Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

BRIEF: Meeting with Hon Nicola Grigg - information on plant import issues

To:	Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity		
From	Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand		
Date	26 July 2024	**MPI Reference**	MO24-0353
Priority	Low	**Security Level**	In Confidence

- You are meeting with Hon Nicola Grigg, the Associate Minister of Agriculture, on 31 July 2024. This brief provides information requested by your office on two topics relating to plant imports.

Update on post-entry quarantine (PEQ) services

- The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is the only supplier of Level 3B PEQ services and they are provided on a cost recovery basis with up to a 50 percent funding contribution from the Crown to support imports of new germplasm.
- Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) has run two Expression of Interest (EOI) processes this year, covering 15 Level 3B greenhouse units that will be available from September 2024 when the new Level 3B PEQ facility at Mt Albert is scheduled to be open for business.
- BNZ received ten EOIs and offered places to all ten applicants. Some potential importers may not have submitted EOIs due to the seasonal availability of plant material not matching the timeframes being offered in this year's EOI processes.
- At this time, six offers have been accepted. Importers who have not progressed their applications are reporting that the main reason is challenges with supply, as they are experiencing difficulty in sourcing nursery plants that comply with New Zealand's biosecurity requirements.
- BNZ is currently reviewing the EOI process and booking policy to improve uptake of PEQ Level 3B greenhouse services.

Reducing barriers on the plant import pathway

- You recently received an aide-memoire for your meeting with New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated (NZPPI), which provided a response to concerns about the plant import system (AM24-0653 *Meeting with New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated* refers). The information provided is summarised below for quick reference.
- BNZ has been working on ways to make the quarantine system quicker and less expensive. Consultation with industry is due to start in August on two options:
  - one option would involve more laboratory testing and less inspection, resulting in fewer months in quarantine; and
  - the other option involves more reliance on offshore measures, resulting in reduced time in the highest level of PEQ in New Zealand.
- BNZ is also consulting on cleaning up the plant nursery stock import health standard by suspending pathways that are not used or traded on. This will enable resources to be focussed on import pathways that are in use and on progressing high-priority new standards.
- Proposals for amendments to the Biosecurity Act 1993 have been developed. Subject to approval from you and Cabinet, these proposals will be consulted on in Quarter Three 2024. Proposals to speed up and improve delivery of import health standards include:
  - broadening the range of amendments that can be made to import health standards without consultation; and
  - enabling one-off or irregular importation of risk goods without an import health standard.

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To: Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity
From: Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand

Update to AM24-0683 *Exotic caulerpa Controlled Area Notice Review and Targeted Engagement Process*

Date	5 August 2024	**Reference**	AM24-0773

Purpose

- As discussed with you at the Officials Meeting today (5 August 2024), this aide-memoire provides you with a further update to the information provided in AM24-0683 (*Exotic caulerpa Controlled Area Notice Review and Targeted Engagement Process*) regarding the intended direction for using Controlled Area Notices (CANs) for the management of exotic caulerpa in New Zealand.

Background

CAN Options presented in AM24-0683

1. AM24-0683 set out three potential options for the use of CANs. These are summarised below:
   a) location-specific CANs, in areas referred to as Exotic Caulerpa High Risk Zones, that restrict anchoring, the taking of marine life, and impose cleaning requirements;
   b) a Regional Exotic Caulerpa CAN applying throughout the habitable range of exotic caulerpa (Cape Reinga to East Cape) that would impose controls, including cleaning obligations on craft that have anchored or equipment that has been used; or
   c) Cease all CAN controls for exotic caulerpa.

2. AM24-0683 set out that option 1(b) (A Regional Exotic Caulerpa CAN) would be the option preferred by Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ).

Updated Advice regarding immediately viable CAN options

3. The existing Aotea Great Barrier Island and Te Rāwhiti CANs both expire on 30 September 2024. A decision on the future of these is a priority and BNZ will engage with local communities and others on replacement options for these CANs prior to this date.

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4. s 9(2)(f)(iv)

5.

6. The two key options that could be implemented for 1 October 2024 and that will be actively tested in targeted engagement as a replacement for the existing CANs are:
   a) to develop location-specific controls in Exotic Caulerpa High Risk Zones, in particular Great Barrier Island/Great Mercury Island and Te Rāwhiti; or
   b) cease all CANs in relation to exotic caulerpa.

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To: Hon Nicola Grigg, Associate Minister of Agriculture
From: Fiona Duncan, Director Regulatory Systems Policy

Gene Technology Reform and the Horticulture Sector

Date	19 August 2024	**Reference**	AM24-0754

Purpose

- This aide-memoire provides information on the gene technology reform and potential effects on New Zealand's horticulture sector. Definitions of some key terms are supplied in **Appendix One**.

Gene Technology Reform

Background and context

1. The Government has committed to the reform of New Zealand's gene technology regulations and legislation (the reform) and this process is now underway. The reform adapts and improves the Australian gene technology regulatory system for New Zealand's unique context.

2. An overview of the proposed regulatory regime is provided in **Appendix Two** Out of Scope . Key differences from the current system include: the establishment of a dedicated independent gene technology regulator, a hybrid regulatory approach[1], and a proportionate rather than precautionary risk management system. A summary table comparing different regulatory approaches is supplied in **Appendix Three**.

3. In developing the reform, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) undertook targeted engagement with stakeholders, including research and industry representatives, and Māori. The Industry Focus Group membership list is provided as **Appendix Four**.

4. Talking points to support your conversations on gene technology are provided in **Appendix Five**.

[1] A combination of a process-based and outcome or trait-based approaches. New Zealand's current approach is process-based.

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Horticulture sector impacts

Innovation

5. Gene technology can offer significantly reduced development times and lower research costs for horticulture-based research. Traditional cross breeding for new variations takes significant amounts of time and can be costly as many crops take many years to establish – in particular, tree crops such as apples and pears.

6. For our horticulture sector, this will mean enabling industry access to new tools to produce high-value, sustainable, climate-friendly food, access to new cultivars, and ways to improve resilience and lift productivity. Some possible examples are provided in Table One.

Table One: Examples of ways gene technologies can contribute to productivity, sustainability, and resilience in the horticulture sector.

