

29 NOV 2016

OIA16-0600

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Graham Carter
C/- fyi.org.nz

Dear Graham Carter

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

I refer to your official information request on 11 October 2016 relating to the following:

- *What precautions have the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) undertaken to monitor imported fish and fish products into New Zealand to ensure that anti-biotics, CMC's, glucose and gelatine have not been added to the product to increase weight?*

The information you have requested is released in full.

Permissible Ingredients in fish

All food sold in New Zealand must comply with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code for composition and labelling. CMC, glucose and gelatine are permissible in processed fish and for this reason MPI does not monitor imported fish for these additives. Product that includes these additives requires labelling to inform purchasers. The labelling must include the name, ingredients and percentage of fish contained in the product. For more information about MPI's food label requirements please visit: (<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety/whats-in-our-food/food-labelling>).

Antibiotic residues

MPI undertakes surveillance programmes to establish the level of antibiotic residues present in food for sale in New Zealand. Foods sampled in these programmes include both product that is imported and domestically produced.

In the 2009 New Zealand Total Diet Study fish products were screened for 240 agricultural compounds and metabolites. Small levels of pesticides were found, however the analysis concluded that dietary exposures to agricultural compounds were all well below the respective Acceptable Daily Intakes and were therefore unlikely to represent a risk to public health. A full copy of the survey can be found at: (<http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/science-risk/programmes/total-diet-survey.htm>).

Growing and Protecting New Zealand

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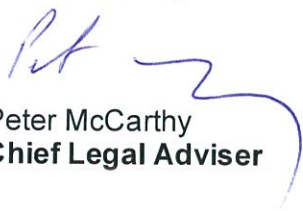
In 2009 and 2011-2013, MPI surveyed imported Basa and Tilapia following concerns about contamination. A total of 51 samples were tested over these two surveys. The samples were tested for triphenylmethane dyes, nitrofurans, phenicols, sulfonamides and an antibiotic screen. Only one sample of basa from Vietnam had a detectable level of antimicrobial residues (Gentian Violet at a level of 0.0022mg/kg) and the matter was raised with the Vietnamese Authorities. Further details on these surveys can be found at: <http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/elibrary/industry/microbiological-quality-chemical-monitoring-and-review/basa-and-tilapia-2009-summary.htm>.

Over half of New Zealand's imported food comes from, or via Australia. Food imported into Australia is of a type and variety very similar to what is found in New Zealand. The close relationship between Australia and New Zealand enhances our food security because the testing undertaken by the Australian, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) also feeds into the intelligence informing New Zealand's decisions about where to target our surveillance. Furthermore, if a non-compliance or serious food safety issue is detected, we are usually advised via Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Details of the DAWR: Imported Food Inspection Scheme can be found at: www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/food/inspection-compliance/inspection-scheme.

The following testing of seafood products for antibiotics has been completed by the DAWR over the last 2 years:

Chemical	No. of tests applied	No. compliant / non-compliant	Compliance rate (%)	Types of food
2014				
Fluoroquinolones	302	287 / 15	95.0	Farmed fish and prawns
Malachite Green	217	214 / 3	98.6	Farmed fish
Nitrofurans	80	77 / 3	96.3	Farmed prawns, honey
2015				
Fluoroquinolones	236	231 / 5	97.9	Farmed fish and prawns
Malachite Green	196	196 / 0	100	Farmed fish
Nitrofurans	35	35 / 0	100	Farmed prawns, honey

Yours sincerely



Peter McCarthy
Chief Legal Adviser