

## Plant Health Committee Communiqué—PHC54

The Plant Health Committee (PHC) held its 54th meeting in Canberra on 4 – 6 December 2018. Andrew Bishop (Tasmania) commenced in the Chair's role for this meeting and Rosa Crnov (Victoria) was appointed the new Deputy Chair. Issues considered by the PHC as part of the meeting are detailed below.

### ■ Governance

Progress against the 2018-19 PHC Work Plan was measured with a number of achievements noted including planning for succession and future leader development. Leadership workshops and opportunities for two Chief Plant Health Managers (CPHMs) to act as the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer have been flagged. A CPHM succession planning document will be progressed in the first half of 2019.

### ■ Fruit fly

PHC agreed to allocate responsibilities for actions under the implementation plan to improve Australia's fruit fly management system. The committee also discussed the management of the Fruit Fly Assurance Framework and welcomed the Australian Government's announcement of a \$16.9 million package to strengthen Australia's fruit fly system.

### ■ Surveillance

PHC considered a scoping proposal to adopt MyPestGuide as a national app for pest reporting. Options for the app's usage, implementation and funding to support national adoption will be finalised in the coming months for reporting to the National Biosecurity Committee (NBC).

### ■ Interstate Trade

Recent interstate trade disputes were discussed in the context of the dispute resolution process that has previously been discussed at the NBC. The process will be revised and streamlined to more effectively handle any future disputes.

Steering of interstate trade reform activities will now be addressed through a PHC working group, which was seen as an opportunity to align with reform initiatives under the new fruit fly funding package.

### ■ Subcommittees

The Subcommittee on Domestic Quarantine and Market Access (SDQMA) updated the committee on the Tomato Potato Psyllid harmonisation entry conditions workshop held in October 2018. PHC agreed to the establishment of an expert panel to review the list of host plant associations and provide a report of their findings to PHC and SDQMA.

PHC endorsed the Reference Collection Strategy Implementation Plan as presented by the Subcommittee on Plant Health Diagnostics (SPHD), along with the formation of a working group to drive and oversee the plan's implementation.

The Subcommittee on National Plant Health Surveillance (SNPHS) provided an update on preparations for the 2019 Annual Surveillance Workshop, to be held in Brisbane on 13-14 March. It is anticipated the Plant



Surveillance Network Australasia Pacific (PSNAP) website that has been in development for the last year will be launched at the workshop.

#### ▪ **Preparedness**

Plant Health Australia (PHA) outlined how phasing in improvements to the process for Biosecurity Planning is resulting in the identification and monitoring of biosecurity preparedness activities in joint partnership between industry and government. To further improve the process, PHC members agreed to provide technical expertise for the review of Threat Summary Tables in Biosecurity Plans. There was also agreement to lead jurisdictions in providing policy/regulatory expertise for participation on Biosecurity Implementation Groups and Biosecurity Reference Panels.

#### ▪ **Harmonisation of bee biosecurity zones**

PHC considered a position paper prepared by the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council that designated five bee protection zones across Australia. The proposal indicated that should varroa mite arrive in Australia and not be able to be eradicated, the movement of live bees without certificates could occur within each of the zones - movement between zones would still require certification. PHC supported the proposal in principal and noted the positive move by industry to develop plans in advance of a response. It was also noted that as bees fall under animal biosecurity for international considerations, PHA will consult with the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer to ensure this policy does not impact on Australia's international obligations.

#### ▪ **Planning and capability**

A presentation on a phylloxera exercise was given by Inca Pearce of Vine Health Australia that highlighted the increasing importance of biosecurity among wine producers. Plant Health Australia delivered a training workshop on incursion management for CPHMs, which covered several aspects of the Emergency plant pest Response Deed, including response plan financial management.

#### ▪ **Next Meeting**

The PHC will next meet in Canberra for a one day meeting on 1 March 2019.

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