Productivity	Sustainability	Resilience
Pest or disease resistant crops, reducing the amount of crops lost to these causes.	Pest or disease resistant crops reducing agricultural chemical use.	Crops with better water retention, making them more resistant to drought conditions.
High yield crops, increasing production for a similar amount of inputs.	Crops with better nitrate retention, reducing nitrate fertiliser requirements.	Crops that can exist in a broader range of climates.
Crops with improved shelf life can help address distance to market challenges.	Crops with improved shelf life can help reduce food waste.	Increased genetic diversity in crops, improving overall resilience to biosecurity threats[2].

Market access and consumer acceptance

7. Key export markets and consumers are more open to horticultural and arable applications of gene technology than those applied to animals. The use of gene technology in animal feed is generally accepted, with products of animals fed on genetically modified (GM) or gene edited feed tending to not require labelling.

8. Consumers are more accepting of food produced using gene technology when the produce has direct consumers benefits, such as improved nutrition. Business-to-business customers are also looking for sustainable products to meet environmental goals.

9. There are also often differences in treatment between crops produced locally and those that are imported in their markets of interest. A GM corn crop, for example, might be able to be imported but not cultivated domestically, or vice versa. In New Zealand, for example, golden rice can be imported for consumption but not cultivation.

[2] For example, all Sauvignon Blanc in New Zealand currently has the same genetic ancestry and therefore the same susceptibility to certain diseases.

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10. The gene technology regulatory reform could impact market access for the organic sector and others making GM-free claims. Different markets vary in their expectation regarding product assurances for gene technology. In some markets manufacturers' declarations or labelling claims are sufficient for products that are not the result of gene technology [3], while others require government assurance.

11. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) currently provides GM-free assurances for exported seed and horticulture products to a range of export markets – such as apples to India. These assurances leverage off the administrative plant exports framework and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO Act). GM freedom is also an expectation for exports to other markets, based on recognition of New Zealand's GM-free status or the exporter providing declarations to their importer or the importing authorities.

12. Under the proposed reform, market risks will be mitigated entirely operationally, through assurance and verification activities overseen by MPI. This will necessitate new or modified assurance frameworks across the primary export sector to enable official GM freedom assurances to be provided to trading partners.

13. s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted] It is not uncommon for GMO and non-GMO supply chains to coexist in the same country, for example Australia and the United States of America.

14. s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted] Funding for the new regulator is expected to come out of reprioritisation from MBIE's budget. s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

We anticipate a lag between any reform activity and economic benefits being seen

15. We expect to see a lag between reform activities and any economic return being seen for those utilising gene technology, because of:
    a) where New Zealand's existing research and industry priorities lie (with several research programmes focused on genetic modification);
    b) the time required for legislative and regulatory development;
    c) trial and commercialisation timeframes; and
    d) the time needed for some trade partners, customers, and consumers to become more accepting towards gene technology derived products.

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[3] Some markets require labelling for products of gene technology.

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Appendix One: Key Terms and Examples

Biotechnology: A multidisciplinary field that involves harnessing biology to make useful products.

Examples include the monitoring of dairy cow genetics for herd management, development of methane inhibitors, and gene editing for new cultivar development.

Gene technology: A subset of biotechnology. Specifically refers to those technologies used to modify the genome or its expression. Includes gene editing and genetic modification.

Gene editing: A type of gene technology. Inducing specific targeted changes in an organism's DNA or the addition of genes from the same or closely related species, to achieve a specific desired outcome.

What technology and resultant organisms are encompassed under this definition varies by country. Edited organisms can be indistinguishable from conventionally bred counterparts. Transgenic modification is often excluded from this definition in legislation.

Examples include PRLR-SLICK cattle, gene edited to have short hair to reduce heat stress, and bio-fortified tomatoes edited to have high levels of vitamin D.

Transgenic modification: Introducing a specific gene or genes from one organism to another organism to produce a desired trait. The two organisms are from different and not sexually compatible species.

Examples include Rainbow Papaya and Bt corn. Rainbow Papaya was modified for resistance to papaya ringspot disease using a gene from the papaya ringspot virus. Bt corn was modified for insect resistance using a gene from soil bacteria.

Genetic modification: A type of gene technology. Involves adding novel DNA to an organism from another, either related or unrelated species. Can include methods with random or known outcomes (including gene editing).

What technology and resultant organisms are encompassed under this definition varies by country. In New Zealand currently this is any changes made to the genome of an organism by any biotechnological method. In international contexts this is starting to be used to refer only to organisms modified by methods with random outcomes and/or transgenic modification.

Currently in New Zealand, examples include both Bt corn (modified for insect resistance using a gene from soil bacteria) and bio-fortified tomatoes (edited to have high levels of vitamin D).

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Appendix Two: Overview of proposed gene technology regulation

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- The legislation is intended to enable New Zealand to safely benefit from gene technologies by managing risks to the health and safety of people and risks to the environment.
- It will achieve this by managing the risks that organisms modified using gene technology pose, proportionate to their risks to the health and safety of people and the environment.

KEY FEATURES OF THE REGULATORY REGIME

- Risk-proportionate and evidence-based
- Internationally-aligned
- Leverages overseas expertise
- Retains public participation
- Streamlined, efficient and transparent processes
- Allows greater use of gene editing
- Focuses on the management of risk

NON-REGULATED TECHNOLOGIES AND ORGANISMS

GENE EDITING TECHNIQUES

- Techniques producing results indistinguishable from those achievable using traditional processes or natural mutations would be exempt. Example applications include:

- STERILE WILDING PINES
- GRASS ENDOPHYTES
- GABA TOMATOES
- NON-BROWNING MUSHROOMS
- DISEASE-RESISTANT MAIZE
- DISEASE-RESISTANT POTATOES

EXEMPT TECHNOLOGIES AND ORGANISMS

- Technologies and organisms commonly regarded as not creating or being a GMO would be exempt, including:

- NULL SEGREGANTS
- RNA INTERFERENCE
- REPLICATION-DEFICIENT VIRAL VECTORS
- EPIGENETICS
- MUTAGENESIS
- PROTOPLAST FUSION

RISK MATRIX FRAMEWORK

The regulator would assign activities to non-notifiable and notifiable risk tiers, the requirements of which will be graduated based on risk. Categories would be tailored for contained activities, activities involving intentional environmental release, and clinical trials and medical applications.

