

# BIOSECURITY 2025

## Making it happen

Issue 2 | July 2017

### Welcome

Welcome to *Biosecurity 2025: Making it Happen*, where we'll keep you regularly updated on what's happening to implement the [Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement](#).

### It's your gig too

Biosecurity 2025 has given clear direction – we are now putting together the detail on how to get there. But the only way we're going to achieve the goals set out in Biosecurity 2025 is for the community to work together and share information and ideas. This e-newsletter has been developed to capture and share this information so we're really keen to hear what's happening out there and welcome your input and ideas for future issues.

[A message from James Buwalda](#)



*James Buwalda*

## The man behind creating the first pest free city in the world

**Wellington's Predator Free advocate Kelvin Hastie started the successful Crofton Downs Predator Free Community project. He's now set his sights higher to make Wellington the first city in the world to become predator free. We talk to Kelvin about this ambitious goal, along with his role on the Biosecurity 2025 4.7 Million Working Group.**

With a background in IT, Kelvin became determined to fight predators after he saw a weasel outside his Crofton Downs home a few years ago. He sparked the community into action, getting one in every five households in the suburb into backyard trapping to rid itself of rats, mice, possums, weasels and stoats.



*Kelvin Hastie, Wellington's Predator Free Advocate*

Within months they caught 27 weasels and stoats, and 184 rats and possums in backyards. Within a year, the number caught dropped to zero. Kelvin's Crofton Down's project worked through buy-in from the community and, with the help of a couple of small grants, and in December 2015, rats were declared eliminated from the suburb.

“*People are really keen to get involved and so they should. This is their land, their pride and joy and they want to protect it.*”

“People are really keen to get involved and so they should.

This is their land, their pride and joy and they want to protect it,” says Kelvin.

Last September Kelvin formed a partnership with the Wellington City Council (WCC), the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and Next Foundation in a bid to make Wellington free of rats, stoats and possums. The project aligns with the recently announced Government mission to make the whole of New Zealand predator-free by 2050. Ultimately he would like this urban project to be an exemplar for other agencies and councils around the country so they can follow suit.

The plan has been focused on Miramar, but he's also been working with Pest Free Plimmerton in Porirua. In Wellington there are currently around 22 community led Predator Free Communities.

“I'm really excited about this new opportunity,” says Kelvin. “By working together we know we can make great gains. The programme has the potential to engage 150,000 people plus in Wellington alone!”

“Since the launch of Predator Free Wellington in September last year, we've already had huge success. The people of Wellington have shown their strong support and want to see the city teeming with birds and the reintroduction of iconic species like Kiwi and Kokako. In-turn our endemic gecko and skink populations will rebound with the removal of these predators.”



*Predator Free Wellington partnership. Next Foundation environmental advisor Devon McLean, Ex-Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown, Kelvin Hastie and Greater Wellington Regional Council chairman Chris Laidlaw.*

More recently Kelvin joined the Biosecurity 2025, 4.7 million Strategic Direction 1 Working Group. He says that there a lot of similarities between the outcomes of his project and the 4.7 million work stream.

“It’s about getting everyone involved and empowering our communities and taking ownership of the problem, rather than waiting for Government to sort out the problem.”

“The Predator free project is a great example of what Biosecurity 2025 is trying to achieve, particularly in building a biosecurity team of 4.7 Million. To be successful we need New Zealanders to make some behaviour changes and take control of their own backyard so to speak.”

“It’s also been really empowering to be part of the 4.7 million Working Group as it has given me an outlet to pass on the knowledge of what I’ve experienced so far and I have a genuine interest to see how this develops.”

***Got a story to share?*** *We’d love to hear from you. If you’d like to be profiled or have a story included in the next issue, please [email us](#).*



## Implementation planning update

### Overview

The working group for Strategic Direction 1 (SD1): A biosecurity team of 4.7 million has met six times and things are progressing well towards the development of an engagement plan.

The other working groups are at various stages of being convened and holding their initial meetings.

Working groups for SD2: A toolbox for tomorrow, SD3: Smart, free-flowing information and SD5: Tomorrow's skills and assets are still being finalised, and expect to hold their first meetings during August.

