

Multiple release permits (MRPs) updates

MRPs off hold

Multiple release permits are issued on a case-by-case basis to importers who can prove they have the technical skill and experience to manage a quality imports system.

Applications for amendments to existing permits and new applications were put on hold in December 2004 to allow much-needed new criteria to be developed. We are pleased to advise that MRP applications that have been on hold are now being processed. Please bear with us as we work through the backlog of applications.

The new application forms can be found on our website (www.nzfsa.govt.nz).

Application Forms

There is now one application form that covers MRP applications for food, food containers, and inadvertent captures. The new application form is set out in four parts:

Part one MANDATORY.

This part covers the declaration and information about the importer and/or broker. A completed Part one can be accompanied by multiple copies of Parts two to four, depending on the application.

Therefore, when completing the new application form, a minimum of two parts are required to be sent to the NZFSA; ie Part one and at least one of the subsequent parts. Please note that before you apply for a general MRP for a food product, you must be on a 1-in-5 testing regime.

Part two To be completed ONLY if applying for a food MRP. Complete part two for each new product or manufacturer for which the application is being made.

Part three To be completed ONLY if applying for a MRP for food containers.

Part four To be completed ONLY for each inadvertent capture covered by the application.



Changes to Customs code and permit numbers

A new Customs code and permit number will apply for imported high risk foods and food containers from 1 December 2005.

The new Customs code will be **FSA** (replacing MHF) and the permit numbers for single and multiple release permits will be, for example, FSA 001..... or FSA 009..... respectively.

Letters were sent to all importers and associated brokers of MRPs informing them of the change to the permit numbers and the new permit numbers have been issued. The letter said that the MRP number to be used after the 30 November should be the FSA number. However, permits will not be reissued with the new number until either an amendment is made to the permit, or the permit is reissued.

NB: It is the MHF code and number that expire on November 30, and not the actual permit validity.

The new code, which is specific to food and food products, has been implemented to clear any confusion between the roles of NZFSA and Ministry of Health and have been developed in conjunction with NZ Customs.

BSE Standard Management Rule

Customs agents must liaise closely with importers to ensure they make the correct declaration for goods potentially containing beef & beef products.

The BSE Standard Management Rule (SMR) targets two sets of tariff codes:

1. If a product is clearly derived from bovine animals, and is caught by the tariff codes listed in Appendix A of the SMR, a permit application **must** be lodged with NZFSA.
2. However, the tariff codes targeted by Appendix B capture a wide range of products - many will not contain any bovine or bovine derived product (eg gelatine). If the product does not contain any bovine ingredients then a declaration can be made to this effect by entering **NBF** into the **Prohibited Goods Field** on the Customs import entry. An NZFSA permit is then **not required** to clear the consignment. When the product contains beef or a bovine derived product, the Customs agent or importer must declare this by entering the code **BEF**. An NZFSA permit is **required** to be issued by the Auckland Central Clearing House (ACCH) before the consignment can be released.

This is the wording that you will see when you are completing the Customs import entry that will prompt you to decide which code you should use ie NBF or BEF:

“For products that contain any beef or beef derived ingredients including gelatin and tallow (but excluding all milk and milk products) enter the code BEF in the prohibited goods field and the import permit number in the permit information field of the import entry.

“For products that do not contain any beef or beef derived ingredients including gelatin and tallow (but excluding all milk and milk products) enter the code NBF in the prohibited goods field of the import entry.”

Better understanding and utilisation of the SMR will result in consignments being cleared more efficiently.

Clearance Procedure for Importers of High-risk Animal Products Manufactured and Exported from the European Union

New Zealand has a Veterinary Agreement with the European Union (EU) to facilitate the trade of live animals and animal products. New Zealand has assessed the EU's sanitary measures (including food controls) as equivalent and agreed that these controls deliver food safety outcomes equivalent to relevant New Zealand measures. Imported products imported under this agreement are subject to a reduced physical testing regime at the border; products will undergo physical inspection (sampling/testing) at the rate of 2%, while all documentation will be checked.

Importers of products covered by this agreement should contact NZFSA to obtain a Multiple Release Permit (MRP) to trigger the reduced clearance procedures. The application form for this new type of MRP is now available on the website.

Affected products are:

- Soft cheeses, grated and powdered cheese
- Ice-cream
- Crustacean - shrimps, prawns and their products
- Crustaceans - lobsters, crabs, bugs and their products
- Molluscs - excluding snails
- Fish - smoked (vacuum packed)
- Fish - manufactured fish products (surimi and marinara mix)
- Fish - histamine susceptible species
- Fish - susceptible to mercury and microbiological spoilage
- Meat Products
- Bovine meat or bovine derived ingredients

Konjac jelly cups found on the shelves again

Importers are reminded that Konjac is not a permitted food additive in New Zealand, so products containing konjac cannot be lawfully sold in New Zealand. Health Protection Officers have recently found and seized jelly cup sweets containing konjac.

These sweets have led to the deaths of several children overseas, by choking. Konjac makes the gel very firm; it does not dissolve like other gels, and this factor combined with the shape of jelly cups makes them dangerous for children. Please be vigilant and do not import or sell products that include konjac.

Change to application form procedures

Due to the amount of time it is taking to process health permits, Auckland Central Clearing House (ACCH) will no longer follow up with importers and brokers for missing information on health permits. Time limits associated with processing health permits will now commence upon receipt of a completed valid health permit application. Incomplete health permits will be sent back to the applicant.

Rejected Products

In the last three months, the following products have been analysed and found to be unsafe and did not comply with the required 'Import Summary Criteria'.

Name of Products	Country	Reason for Failure
Canned Tomatoes	China	Failed can seam evaluation
Ground Nutmeg	India	High mould counts
Whole Peeled Tomatoes	Italy	Failed can seam evaluation
Ceramic Cups & Saucers	China	Test result not provided
Salted & Seasoned Oyster	Korea	Test result not provided
Short Neck Clam	Korea	Test result not provided
Fried Coated Peanuts	Taiwan	High level of aflatoxin
Whole Nutmeg	Fiji	Live insects & larvae found
Unshelled Pistachio	USA	High level of aflatoxin
Porcelain Bowls, Plates	China	Test results not provided
Cup & Saucer Sets	Australia	Test results not provided
Dried Seaweed – Hijiki	Japan	High level of arsenic
Peanuts	China	Test results not provided
Black Tiger Shrimps	Vietnam	High level of APC
Cream Coffee Mugs	China	Failed porosity test
Spicy Beef Soup	Indonesia	Presence of bovine ingredients
Frozen Raw Prawns	Vietnam	High level of APC
Ceramic Canisters	Taiwan	High level of APC
Canned Tomato Paste	Iran	Failed can pressure test
Salted Dried Peanuts	China	High level of aflatoxin
Peanuts	India	High level of aflatoxin
Black Tiger Prawns	Vietnam	Salmonella isolated
Mayonnaise	Switzerland	Test results not provided
Canned Tomatoes	Iran	Failed can seam evaluation
Shrimp Paste	Phillipines	Test results not provided