CONTAINED ACTIVITIES	ENVIRONMENTAL RELEASE	MEDICAL APPLICATIONS
Non-notifiable	Non-notifiable	Non-notifiable
Notifiable	Notifiable	Notifiable
Licensed Expedited assessment	Licensed Pre-assessed activities Expedited assessment Full assessment	Licensed Pre-assessed activities Expedited assessment Full assessment

- Non-notifiable activities would be very low risk and would include CAR T-cell therapies and routine laboratory research.
- Notifiable activities would be low risk and would include research with laboratory animals.
- Licences would cover field trials, clinical trials, and commercial releases.

ASSESSMENTS AND APPROVALS

Licensed activities would require assessment and approval by the regulator. The pre-assessed activity pathway would not require a Risks Assessment and Risk Management Plan and only full assessments would require public consultation.

Application is received → Regulator prepares a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan → Public consultation → If satisfied risks can be managed, regulator issues license

GENE TECHNOLOGY REGULATOR

- The regulator will be a single decision-maker, supported in their functions by an office, a technical advisory committee, and a Māori advisory committee.
- Their responsibilities will include assessing and authorising activities, developing regulations, providing advice on technical matters to Ministers and other agencies, and providing information and guidance to the public and regulated parties.

STREAMLINED ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

- Overlapping processes with other domestic regulators will be streamlined through information sharing, cooperation, and delegation, where appropriate.
- This will apply where gene technologies considered by the regulator are also new organisms, medicines, agricultural compounds, and veterinary medicines.

LEVERAGING THE EXPERTISE OF OVERSEAS REGULATORS

- Joint review provisions will enable the regulator to undertake joint assessments with other overseas regulators. Following the joint assessment, the regulator would make their own independent decision.
- Automatic authorisation of human medicines under the gene technology legislation would apply to medicines approved by at least two overseas gene technology regulators recognised by the New Zealand gene technology regulator.
- Expedited assessments would apply to activities approved by overseas gene technology regulators previously recognised by the New Zealand gene technology regulator.

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Appendix Three: Comparison of regulatory approaches

Regulatory Trigger	**Process**	**Hybrid**	**Trait/Outcome**
Description	The use of gene technology to attain a trait in an organism triggers regulation.	Gene technology considered "low risk" are exempted from regulatory oversight. Organisms and products are regulated as for those developed through traditional means. Other gene technology are still regulated proportionately to risk.	Novelty of trait in the organism and use triggers regulation as for those developed through traditional means.
Jurisdictions	New Zealand European Union (EU)	Australia United Kingdom EU (proposed – plants only)	Canada

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Appendix Four: Industry Focus Group Members

Organisation	Name	Sector
Horticulture New Zealand	Eve Pleydell	Primary Sector - Horticulture
Kiwi Fruit Breeding Centre	Matt Glenn	Primary Sector - Horticulture
New Zealand Winegrowers	Sarah Wilson; Phil Gregan	Primary Sector – Horticulture (also organics)
Zespri International	Lesly Van Nijlen	Primary Sector – Horticulture Organics
Fonterra	Ben Cunliffe	Primary Sector – Organics sector
Forest Owners Association	Brendan Gould, Elizabeth Heeg	Primary Sector – Forestry
Grasslanz Technology Limited	John Caradus	Primary Sector
Beef + Lamb New Zealand	Chris Houston, Dr Suzi Keeling	Primary Sector
Meat Industry Association of New Zealand Incorporated	Kaylene Larkin, Ashlin Chand	Primary Sector
AL Rae Centre for Genetics and Breeding	Dorian Garrick	Primary Sector
Board Focus Genetics, Dairy Genetics, New Zealand Animal Evaluation Limited	Hugh Blair	Primary Sector
Seafood New Zealand	Cathy Webb	Primary Sector
DairyNZ	Laura Kearney	Primary Sector
Foundation for Arable Research	Alison Stewart	Primary Sector
Infant Nutrition Council	Carole Inkster	Food sector
New Zealand Food and Grocery Council	Donnell Alexander	Food sector
BioTechNZ	Zahra Champion	Biotechnology
Medicines New Zealand	Tanya Baker	Health Sector
BioValeo	Julie Jones	Health Sector
NZeno	Dr Olga Garkavenko	Health Sector
Rautaki Solutions	Carl Ramage	International Consultancy
SGA Solutions	David 'Rock' Hudson	International Consultancy

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Appendix Five: Talking points to support your conversations on gene technology reform

Regulation

- Our current gene technology regulatory system was designed when the technologies were less predictable and precise than what is available now, and we took a much more cautious, risk-averse approach.
- This has resulted in a regulatory regime that is now overly prohibitive and is holding New Zealand back while overseas competitors reap the benefits that modern gene technologies have to offer.
- The Government is committed to updating New Zealand's gene technology rules to enable our growers to safely access these technologies while also protecting those who opt not to use these tools.
- Our intention is to establish a new regulatory regime that allows New Zealand to benefit from technological advancements while balancing strong protections for the health and safety of people and the environment, modelled on Australia's successful approach.
- This Government's goal is to ensure gene technology regulation works in a way that supports the horticulture sector to respond to changing consumer preferences, market dynamics, and advances in technology.
- The new reforms propose to manage the risks associated with gene technologies, rather than prevent their use all together.
- We also want to ensure that New Zealand growers can hold their own with our international competitors in terms of productivity.
- For our horticulture sector, this will mean enabling industry access to new tools to produce sustainable, climate-friendly food, access to new cultivars, and ways to lift productivity.
- The Government's role will be providing oversight where necessary, focussing on managing risks rather than preventing the use of genetic technologies all together.
- Unnecessary regulatory barriers will be eased, and the gene tech regulator will ensure products of gene technology are regulated in a risk proportionate way with appropriate protections for the heath and safety of people and the environment.
- It is expected that a Bill will be introduced to the House by the end of this year. Once the Government has introduced legislation, I would encourage you to provide feedback on the changes during the select committee process.

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Reputation, trade, and maintaining market access

- We need to update our legislation in a way that provides new market opportunities while ensuring New Zealand retains its reputation as one of the world's most sustainable provider of high-value food and primary products.

- Gene technology can have a range of important benefits. For the horticulture sector, it could mean giving the sector further tools to produce sustainable, climate-friendly food to boost exports in our key export markets, and new technology to reduce climate impacts from production – maintaining our reputation for sustainability.

- We can use gene technologies to create higher value products that are more nutrient dense, or that are without allergens, opening up the market to a wider range of consumers.

