. Amines, including histamines, are only produced during temperature abuse or spoilage. Histamines are heat stable and are not destroyed during cooking or canning processes. Good manufacturing practices, particularly maintaining products at chilled temperatures, reduces the likelihood of histamine production.

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 **histamine susceptible fish** products, recognised assurances / certification may be accepted from:

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency (previously the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans)
- Thailand Department of Fisheries
- Thailand Centre of Export Inspection and Certification for Agricultural Products
- European Union - Animal and Public Health Certificate.

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), **histamine susceptible fish** products are sampled and tested in New Zealand.

Products will be tested for histamine.

Sampling and testing is to be in accordance with [NZFSA's sampling and testing protocol](#), except for products from the USA which will be sampled and tested at the rate of 1 in every 10 shipments (covered by a Mutual Recognition Arrangement between New Zealand and USA).

Option 3 - Multiple Release Permits (MRPs)

MRPs are issued for imported food products 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

Verification of recognised assurances/certification

Recognised assurances/certification may be verified by physical inspection of the consignment. Consignments imported with assurances or certification are verified by identity check and/or sampling and testing at intervals.

- The standard rate used to verify assurances/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 verified every six months.
- Imports with certification from the European Union (EU) are verified at 1% rate (1 in every 100 consignments).

3.3 Clearance sampling and testing on arrival in New Zealand

Sampling and testing is to be in accordance with [NZFSA's sampling and testing protocol](#) except products from the USA which will be sampled and tested at the rate of 1 in every 10 shipment.

Samples:

- Number of samples per lot = 5.
- Each sample per lot must weigh a minimum of 100g.
- Individual units or packets should be sampled if these are available.
- The laboratory may composite 5 samples per lot.

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

- Presence of histamine to a level not exceeding 200mg/kg.
- Imports of smoked vacuum packed fish must also meet NZFSA import requirements for smoked vacuum packed fish.

Reject criteria:

- FAO may REJECT lots that indicate the level of histamine exceeds 200mg/kg (single sample).
- 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 the NZFSA 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 **histamine susceptible fish** products 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 above. If this is the case, products will not be subject to the sampling and testing protocol 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 histamine susceptible fish	
0302 Fish, FRESH or CHILLED, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat of heading 03.04	
0302.31.00.01L	Albacore Or Longfinned Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>)
0302.31.00.11H	Albacore Or Longfinned Tunas Headed and Guttled

0302.31.00.19C	Albacore Or Longfinned Tunas Other
0302.32.00.01E	Yellowfin Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>)
0302.32.00.11B	Yellowfin Tunas Headed and Guttled
0302.32.00.19H	Yellowfin Tunas Other
0302.33.00.01K	Skipjack (<i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>) or Stripe-Bellied Bonito (<i>Sarda spp</i>) Whole
0302.33.00.11G	Skipjack or Stripe-Bellied Bonito Headed and Guttled
0302.33.00.19B	Skipjack or Stripe-Bellied Bonito Other
0302.34.00.10C	Bigeye Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus obesus</i>)
0302.34.00.12K	Bigeye Tunas Headed and Guttled
0302.34.00.19G	Bigeye Tunas Other
0302.35.00.10H	Bluefin Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>)
0302.35.00.12D	Bluefin Tunas Headed and Guttled
0302.35.00.19A	Bluefin Tunas Other
0302.36.00.10B	Southern Bluefin Tunas Whole (<i>Thunus maccoyii</i>)
0302.36.00.12J	Southern Bluefin Tunas Headed and Guttled
0302.36.00.19F	Southern Bluefin Tunas Other
0302.39.00.10F	Other Tuna Whole
0302.39.00.12B	Other Tunas Headed and Guttled
0302.39.00.18A	Other Tunas Other
0302.40.00.01K	Herrings Whole (<i>Clupea harengus, Clupea pallasii</i>)
0302.40.00.11G	Herrings Headed and Guttled
0302.40.00.19B	Herrings Other
0302.61.00.01A	Sardines Whole (<i>Sardinia pilchardus, Sardinops spp., Sardinella spp.</i>)
0302.61.00.11J	Sardines Headed and Guttled
0302.61.00.19D	Sardines Other
0302.64.00.01E	Mackerel Whole (<i>Scomber scombrus, Scomber australasicus, Scomber japonicus</i>)
0302.64.00.11B	Mackerel Headed and Guttled
0302.64.00.19H	Mackerel Other
0302.69.01.55C	Yellowtail Kingfish Whole
0302.69.11.51F	Yellowtail Kingfish Headed and Guttled
0302.69.19.51G	Yellowtail Kingfish Other
0303 Fish, FROZEN, excluding fish fillets and other fish meat of heading 03.04	
0303.41.00.01B	Albacore Or Longfinned Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus alalunga</i>)
0303.41.00.11K	Albacore Or Longfinned Tunas Headed and Guttled
0303.41.00.19E	Albacore Or Longfinned Tunas Other
0303.42.00.01G	Yellowfin Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus albacares</i>)
0303.42.00.11D	Yellowfin Tunas Headed and Guttled

