

The BORDER SPACE

Working together to secure New Zealand's borders from biosecurity threats



Getting tough on untreated US vehicles

Untreated vehicles from the US can be sent back at the shipper's expense under strict new rules intended to keep New Zealand free of brown marmorated stink bug.

A directive came into force on 15 October to make it compulsory for all bulk imported vehicles and machinery from the US to be heat-treated or fumigated before shipment to New Zealand.

MPI introduced mandatory treatment requirements last December for all vehicles and machinery imported from the US, but allowed some treatment of bulk imports on vessels before landing or on the Auckland wharf.

We're taking the restrictions a step further now that treatment facilities are fully operational at the main US vehicle export ports in Baltimore and Savannah.

We have worked closely with importers on this issue. There is agreement that sufficient facilities are now in place in the US to allow them to comply with MPI's requirements.

We will assess each arriving vessel on a case-by-case basis, but our intent is to take a very hard line on non-compliance.

- Brown marmorated stink bug is an agricultural pest that has invaded the United States. It could successfully establish in New Zealand.
- The New Zealand horticulture industry currently lists it as one of the top six pests of concern.



So far so good for stink bug season

So far so good for ships carrying US-sourced vehicles and machinery to New Zealand – the first shipments of the summer have arrived free of brown marmorated stink bug.

I'd like to single out the efforts that Wilhelmsen, the main shipper of break bulk cargo, has made to keep their vessels clean.

The company has worked in partnership with us to ensure it meets MPI's biosecurity requirements, including constructing a new treatment facility in Baltimore.

Other Wilhelmsen initiatives include:

- Ensuring all pre-treated cargo is loaded directly from warehouse, which reduces the chance of stink bug contamination on the wharf.
- Placing stink bug traps on all vessels bound for Oceania.



Wilhelmsen's stink bug treatment facility in Baltimore

- Displaying MPI posters about the bug aboard their ships to create awareness among crew.
- Separating treated and untreated cargo in terminals and on board vessels.

Stink bug requirements to be assessed further

MPI is reviewing the import standard for vehicles, machinery and tyres, including the stink bug treatment requirements for US-sourced vehicles and machinery.

This process involves going through the normal revision process, including robust consultation with industry.

One of the major proposed changes is to reduce off-shore treatment of US-sourced vehicles and machinery from applying all year to being required only for the stink bug "season" – 1 September to 30 April.

In addition, new fumigation and heat treatment rates have been proposed, based on new scientific information. The reduced treatment rates would still be effective at killing stink bug, but would reduce costs for importers and produce less gas emissions.

The changes would bring New Zealand's stink bug treatment requirements for US-sourced vehicles and machinery more into line with Australia. This would assist exporters shipping cargo carried on the same ship to Oceania.

Submissions on the proposals closed on 6 November. The outcome of the review will be released as soon as possible.

Japanese used cars face new restrictions

Speaking of the vehicle standard review, we are also proposing to introduce mandatory off-shore biosecurity processing for bulk used vehicles arriving from Japan.

Some 95 percent of used vehicles imported to New Zealand arrive from Japan. We currently manage this cargo as a “high risk pathway”, as Japan is potentially the source of Asian gypsy moth, ants and other major biosecurity risks.

Many vehicles imported from Japan require cleaning upon arrival. Although we pick up the unwanted hitchhiking pests, it is difficult to manage the biosecurity risk when uncontainerised vehicles arrive in large numbers.

At the moment, some 90 percent of the imported vehicles are cleared off-shore. The proposal to make this requirement mandatory for all vehicles will prevent uncleared contaminated used vehicles from arriving in New Zealand.

Cleaning proof may be needed

We are also proposing (under the vehicle standard review) making a requirement for importers of used farm machinery to provide proof that cleaning has taken place off-shore.

Under the current standard, all used farm equipment must be thoroughly cleaned before it is exported to New Zealand.

That doesn't always take place; some equipment arrives with extensive contamination. Other items can seem clean when they arrive, but partial dismantling can reveal high-risk material such as pine needles and soil.

We currently have the power to re-ship equipment that is grossly contaminated. But experience shows that can be an inefficient and reactive way to manage biosecurity risk.

French lessons

We've added New Caledonia to the pre-season visits we make in the Pacific each season to build biosecurity awareness among international yachts heading to New Zealand.

For the last couple of seasons, MPI staff have gone to Fiji and Tonga – the main gathering points for New Zealand-bound vessels.

We sent two staff members to New Caledonia for the first time in October. They met with local biosecurity staff, marinas, agents and yachties to hand out information about New Zealand's biosecurity rules. New Zealand Consulate staff helped them to translate our written materials into French.

About 16 percent of international yachts arrive in New Zealand from New Caledonia, some of them originating from Europe. There is anecdotal evidence that crews departing Noumea can be ignorant of our biosecurity requirements.

Similar to last year, we have additional staff based in Northland this season to provide greater scrutiny of visiting yachts. There will also be greater use of detector dog teams in clearing yachts – see our press release on the [MPI website](#).



Bean suspension

Followers of Pacific media will have seen that MPI has temporarily suspended longbean and okra exports from Fiji to New Zealand following the interception of *Thrips palmi*, a potentially harmful pest.

The suspension came into effect on 21 October and is still in place at the time of writing.

Quarantine officers spotted the bug during routine inspections of three shipments of longbeans and okra from Fiji during October. This followed an interception in a consignment of longbeans in August.

Exports will remain suspended until MPI is satisfied that Fijian biosecurity authorities have made any necessary changes to export procedures to prevent contamination.

Thrips palmi is a high risk pest of concern to New Zealand.

More biosecurity reality TV

Expect to see *Border Patrol* and *Dog Squad* back on TV next year.

We have just finished editing the eighth series of *Border Patrol* and the sixth series of *Dog Squad*.

It's amazing to me how successful these shows have been. The seventh series of *Border Patrol* recently finished running on Mondays at 7.30pm. It was the most watched show of the evening every week for the nine weeks it played.

Its top rating was week six when it had 714 380 viewers (only *One News* ever gets above 700 000!).

Dog Squad ran on Tuesdays for 16 weeks. In 14 of these weeks, it was the most watched show of the evening. It was just pipped by the finals of *The Bachelor* on two of the weeks.

The two reality TV shows have been a great marketing tool for us over the years to promote biosecurity messages.



Border levy flies

The government recently announced its decisions on the introduction of a border clearance levy.

You have probably seen the announcement in the media, so I won't go into the details. (If you haven't, the info is available on the **MPI website**.)

The gist of it is from 1 January arriving cruise ship passengers will pay \$22.80 (plus GST) and air travellers will pay \$18.76 (plus GST). The levy is higher for cruise ship passengers because of the additional time and resources needed for biosecurity risk assessments at ports.

The government has decided to exempt crews. This will come as a relief to many of you.

The levy rate will be set for 30 months. At the end of the period, MPI and Customs will update the rates based on expected demand and planned expenditure.

This and later reviews will provide an opportunity for industry players to put downward pressure on the levy rate. The equation is simple: the adoption of best biosecurity practice by more players would see less need for MPI biosecurity interventions funded by the levy.

I'll leave that thought with you.

Going mobile

A new mobile x-ray machine will soon be used to scan hand luggage carried ashore by cruise ship passengers.

At the time of the writing, the new machine (Rapiscan 620XR-M) was expected to be ready for deployment by 7 November.

It will be used to screen cruise ship passengers' bags at "ports of first arrival" and regional ports where required. The x-ray can process some 350 bags an hour.

The images show what the new machine looks like in its raw form. We will be giving it a makeover with biosecurity graphics that relate to cruise ship passengers.

For more on what's happening to improve biosecurity in the cruise ship pathway is available on the **MPI website**.



Goodboy spreads the word

Meet Officer Goodboy, the canine face of MPI's new in-flight video.

The new video is being developed for major airlines to spread the biosecurity word among passengers before they land in New Zealand.

The animated beagle will inform passengers about the main risk items they could inadvertently try to bring into New Zealand.

The voiceover for Officer Goodboy comes from New Zealand comedian Te Radar.

We hope the video will be sufficiently engaging to get passengers to pay attention to our messages at what is often the end of long flight.

It will be translated into eight different languages, and we plan to have a dubbed-over Chinese version as well.