- This will add value to New Zealand's food and fibre products and the provenance stories that are an integral part of our export industry, particularly as we look to increase the value of New Zealand's exports now and into the future.

- One way to ensure upwards consumption and market access with gene technology is by ensuring that we match our approach to our trade partners as closely as possible.

Organics

- Gene technology is not a silver bullet, but it can be another tool in our kit as we face environmental and food security challenges.

- We are giving food producers the option to create new products that are better suited to changing conditions and consumer preferences, if they choose to.

- We don't expect to see a complete shift towards the use of gene technology - there will always be demand for foods produced using the same, traditional methods we use now.

- It is not uncommon for GMO and non-GMO supply chains to coexist in the same country for example Australia and USA. This is achieved through implementing assurance and supply chain separation programmes, which minimise unintentional crossover and help manage trade risks.

Biosecurity

- Gene technology solutions could help to control exotic pests or diseases. They could also help improve resilience of native species in the face of climate change.

- Regulatory oversight would be maintained for gene technology activities that may present a known or unknown risk to the environment, allowing proportionate risk management for exports or products we consume domestically. This will allow risk management effort to be focused on the areas of highest risk or greatest uncertainty.

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Engagement with reforms during Select Committees

- The Government welcomes feedback on the proposed legislation through the select committee process.
- The select committee process is likely to be held mid-2025 and the public and interested groups will be able to make submissions to the committee.
- When the proposed Bill is introduced later this year, information will be published on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website.

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To: Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity
From: Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand

Red seaweed, *Asparagopsis taxiformis* detection

Date	19 August 2024	**Reference**	AM24-0802

Purpose

- This aide-memoire informs you of the detection of red seaweed, *Asparagopsis taxiformis*, in New Zealand.

Situation

1. A new-to-mainland New Zealand red seaweed confirmed as *Asparagopsis taxiformis* (*A. taxiformis*) has been detected at two locations in the North Island (Iris Shoal near Kawau Island, and Whangārei Harbour).

2. During a biodiversity assessment associated with the dredging project to manage exotic caulerpa in April, red seaweed was collected at Iris Shoal by the s 9(2)(a) . On 31 July Northland Regional Council (NRC) staff collected a sample of red seaweed after large volumes washed ashore in Whangārei Harbour. In conjunction with Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ), NRC sent the sample to s 9(2)(a) for testing

3. s 9(2)(a) tested both red seaweed samples using taxonomic and molecular tests. s 9(2)(a) notified BNZ the confirmed identification of *A. taxiformis* lineage 2 on 9 August.

Background

4. There are six distinct genetic lineages of *A. taxiformis* and determining the lineage requires molecular testing. Lineage 2 has been detected at both Iris Shoal and Whangārei Harbour. *A. taxiformis* lineage 5 is native to the Kermadec Islands.

5. Lineage 2 is present at many locations around the world and is considered invasive in the Mediterranean Sea where it grows to high densities under those environmental conditions. *A. taxiformis* meadows have been found to have less abundant and diverse organisms associated with it compared to meadows of native seaweeds.

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6. Lineage 2 can survive water temperatures of 9 to 23 degrees Celsius, compared to 17 to 31 degrees Celsius of other tropical lineages. *A. taxiformis* can grow in shallow waters and up to a depth of 30 metres. There are two main life phases of *A. taxiformis,* and both can be spread via fragmentation.

New Zealand situation

7. A New Zealand native seaweed *Asparagopsis armata* is present throughout New Zealand waters and looks very similar to *A. taxiformis,* requiring laboratory testing to confirm which species of red seaweed is present.

8. It is likely that *A. taxiformis* entered New Zealand on a vessel either associated with biofouling or ballast water, on an anchor, anchor chain, or dirty equipment. These pathways can also spread this species domestically.

9. Due to the distance of approximately 75 kilometres between Iris Shoal and Whangārei Harbour, *A. taxiformis* may well be present at additional locations and may have been established in the North Island for several years.

10. *A. taxiformis* is likely to survive throughout the waters of the North Island, South Island and Stewart Island. However, it is too early to understand whether *A. taxiformis* will affect biodiversity in New Zealand waters.

11. Natural spread via water currents cannot be prevented within New Zealand. Domestic pathway management will reduce large scale spread. Boaties, fishers, and divers can help stop the spread of invasive seaweeds by keeping their gear clear of any seaweed before moving locations and keeping hulls clean.

Next steps

12. A risk assessment on *A. taxiformis* is being undertaken to better understand impacts on New Zealand coastal waters and biodiversity. We will advise on options for next steps once this is completed, which is expected in the next few weeks.

13. BNZ will continue to sample as part of regular surveillance for marine pests at 12 of New Zealand's busiest ports to understand if it is present elsewhere.

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Communications

14. BNZ has updated Northland Regional Council on the situation and notified Ngātiwai, the iwi with mana whenua over Whangārei Harbour. Northland Regional Council has also reached out to two Ngātiwai hapu in the Whangārei Harbour area to inform them of the situation. Ngāti Manuhiri and Auckland Council have been notified about the Iris Shoal detection. At this point all stakeholders informed were pleased to receive early notification and are awaiting further information.

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To: Hon Todd McClay, Minister of Agriculture
Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity
From: Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand

Import health standard development and prioritisation

Date	21 August 2024	**Reference**	AM24-0812

Purpose

- This aide-memoire provides information on import health standard development and prioritisation frameworks.

Regulatory framework for import health standards

1. The Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) prohibits the importation of biosecurity risk goods[1] into New Zealand unless there is an import health standard (IHS) in place. The IHS must specify effective rules for managing the risks associated with that good so it can be cleared for entry into New Zealand.

2. The process for developing an IHS is set out in the Act. The key steps are:
   a) a risk assessment to determine the pests and diseases that could be associated with the goods, and the potential impacts if they were to establish in New Zealand;
   b) identifying measures (actions) that will be effective in managing the risks posed by those pests and diseases;
   c) preparing a draft IHS that sets out those measures;
   d) consulting on the draft IHS; and
   e) finalising the IHS, including responding to any requests for an independent review (a process provided for in the Act).

3. The Act requires the same process for IHS amendments, although consultation is not required for a minor or urgent amendment.

4. For some commodities, for example, some grains and seeds, trade can start once an IHS is in place. For others, for example, all fresh produce and most animal products, once an IHS is in place, the exporting country can start negotiating with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) about the export protocol and/or export certificate on the details of how it will meet our import requirements.

