



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

MEDIA RELEASE
Quarantine Matters!

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AVOID QUARANTINE PROBLEMS WHEN TRAVELLING THIS SUMMER

AQIS – the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service – will be busy this summer checking the luggage of close to one million Australians returning from overseas holidays.

Many of these travellers will be returning from Korea, which means Australian Quarantine officers will be on the lookout for items such as chilli paste, fresh fruit and vegetables and kim chi. AQIS will also be on the lookout for any other food, plant product or animal material that could carry pests or diseases.

The current outbreak of bird flu (H5N1) in many countries underscores the importance of Australia's strict inspection regime. Australia has always restricted the entry of feathers, poultry and bird products from other countries, due to the risk of introducing a range of exotic diseases including bird flu.

Not complying with Australian quarantine laws can be an expensive mistake – as one traveller arriving in Australia from Korea found out recently. The traveller was fined and ordered to pay court costs totalling more than \$1900 for failing to declare 20 kg of onions.

Travellers entering Australia from overseas must declare all food, plant material and animal products, as well as items that could be carrying soil or other organic material, such as shoes and sporting gear. Many of these items turn out to be OK on inspection; AQIS will return these items to their owners. On occasion, however, items may need to be treated before return, or confiscated and destroyed.

Finding out about Australian quarantine is easy. Before travellers leave Australia they can:

- contact their travel agent for a free copy of the brochure *What can't I take into Australia?* in Korean;
- visit www.aqis.gov.au/korean; or
- call AQIS on 1800 020 504 (free call within Australia).

When travellers arrive back in Australia, they must:

- correctly fill out the incoming passenger card;
- declare for inspection all food, plant material and animal products – if unsure declare anyway; and
- place items that need to be declared in an easily accessible part of their luggage.

CONTACT AQIS Public Relations 02 6271 6402 or 02 6272 3097.

Photos available of (1) items typically seized from travellers' luggage and (2) Quarantine in action at Australian airports.