**Update on getting produce into Australia**

 **February 2018**  

1. **Background**

Australia is phasing out the OPI[[1]](#footnote-1) programme which allows eligible New Zealand fruit and vegetables can be precleared in New Zealand by DAWR2 inspectors before export.

Within three years OPI will no longer be offered by DAWR. Instead the Compliance Based Inspection Scheme (CBIS) will provide one way of moving produce into Australia. While the inspections under CBIS will take place at the Australian border, the scheme rewards importers with a good compliance history with decreased inspection rates and faster entry. CBIS details are available on the:

* PMAC web site http://www.pmac.co.nz/advice-for-exporters.html
* DAWR web site - <http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/plant-products/risk-return>

MPI and Industry members on PMAC have formed a working group to work with both the New Zealand Industry and Australian officials to facilitate a smooth transition to CBIS.

1. **Latest news**

The latest working group meeting was held on the 13th February at which the following points were discussed:

* 1. The number of inspectors in New Zealand to undertake OPI inspections between May 2018 and April 2019 will reduce from the current 17 to 8. Since there will be significantly fewer inspectors some difficult decisions are required about where and when inspectors will be available. To ensure these allocation decisions are consistent and efficient, the meeting considered a paper on the principles MPI will use to allocate inspectors. The principles will be confirmed later this month.
	2. MPI continues to communicate with Australian officials to try and minimise the impact of the change from OPI to a CBIS system. Over the last month MPI has been working with DAWR on a report on how the CBIS programme for New Zealand avocados operated. Between October and December no exporters were placed on a reduced monitoring rate. The success rate for consignments from individual exporters varied from 0 to 75%. Officials are using the report to look at whether the settings for the programme are appropriate.
	3. MPI reported that once DAWR has completed the CBIS review it may add more products from New Zealand into the CBIS programme for 2018.

The next meeting will be held in mid-March and it is hoped by that stage the Australian CBIS review will be completed and MPI will have met with DAWR in Australia to discuss any proposed changes to CBIS.

1. **Ongoing working group advice**
	1. Growers, packhouses and exporters should continue to do all they can to ensure that only compliant product is sent to Australia. In the case of CBIS even the presence of non-quarantine pests will result in a “fail” as an intervention is required to identify the pest and determine its status. (Note that for avocados under CBIS this accounted for a large part of the failures). Australian officials assume that insect finds at the border are a pest until shown otherwise, as occurs in New Zealand. As a consequence the presence of insects will delay passage across the border.

* 1. Exporters are asked to provide feedback to their sector body or MPI on the fate of consignments at the Australian border. Any details about consignments (such as time to inspect, time for pest ID to be confirmed or storage of consignments awaiting inspection) will be used to inform MPI’s discussion with Australian officials. Having conversations based on fact rather than perception maximises the chance that these conversations will result in useful initiatives. Note Australian importers[[2]](#footnote-2) are being provided with a monthly report on the fate of their consignments. If you are not receiving any feedback from your importers on how individual consignments have fared please contact them and ask for this information.
	2. If your commodity is not yet being sent via CBIS – look now to see whether there are enhancements required to reduce insect presence in the consignment. Where this involves significant change to the production chain please inform MPI so they can inform DAWR officials. This will inform the product settings under CBIS.

**Next steps**

Over the next 6 months the working group (Industry and MPI) will be meeting monthly to monitor access into Australia. After each meeting an update will be circulated. The December communication titled “Sending product to Australia is likely to become more difficult over the next few years” is [available here](http://www.pmac.co.nz/uploads/1/4/1/0/14100200/december_2017_opi-_cbis_communication.pdf). If you have any specific queries or concerns on these communications, please check the websites mentioned above or email plantexports@mpi.govt.nz

   

1. Offshore Pre-shipment Inspection programme [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. An importer is defined as that organisation which is the responsible party for the consignment when it is presented at the border. More detail on the definition of an importer is being sought from DAWR. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)