Australian Government
Department of Agriculture and Water Resources

31 January 2019

Plant Biosecurity Advice 2019/P01

FINAL GROUP PEST RISK ANALYSIS FOR MEALYBUGS AND THE VIRUSES THEY TRANSMIT ON FRESH FRUIT, VEGETABLE, CUT-FLOWER AND FOLIAGE IMPORTS

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of the release of the *Final group pest risk analysis for mealybugs and the viruses they transmit on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut-flower and foliage imports*.

The final group pest risk analysis identifies 169 mealybug species and nine virus species transmitted by mealybugs as quarantine pests for Australia.

The final group pest risk analysis recommends measures for mealybug quarantine pests as well as alternative risk management options that 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.

No additional measures are required for the nine viruses transmitted by mealybugs on the plant import pathway.

The final group pest risk analysis takes into account submissions and comments received from stakeholders on the draft group pest risk analysis, released on 28 September 2018.

The *'Final group pest risk analysis for mealybugs and the viruses they transmit on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut flower and foliage imports'* is the second group pest risk analysis (PRA) to be finalised under the Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper. The first group PRA to be finalised was for thrips and orthotospoviruses.

This group PRA considers the biosecurity risks posed by all members of the insect families Pseudococcidae, Putoidae and Rhizoecidae (commonly referred to as mealybugs) in the insect order Hemiptera. It also considers the viruses transmitted by mealybugs that may be associated with fresh fruit, vegetables, cut-flowers and foliage imported into Australia as commercial consignments from any country.

This group PRA identifies 169 mealybug species as quarantine pests that require risk management measures to achieve the appropriate level of protection for Australia. The biosecurity risk associated with these mealybugs will need to be verified 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. This is because the risk can be influenced by a range of pathway-specific factors, such as the commodity, seasonal considerations, or the incidence of mealybugs in specific export production areas.

These recommended measures are consistent with long-standing established import requirements for mealybug quarantine pests.

T +61 2 6272 3933
F +61 2 6272 5161
18 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra City ACT 2601
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601
agriculture.gov.au
ABN 24 113 085 695

In contrast, this group PRA identifies nine viruses transmitted by mealybugs as quarantine pests that do not require risk management measures to achieve the appropriate level of protection for Australia on fresh fruit, vegetables, cut-flower and foliage imports. This is because mealybugs can only transmit viruses for a short period of time (semi-persistent transmission) and these viruses have a limited host range compared to their mealybug vectors. These biological factors significantly limit the likelihood that mealybugs associated with imported fresh fruit, vegetables, cut-flowers and foliage will be able to transmit exotic viruses to a host plant in Australia. Therefore no additional measures are required for these viruses transmitted by mealybugs on the plant import pathway.

Measures are applied to ensure that goods in consignments are free from mealybug quarantine pests. Verification measures, such as inspection, are required to provide assurance that Australia's import conditions have been met and the appropriate level of protection achieved. Additional operational procedures may be required on a case-by-case basis for specific plant import pathways, such as a system of traceability, registration of packing house and treatment providers and auditing of procedures, packaging and labelling requirements and specific conditions for storage and movement.

Imported goods that are frequently found to be infested with mealybug quarantine pests may be subject to mandatory treatment, which may be required pre-export rather than as a remedial action on arrival.

The final report and information about this group pest risk analysis are available on the department's website. Printed copies of the report are available on request.

Dr Marion Healy
First Assistant Secretary
Biosecurity Plant Division

Telephone: 1800 900 090 (option 1, option 1)
Email: imports@agriculture.gov.au