[1] A biosecurity risk good is anything that it is reasonable to suspect constitutes, harbours or contains an organism that may cause unwanted harm in New Zealand.

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The IHS work programme

Prioritisation

5. Demand for new and amended IHSs is high, and the work programme is under constant pressure, driven by:
   a) requests from trading partners for access to the New Zealand market;
   b) requests from domestic industries to support primary sector growth and development, resilience, food supply, domestic market opportunities; and
   c) changes in pest and diseases that require IHS amendment to ensure they continue to manage biosecurity risk.

6. The IHS register contains 190 market access IHS requests from 35 countries (out of 511 items on the register). MPI conducts IHS prioritisation rounds and regularly assesses its forward work programme. The horticulture produce IHS work programme is almost solely driven by market access requests, the plant germplasm programme almost solely by sector development needs (new genetics), and the animal and animal products work programme is a mix of these and conservation needs (zoos). Table One lists the IHS numbers over the last four years, Table Two contains the current IHS work programme across the plant and animal sectors.

Table One: IHS projects completed over the last four years

	New	Amended	Total completed
FY 23-34	4[2]	44	48
FY 22-23	5[3]	42	47
FY 21-22	14	42	56
FY 20-21	3	34	37

7. There are four key criteria that help determine the IHS work programme (listed below), though not all IHS projects need to go through a prioritisation process.
   a) s 9(2)(j) [redacted]
   b) the interests of domestic sectors and consumers: the benefits sectors and New Zealanders may gain from being able to access goods or services, products, organisms, or imported genetic material;
   c) the scale of new or changed pests and diseases that have emerged on a trade pathway: pathways can be quickly closed if there is an urgent need to do so, but where risk remains well managed, trade will be left open while a standard is reviewed; and
   d) the feasibility of the potential IHS, and the efficiency with which the IHS process can be completed.

[2] The four new IHSs from 2023 to 2024 were giant river prawn broodstock, waste for recovery, reprocessing, recycling or disposal, hops plants for planting, and fresh pineapples for human consumption.
[3] The five new IHSs from 2022 to 2023 were avocado plants for planting, zoo crabs, zoo carnivores, egg products, and zoo rhinoceroses.

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8. The prioritisation process is designed to ensure MPI resources are directed where they will deliver the best returns for New Zealand. Decisions to change the work programme can be made at any time, though it has been demonstrated to be highly inefficient and costly to suspend work on an import pathway once it has started.

Table Two: Current projects on the IHS work programme

	New IHSs	IHS amendments
Plant germplasm	Mushroom spawn Pinus nursery stock Pyrus (pear) and Cydonia (quince/pear rootstock) nursery stock	Assessment of measures for *Xylella fastidiosa* Banana nursery stock Hoya nursery stock Insecticide treatments for nursery stock Cannabis tissue culture Chrysanthemum nursery stock Dahlia (potato spindle tuber viroid) Suspensions of non-traded schedules Agropyron (grasses) seeds for sowing Brassica (for example, mustards, canola, oilseed) seeds for sowing Capsicum seeds for sowing Blackberry seeds for sowing Tomato seeds for sowing Corn and maize seeds for sowing Fungicide treatment options for imported seed
Horticulture produce	Cut flowers Table grapes Blueberries Stonefruit Asparagus	
Live animals and germplasm	Deer germplasm Zoo equines	Cats and dogs Bovine germplasm Live horses
Animal products	Biological products and microorganisms Chicken meat Animal food Dairy products	Specified animal products Personal consignments of animal products Aquatic animal products

Working with industry

9. MPI works formally and informally with groups across the import, plant and animal sectors, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), to help develop both our export market access and IHS work programmes. Domestic sectors tend to communicate directly with us about their needs. Some recent examples of IHSs being developed in response to industry's needs are:

a) amended IHSs for fresh capsicum, cucumber, pumpkin from Australia in response to supply constraints after the Auckland floods and Cyclone Gabrielle;

b) a new IHS for avocado plant nursery stock to support the avocado industry; and

c) a new IHS for giant river prawns broodstock to support that industry.

10. s 9(2)(j) [redacted]

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Initiatives to speed up delivery of import health standards

Operational improvements

11. Since 2020, MPI has made several operational improvements that have:
    a) reduced fresh horticulture IHS development from ~seven to ~two years;
    b) strengthened regulatory practice to ensure IHSs are fit for purpose (and no more restrictive than necessary); and
    c) invested in technology to support importers, exporters, quarantine officers and foreign counterparts easily access and understand biosecurity rules (the product import and export requirements (PIER) tool).

12. There is more MPI can do to improve IHS development processes and efficiency. The most time-consuming activities in IHS development are the risk assessment and stakeholder consultation processes. MPI is trialling different approaches to risk assessment to suit different types of IHS projects. A recent trial reduced risk assessment time from an estimated several years (using standard international practice) to 13 months. Trials of other approaches are also returning good results.

13. The other focus area is to improve communication and engagement with domestic stakeholders. Domestic horticulture producers do not typically welcome increased horticulture imports as they can perceive that they bear the negative impacts of pest and diseases risks associated with imports for the other sectors to gain from.

14. MPI has been putting more effort into its communication tools and products, and into engaging early with domestic producers. The aim of this work is to help stakeholders better understand how our proposed measures manage pest and disease risks. This work does take significant technical and other resources, but it is hoped it will eventually lead to more trust and confidence from domestic producers resulting in fewer issues needing resolution after formal public consultation.

15. A large amount of planning, gathering information from trading partners, assessment and technical resource goes into developing an IHS. It is important for the IHS development system to be responsive to changing needs. It is also important, once an IHS is in development, that MPI complete it to avoid damaging trade relationships or losing the investment made.

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Legislative proposals

16. In addition, MPI is proposing changes to the Biosecurity Act 1993 to streamline IHS development. If approved, these changes would be made through a Biosecurity Act Amendment Bill. Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity, is considering lodging a Cabinet paper seeking agreement to launch public consultation on policy proposals during Q4 2024. The changes being proposed in the amendment Bill would enable:
    a) technical amendments to an IHS without consultation;
    b) a rapid amendment process for an IHS during the first year of trade without consultation;
    c) the authority to issue one-off import permits without an IHS;
    d) the authority to issue permits to allow trade to continue while a suspended IHS is reviewed; and
    e) the authority to consult on risk management proposals, rather than the draft IHS itself.

