



Imported Food Notice 03/11

Issued: 29 March 2011

SUBJECT: Food sampling under the Imported Food Inspection Scheme

Purpose

To provide importers with information about the amount of food that is required to be sampled for testing under the Imported Food Inspection Scheme (IFIS).

Scope

This notice applies to the following:

- All food importers whose food has been referred for inspection to check its safety and compliance with Australian food standards

Sampling

When food has been referred to AQIS IFIS for inspection, it may be inspected and sampled. Some foods are subject to analytical testing by laboratories known as Appointed Analysts.

The amount of sample selected for testing must be representative of the particular type of food that has been referred for inspection and this is known as a *batch*. A batch of food is a food that is manufactured and packaged in a similar manner.

Within a batch, there may be several *lots*. Lots are a set quantity of the type of food and are generally manufactured in a specified time period.

The number of lots per batch that are sampled depends on whether the food is *risk food* or *surveillance food* and how many lots of the food are imported. For *risk food*, the AQIS officer must sample from every batch of food. For *surveillance food*, samples are taken from across batches. The required number of lots/batches that are to be sampled for a surveillance food are detailed in the Imported Food Control Regulations.

An example of the number of samples to be taken from each batch of risk food (where the importer has accurately identified the lots) follows:

No. of lots in batch	No. of lots to be sampled
2 - 8	2
9 - 15	3
16 - 25	5
26 - 50	8

To determine how many samples to take from a consignment referred for inspection, the AQIS officer will consider how many different batches of food are in the consignment. Different size packs (e.g. 100g and 500g portions of the same cheese), different package types (e.g. tuna in tins, pouches or plastic cups) or different manufacturing processes (e.g. whole leg of ham and sliced ham packs) may result in products being considered as different batches. If this is the case, samples will be taken from all batches.

In general, AQIS requires 500 grams of solid food or 500 millilitres of liquid per sample which is generally made up of five 100 gram/millilitre samples.

An AQIS officer may take greater amounts of samples or from more lots if they deem it necessary to do so. If you require more information, discuss with the AQIS officer at the time of inspection or contact the Food Safety Manager in your region using the contact details below.

Definitions from the Imported Food Control Regulations 1993

consignment	food of a particular kind that comprises 1 or more batches imported by the same owner at the same time and described by a single line in an import entry.
batch	food of a particular kind made or packed in a distinct manner which may include one or more lots
lot	a quantity of food of a particular kind prepared or packed under essentially the same conditions (ordinarily from a particular preparation or package unit and during a particular time usually not exceeding 24 hours)
package	a container of food that is not separated from the food by any intervening covering except lining material.

Other definitions

Risk food	food that has been assessed by FSANZ as representing a medium to high potential risk to consumer health. It is referred to AQIS by Customs for inspection at the rate of 100 % of imports.
Surveillance food	foods that are low risk foods under the Imported Food Inspection Scheme.

Who can I contact for further information?

NSW	(02) 8334 7475	nswimpfood@aqis.gov.au
Queensland and Northern Territory	(07) 3246 8757	qldimpfood@aqis.gov.au
Victoria, Tasmania	(03) 8318 6700	vicimpfood@aqis.gov.au
Western Australia and South Australia	(08) 9334 1532	waimpfood@aqis.gov.au
Canberra	(02) 6272 5488	foodimp@aqis.gov.au

Note: The information in this document covers AQIS imported food requirements only and is current on the date of publication but may change without notice. Importers must satisfy all requirements of the Imported Food Control Act 1992 applicable at the time of entry. The Commonwealth through AQIS is not liable for any costs arising from or associated with decisions to import based on information presented here which is not current at the time of importation. While every effort is taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, the ultimate determination in respect to food standards that must be complied with are those set down in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code