



Draft group pest risk analysis for soft and hard scale insects on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut-flower and foliage imports

Fact sheet

November 2020

Key points

- We released the draft pest group risk analysis (PRA) for soft and hard scale insects on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut-flower and foliage imports on 6 November 2020.
- This is the third group PRA released for public consultation. The first was for thrips and orthospoviruses and the second for mealybugs and the viruses they transmit. These group PRAs were finalised in 2017 and 2019, respectively.
- Stakeholders can submit comments on the draft group PRA during a 90 calendar day public consultation period, closing 4 February 2021.
- The final report is expected to be published in 2021.

About the group pest risk analysis

The group PRA considers the biosecurity risks posed by all members of the family Coccidae (soft scales) and the family Diaspididae (hard scales or armoured scales) in the insect order Hemiptera on fresh fruit, vegetables, cut-flowers and foliage imported into Australia as commercial consignments. It also assesses the risk posed by plant viruses transmitted by soft and hard scale insects.

The draft group PRA identifies 243 soft scale and 331 hard scale species as quarantine pests for Australia. No plant viruses of biosecurity concern were identified as being transmitted by soft and hard scale insects.

The draft group PRA identifies measures for soft and hard scale quarantine pests, and alternative risk management options. These may be considered on a case-by-case basis when developing new import conditions for specific commodities, or when reviewing existing import conditions for commodities that are currently traded.

Where measures are required, they include the following options:

- pre-export visual inspection and if found, remedial action (e.g. suitable treatment) to manage the identified pest
- a systems approach
- treatment
- area freedom.

On-arrival verification will be undertaken to provide assurance that Australia's import conditions have been met and appropriate level of protection achieved.

Imported goods that are frequently found to be infested with scale insect quarantine pests may be subject to mandatory, pre-export treatment approved by Australia.



Soft and hard scale insects

Soft and hard scale insects are small sap-sucking insects that feed on plants. More than 3,900 species have been described, of which 243 soft scale and 331 hard scale species are identified as quarantine pests for Australia. These species have the potential to be on the plant import pathway. Some soft scale insect species are also able to transmit viruses associated with grapevines but these viruses are not quarantine pests as they are already present in Australia.

Soft and hard scale insects are regarded as major plant pests and are found in every part of the world. Soft and hard scale insects can cause damage across a range of crops by reducing yield, quality and marketability, requiring ongoing field management and control.

Next steps

Once the consultation period closes, we will consider stakeholder comments and prepare the final group PRA. Responses to technical issues raised will be included in the final group PRA. We expect to release the final report in 2021.

Further information

Why did we conduct this pest group risk analysis?

A PRA is the process of evaluating biological or other scientific and economic evidence to determine whether an organism is a pest, whether it should be regulated, and whether it needs phytosanitary measures to manage its biosecurity risk.

The department is improving the effectiveness and consistency of our PRA processes. A key step in this improvement is the development of the group PRA, which assesses the biosecurity risks posed by groups of pests and diseases with shared biological characteristics across numerous import pathways.

Group PRAs make the risk analysis process for imported goods more effective and consistent for the department, while maintaining a robust system to protect against pests and diseases entering Australia.

Keep informed

Further information on this risk analysis can be found on the department's [website](#) or by contacting us. Subscribe to the [plant stakeholder register](#) to receive notices about plant biosecurity policies.



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