



## Communiqué:

### 2021 Quarantine Regulators Meeting

18, 20, 25, 27 May, and 3 June 2021 (virtual)

The 2021 Quarantine Regulators Meeting (QRM) was held on 18, 20, 25, 27 May and 3 June 2021. This was the third meeting under the three-year theme *Advancing biosecurity systems through a success-oriented plan*. The focus of the meeting was on *managing systems and continuing improvement*. The meeting, the twelfth of its kind and the first to be held virtually, was hosted by the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE).

Each of the five QRM sessions was attended by approximately 160 delegates (800 total) representing over 30 biosecurity agencies, discussing a range of topics including emerging international biosecurity threats, biosecurity treatment assurance systems, alternative treatments, detector dogs and biosecurity innovation.

Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO, Secretary, DAWE opened the meeting. Mr Metcalfe remarked on the importance a harmonised approach to biosecurity border management, trade facilitation and capacity building and noted that fora such as the QRM are an excellent opportunity to connect with international counterparts.

Mr Sam Griffiths from DAWE presented on the Khapra Beetle response and new measures that Australia has implemented to manage the risk. The presentation outlined Australia response to the recent and increasing hitchhiker risk of khapra beetle in sea containers. The multiple questions asked regarding the requirements and approach taken by Australia highlighted the global consensus surrounding the issue of khapra beetle.

Mr Rama Karri from DAWE spoke about what Australia is doing to manage the increasing risk of hitchhiker pests. The presentation detailed where the risks lie and what Australia is doing to mitigate those risks, including collaborating with trading partners, offshore assurance schemes and taking advantage of new technology. During further discussion it was noted that there has been significant investment from the Australian government to help manage those risks and Australia will provide some progress reports into the future.

Dr Wickramaarachchi from Sri Lanka's National Plant Quarantine Service presented on pests that are of significant quarantine concern in Sri Lanka. Dr Wickramaarachchi expressed Sri Lanka's desire to prevent the introduction, establishment and spread of these pests, and also detailed plant diseases that are of particular concern, such as Citrus Greening.

On **Day Two** Mr André Nothomb and Mr Mathew Murphy from Cytec Solvay Group spoke about the future use of cylinderised phosphine as an alternative to methyl bromide and metal phosphide tablets. The presentation generated multiple questions and further discussion around various uses for phosphine.

Ms Nancy Villegas from the International Regional Organisation for Plant and Animal health (OIRSA) spoke about the prioritisation of regulated pests in the OIRSA region. Ms Villegas covered the criteria used when prioritising pests and discussed the model used to score each one. The presentation prompted questions around the pest entry pathways and what measures are being taken to detect and prevent infestation.

Ms Nidia Sandoval from OIRSA gave a presentation on how the new dog brigades in Guatemala have been successful as a first line of defence for keeping the region free of pests and diseases. The presentation covered the difference that the dogs have made when inspecting passengers and goods. The seizures resulting from detections and future dog detection projects in the region were discussed by participants.

Ms Janet Rowley and Ms Barb Nead-Nylander from Douglas Products ended the session by speaking about the evolution of the Douglas Products' stewardship program for the use of sulphuryl fluoride, or Vikane and Profume. The stewardship program now includes biosecurity treatment specific information which supports Australia and New Zealand's fight against brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB). This is a great example of industry and government working collaboratively to address biosecurity risks.

**Day Three** began with Ms Penny McLeod from New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries (NZ MPI) speaking about phytosanitary measures for the importation of used agricultural and forestry machinery. The presentation covered the associated risks involved with used machinery, import requirements and the challenges faced with regard to contamination which prompted many questions and discussion from participants.

Dr Andy Sheppard from Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation gave a presentation on a report about Australia's biosecurity future, covering economic impacts, system connectivity, shared responsibility and innovation in science and technology. Further discussion was had with participants around how the report could apply to every country to help improve biosecurity systems.

Ms Carol Quashie-Williams from DAWE presented on the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) pest surveillance and reporting project which explored how governments connect with donor agencies to further their programs. There was a lot of interest from participants wanting to know how their country can get involved in the project, with links provided for further information.

Mr Stephen Butcher from NZ MPI ended the session with a demonstration of the Official New Zealand Pest Register (ONZPR) online tool. This presented an opportunity for other agencies to see whether similar tools would be of benefit in their country.

**Day Four** began with a joint presentation on sea container cleanliness, by Mr Shane Sela from World Bank Group, Ms Wendy Asbil from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and Ms Wendy Beltz from the United States Department of Agriculture, joined by Ms Sina Waghorn from NZ MPI and Mr Rama Karri from DAWE. The presentation covered contamination of sea containers and cargo, how this contamination occurs and the different initiatives and approaches to mitigate it.

Ms Jessica May from DAWE gave an update on some of the biosecurity innovation projects within Australia, with themes around remote auditing, treatment verification, exotic invasive ants and

container traceability. Another project that was discussed was the creation of new apps to identify insects, including BMSB and other pest and native species.

To finish the session, Ms Erin Gillespie from NZ MPI spoke about the regulations associated with the disinsection of aircraft, the methods required for entry into Australia and New Zealand and the various verification methods used.

**Day Five** began with Mr Stephen Peios from DAWE facilitating an open discussion on the theme for the 2022 QRM. It was agreed that the theme for the 2022 QRM will be *'Turning challenges into opportunities: adapting biosecurity regulation using advancing technology in an uncertain environment'*.

Mr Murray Dawson from Landcare Research in New Zealand gave a presentation and virtual demonstration of a new app to identify plants at risk from Myrtle Rust. The presentation generated further discussion around who the app is aimed at and how many people use it.

Ms Danierla Cerón from the Phyto and Zoosanitary Regulation and Control Agency in Ecuador spoke about Ecuador's recent experiences working with the fumigation of roses with phosphine. Ms Cerón explained that a new voluntary control has been put in place and been implemented by many industry participants in Ecuador.

Finally, Mr Nathan Reid from DAWE provided a recap of the meeting. He noted the diverse range of topics that had been covered over the five sessions and that the number of delegates who attended was a record for the QRM. He encouraged continued collaboration and communication between delegates, and for all to embrace the 'new normal', as we prepare to meet again face to face in the future. He thanked delegates and presenters for their participation and valuable contributions before officially closing the 2021 QRM.