The SD4: Effective leadership and governance working group has held its first meeting. The group is energised and looking forward to exploring ways to ensure the biosecurity system has a workable pragmatic platform for the future, which will be enduring despite changing circumstances, and will engender wide trust and confidence.

Members of the working group are:

- John Hellstrom, Chair, led 2003 Biosecurity Strategy work, and was a peer reviewer for the Biosecurity 2025 Direction Statement
- Basil Chamberlain, Chief Executive, Taranaki Regional Council
- Dan Coup, Chief Executive Officer, Deer Industry New Zealand
- Justine Gilliland, Director Investment Programmes, Ministry for Primary Industries
- Melanie Mark-Shadbolt, Māori Research & Development Officer, Bio-protection Research Centre, Lincoln University (she is sharing her role with Steven Wilson)
- Barry O'Neil, Chief Executive, Kiwifruit Vine Health
- Bob Penter, Chief Executive, Waikato River Authority (apologies for the first meeting)
- Susan Timmins, Acting Director Threats, Department of Conservation
- Nadine Tunley, Chairman, Pipfruit New Zealand
- Steven Wilson, Chief Executive, Maximise Consultancy (he is sharing his role with Melanie Mark-Shadbolt)

### Update from the SD1 working group



*SD1 Working Group members brain storming during a session*

The SD1 working group have had a busy couple of months. During June, they held three meetings to flesh out what the Engagement Plan might look like, an approach to undertaking a stocktake of biosecurity activities and programmes across New Zealand's biosecurity system, how to divide up our audience of 4.7 million into segments, what research is required to deliver against the targets, who the target audiences are and what programmes they'll be developing (awareness and knowledge, and behaviour change), how they'll build a 'movement' through a Unification Programme, and identifying current programmes that could be support or broadened to help meet their targets.

The stocktake exercise has now been largely completed, unfortunately with disappointing response rates. The group are now considering next steps for this workstream. The Working Group have also agreed on a research brief to baseline against the targets. This is now in the process of being finalised before commissioning. In addition, a sub-group of the 4.7 million Working Group recently met to work through an intervention logic process, mapping goals and outcomes to success criteria and possible programmes of work.

## Increased funding for Biosecurity 2025 Programme

In May Minister Guy announced an \$18.4 million funding boost (over the next four years) to strengthen the biosecurity system as part of Budget 2017.



The funds will be split across various biosecurity activities, including:

- Strengthening our ability to manage biosecurity risk offshore so fewer pests and diseases arrive in NZ – additional capacity to review and update Import Health Standards (IHS) and develop new IHSs in support of market access initiatives; funding for further research into treatment options.
- Engaging citizens and businesses to play a part in biosecurity – funding to: support Strategic Direction 1, including development of the SD1 work plan and targeted programmes to build awareness and drive behaviour change; online pest and disease reporting, and broadening reporting tools.
- Driving more rapid uptake of innovative technology to improve biosecurity risk management – additional funding for MPI's Research, Technology, and Innovation Practice: to develop prototypes for new tools to detect and eradicate pests.

Within these initiatives there is resourcing to deliver the Biosecurity 2025 work programme including the implementation plan.



## B3 supports preparedness for stink bug



**B3** | Conference 2016  
**BETTER BORDER BIOSECURITY**  
[www.b3nz.org](http://www.b3nz.org)

A range of research is being undertaken within B3 (a multi-partner, cooperative science collaboration that researches ways to reduce the entry and establishment of new plant pests and diseases in New Zealand) to prevent the establishment of brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) and to reduce its impact if it does establish

One of the strategies being developed by B3 researchers, in close partnership with industry and government, is a world first pre-emptive approach to biological control. This involves getting everything in place for the introduction of the tiny Samurai wasp, a biological control agent for BMSB, before BMSB establishes in New Zealand. The Samurai wasp, which originates from Asia, is considered to be the most promising natural enemy for BMSB and will provide an important means for controlling BMSB if it establishes.

***“We are making damn sure we are doing everything in our power to prevent BMSB from entering at the border; but more than that, we are building an arsenal to hit it head-on should it manage to set up home here”***

“The threat that BMSB poses to a number of New Zealand horticultural and agricultural industries means we need to be as ready for this bug as we can be,” says Dr David Teulon (B3 Director).

