

Friday, 24 February 2006

Dear Stakeholder,

IMPORT HEALTH STANDARD FOR THE IMPORTATION OF NURSERY STOCK

Please be advised that a revision to the Import Health Standard (IHS) for Nursery stock is currently under consultation until 28 April 2006 and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry would be pleased to receive your input.

Nursery stock imported into New Zealand must meet the requirements of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) import health standard 155.02.06 *Importation of Nursery Stock*. All nursery stock must meet the basic conditions (section 2) while some species (for which specific associated pests have been identified) have further requirements as outlined in the schedule of special conditions (section 3). This recommendation proposes changes to:

- the risk mitigation measures and host list for *Phytophthora ramorum*;
- the risk mitigation measures for *Xylella fastidiosa*;
- the risk mitigation measures and host list expansion for Guava rust (*Puccinia psidii*);
- and a review of the *Caladium* schedule.

1) *Phytophthora ramorum*

Phytophthora ramorum is the organism that causes Sudden Oak Death, a serious disease of oaks and other woody and herbaceous plants. Thousands of tan oaks and other oak species have been killed by this disease in California, United States, since the mid 1990's. Mortality has also been reported in arbutus, beech, rhododendron, *Vaccinium* and *Viburnum*. These plants and others may also exhibit symptoms such as dieback, wilting, and lesions and may play an important role in the spread of the pathogen, both by natural movement in the environment and by the movement of infected plant material via the nursery trade.

The host list for *Phytophthora ramorum* has grown since specific measures were first put in place to prevent its introduction into New Zealand. The following twenty one genera should be added to the host list: *Adiantum*, *Ardisia*, *Calycanthus*, *Euonymus*, *Fraxinus*, *Gaultheria*, *Griselinia*, *Hamamelis*, *Lithocarpus* (inclusion of *L. densiflorus*), *Magnolia*, *Maianthemum*, *Michelia*, *Osmanthus*, *Parrotia*, *Photinia*, *Prunus*, *Pseudotsuga*, *Sequoia*, *Taxus*, *Torreya*, and *Trientalis*.

With the exception of high value plants for which the risk of *Phytophthora ramorum* is mitigated alternatively (see *Vaccinium* schedule as an example), hosts of *P. ramorum* are only permitted to be imported from countries recognised by New Zealand as Pest Free Areas. It is proposed that *Prunus* is regulated in the same way as *Vaccinium*.

At present, New Zealand recognises only Australia, Canada, Israel and South Africa as free of *Phytophthora ramorum*. As the host list expands, our current risk mitigation options threaten to cut-off trade to large amounts of plant propagative material.

As Sudden Oak Death gains prominence in the international sphere, additional risk mitigation options are being developed. There are programs in Europe and North America which have been developed, in line with ISPM 10: Requirements for the Establishment of Pest Free Places of

Production and Pest Free Production Sites, to certify places of production as free from *Phytophthora ramorum*.

MAF is considering permitting imports of plant material from these programs. Countries wishing to export *P. ramorum* host material to New Zealand under this option are required to develop a *P. ramorum* pest free place of production program and present it to MAF for evaluation. Prior to accepting a program MAF Plant Imports will evaluate whether they meet the criteria below:

- systems to establish and maintain pest freedom;
- systems to establish and maintain an appropriate buffer zone (as defined by ISPM 10);
- verification that pest freedom has been attained or maintained. This must include laboratory testing of propagative material, water, soil or other growing media, and other material coming into contact with propagative material; and
- product identity, consignment integrity and phytosanitary security.

MAF is proposing adding “originating from a New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry-approved Pest Free Place Of Production for *Phytophthora ramorum*” as an acceptable additional declaration.

2) *Xylella fastidiosa*

With the exception of high value plants for which the risk of *Xylella fastidiosa* is mitigated alternatively (see *Vitis* schedule as an example), BNZ’s current policy on the importation of hosts of *Xylella fastidiosa* is that they must originate in countries recognised free from this disease. MAF has recently developed and validated a reliable PCR protocol for *X. fastidiosa*.

A systems approach is defined by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) as the integration of different pest risk management measures, at least two of which act independently, and which cumulatively achieve the appropriate level of phytosanitary protection. Following this line of thinking, it is recommended that, as an alternative to originating in Pest Free Areas (Whole countries only), MAF should accept certification by the exporting NPPO on a Phytosanitary Certificate that the plants originate in a Pest Free Places of Production or Pest Free Area (units smaller than whole countries e.g. States or Provinces) for *X. fastidiosa*, supplemented by testing for *X. fastidiosa* by MAF in level 2 Post Entry Quarantine for a minimum of 3 months.

3) *Puccinia psidii*

Guava rust (*Puccinia psidii*) has recently been discovered in Hawaii on new hosts in the Myrtaceae family. Hawaii should be added to the list of countries where this pest is present. It is recommended that *Metrosideros* and *Myrtus* be added to the host list. Known hosts of *P. psidii* are prohibited entry from areas where this pest is present. Given that the host range for this rust is expanding, in addition, as a precautionary measure, a prophylactic fungicide effective on rusts should be applied to nursery stock from genera in the *Myrtaceae* family that are not reported as hosts for *P. psidii* originating in areas where *P. psidii* is present. The following genera in the Myrtaceae family are permitted importation into New Zealand and have yet to be shown to be hosts: *Agonis*, *Angophora*, *Kunzea*, *Leptospermum*, *Lophomyrtus*, and *Luma*.

The following fungicides could be applied at label rates: copper oxychloride (copper), Mancozeb (Ditheocarbamate), Saprool (Peperidine), Sulphur, Taratek 5f (Nitrile & Benzimidazole) and Chlorocarb (Benzimidazole & nitrile). These fungicides are available in New Zealand, but may not

be available worldwide; as such we can make this recommendation but should accept any fungicide that the exporting NPPO deems effective against rust fungi.

4) Requirements for virus freedom in *Caladium*

Caladium tissue culture is regulated under the "Arum" schedule, which required testing to ensure freedom from viruses. MAF reviewed this requirement and found that only *Caladium virus X* posed a Biosecurity risk. As a result, MAF is proposing the following additional declaration:

"The cultures have been derived from parent stock free of *Caladium virus X*"

The draft documents can be found at the following link:

<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/strategy-and-consultation/consultation/ihs>

The current nursery stock import health standard can be found at the following link:

<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/imports/plants/standards/155-02-06.pdf>

Please provide comments by 28 April 2006 to myself at:

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Thank you in advance for your input.

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