17. In addition, under Section 24 of the Biosecurity Act 1993, a person can request a review of how scientific information was used during IHS development if they are concerned that evidence did not receive sufficient consideration. This process not only delays IHS review or development, but also diverts staff time from progressing other IHSs, adding to the backlog of IHS work[4]. The Biosecurity Act Amendment Bill proposals include options to improve the efficiency of the review process under Section 24, or to remove it.

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[4] In the last three years, every large horticulture IHS and several others have either been subject to a s24 request, request for judicial review, or threat of s24 request (which delays work). Each request was eventually dropped, or declined, as none met the necessary legal tests.

Biosecurity New Zealand
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

To: Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity
From: Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand

Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus in South Australia

Date	22 August 2024	**Reference**	AM24-0822

Purpose

- This aide-memoire provides information about Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus and the recent detection of the virus in South Australia.

Background

1. Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (the virus) affects tomatoes and capsicums. It was first identified in 2014, in Israel, and has spread to many other countries. It causes significant production losses and negatively impacts the marketability of fruit but does not present a risk to human health. More information about the effects of the virus on tomato fruit is contained in the attached fact sheet produced by Tomatoes NZ. If the virus were to establish in New Zealand, it could result in trading partners imposing restrictions on our exports.

2. The virus is mainly transmitted to new sites via seeds for sowing but can also be transmitted via infected sap entering the tomato plant (for example, via machinery or hands). Any object capable of spreading infected plant sap from one plant to another can spread the virus. The virus is very stable and persistent outside of its host plants.

3. There are no treatments available for the virus. Control is through removing plants, usually from the whole glasshouse, and disinfection.

4. The virus has previously been found in New Zealand, in 2020. The virus was present at very low levels and the incident was managed. Seed testing methodology requirements were tightened in light of this incident to reduce the possibility of a failure to detect the virus at very low levels.

Detection in Australia

5. On Monday 19 August, Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) was notified by Tomatoes NZ (the industry representative body) of a detection of the virus in the North Adelaide Plains, South Australia. We immediately contacted the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) who confirmed, later on Tuesday, that the

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virus had been detected for the first time in Australia, in two indoor production facilities.

6. DAFF also confirmed that the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions has initiated a response, put in place quarantine measures and commenced activities to trace movements from the affected facilities, test for the virus, and ascertain to what extent (if any) it has spread.

7. No decision has been made as yet on whether to attempt to eradicate the virus from Australia. We understand that, globally, few attempts to eradicate the virus have been successful.

Tomato imports into New Zealand

8. Australia is the only country that New Zealand imports fresh tomatoes from. The volume of imports has decreased significantly since 2011 following the ban of the chemical dimethoate and increased glasshouse production in New Zealand. In recent years imports have been confined to the June to October period. The total volume of imports in 2023 was 524 tonnes. This year's imports started in mid-July and total 156 tonnes to date. Since 2021, our import records show all imports have been of fruit produced in Queensland.

9. Fresh tomatoes from Australia are subject to irradiation as a measure to manage the risk from fruit flies. In addition, tomato imports are subject to a pre-export inspection by the Australian authorities and certification as to freedom from pests and diseases, and a verification inspection by BNZ on arrival in New Zealand.

10. New Zealand imports all its tomato seeds. While we do import tomato seeds from Australia, it is a fairly minor supplier. Our import records show that since 2020, we have imported 153 kilograms of Australian tomato seed, all of which was produced in New South Wales.

11. The risks from the virus are managed in seed imports by either:
    a) requiring that the seeds be produced in an area or place that is free of the virus; or
    b) requiring that the seeds be sampled and tested and found to be free of the virus.

New Zealand's response

12. BNZ has requested that DAFF certify exports of tomato and capsicum seed for sowing of Australia origin **only** if the seeds have been tested and found free from the virus. We have advised DAFF that, for the time being, we will not accept any certification that seeds are sourced from an area or place that is free of the virus – we require them to be tested. This will be reviewed when there is more certainty about the extent of any spread within Australia.

13. BNZ has temporarily suspended the importation of fresh tomatoes from Australia, with the exception of tomatoes produced in Queensland. DAFF has advised that tracing activities have not identified any movement of plant material from the affected

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properties to Queensland. There have been no reports to date of the virus in Queensland.

14. The changes to import requirements have been notified to our border clearance services teams and to importers and have been communicated to DAFF and Tomatoes NZ.

15. We understand that some New Zealand importers, following contact from Tomatoes NZ, have cancelled orders for fresh tomato exports from Australia. These are business decisions taken independently of any official biosecurity measures.

16. We are engaging daily with Tomatoes NZ on this issue and will continue to do so as the situation in Australia is worked through and clarified.

17. BNZ needs to understand the source of the infected seed lot in Australia. Both countries source seed from similar suppliers offshore and New Zealand also receives third country seed re-exported from Australia (albeit in small quantities). We have asked DAFF for specific information out of their tracing exercise, and to provide us on-going updates on the results of the back-tracing to the source of the infected seed lot.

Other Ministerial interests

18. We understand that Hon Nicola Grigg (Associate Minister of Agriculture) has been contacted by growers to raise concerns about the detection of the virus in Australia. You may wish to forward a copy of this aide-memoire to the Minister for her information.

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Appendix One: Fact sheet produced by Tomatoes NZ

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Exotic Pest Fact Sheet 14

Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV) Genus: Tobamovirus

What is it?

Tomato brown rugose fruit virus (ToBRFV) is a member of the Tobamovirus genus and is a relatively new virus closely related to Tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) and Tomato mosaic virus (ToMV). Tomato and capsicum are the main hosts. Petunia and certain weeds such as black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) and goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.) have been shown to be hosts in experiments and may act as reservoirs for ToBRFV.

What does it look like?

Symptoms on tomato fruits include yellow spotting and discolouration, green spots and deformations, green grooves and irregular brown spots. Fruits may be deformed and have irregular maturation. On tomato leaves, ToBRFV symptoms appear as mosaic symptoms, spots and yellowing. Leaves can also appear narrowed, puckered and deformed.

Why is it important?

Tomatoes are a primary host of ToBRFV. Crop production and tomato quality can be affected thereby significantly impacting their market value. ToBRFV is of special concern because of its ability to overcome resistance bred into conventional tomato varieties against other Tobamoviruses.

