

Brunei Darussalam

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■ Export of Fishery Products

The total commercial exports of seafood products in 1999, was 425 tonnes, to countries such as Hong Kong, Japan, Egypt, Taiwan and Malaysia. The products include frozen shrimp, live fish and lobster and fresh chilled fish.

Even though the volume is "minute" as compared to the other Asian countries, the issues faced in respect of product control, inspection and subsequently procedures allowing exportation of these products are believed to be similar to the others. Although the importing countries concerned has not made the implementation of HACCP as a pre-requisite requirement for Brunei Darussalam's product to enter their country, however, they do require Health Certification from relevant authorities. In this respect, Brunei Darussalam has only been able to do in the form of Letter of Attestation (LOA).

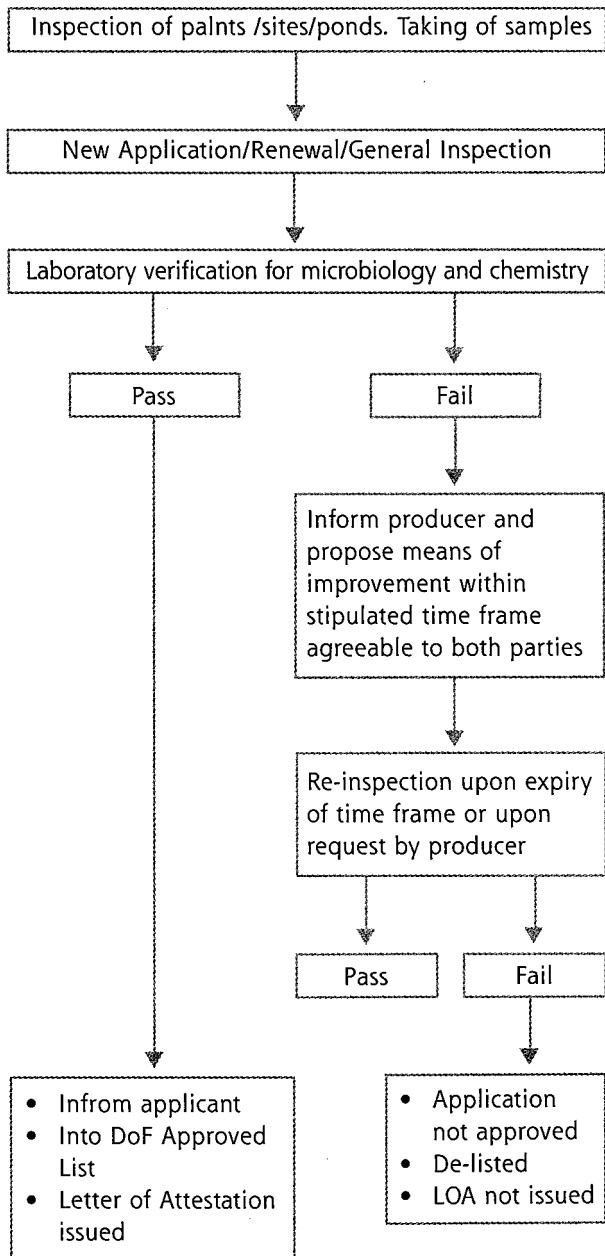
These Letters of Attestation are issued administratively by the Department of Fisheries since 1998. The issuance of a Letter of Attestation is based on the Guidelines provided by Codex as well as adhering to the specific requirements of the importing countries concerned, such as microbiological and chemical limits.

■ Seafood Quality and Safety Assurance Program in Brunei Darussalam

The food manufacturing industry including seafood industry in Brunei Darussalam has to be operated within the guide lines provided by pertinent laws and regulations. These are:

- The Municipal Boards Act (1984) and the Miscellaneous Licensing Act (1978).
- These Acts are under the executive purview of the Municipalities and the District Offices.
- They encompass the aspects of inspection of premises of food preparation, outlets and places where food are sold to the general public.

The Procedure for Issuance of the Letter of Attestation is as the follows:



- Inspections are done by appointed officers of the Ministry of Health.
- Compliance is assured through conditions of the license issued under these Acts.
- These Acts however need improvement in specific areas required by seafood processing plants as those stated by Codex.
 - Food Safety Act and Regulation (1998)
- This Act is under the executive purview of the Ministry of Health, with liaison with other relevant authorities, such as Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources (Department of Fishery, Agriculture Department), Municipalities and District Offices.
- The Regulation lay down specific requirements, chemical and microbiological standards, labeling, composition, etc for foods industry including fish and fish products.

■ HACCP Implementation in Brunei Darussalam

Even though the HACCP concept is still relatively new in Brunei Darussalam, its importance as the best tool currently available towards achieving the quality and safety levels required of food products produced is by no means unappreciated. Various government efforts had been made to initiate the implementation of HACCP into the food manufacturing industry.

The program includes introductory talks and seminars to various Government officials, as well as implementation of specific projects to set up HACCP program for specific food products through consultative joint projects.

In the seafood processing industry, introductory seminar on HACCP principles was first conducted for relevant officers in 1996. However, the implementation of the system is not yet widespread as in the other member countries of ASEAN. This is mainly due to the fact that most seafood processing plants in Brunei Darussalam are small, and usually only serving the local and the immediate neighbouring countries.

Therefore, there is hardly any "pressure" from importing countries, as experienced by the other exporting countries.

In addition, as most of the seafood processing plants are small, there is hardly any organized structure whereby the HACCP system could be implemented at a cost effective level, since in most cases, implementation of HACCP means minor to major changes to the existing plant or its operations.

To date, only one seafood-processing company is taking steps towards implementing HACCP in its processing plant. This is in readiness for the plant's intention to export its products to the EU.

■ Conclusion

Even though, the HACCP system has yet to be implemented in the seafood processing industry in Brunei Darussalam, it is however becoming more apparent that Brunei Darussalam will need to do so in the near future, if it is to maintain the safety and quality "edge" which had become synonymous with HACCP. Furthermore, several seafood processors intend to export their products to the EU. Therefore, Brunei Darussalam intends to initiate voluntary implementation of HACCP in seafood processing plants by 2001.