20 years for detector dog programme

It's been 20 years since the birth of the MPI detector dog programme.

MPI's predecessor purchased the first beagles in 1995. Two of them started at Auckland airport soon after.

We're planning a few events to celebrate the anniversary. They include a dog visit to parliament and a giant cake cutting by ministers at this year's A&P show in Canterbury. We're also considering some sort of media event when our newest dog teams graduate on 11 December (along with 27 other new quarantine officers).

The graduation will see 24 dog teams gain their official stripes.

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It will be the largest number of dog teams to graduate at any one time in the history of MPI or its predecessors.

As a result, the programme will have nearly 60 detector dog teams, allowing 100 percent screening of arriving international flights – a far cry from the humble beginnings in Auckland 20 years ago.

Giant detector dogs in the making

Our first-ever litter of harrier hound puppies joined the MPI detector dog programme last month.

MPI mainly uses beagles as detector dogs. Harrier hounds look like beagles but are much taller, making it easier to sniff travellers' backpacks and baggage stacked high on airport trolleys for biosecurity risk items.

MPI has two other harrier hounds. Both started their training as adolescents.

In contrast, the new pups will go right through the entire detector dog training programme, including being fostered for a year to selected families in Auckland and Hamilton.



My kennel staff are planning to look for potential breeding animals from the litter. These will be crossed with beagles.

The aim is to increase the genetic diversity of our detector dogs. It will also see the introduction of taller dogs in future generations under our breeding programme.

From the courts

Community work for mangoes

It's reassuring to see the courts continue to come down hard on biosecurity offences, as an Auckland woman who tried to sneak three mangoes into New Zealand from Brisbane recently discovered.

Elenoa Laban of Mangere, pleaded guilty and was convicted in Manukau District Court in September to charges of attempting to possess unauthorised goods and providing misleading information to a quarantine officer.

She received a sentence of 75 hours community service.

Mangoes are one of the many hosts of Queensland fruit fly, which would threaten New Zealand's \$6.7 billion horticulture industry if it became established here.

MPI prosecutions underway

- Three individuals charged with erroneous declarations – Manukau District Court.
- Individual charged with attempted possession of unauthorised goods (raw sausages from Thailand) – Auckland District Court.
- Individual charged with selling and possessing unauthorised goods (bird nest) – North Shore District Court.
- Individual charged with attempted possession of unauthorised goods (live cacti) – Manukau District Court.
- Individual charged with attempted possession of unauthorised goods (seeds) – Manukau District Court.
- Individual charged with attempted possession of unauthorised goods (seeds concealed in another packet of seeds).

Border sting

Let's finish with a quirky border interception story, though not one for the faint hearted and, thankfully, not one from our own frontier.



French border officials recently seized 115 live scorpions hidden in two shipments from Cameroon.

The scorpions were discovered in plastic boxes and cups. They were declared as samples for medical research.

It is thought the large, black scorpions (identified as members of the *Pandinus dictator* family) were destined for sale on the internet in the United States.

French customs seizes 115 live scorpions headed to US

10:24 AM Saturday Oct 3, 2015

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Border activity for September/ October 2015

	Sept 15	Oct 15
Aircraft and Aircraft Passengers		
Passengers	447 653	512 016
Infringement Notices	467	545
Aircraft	2 768	2 921
Sea Containers		
Loaded Containers	41 281	41 721
-Inspected	408	187
-% Contaminated	46%	49%
Empty Containers	16 621	20 407
-Inspected	4 547	5 589
-% Contaminated	3%	3%
Personal Effects		
Clearances	2 403	2 083
Inspections	653	410
% requiring decontamination	8%	7%
Direct Vessel Arrivals	234	313
Mail		
Mail Items Arriving	2 019 698	2 582 896
Mail Items Opened	3 401	3 058
% requiring biosecurity action	21%	21%

News for TF staff

The latest issue of **See Contain Report** is available on the MPI website. The newsletter provides information targeted at Transitional Facility Staff.

Previous issue

The previous issue of **The Border Space** is available on the MPI website.



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Director Border Clearance

Please email MPI at borderspace@mpi.govt.nz with any queries or comments.