



4 November 2015

Biosecurity Advice 2015/19

Final review of policy: importation of *Phytophthora ramorum* host propagative material into Australia

This Biosecurity Advice (BA) is to advise stakeholders of the imminent release of the '*Final review of policy: importation of Phytophthora ramorum host propagative material into Australia*' on 4 November 2015.

Background

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) initiated this review following a request from the Australian nursery industry to revise the import conditions for nursery stock from countries where *Phytophthora ramorum* is known to occur. Surveys conducted overseas in response to *P. ramorum* outbreaks identified several new species of *Phytophthora* including *P. kernoviae*, *P. nemorosa* and *P. pseudosyringae*. These *Phytophthora* species share a similar host range, geographic range and cause symptoms indistinguishable from those of *Phytophthora ramorum*. This review therefore considers not only *Phytophthora ramorum* but also *P. kernoviae*, *P. nemorosa* and *P. pseudosyringae*.

The introduction of these *Phytophthora* species into Australia would have significant economic consequences. *Phytophthora ramorum* is one of the most destructive pathogens of oak and a range of other host plants with substantial commercial value. If introduced, this species will cause plant death and increase the cost of production due to its regulatory impact. The department has therefore conducted an analysis of the scientific literature to review the appropriateness of the existing policy for the importation of propagative material for these *Phytophthora* hosts.

The draft review of policy was released on 16 March 2015 for a 45 day consultation period (BA 2015/03). Following stakeholder consultation, all comments received were carefully considered in the finalisation of the policy.

Recommended measures

The department has reviewed the existing policy and recommended a tiered approach to risk management measures. The measures are designed to work together to ensure the risk is progressively reduced to a very low level to meet Australia's appropriate level of protection. The major recommendations of this review include:

- **Updating the host list** for *Phytophthora ramorum* and including hosts of *P. kernoviae*, *P. nemorosa* and *P. pseudosyringae*.
- **Off-shore measures** to minimise risks, including restricting bare-rooted plants, budwood and dormant cuttings to one-year-old material, thereby lessening the exposure of material to disease infection.

- **Mandatory official phytosanitary certification** endorsed with an additional declaration that bare-rooted plants, budwood and dormant cuttings have been inspected and found free from obvious disease symptoms.
- **On-arrival measures** to minimise risks for bare-rooted plants, budwood, dormant cuttings and tissue cultures. Bare-rooted plants, budwood and dormant cuttings must undergo on-arrival inspection, culturing, testing and treatment. Tissue cultures require on-arrival inspection for diseases symptoms.
- **Mandatory growth in a post-entry quarantine facility** for a minimum of 12 months (budwood, dormant cuttings and tissue cultures) or 15 months (bare-rooted plants), with disease screening and molecular testing.

The existing conditions for propagative material from countries where these *Phytophthora* species are not known to occur are recommended to continue.

The recommended measures will protect Australia's industries from these destructive pathogens while also allowing the industry to have access to new varieties from overseas.

The ultimate goal of these phytosanitary measures is to protect plant health and prevent the introduction of the *Phytophthora* species under review. The department considers that the risk management measures recommended in this final review of policy will be adequate to mitigate the risks posed by the *Phytophthora* species under review.

The *Final review of policy: importation of Phytophthora ramorum host propagative material into Australia* is available at agriculture.gov.au/ba.

Please pass this notice to other interested parties. If those parties wish to be included in future communications on this matter they should contact Plant Biosecurity.

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