

Microbiological results of the AQIS Imported Horticultural Products Survey

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) advises that the overall survey results, as detailed below, indicate that good hygienic practices are generally in place and the risk associated with microbiological contamination of imported fresh fruit and vegetables remains low.

Comparing these results with data from state government surveys of domestic produce indicates that imported produce has microbiological and chemical levels comparable with Australian produce.

Horticultural Product*	<i>E. coli</i> (cfu/g)	Comment
84 samples including: onions, shallots, garlic, mushrooms, capsicum, tomatoes, sugar snap peas, snow peas, taro, yam, pumpkin, baby corn, asparagus, frozen carrots, frozen spinach, frozen cauliflower, semi-dried tomatoes	No <i>E. coli</i> detected or at the level of detection	These levels indicate that good hygienic or agricultural practices are in place. This includes one inconclusive result on product from China, where the level of <i>E. coli</i> detected was at the level of detection (10 cfu/g).
Cassava leaf	>15 000	These samples were collected from one supplier in Fiji. AQIS has contacted the Fijian authorities and requested that they investigate these findings, so that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure adherence to good hygienic or agricultural practices.
Cassava leaf	>15 000	
Drumstick leaf	>15 000	
Taro leaf	>15 000	
Paan leaf	5400	
Taro	3800	
Drumstick leaf	250	
Taro	210	
Amaranthus leaf	110	
Amaranthus leaf	50	
Baby corn	810	These samples were collected from three different suppliers in Thailand. AQIS has contacted Thai authorities and requested they investigate these findings, so that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure adherence to good hygienic or agricultural practices.
Asparagus	240	
Asparagus	20	

* In the interests of protecting consumers, FSANZ recommends that all fruits and vegetables be washed and/or cooked prior to consumption – this applies to imported fruits and vegetables as well as those grown in Australia.