“We are making damn sure we are doing everything in our power to prevent BMSB from entering at the border; but more than that, we are building an arsenal to hit it head-on should it manage to set up home here,” says Richard Palmer

chair of the Samurai wasp Steering Group.

Before any natural enemy, such as the Samurai wasp, can be released into New Zealand it needs to go through a process administered by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to ensure that it does minimal harm to New Zealand’s valued flora and fauna. As part of this assessment researchers from B3 have been scouring New Zealand’s countryside for the few but rare native and indigenous stink bugs and then examining the impact of the Samurai wasp on them in quarantine.

B3 researchers are also having input into a cost/benefit analysis and risk assessment report that have assisted with the important consultation processes with Māori and other key stakeholders.

This information will become part of an application to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) later this year.

This pro-active approach, and the close co-ordination of research, industry and government activities provides an exemplary model for preparedness of high risk invasive species that threaten New Zealand’s valued plant systems.

Find out more about this exciting work [here](#).

***Got a story to share? We’d love to hear from you. If you’d like to be profiled or have a story included in the next issue, please [email us](#).***



## 2017 New Zealand Biosecurity Awards

New Zealand's inaugural Biosecurity Award winners will be recognised at an awards ceremony at Parliament on 2 August 2017 with the Minister for Primary Industries, Hon. Nathan Guy.



Thanks to those who made nominations for this year's awards programme.

"The number and calibre of entries received far surpassed our expectations," says Julie Collins, Director, Biosecurity and Animal Welfare. "It's been inspiring to hear about the fantastic work being done by members of our biosecurity team of 4.7 million every day."

The awards were open to all New Zealanders (individuals, groups, businesses and communities) who were involved in a project, programme, protocol or one-off event (in the past 5 years) that focused on biosecurity. For example:

- a community programme to eliminate an invasive weed
- a project to educate school children about biosecurity
- a company programme to eliminate harmful pests from their products
- a working bee to clean up a waterway clogged with algae.

Keep an eye out on [MPI's website](#) to find out who the winners are.



## Fieldays 2017 – biggest turn out yet



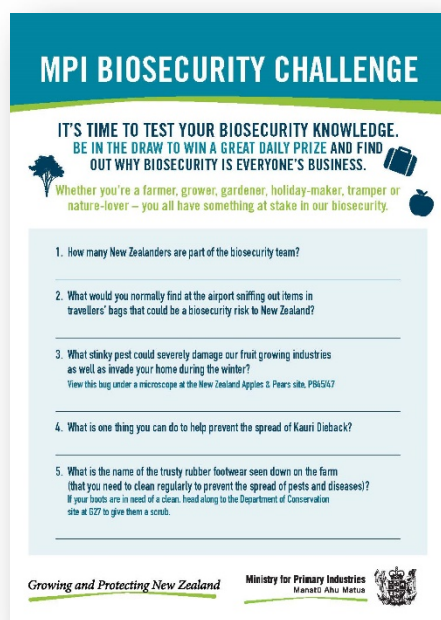
**It's the largest annual farming and agricultural trade show in the Southern Hemisphere – this year's event didn't disappoint which saw record numbers as 133,588 Fielday-goers turned up to celebrate the four-day agricultural event.**

Minister for Primary Industries the Hon Nathan Guy congratulated the Fieldays organisers for another successful event at Mystery Creek in Waikato.

"This year's Fieldays was another success thanks to hard work from Peter Nation and his team, but also in part due to the positive outlook for the primary sector," says Mr Guy.

"Many farmers and growers have dealt with some challenging past seasons, so it was great to feel a really positive mood across the many thousands who entered the gates. There's a strong sense that many will be looking to use their extra forecast revenue to reinvest in their businesses.

"This will have flow on effects for the wider economy, and particularly for all those rural businesses that support the primary sector. That includes those offering direct support services, right through to those who operate general retail businesses in our regions," says Mr Guy.



Biosecurity was a feature on a number of stands and was very prominent on the MPI, DOC and Pipfruit New Zealand sites.

