



Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia

Media release

For immediate release

20 December 2017

Greater biosecurity harmonisation will help protect nursery industry

The detection of 15 emergency plant pests¹ in Australia in 2017 has placed even clearer focus on the need for the harmonisation of biosecurity measures across plant producers in all states and territories to protect the nation's valuable nursery industry.

The sector underpins more than \$15 billion in national food, fibre and foliage plant production including urban landscape and retail through to fruit, vegetable, forestry and revegetation. It is one of the most heavily invested industries in Australia's national domestic biosecurity system.



While the bulk of pest incursions in 2017 were of low to negligible impact, the detection of Tomato Potato Psyllid (TPP) in February 2017 seriously affected a wide section of the industry in Western Australia, including seedling producers, high value grafted tomato production and ornamental plant production².

National biosecurity manager for Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA), John McDonald, presenting at the National Biosecurity Roundtable in Canberra recently, said streamlining the national domestic biosecurity system would improve business profitability and sustainability, while delivering efficiencies across agencies.

"These gains would be made by reducing the loss of markets and inability to access and supply new genetic material, while also decreasing the labour costs associated with managing market access compliance," Mr McDonald said.

"There's also considerable industry confusion in interpreting legal obligations during and after an incursion, and we risk eroding industry belief in, and support for, our biosecurity systems if we don't address these key criteria."

Other key risks for industry associated with not better harmonising biosecurity measures include:

- Reduced access to new and improved plant products
- Lack of participation by industry in national initiatives such as pest surveillance
- New genetic material not being traded across all jurisdictions therefore limiting productivity gains in certain sectors
- Producers not complying with biosecurity measures due to complexity and cost.



Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia

Media release

Mr McDonald said a national domestic pest risk analysis framework, together with standardised documents such as plant health and biosecurity certificates, uniform administrative requirements for labelling, packing and consignment information, electronic certification and agreed definitions for all movement control terminology would take important first steps towards harmonisation and would provide true red tape reduction.

The nursery industry is continuing to advance its levy-funded *National nursery industry biosecurity program* (NY15004) with five states – Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia – all providing the legal mechanisms to allow BioSecure HACCP to operate within their jurisdictions. The Northern Territory and WA are in the process of providing the legal instruments.

Mr McDonald said this was an outstanding example of biosecurity agencies across Australia working constructively, and in partnership, with industry to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome.

“Our aim is to ensure that production nurseries in Australia have access to an on-farm biosecurity program, that they’re aware of and prepared for incursions of exotic plant pests, and that they have effective market access mechanisms in place to maintain business functionality,” he said.

“Ultimately our domestic biosecurity system is there to ensure our growers can minimise their biosecurity risks and impacts through the least trade restrictive protocols possible that are technically sound and economically feasible.”

Ends

Additional information:

¹ In 2017, up to the beginning of November, NGIA involvement has been required in the below 15 emergency plant pest (EPP's) detections across Australia. The majority of these detections have been of low to no significant impact of our various cropping systems/supply chains (ornamental, landscape, fruit, vegetable, forestry, revegetation, etc) however *Bactericera cockerelli* (Tomato potato psyllid (TPP)) has had a significant impact. A further 18 EPP's have been actioned during 2017 that were carried over from 2016 requiring NGIA attention including consideration of data provided to determine various actions such as determining the technical feasibility of eradication.



Nursery & Garden Industry
Australia

Media release

Scientific name (common name)	Lead Agency
1 <i>Austropuccinia psidii</i> (Myrtle rust)	Cwith (Norfolk Is)
2 <i>Bactericera cockerelli</i> (Tomato potato psyllid)	WA
3 <i>Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum</i> (Vegetative disorder)	NSW
4 <i>Collophora rubra</i>	VIC
5 <i>Dickeya dianthicola</i> (Black leg of potato)	WA
6 <i>Enterobacter cowanii</i>	QLD
7 <i>Eriophyes cf. exilis</i>	TAS
8 <i>Killifia acuminata</i> (Acuminate scale)	QLD
9 <i>Lasiodiplodia citricola</i>	SA
10 <i>Liothula omnivora</i> (Common bag moth)	NSW
11 <i>Papaya meleira virus</i>	QLD
12 <i>Perenospora belbahrii</i> (Downy mildew of basil)	QLD
13 <i>Puccinia striiformis f. sp. tritici</i> , pathotype 64E64A	VIC
14 <i>Trionymus sp.</i> (Root mealybug)	TAS
15 <i>Wahlgreniella nervata</i> (Strawberry tree aphid)	WA

²TPP was detected in metropolitan Perth in February 2017 leading to the development of a Response Plan under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) aimed at eradicating TPP/*Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum* (CLso) disease complex– which is expressed as zebra chip disease in potatoes. Based on the activities completed under the response plan it was determined in April 2017 that TPP was not technically feasible to eradicate therefore parties agreed to implement the Transition to Management (T2M) phase under the EPPRD. This T2M program will run for 12 months to May 2018 providing a range of activities addressing; surveillance for CLso, communication, R&D, market access, a national management plan, developing management options for TPP and CLso and cost/benefit analysis. NGIA participated in approximately 16 TPP Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP) meetings and 6 National Management Group meetings dealing with this incursion plus more than 30 other side meetings and group conversations with affected growers, other industry stakeholders and governments.

****ENDS****

Caption: National biosecurity manager for Nursery & Garden Industry Australia (NGIA), John McDonald.

For further information, please contact Hilary Sims, Cox Inall Communications, on 0474 699 747 or hilary.sims@coxinall.com.au

This communication has been funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture.