

Food Safety Department, Belize Agricultural Health Authority
Guidance Document for Industry: FS/GD/02/08/Rev. 1

To Importers of Fish and Fishery products and the General Public

Guidance on the Importation of Aquatic Animals and Related Materials

The importation of aquatic animals and related materials is strictly regulated by the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA). A valid Animal Health Import Permit is required for importation of the following:

- 1) aquatic animals such as fish, crustaceans and molluscs.
- 2) Products/materials derived from aquatic animals including embryos, gametes, blood, tissues, serum, extracts and fluids.
- 3) Organisms (e.g. viruses and bacteria) affecting aquatic animals, provided that
 - a. The organism is not intended for use as a vaccine or other biological product;
 - b. The organism is not considered to be pathogenic for livestock or poultry.

In the case of aquatic animals for consumption, a valid Certificate of Origin is required for any such commodity. The Certificate of Origin should be the same as the origin written on the Import Permit – if otherwise then the permit is not valid. Failure to comply with these Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) conditions will result in one of the following actions:

- the consignment being returned to the place of origin or;
- confiscation and subsequent destruction of the product(s);
- the cost of any of the aforementioned actions by Quarantine shall be borne by the importer.

For importation of fish and fishery products coming from areas outside the USA, it is necessary for BAHA to conduct an Import Risk Analysis (IRA) to establish the health and safety status of the exporting country. The cost of the IRA to be conducted will be borne by the Importer(s).

It is important to note that some Asia-Pacific countries have not been complying with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) disease reporting for communicable animal diseases. Therefore, BAHA will not allow entry of any product from these countries, as it is necessary to safeguard Belize's agricultural sector.

This information can also be reviewed on the BAHA web page: <http://www.baha.bz>.

For additional information or clarification call our helpline at 660-9028.

Your cooperation in this issue is greatly valued.

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