



Subcommittee on National Plant Health Surveillance Communiqué – SNPHS18

The Subcommittee on National Plant Health Surveillance (SNPHS) held its 18th meeting virtually from 20 – 21 April 2021. Topics considered by SNPHS are detailed below:

- **Digital Systems Update**

The subcommittee noted that activities to support the operational deployment of AUSPestCheck™ are continuing, as is work to nationalise MyPestGuide™ Reporter, through a working group established by Plant Health Committee. The subcommittee also noted that Plant Health Australia (PHA) has projects underway to redevelop and redeploy the Australian Plant Pest Database and the Pest and Disease Image Library.

- **Industry Surveillance Strategies and Programs**

The subcommittee discussed a range of industry-led surveillance initiatives. These included activities occurring to support early detection of high priority pests of the citrus, honeybee, potato and tropical plant industries.

- **Presentation on Making General Surveillance Work**

The subcommittee learned about an Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics project titled 'Making General Surveillance Work (2018-2021)'. This project explores general surveillance through a 'thinking lens' across sectors. The aim is to develop general surveillance guidelines that will be of benefit to general surveillance program coordinators, policy-makers, funders and people monitoring and evaluating general surveillance programs. The project has explored general surveillance literature as well as nine in-depth case studies of general surveillance to understand what hinders and facilitates success. SNPHS members were asked to review the draft guidelines and to participate in a workshop planned for the second half of 2021 to ensure the guidelines meet end-user needs.

- **National Forest Pest Surveillance Program and Partnership Update**

PHA continues to work with subcommittee members to finalise details of a National Forest Pest Surveillance Program and Partnership project. The project is now supported by a steering committee represented by all jurisdictions which will further contribute to the strengthening of national forest biosecurity.

- **Spotted Wing Drosophila Surveillance Update**

Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) is a high-risk quarantine pest for Australia and has the potential to become a significant pest. Agriculture Victoria undertook a pilot SWD surveillance program in high-risk entry and establishment pathways located in urban Melbourne and the Yarra Valley. While the primary aim of the program was early detection, the pilot also compared the efficacy of different traps in capturing drosophila species as well as the efficacy of traditional morphological diagnostics



with more sophisticated metabarcoding techniques. No SWD were detected during the pilot program.

- **Presentation on Khapra Beetle Surveillance**

The ongoing National Khapra Beetle Response has seen the introduction of a number of continuous improvement measures during the initial phases. The presentation outlined examples of improvements in the policy and strategy, data management, diagnostics and surveillance fields. Some measures were more easily incorporated into the response than others. While the response benefited from these measures it has emphasised the importance of preparedness as well as end of response evaluation of processes.

- **Management of Erroneous Pest Reports on Citizen Science Platforms**

The subcommittee discussed the potentially significant impact that erroneous records of a pest of significance to biosecurity may have if reported on a citizen science platform. Biosecurity, trade and market access could be adversely affected. Opportunities to engage with citizen science groups to mitigate the associated risk were considered.

- **National Plant Biosecurity Surveillance Strategy**

The subcommittee discussed progress made on the development of the National Plant Biosecurity Surveillance Strategy and the implementation plan for the strategy. The Surveillance Strategy Working Group (SSWG) met recently to continue to progress the strategy development and finalise the scope. The subcommittee endorsed the Glossary of National Plant Health Surveillance Terms developed by the SSWG.

- **Plant Surveillance Network Australasia Pacific Update**

SNPHS noted the draft Annual Surveillance Workshop report and is considering the recommendations from the workshop for inclusion in future national surveillance plans.

- **Next Meeting**

The subcommittee will hold its 19th meeting on 14-15 September 2021 via videoconference.