



Imported Food Notice 05/11

Issued: 12 April 2011

Supercedes: IFN 04/11

SUBJECT: Testing of some Japanese food imports for radionuclides

General Information

Following damage to Japan's Fukushima nuclear facility in early March 2011, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has recommended that some testing of Japanese food imports be undertaken to ensure radionuclide levels are under international safe levels.

Tested foods that show radionuclide levels below the safe level will be permitted entry into Australia. Foods that show radionuclide levels above the safe level will not be permitted entry.

Foods that are subject to radionuclide testing

Only certain types of food from specific prefectures are subject to testing for the radionuclides Caesium ^{134,137} (Cs^{134, 137}) and Iodine ¹³¹ (I¹³¹).

The table below summaries the types of food and prefectures that are affected, and the corresponding radionuclide testing that will be undertaken for each food type/prefecture combination.

Summary of Radionuclide Testing for Japanese Food Imports

| | Seaweed fresh, frozen and dried | Seafood fresh, frozen and dried | Fruit fresh, frozen and dried | Vegetables fresh, frozen and dried | Milk fresh and dried | All Other Foods |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| Fukushima | Cs ^{134,137} I ¹³¹ | - |
| Gunma | Cs ^{134,137} I ¹³¹ | - |
| Ibaraki | Cs ^{134,137} I ¹³¹ | - |
| Tochigi | Cs ^{134,137} I ¹³¹ | - |
| Chiba | Cs ^{134,137} I ¹³¹ | - |
| Shizuoka | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Niigata | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Kanagawa | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Tokyo | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Yamagata | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Saitama | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Nagano | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |
| Miyagi | - | - | - | I ¹³¹ | - | - |

Arrangements for identifying these foods to AQIS

As with current arrangements for clearing imported food, brokers will need to answer a specific question when lodging entries so that AQIS can identify if the goods should be subject to testing.

Brokers will need to have information about the food being imported to correctly answer the following question:

Have the goods been in the Japanese prefectures of Chiba, Fukushima, Gunma, Ibaraki or Tochigi at any time since 11 March 2011?

For **vegetable imports only**, brokers will also need to answer the following additional question:

Have the goods been in the Japanese prefectures of Kanagawa, Miyagi, Nagano, Niigata, Saitama, Shizuoka, Tokyo or Yamagata at any time since 11 March 2011?

Answering YES to either of these questions will result in the food being referred to the imported food inspection scheme for radionuclide testing.

Brokers and importers must ensure that they have adequate documentary evidence to substantiate their response to the above question. AQIS will conduct random verification of answers to this question.

Suitable documents include the address, in English, of the manufacturer, processor, producer and packer of the foods.

Testing

Where testing for Cs¹³⁷ and Cs¹³⁴ is undertaken, their combined becquerel (Bq) levels will be considered against the international (Codex Alimentarius) safe level of 1000 Bq/Kg:

- **total Cs¹³⁷ and Cs¹³⁴ must not be more than 1000 Bq/kg**

Where testing I¹³¹ is undertaken, the acceptable Codex Alimentarius safe level is 100 Bq/Kg:

- **I¹³¹ must not be more than 100 Bq/kg**

Please note: foods must pass both limits where both tests are undertaken on a food

Laboratories

As with other testing under the imported food inspection scheme, all testing costs are to be paid for by importers.

Samples for testing will be accepted by AQIS appointed analysts approved for radionuclide testing. Laboratories that have current approval to accept samples for radionuclide testing are listed in the AQIS appointed analyst [testing capability matrices](#).

Approved laboratories will subcontract radionuclide testing to the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA).

Sampling

It is possible that when radionuclide testing is applied, existing tests under the inspection scheme will also need to be undertaken. For example, in addition to radionuclide testing imported seaweed may also be tested for levels of iodine.

In these cases, AQIS will need to take two sets of samples, one set for radionuclide analysis and another set for any additional analysis other than radionuclide screening.

Further Information

If there are any questions about the implementation and scope of the testing to be conducted by AQIS as per this notice, please contact:

AQIS Imported Food Program - Canberra
Phone: 02 6272 5488 (ph)
Email: foodimp@aqis.gov.au

To keep updated with any changes to the scope of this notice, monitor the AQIS Imported Food Notices webpage and subscribe to the Imported Food Notices RSS Feed
<http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/food/notices>

The Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) [website](#) has further information regarding food safety matters.

The ARPANSA [website](#) provides detailed information about the incident.

The World Health Organisation has published [frequently asked questions and answers](#) in relation to concerns over the safety of food produced in Japan.