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## Australia

### Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

## Australia Revises Import Conditions for California Table Grapes

### 2006

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**Report Highlights:**

Biosecurity Australia announced on November 3, 2006 that it had carried out a review the current policy requiring mandatory methyl bromide fumigation of table grapes imported from California and concluded that there was no technical justification to maintain this requirement in addition to other stringent quarantine conditions that remain in place. The revised policy removing the mandatory methyl bromide fumigation policy is expected to come into effect around November 17, 2006. In 2005, U.S. exports of tables grapes to Australia were 4,628MT, valued at \$17.3 million.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Canberra [AS1]  
[AS]

Biosecurity Australia (BA) has reviewed the policy for imports of table grapes from California and concluded that there is no technical justification to maintain the existing mandatory requirement for methyl bromide fumigation. This requirement will therefore be removed subject to the continuing application of other stringent quarantine conditions.

In reviewing this policy, Biosecurity Australia reviewed the data from the commencement of trade in 2002 on pests intercepted during routine pre-clearance inspections in California, and on pests detected from all table grape shipments inspected under an intensive destructive sampling protocol implemented in October 2005. This interception data did not identify any pests that routinely require mandatory methyl bromide fumigation. There have been no detections of glassy winged sharpshooter since the inception of the trade.

Importations will be closely monitored for 12 months through identification of all live arthropods intercepted by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) detected during pre-clearance inspections; and repetition of the destructive sampling regime implemented by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. At the conclusion of the monitoring period (or earlier if warranted), BA will review the new arrangements to ensure the risks are being appropriately managed.

Standard AQIS procedures, pre-clearance inspections and other measures will continue to effectively manage the quarantine risk posed by table grapes from California. Only consignments inspected by AQIS in California and found free of live quarantine pests will be cleared for export.

The following phytosanitary measures will remain in place for all imports of table grapes from California to mitigate the risk of the introduction of quarantine pests:

- Registration of vineyards and fumigation facilities.
- Pest Free Area and Non-Host Status for specified quarantine pests.
- Labeling requirements for palletized and non-palletized table grapes.
- Forced air fumigation with 1% SO<sub>2</sub> and 6% CO<sub>2</sub> for 30 minutes (or equivalent treatment) to mitigate the risk of introduction of spiders which pose a risk to human health.
- AQIS pre-clearance inspection and freedom from quarantine pests in California prior to shipment.
- The detection of pests that are managed by pest free area or non-host status during pre-clearance inspections will result in suspension of trade.
- The detection of a live glassy-winged sharpshooter (*Homalodisca coagulata*) during pre-clearance inspection will result in suspension of all exports until the problem is investigated.
- The detection of a dead glassy-winged sharpshooter during pre-clearance inspection will result in investigation by AQIS and APHIS to evaluate the association of *H. coagulata* with the table grape importation pathway.
- 600 unit inspection sample.
- Phytosanitary certification.
- On-arrival consignment verification.

Removal of the mandatory requirement will be accompanied by the addition of other safeguards, as outlined below.

- Monitoring of the outcome for 12 months through identification of all live arthropods intercepted by AQIS detected during pre-clearance inspections; and repetition of the destructive sampling regime proposed by APHIS for the 2005 season.
- Amendment of the pest list to include the spiders *Latrodectus* species (black widow spiders) and *Cheiracanthium* species (yellow sac spiders) as actionable pests.

- If egg sacs of spiders that pose a risk to human health are detected during preclearance inspection, all subsequent consignments from the source vineyards will be subject to mandatory CH<sub>3</sub>Br fumigation before export to Australia for the remainder of the season.
- Maintenance of a strict allowable tolerance for trash. BA has identified the presence of leaf material as a potential pathway for pests of quarantine concern, namely eggs of the glassy-winged sharpshooter, *Homalodisca coagulata*. Therefore, in the absence of mandatory methyl bromide fumigation consignments must not contain any leaf material of grape vine (*V. vinifera*) or weeds.
- Revision of the procedures for weed species.

This revised policy is expected to come into effect on November 17, 2006.

Further information on this topic can be found on the Biosecurity Australia website – [www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au](http://www.biosecurityaustralia.gov.au).

Source: Biosecurity Australia Policy Memorandum 2006/32

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Report Number	Title of Report	Date
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6068	Australia Considers Grain Imports; Additional Drought Aid Announced	10/31/06
6067	Government Announces Changes to Import Risk Analysis Process	10/31/06
6066	Grain Quarterly Update	10/20/06
6065	Frost Affects Fruit Production in Goulburn Valley, Victoria and Tasmania	10/18/06
6064	A\$350m Additional Drought Aid	10/17/06
6063	Ag DownUnder Vol. 15	10/12/06
6062	Corish Report: Australian Government Response	10/04/06
6061	Sugar Semi-Annual	09/29/06
6060	Exporter Guide	09/29/06
6059	Export Certificate Report	09/27/06
6058	Ag DownUnder Vol. 14	09/26/06
6057	Livestock Annual	09/13/06
6056	Ag DownUnder Vol. 13	09/08/06
6054	Drought Update	09/05/06
6053	Cotton Quarterly Update	08/31/06
6052	Ag DownUnder Vol. 12	08/25/06
6051	Australia Launches Strategy to Gain Access to Southern Indian Food Market	08/10/06
6048	Food & Agriculture Import Regulations & Standards	08/03/06
6047	Grain Quarterly Update	08/01/06
6046	Ag DownUnder Vol. 11	07/21/06
6045	Citrus Update	07/17/06
6042	Australian FTA with Gulf States	06/30/06
6041	Poultry Meat IRA Released	06/28/06
6040	Worst Frost in 20 Years Affects Australian Citrus Production	06/27/06