

Stakeholder Communique - Plant Biosecurity Council; Fruit Fly Council & BMSB Council

This communique outlines the key matters discussed and agreed at meetings of the Plant Biosecurity Council; the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Council and the Fruit Fly Council held on 19 November 2019.

Plant Biosecurity Council

Membership – MPI, NZ Forest Owners Association, Summerfruit NZ, NZ Plant Producers Incorporated (Observer), Kiwifruit Vine Health, Onions NZ, NZ Winegrowers, NZ Apples & Pears, NZ Avocado, Horticulture NZ, Seeds and Grains Readiness & Response (Observer), Tomatoes NZ, and Potatoes NZ

The Plant Biosecurity Council (PBC) held its second meeting, with discussion focussing on the election of an inaugural Chair, the role and purpose of the Council and its initial work programme.

Key outcomes and topics discussed included –

- Stu Hutchings, CEO of Kiwifruit Vine Health and Chair of the Fruit Fly Council was elected as the inaugural Chair of the PBC.
- The initial focus of the PBC will be to provide a forum for facilitating pan-Plant sector biosecurity issues and opportunities. Initial terms of reference for PBC have been agreed, but are expected to evolve over time as the role of the PBC clarifies. PBC will hold a planning session early in 2020 to set an initial strategy to underpin its deliberations.
- PBC membership is relevant to most plant sector GIA signatory parties, with other stakeholders invited on an issue by issue basis. Ongoing membership will be discussed at the forthcoming planning day.
- PBC received an update from MPI's policy team on the process to review the Biosecurity Act, and the expected timings for the release of public discussion documents.
- PBC were briefed on the proposed Plant Production Biosecurity Scheme (a scheme designed to provide certification of biosecurity standards for producers of nursery plant stock across all sectors), and noted that relevant GIA signatories are expected to progress the development of an Operational Agreement under GIA over the next few months.
- PBC received a briefing on work commissioned by the Xylella Action Group to identify primary sectors potentially impacted by *Xylella fastidiosa*, and noted the current focus is developing a response plan as an Operational Agreement under GIA.
- PBC were briefed on the International Year of Plant Health 2020 (IYPH) programme being run through the United Nations, and noted that a New Zealand launch event is expected to be held at Parliament early in 2020. Where possible biosecurity work emanating from plant sector councils work will be aligned with the IYPH initiatives.

The meeting served as Marie Dawkins' (CEO of Summerfruit NZ) final attendance at a GIA meeting, and her significant contribution to the development of GIA was acknowledged by the full group.

PBC's next meeting is scheduled for 4 March 2020.

Fruit Fly Council (FFC)

Membership – MPI, Summerfruit NZ, Vegetables NZ, Kiwifruit Vine Health, NZ Citrus, NZ Apples & Pears, NZ Avocado, Horticulture NZ.

FFC held a regular quarterly meeting, with the meeting primarily focussed on the progress of Council's work programme.

FFC acknowledged the recent passing of Richard Ivess, a former Chief Plants Officer and Director Plant Biosecurity with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, who made a huge contribution to the development of New Zealand's fruit fly management programme.

Key outcomes and topics discussed included:

- A project to consider additional fruit flies of economic significance in a New Zealand context was closed, with the final report having been previously considered. The report recommended that no further action was required in that the risk of these new flies establishing was low and the FFC had previously noted that the existing Fruit Fly response standard is applicable to any fruit fly response situation.
- FFC agreed to continue a project exploring the potential benefits of sterile fruit fly release as a response tool in any New Zealand outbreak.
- FFC discussed an ongoing project considering domestic movement controls during a response, and agreed to a refinement of the initial project brief.
- FFC agreed funding for a new project to get underway –Isotope signatures from potential Qfly origins.
- Status reports on other projects underway (Technical developments; Combining fruit fly lures; Investigating alternatives to agricultural chemicals used in fruit fly trapping; Reviewing biosecurity risks across the system; Testing and refining fruiting traps) were all noted.

FFC will meet again on 26 March 2020 and, amongst other things, expects to review its overarching strategy.

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Council (BMSBC)

Membership – MPI, NZ Avocado, NZ Apples & Pears, Kiwifruit Vine Health, Tomatoes NZ, Vegetables NZ, Summerfruit NZ, Horticulture NZ, NZ Wine, Seeds and Grains Readiness & Response (Observer)

BMSBC held a regular quarterly meeting, with discussion also focussed on progressing the Council's work programme.

Key outcomes and topics discussed included;

- BMSBC discussed the response triggers contained in the BMSB Operational Agreement, as they relate to the two post border investigations in the 2018/19 risk season. Council agreed that similar circumstances in future will likely trigger a cost shareable response.
- A number of industry members agreed to co-fund a visit by two US BMSB experts to NZ in early 2020.
- Council noted with concern ongoing delays in the registration efforts for synthetic pyrethroids and will re-engage with EPA staff to attempt to expedite progress.

- Council agreed to submit a revised BMSB Response Operational Specification, and Samurai Wasp Release Plan, to the EPA to meet requirements related to the previous approval to release samurai wasp.
- Council discussed options for identifying a source of samurai wasps for potential deployment in a response (subject to the conditions on deployment in the EPA's approval), noting the limited number of potential providers internationally; and associated logistical issues.
- Council considered a range of recommendations emanating from the previous work of a Technical Advisory Group (on possible chemical response treatments) and agreed additional scoping work is required before specific work is commissioned.
- Status reports on other projects underway (Understanding BMSB Biology (to be closed); Use of Netting against BMSB; Samurai Wasp Host Searching and the BMSB Surveillance Programme) were all noted.

BMSB will meet again on 26 March 2020 and intends to hold a planning session to review the current and future Work Programme.

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Any questions please contact Steve Rich, GIA Secretariat Manager, steve.rich@gia.org.nz