The MPI site ran an MPI Biosecurity Challenge to test visitors' biosecurity knowledge. We had about 300 entries in total and they all went into a draw to win a daily prize. DOC ran a biosecurity scavenger hunt which the younger visitors really enjoyed. "Wanted" posters for different weeds were placed around different sites and once the kids had found them all they were given Biosecurity Champion status.

The event kicked off on Tuesday night with an event celebrating the 1000<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Farming Fund project, and the launch of the Primary Sector Science Roadmap with Ministers Guy, Upston, Bennet and Goldsmith.

On Wednesday, Acting Prime Minister Paula Bennett formally opened Fieldays and Ministers Coleman and Guy opened the Rural Mental Health Hub and announced \$500,000 more funding for 20 rural health workshops.

On Thursday, Minister Guy spoke at the Innovation Awards breakfast and congratulated entrants for their ideas that will help drive growth in the primary sector.

Mathew McAtamney was crowned the Rural Bachelor of the Year after a week of challenges against seven other male contestants. The 26 year old took the golden gumboot trophy and won a prize pack worth over \$20,000, including a Suzuki King Quad 750 4WD.

For the second year running the People's Choice Award is heading to Australia with Queensland's Gordon 'Gordy' Mill walking away with the People's Choice award.



*Fairlie farmer Matt McAtamney won Rural Bachelor of the Year at the National Fieldays.*

## Kicking wildings for touch

An area the size of Marlborough or a million rugby fields has been controlled for wilding conifers in the Central North Island, Marlborough, Canterbury, Otago and Southland in the 2016/17 year by the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme and its partner agencies.

“Wilding conifers are trees that have spread beyond the boundaries of their original plantings for shelter, timber, research or erosion control, and now affect well over 1.8 million hectares and are spreading”, says the Ministry for Primary Industries Wilding Conifer Programme Manager Sherman Smith.



“Planted in the right place conifers can provide timber, store carbon, decrease erosion, and provide shelter and shade for stock but in the wrong place they are a major threat to our ecosystems, farms, water, and iconic landscapes.

“If we do nothing, the economic impacts of wilding conifers on productive land, international tourism, biodiversity loss and water yields alone could equal at least \$1.2 billion in losses over 20 years and are likely to get worse from there,” he says.

“**...it's a big challenge for New Zealand that has to be addressed but it's too big an issue for just one party**

Sherman says it's a complex issue that requires co-ordination across multiple parties from central government to landowners, the forestry and farming industries and communities.

“It's a big challenge for New Zealand that has to be addressed but it's too big an issue for just one party. It has to be a co-ordinated approach.”

In May 2016, the Government committed an extra \$16 million over 4 years for the first phase of a national control programme. This funding is being used to tackle wilding conifers in the highest priority areas and reduce the area of New Zealand affected by wilding conifers.

The Programme is being implemented by the Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, and Land Information New Zealand in partnership with other central government agencies, iwi groups, local government, forestry and farming industries, landowners, researchers and community trusts and organisations.

“We are working closely with regional partners and there is a lot of good work going on,” says Sherman.

“The initial focus of the operations is on removing scattered wilding conifers to prevent further spread. Even one tree can produce large amounts of seed and spread to areas up to 20km away,” he says.

“It's really is a case of ‘a stitch in time saves nine’. Removing sparse young seedlings now, before they start producing seed, costs less than \$10 per hectare, but letting them mature can cost over \$10,000 a hectare.”

Sherman is pleased that the programme has made such good progress in its first year. “It really demonstrates how working together with other agencies, groups and individuals can really make a difference.”

## Parasite found in Stewart Island oysters

One of Kiwis most loved delicacies is under threat from a parasite. *Bonamia ostreae* is a parasite that can be fatal for flat oysters. It has been in New Zealand since 2015 in the Marlborough Sounds and Nelson.



*An affected flat oyster*

In May 2017, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) detected the parasite on two flat oyster farms in Big Glory Bay, Stewart Island. This was the first time it had been found in another area of New Zealand.

"*Bonamia Ostreae* is a naturally occurring parasite and is difficult to contain and eradicate as it spreads easily through ocean currents and on vessels," says MPI Readiness and Response Director Geoff Gwyn.

"It is also difficult to detect in the environment and it is unclear how *Bonamia ostreae* made it to Stewart Island. We're committed to doing everything we can to limit the spread to other areas."