0303.42.00.19K	Yellowfin Tunas Other
0303.43.00.01A	Skipjack or Stripe-Bellied Bonito Whole
0303.43.00.11J	Skipjack or Stripe-Bellied Bonito Headed and Guttled
0303.43.00.19D	Skipjack or Stripe-Bellied Bonito Other
0303.44.00.10E	Bigeye Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus obesus</i>)
0303.44.00.12A	Bigeye Tunas Headed and Guttled
0303.44.00.19J	Bigeye Tunas Other
0303.45.00.10K	Bluefin Tunas Whole (<i>Thunnus thynnus</i>)
0303.45.00.12F	Bluefin Tunas Headed and Guttled
0303.45.00.19C	Bluefin Tunas Other
0303.46.00.10D	Southern Bluefin Tunas Whole (<i>Thunus maccoyii</i>)
0303.46.00.12L	Southern Bluefin Tunas Headed and Guttled
0303.46.00.19H	Southern Bluefin Tunas Other
0303.49.00.10H	Other Tuna Whole
0303.49.00.12D	Other Tunas Headed and Guttled
0303.49.00.18C	Other Tunas Other
0303.51.00.10E	Herrings Whole (<i>Clupea harengus</i> , <i>Clupea pallasii</i>)
0303.51.00.13K	Herrings Headed and Guttled
0303.51.00.16D	Herrings Other
0303.71.00.01C	Sardines Whole (<i>Sardinia pilchardus</i> , <i>Sardinops spp.</i> , <i>Sardinella spp.</i>)
0303.71.00.11L	Sardines Headed and Guttled
0303.71.00.19F	Sardines Other
0303.74.00.02E	Blue Mackerel Whole (<i>Scomber scombrus</i> , <i>Scomber australasicus</i> , <i>Scomber japonicus</i>)
0303.74.00.08D	Other Mackerel Whole (Excluding Jack)
0303.74.00.11D	Blue Mackerel Headed and Guttled
0303.74.00.19K	Other Mackerel Headed and Guttled (Excluding Jack)
0303.74.00.21A	Blue Mackerel Other
0303.74.00.29G	Other Mackerel Other (Excluding Jack)
0303.79.01.23G	Jack Mackerel Whole
0303.79.01.85G	Yellowtail Kingfish Whole
0303.79.11.23B	Jack Mackerel Headed and Guttled
0303.79.11.81K	Yellowtail Kingfish Headed and Guttled
0303.79.19.23C	Jack Mackerel Other
0303.79.19.91H	Yellowtail Kingfish Other
0304 Fish FILLETS and OTHER FISH MEAT (whether or not minced), fresh, chilled or frozen	
0304.19.00.66L	Southern Bluefin Tuna Fresh or Chilled
0304.19.00.68G	Other Tuna Fresh or Chilled

0304.19.00.76H	Yellowtail Kingfish Fresh or Chilled
0304.29.00.41J	Blue Mackerel Frozen
0304.29.00.42G	Jack Mackerel Frozen
0304.29.00.66D	Southern Bluefin Tuna Frozen
0304.29.00.68L	Other Tuna Frozen
0305 Fish, DRIED, SALTED or in BRINE; SMOKED fish, whether or not cooked before or during the smoking process; flours, meals and pellets of fish, fit for human consumption	
0305.42.00.00E	Herrings Smoked
0305.49.00.31G	Mackerel Smoked
0305.61.00.00H	Herrings Salted
1604 PREPARED or PRESERVED fish	
1604.12.00.01J	Herrings Whole or in Pieces in airtight Cans or Jars, whether or not with added liquor, oil or sauce
1604.12.00.09D	Herrings Whole or in Pieces Otherwise packed
1604.13.01.00A	Sardines Whole or in Pieces in airtight Cans or Jars, whether or not with added liquor, oil or sauce
1604.13.19.00H	Sardines Whole or in Pieces Otherwise packed
1604.14.01.00F	Tunas Skipjack And Bonito Whole or in Pieces in Cans or Jars, whether or not with added liquor, oil or sauce
1604.14.09.00G	Tunas Skipjack And Bonito Whole or in Pieces Otherwise packed
1604.15.01.00L	Mackerel in Cans or Jars
1604.15.09.00A	Mackerel Otherwise packed
1604.19.01.01G	Pilchards Prepared Whole or in Pieces in Cans or Jars, whether or not with added liquor, oil or sauce
1604.20.01.00A	Fish Pastes
1604.20.09.01L	Fish Pate