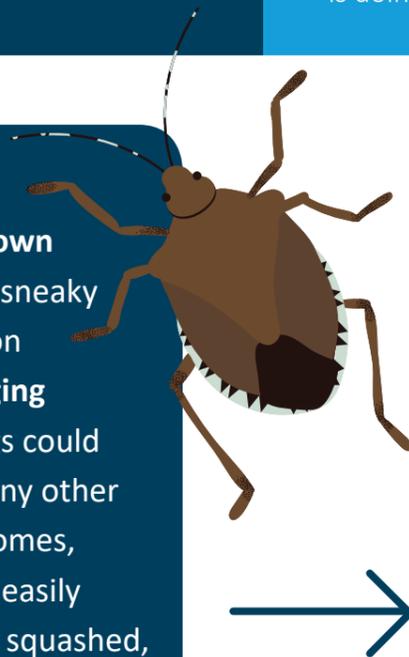


BORDER BUGS: UPDATE ON PROCESSING TIMES FOR IMPORTED FOODS

Food industry representatives have let MPI know that increased processing times for imported foods are having a significant impact on business. This guidance gives information about why processing times have increased, what MPI is doing to reduce processing times, and what food importers can do to limit impacts on food businesses.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

MPI's Biosecurity New Zealand unit is working hard to keep **brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB)** out of New Zealand. BMSB is a sneaky pest that we've caught at the border many times, hitchhiking on passengers and imported goods. These bugs could be a **damaging economic pest** and a significant household nuisance. Stink bugs could attack grapes, kiwifruit, apples, citrus, stone fruit, corn and many other valuable crops. Over winter, bugs gather in large numbers in homes, where they're an unsightly and smelly nuisance. They can't be easily treated with insecticides and they emit a pungent odour when squashed, making them hard to remove.



So far, **we've managed to stop BMSB** from settling here, but this has only been through increased action at our borders. Following the spread of BMSB from Asia to the US and Europe, more containers from a wider range of countries need to be inspected at the border. Following increased detections in containers at the onset of the BMSB season, which coincided with the 2018/19 summer peak for imported foods, **additional control measures were implemented** to keep the country safe. The increased measures saw 10 times more containers being held for inspection or fumigation over the 2018/19 season than in previous years.



LOOKING AHEAD

MPI has undertaken a number of initiatives to manage processes better for future Christmas seasons. This information is provided to help you know how to get goods cleared as fast as possible.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE



Employed more staff

The Target Evaluator team has increased from 40 to 70 evaluators.



Introduced more automation for processing of applications

This will speed things up by relieving manual requirements.

WHAT TO KNOW



Good news

Consignments from an additional 30 countries will now be subject to increased inspection rates, leading to a safer Aotearoa!



Better news

In certain cases, fumigation must now be completed in the exporting country rather than on arrival in New Zealand, leading to faster processing at the border.



Great news

Through an internal review of border processes, a number of enhancements are underway to both improve biosecurity and streamline processes. Be on the lookout for opportunities to provide feedback!

WHAT TO DO

If your business imports food, it is important to have a good agent!

A good agent will:

- » **Know the requirements of the exporting country prior to departure**
High-risk countries, high-risk cargo, and high-risk seasons all have certain requirements. Knowing these before dispatching prevents delays.
- » **Get paperwork submitted as soon as the goods are on their way**
The paperwork needs to cover all requirements of the [Import Health Standards](#), be accurate, be complete, and not include unnecessary information.
- » **Check to make sure your goods won't be tripped up by cross-contamination issues with your importer**
- » **Have an arrival plan**
Know [how to apply for the urgency queue](#) if you are delayed.
- » **Be aware of potential delays such as audit inspections that may need to be factored in**

For more detailed guidelines please consult the Biosecurity website for [General Importing Requirements](#).