How does it spread?

ToBRFV is easily transmitted from plant to plant by mechanical means which include common cultural practices, contaminated tools, equipment, hands, clothes, soil, infected plants, and contaminated water. Transmission by bumblebees (*Bombus* spp.) during pollination has also been reported. Volunteer crop plants and solanaceous weed species can serve as pathogen reservoirs. There is now evidence of seed transmission with the virus being transferred from infected seeds to plantlets during germination. Tobamoviruses are very persistent and can last for a long-time on host plants, and survive on inert materials (clothing, tools), in plant remains, in substrate and soil without losing their virulence.

Where is it present?

ToBRFV was first identified on tomatoes in Israel in 2014 and Jordan in 2015. Outbreaks have continued to occur in Europe and Mediterranean, spreading eastwards to Turkey, and the Middle East. ToBRFV is also present in Morocco, Uzbekistan, China, Canada, USA, Mexico and Argentina.

How can I protect my industry?

Check your production site frequently for the presence of new diseases and unusual symptoms. Make sure you are familiar with common pests and diseases of your industry so you can recognise something different.

TomatoesNZ

Fig 1: Mosaic pattern on young leaves. Image: Piedmont Region, Plant Protection Services, https://gd.eppo.int

Fig 2: Severe mosaic pattern on older leaves. Images: Prof. Salvatore Davino, https://gd.eppo.int

Fig 3: Brown rugose fruit. Image: Diana Godinez, https://gd.eppo.int.

Fig 4: Typical fruit symptoms with yellow spots. Image: Dr Aviv Dombrovsky, https://gd.eppo.int.

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New Zealand Food Safety
Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

To: Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Food Safety
From: Vincent Arbuckle, Deputy Director-General New Zealand Food Safety

Update on the Future of Certification Programme

Date	26 August 2024	**Reference**	AM24-0779

Purpose

- This aide-memoire provides you a progress update on the Future of Certification Programme (the Programme). Please refer to AM24-0258 *Future of Certification Programme Update* for background information. The programme will replace and modernise the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) existing certification systems and processes for exports and imports with a new system called MPI Trade Certification.

Key messages

1. MPI certification systems are essential to enabling the two-way trade of primary product exports and imports by exchanging the official assurances (usually in the form of export/import certificates) with overseas governments that accompany those products. The certification systems enable $33 billion of export trade each year and help protect New Zealand from harmful pests and diseases.

2. AM24-0258 advised that Tranche 1 (MPI to digitise a request for a simple export certificate) was completed. Tranche 2 (Acceptance of electronic import certificates) is now also complete. The system is performing well.

3. The Programme has now turned its focus to Tranche 3, which will complete the build of all core functionality and transition the wine industry into the Trade Certification System. The first wave of users is due to transition to the new system by the end of October 2024. This timeframe is tight given the scope of the work that remains. The Programme is actively working on options for delivery to meet the wine industry's priorities.

4. Industry engagement remains an important part of the Programme. The Programme has an active Industry Advisory Group which meets every six weeks. This group includes representatives from all major range sectors. A list of representatives is included in **Appendix One**. There is also bespoke engagement with industry sectors through well-established MPI-industry sector meetings and Tranche specific engagement, such as that with the Wine industry in Tranche 3.

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5. MPI is actively working on cost recovery models and options. At this stage, the cost recovery process and indicative timeframes have been shared with industry. No detail of the possible frameworks or indicative costs has been shared with industry at this stage as they are not yet finalised. You will be briefed fully on cost recovery proposals in early October.

6. Independent assurance activities remain an important part of ensuring the Programme is operating and delivering effectively. MPI and Deloitte have met with the Treasury New Zealand to initiate the Gateway 4 Review - Readiness for service review planned for mid-February 2025. It is likely you will be invited to participate in this process as the responsible Minister. MPI has engaged KPMG to conduct Independent Quality Assurance and Technical Quality Assurance of the Programme.

7. The affordability challenges reported to you in AM24-0258 have been managed. However, the Programme still has over a year to run and a significant amount of work to deliver in that timeframe. Governance and the Programme are actively working on options to ensure costs are contained. Officials we will keep you

Programme Update

8. The Programme Build and Transition plan currently remains to be delivered in six Tranches, in order to manage risk in both the build and in transition sector. The Tranches are:
   a) Tranche 1 Digitise a request for a simple export certificate;
   b) Tranche 2 Acceptance of electronic import certificates;
   c) Tranche 3 Core build complete; wine sector transition;
   d) Tranche 4 Phytosanitary build complete; phyto sector transition;
   e) Tranche 5 Animal products build complete; animal products sector transitioned except for large exporters; and
   f) Tranche 6 Animal products transition for large exporters.

9. Tranche 1 (MPI to digitise a request for a simple export certificate) was successfully completed.

10. Tranche 2 (Acceptance of electronic import certificates) is now also complete. The system is performing well. As at 16 August 2024, 1,619 import certificates had been collected from 15 different countries. Overall, the feedback received to date has been consistently positive and encouraging from users. A recent survey concluded the majority of users found the new system easier to use compared to than the previous system.

11. The Programme has now turned its focus to Tranche 3, which will;
   a) complete the build of all core functionality; and
   b) transition the wine export, Free Sale and Organics Certificates to Great Britain into the Trade Certification System.

12. Transitioning the wine industry is the focus of Tranche 3. The first wave of users is due to transition to the new system by the end of October 2024. The second wave is

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currently due to be transitioned by the end of 2024. This transition is important to industry as it will enable them to realise the benefits from the NZ-EU and NZ-UK FTAs.

13. The October 2024 timeframe for the first wave of wine users is tight given the scope of the work that remains. It is important that the products delivered by the Programme meet industry expectations. The Programme is actively working on options to ensure the optimal outcome for the wine industry.

14. Some planning for future Tranches (Tranche 4, Tranche 5, and Tranche 6) has also occurred, but at this stage remains at a high level.

Affordability

15. AM24-0258 referred to affordability challenges driven by costs which were either not captured in the Vendor Confirmation Phase costings, or not treated correctly from an accounting perspective. This affordability challenge has been addressed through a reduction in support costs, deferral of non-essential elements of solution scope, reduction in MPI labour costs during the programme, re-allocation of IT licence costs and accounting treatments. The Programme now has approximately s 9(2)(b)(ii), s 9(2)(i) contingency.

