

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio
Department
Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: AQIS 01

Topic: Beef imports from Brazil, names of receiving companies

Hansard Page: 35

Senator O'Brien asked:

A series of questions with regard to the companies to whom Heinz distributed the uncooked Brazilian beef.

Answer:

The beef was distributed by Heinz to potential customers for evaluation. The names of the individual companies were provided to AQIS by Heinz, for the sole purpose of tracing the meat after the suspected case of foot and mouth disease in southern Brazil.

All imported uncooked beef from Brazil has been traced and ordered into quarantine or destroyed.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio
Department
Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: AQIS 02

Topic: Frequency of beef imports from all countries

Hansard Pages: 42 & 43

Senator Heffernan asked:

- (a) How often do we import fresh meat?
- (b) When was the last time fresh meat was imported?

Answer:

- (a) A total of 1370 consignments of fresh and frozen uncooked beef were imported between 1 January 1998 and 15 February 2005. These have predominantly been from New Zealand..
- (b) As at 15 February 2005, the last consignment of fresh beef was imported on 14 February 2005. This consignment was from New Zealand.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio

Department

Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: AQIS 03

Topic: Details of consignments of imported uncooked beef

Hansard Page: 46

Senator Heffernan asked:

For details of all fresh and frozen uncooked beef imported into Australia since 1998.

Answer:

The following table provides details of all commercial consignments of fresh and frozen uncooked beef imported into Australia between 1 January 1998 and 15 February 2005.

Country of export	Volume of import (kgs)	Number of total consignments	Date of first import (after 1 Jan 1998)	Date of last import (prior to 15 Feb 2005)
Brazil	544	1	2-Dec-04	2-Dec-04
Canada	11	1	4-May-00	4-May-00
Japan	1,402	20	6-Feb-98	14-Sep-01
New Zealand	8,576,430	1,287	12-Jan-98	14-Feb-05
Vanuatu	302,575	28	15-Jul-02	24-Jan-05
USA	4,254	16	10-Apr-01	23-Dec-02

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio
Department
Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: AQIS 04

Topic: Herbs and Spices

Hansard Page: 70

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (a) Is it the case that, since 17 August 2004, virtually all dried herbs and spices being imported into the country are now treated as high-risk products and that a regime involving laboratory testing of a sample batch of each import is required?
- (b) I understand that, prior to that date, the only dried herbs and spices that were treated as high risk and were routinely subject to analysis were cinnamon, pepper and paprika.
- (c) I want to know what the risk associated with imported herbs and spices is;
- (d) What process was used to determine that these products pose a greater risk than was previously thought;
- (e) And what the basis was for the decision to place the products in a high-risk category.

Answer:

- (a) Based on advice from Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), between 17 August 2004 and 6 December 2004 samples from all imported consignments of dried herbs and spices were tested for residues which would indicate the use of ethylene oxide. In line with further advice from FSANZ, from 6 December 2004, only 5% of imported consignments of herbs and spices are sampled for testing for these residues.
- (b) Correct.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio
Department
Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: AQIS 04 cont.

Topic: Herbs and Spices

Hansard Page: 70

- (c) The risks to human health associated with herbs and spices are primarily related to microbiological contamination or chemical residues.
- (d) AQIS adopts risk categorisations for food products based solely on advice from Food Standards Australia New Zealand. AQIS understands that FSANZ undertook a risk assessment on imported herbs and spices to determine the potential risk to human health posed by the consumption of herbs and spices that had been treated with ethylene oxide.
- (e) The decision was made based on the results of the risk assessment conducted by FSANZ and its subsequent advice to AQIS.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Portfolio
Department
Additional Budget Estimates, 15 February 2005

Question: AQIS 05

Topic: Fishers Quarantine

Hansard Page: 92

Senator O'Brien asked:

In the Minister's press release of 31 January, it says:

A commitment is also given to boost quarantine arrangements for fishers and their vessels by providing additional AQIS monitoring and surveillance and pest and disease surveys.

What additional resources are being provided to meet this commitment and where are they coming from?

Answer:

The Government has announced that AQIS will be sufficiently resourced to conduct additional monitoring, surveillance and pest and disease surveys.