Following the detection in Big Glory Bay, MPI reissued a Controlled Area Notice under the Biosecurity Act, legally restricting movements of some shellfish species, including their spat, into and out of Nelson, Marlborough Sounds and Stewart Island. It also legally restricts movements of farm equipment and vessels out of Stewart Island.

“We're committed to doing everything we can to limit the spread to other areas”

In June, MPI issued Notices of Direction under the Biosecurity Act, ordering all oysters be removed from commercial farms in Big Glory Bay, Stewart Island.

"Science strongly guided our decision. The epidemiology of *Bonamia ostreae*, and the proximity of the two affected marine farms to others, means there is a strong risk of spread to those farms, and increasing the threat to the wild population. Removing all of the flat oyster stocks from the marine farms in Big Glory Bay significantly reduces this risk", says Mr Gwyn.

"A dying flat oyster can release about 500 million parasites into the water. The lower we can keep parasite numbers the fewer oysters will become sick and die and the risk of spreading to new areas greatly reduced".

The detection on Stewart Island was made as part of an MPI surveillance programme.

Since March 2016 MPI has conducted 6-monthly sampling and testing of farmed and wild oysters for *Bonamia ostreae* in Marlborough, Otago, Chatham Islands and Southland. This surveillance programme is designed to detect early infections, so that measures can be implemented to control spread of disease.

"Our most recent testing in the Bluff wild oyster fishery was done in July and no *Bonamia ostreae* has been detected. This was good news and demonstrates that the removal of farmed oysters from Big Glory Bay is the right thing to do to lessen the risk to the wild fishery".

MPI will continue to actively monitor the wild fishery - the next round of sampling and testing will be in September 2017.

## Myrtle rust continues to spread

In May, the discovery of myrtle rust at a Northland plant nursery sparked a major biosecurity operation of Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), other agencies and industry partners under the Government Industry Agreement.

The total number of properties infected with myrtle rust continues to climb. There have been more than 90 cases also reported in Taranaki, the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Northland.



MPI's focus, along with the Department of Conservation (DOC), is containing the spread of infection in Taranaki while it continues to be found in a relatively discrete geographical area.

"The public response to myrtle rust has been huge and we thank everyone for their vigilance. We've received over 1000 calls reporting suspected myrtle rust. It's vital information. Building our knowledge of this issue and the distribution of the disease will enable us to make the best possible decisions about managing this into the future."

“*The public response to myrtle rust has been huge and we thank everyone for their vigilance.*”

“We will continue to work closely with the Department of Conservation (DOC), regional councils and other agencies to control the spread of myrtle rust and remain vigilant for any signs of further infections.”

The fungus is thought to have arrived on the wind from Australia, which has had the plant disease since 2010. At this time it's not known how myrtle rust will behave in New Zealand conditions and what the impact would be on mānuka, but it could have the potential to devastate native flora.

MPI continues to remind gardeners that if they have recently bought myrtle species plants – for example, pōhutukawa, ramarama, mānuka, Lilly Pilly, feijoa – they should check these plants for any signs of the disease.

Everyone is encouraged to keep an eye out for signs of myrtle rust. It appears as bright yellow/orange powdery patches on leaves of myrtle plants. Affected leaves may buckle or die off.

**If you think you've seen myrtle rust, don't touch it or try to take a sample. Instead, take a photo, including of the affected plant, and contact MPI on 0800 80 99 66.**



### **Planning for the future of biosecurity in Queensland**

The draft *Queensland Biosecurity Strategy: Our Next Five Years 2017–2022* is now available for public feedback. [Read more >>](#)

### **[Wine industry joins GIA partnership](#)**

The wine industry have signed an agreement with Government to better protect the commercial grape growing industry it represents in managing biosecurity

### **Upcoming events**

#### **[New Zealand Equine Veterinary Association Conference](#)**

25-28 July, Queenstown

#### **[NZ Biosecurity Institute – \(NETS\) The Birds and the Beehive Conference](#)**

9-11 Aug 2017, Wellington

#### **[NZ Winegrowers Romeo Bragato Conference](#)**

30-31 August 2017 Marlborough

#### **[Asia Fruit Logistica](#)**

6-8 Sep 2017, Hong Kong