16. Whilst this is a positive development, the Programme still has four major tranches and over a year to run. Affordability challenges are likely to emerge during this period. Cost containment and other measures to address affordability are actively being implemented.

Engaging with industry stakeholders

17. Industry engagement remains a priority activity for the Programme. Engagement includes an MPI Trade Certification webpage, regular meetings with industry through all-industry updates and workshops or focused meetings, workshops with key sector groups and an Industry Advisory Group. Industry continues to be actively involved in providing feedback on the design of MPI Trade Certification.

18. AM24-0258 referred to the establishment of a MPI Trade Certification Industry Advisory Group. This Group has now met several times and is proving to be an effective forum for MPI to engage directly with industry. The Programme is now investigating how Governance may be able to engage with more senior industry leadership (Chief Executives). Overall, feedback from industry about Future of Certification remains supportive.

Cost recovery

19. The costs and the equity of how costs are recovered are important for industry. The Detailed Business Case presented to Cabinet in 2022 presumed that following implementation of the new certification system, ongoing funding will be fully cost recovered. At this stage, the costs, and how these costs are to be distributed between users, are still being confirmed and are yet to be discussed with industry.

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20. To ensure the costs of the new system costs are recovered transparently, efficiently, and equitably, MPI is resetting existing cost recovery mechanisms. For example, one current charge includes a per second charge for system use. As processing time is no longer a cost driver other charging options are being developed for industry consultation. MPI will provide a briefing alongside draft proposals to you later this year, ahead of consultation. New cost recovery arrangements are anticipated to be in place by 1 July 2025.

Independent Programme Assurance

21. The oversight provided by the Programme's Governance Group is supported by Deloitte's internal assurance, internal MPI assurance and independent assurance.

22. The independent assurance includes:
    a) independent quality assurance (IQA) reviews conducted by KPMG;
    b) technical quality assurance (TQA) also conducted by KPMG;
    c) 'Gateway' reviews conducted by an independent panel appointed with the support of the Treasury's Gateway Review team; and
    d) procurement probity review by McHale Group.

23. MPI and Deloitte have met with Treasury to initiate the Gateway 4 Review - Readiness for service review planned for mid-February 2025. The review itself is preceded by several planning activities. The draft timeline is currently as follows:
    a) Gateway Assessment Meeting: between 9 and 16 December 2024.
        i. Planning workshop: 27 January 2025.
    b) The Gateway Review: 10 February to 14 February 2025.

24. Previous Ministers for Food Safety have been involved as interviewees in past Gateway Reviews for the Programme. You may wish to be involved in the next Gateway Review to provide Ministerial-level endorsement and assurance for the programme. Officials can discuss this with you as details are confirmed with Treasury and engage with your office.

25. MPI has engaged KPMG to conduct Independent Quality Assurance and Technical Quality Assurance of the Programme. These activities are starting this month. The Independent Quality Assurance review will focus on Programme structure and processes. The Technical Quality Assurance review will focus on the Programme's ability to deliver the remainder of the IT solution scope and readiness for transition to business-as-usual.

Programme Risks

26. The Programme's Governance Group is currently managing three key high-level risks:
    a) the affordability challenges mentioned earlier;
    b) substantial software configuration remains to be done across the remaining Tranches, and so delivery risk (time and cost) remains; and

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c) the amount of change to deliver the programme is greater than the capacity of both MPI and the sector to absorb.

27. These types of risks are common in delivering a complex, multi-year, Information and Communications Technology programme across MPI and a diverse primary sector. AM24-0258 provides detail on the risks and mitigations.

28. MPI officials will discuss this paper with you on 28 August.

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Appendix One: List of Future of Certification Industry Advisory Group Representatives

1. Fonterra
2. Halal
3. Dairy
4. Seafood
5. Meat and meat products
6. Seed
7. Forestry
8. Wine
9. Organics
10. Horticulture and plant
11. Live animal exports
12. Verifiers
13. Apiculture
14. Custom brokers and freight forwarders
15. New Zealand Food and Groceries Council

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Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

BRIEF: Update on Australian detection of tomato brown rugose fruit virus

To:	Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity		
From	Stuart Anderson, Deputy Director-General Biosecurity New Zealand		
Date	30 August 2024	**MPI Reference**	MO24-0427
Priority	Medium	**Security Level**	Restricted

Biosecurity New Zealand is meeting Australia's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) regularly for updates

- s 6(b)(i) [redacted]
- The Queensland government has issued a movement control order notice which restricts movement into Queensland of all tomato seeds, plants (including fruit) and glasshouse structures and any other equipment used in solanaceous crop production. This came into force on Friday 23 August for a three-month period, with the aim of protecting Queensland's horticulture industry and their access to quarantine-sensitive markets such as New Zealand.
- The incoming seed lot trace-back is ongoing, s 6(b)(i) [redacted]

Biosecurity New Zealand is meeting Tomatoes New Zealand (TNZ) regularly to share information

- TNZ is satisfied with BNZ's temporary suspension of tomato imports from all Australian States and Territories and the application of testing to Australian tomato and capsicum seeds.
- TNZ continues to be concerned about any possibility of this virus entering New Zealand. This week they had a blotchy tomato tested; it was negative for the virus.
- TNZ continues to query capsicum imports from Australia. We have informed them there is no evidence of infection in capsicums. All capsicums exported to New Zealand are grown in Queensland.
- TNZ sought to understand what a response would look like if the virus were to be detected in New Zealand. TNZ has been a Government Industry Agreement partner since 2016 and has been involved in several responses as part of response governance. In the event of a response, response objectives would be based on the circumstances of the incursion and would be agreed between TNZ and BNZ.

Actions BNZ has or is currently undertaking:

- Effective from 23 August 2024, all imports of fresh tomatoes from all Australian States and Territories have been suspended temporarily with a seven-day review cycle. Australia is still working through its delimiting and tracing processes, so we decided yesterday (29 August) to retain the suspension in place and will review this again at the end of next week.
- BNZ requires Australian origin tomato and capsicum seeds for sowing to be certified by DAFF as tested and found free of the virus. The latest import of Australian origin (New South Wales) tomato seeds was on 4 July 2024. Tomato seed imports occur in time for spring and summer planting, so we expect the usual uptick in imports in the coming months.
- s 6(b)(i) [redacted]
- We will continue to regularly meet with DAFF and TNZ.

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