



July 6, 2021

Imported Food Virtual Inspections, Australia

Dear Valued Customer,

From July 5, 2021, the Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment (the Department) will be accepting expressions of interest from parties interested in engaging in virtual visual label inspections for eligible imported surveillance food.

For background in 2020, in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Department conducted a trial of virtual inspections under the Imported Food Inspection Scheme (IFIS) for label and visual inspections of surveillance foods. The virtual inspection trial was a success and found virtual inspections offered many benefits for both industry and the Department including greater flexibility and efficiencies including reduced inspection times. Due to the success of the trial, the Department supports offering virtual inspections as a permanent option under IFIS for eligible surveillance foods.

Key Points:

- A virtual inspection is conducted in real time using Microsoft Teams. Virtual inspections allow a Departmental authorised officer to connect with an importer through a smart portable device and conduct the inspection remotely. The only platform currently used is Microsoft Teams.
- Guidelines will be sent to importers that express interest with the complete list of requirements that must be met to undertake a virtual inspection.
- Importers must have the technological capability and connectivity to participate in a virtual inspection through Microsoft Teams. Importers must also nominate representatives to undertake virtual inspections. Representatives will be required to follow directions of authorised officers, including the selection of samples for inspection, and positioning the goods to the camera for detailed inspection.
- Importers will be charged per the existing charging guidelines. If, during a virtual inspection, the food is found not to be compliant, the virtual inspection will be cancelled, and a physical inspection must be booked.
- Food eligible for a virtual label and visual inspection is surveillance food. The following surveillance foods are not eligible for virtual inspections:
 - Formulated supplementary sport foods
 - Food subject to a holding order
 - Food subject to analytical testing.
 - Risk food is also not eligible for label and visual virtual inspections.
- Physical inspections will continue to be an option for importers who do not wish to book a virtual inspection
- From July 5, importers must express interest to participate in a virtual inspection and conduct connectivity testing with the Department prior to booking a virtual inspection. Expressions of interest can be sent to IFIS-InspectionSupport@agriculture.gov.au.

Thank you for being our Valued Customer. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the notice held within, please contact your Key Account Manager or a C.H. Robinson representative.

Sincerely,
C.H. Robinson.