



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**Quarantine Matters!**

English-Japanese

AQIS2054NESB

16 November 2005

## QUARANTINE ON LOOKOUT FOR RISKY NEW YEAR MAIL

MORE than 7000 items mailed to Australia last New Year were confiscated by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). Hundreds of these high-risk New Year gifts were sent from Japan. The mail parcels were inspected and seized by AQIS because they contained restricted food, plant or animal products that could have introduced exotic pests and diseases into Australia.

This year AQIS is again on the lookout for risky New Year mail. Seemingly innocent packages containing rice straw, rice seed, eggs, mayonnaise, fresh egg noodles, meat, seeds (such as soybeans) or plant material could in fact pose a serious threat to Australia's environment and agriculture industries. These items, and many more, are restricted and may be confiscated.

Bob Stirling, AQIS International Mail Program Manager, strongly suggests that people living in Australia expecting international mail this New Year should inform their relatives and friends overseas about Australia's strict quarantine laws.

"AQIS asks people to tell friends and relatives overseas to avoid sending gifts that contain restricted items and to honestly list the contents of parcels they do send," Mr Stirling says.

"AQIS now screens every single item of mail coming to Australia. All food and anything made from wood, plant or animal material must be declared on the postal declaration label. Some of these items will be released after inspection. But prohibited items will be destroyed and other gifts may have to be treated — at your expense and with your consent — to make them safe.

"Australia is very serious about keeping out unwanted pests and diseases, with fines of up to \$60,000 for serious breaches of our quarantine laws."

"So, make sure your New Year is a happy one by being aware of quarantine," says Mr Stirling.

To find out what you can and cannot mail to Australia:

- contact the AQIS office in your State for a free copy of the *What can't be mailed to Australia?* brochure in Japanese;
- visit [www.aqis.gov.au/japanese](http://www.aqis.gov.au/japanese); or
- call AQIS on 1800 020 504 (free call within Australia).

### CONTACTS

**For interviews in your language:** ask for an interview with an AQIS officer who speaks your language. For interview opportunities, phone AQIS public relations 02 6272 3097

**Photos:** 02 6271 6402, 0419 26 7277 for publication-quality images of (1) typical items seized from international mail, (2) Quarantine detector dogs in action.