

NZ Plant Producers Inc. submission on Early engagement on review of measures for the management of Xylella fastidiosa

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Introduction

New Zealand Plant Producers Incorporated (NZPPI) represents businesses engaged in plant propagation and cultivation for various sectors and our members underpin the success of the country's primary industries.

The plant production sector, also known as nursery production, has witnessed rapid growth due to demand in horticulture, wine, forestry, and native plants, which has been further bolstered by government policies encouraging sustainable production systems.

The plant production industry, estimated to be worth around \$500 million annually, is a regional success story, offering skilled jobs and career opportunities where they are needed most.

Submission

NZ Plant Producers appreciates the opportunity to provide early feedback on the review of measures for the management of *Xylella fastidiosa*.

We support the development of options for use of offshore High Health Schemes (HHS), Offshore Parent Plant testing and the use of Plant Pass Certified nurseries.

In the coming weeks, we will engage with our stakeholders to provide MPI with more detailed information and examples of HHS and Offshore Parent Plant testing for *Xylella*.

Further comments on the feasibility and practical implementation of these options are presented below.

High Health Schemes

Utilising existing high-health offshore schemes as a risk management measure takes a systems approach into offshore risk management.

We think it is feasible for importers to apply to MPI to request accreditation of HHS they utilise.

There are several schemes around the world but the one we are most familiar with is Naktuinbouw. MPI has existing experience with this scheme, as the Nursery Stock IHS currently provides options for Naktuinbouw SEE and EE certification in several schedules.

Naktuinbouw is the Netherlands Inspection Service for Horticulture, which operates on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and is monitored by the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA).

It is administered in the Netherlands, but plant breeders/producers in other European countries (and beyond) also use this service for Elite production of tissue culture and cutting material for export, including:

- Innova Plants, Germany
- Elsner Pac, Germany

- Dummen Orange, Spain and the Netherlands
- Vitroflora, Poland
- HilverdaFlorist B.V., Netherlands
- Danziger, Israel (certified to the Israel Plant Protection and Inspection Service, which is recognised and declared as equivalent by Naktuinbouw).

Many of New Zealand's nursery importers use these breeding companies.

Naktuinbouw Elite

The Naktuinbouw Elite system sets stringent standards related to the quality and health of the propagating material.

Naktuinbouw Elite[®]-certification consists of:

- Clearly described procedures for pathogen testing and production methods.
- A controlled multiplication process under inspection of Naktuinbouw.
- Certified plants are delivered to the customer with the Naktuinbouw Elite[®]-certificate.

Selected lines (Candidate plants) undergo extensive diagnostic testing to verify disease-freedom, for a range of viruses, viroids, and other diseases as applicable, e.g. *Ralstonia solanacearum*. After testing, the Candidate plants enter into the scheme as Nuclear stock (SEE). These plants are held in secure, insect-proof facilities for cutting production or initiation into tissue culture.

All production systems are underpinned by traceability, and independently audited and verified according to Naktuinbouw procedures.

I have attached a copy of the 2022 Elite Handbook, which provides a detailed explanation about the scheme, sampling, testing and certification, and the requirements for participants and authorised testing laboratories.

Testing for *Xylella fastidiosa* is mandatory for the genera *Lavender* and *Salvia* (see Appendix II.A Control participants protocols) and 100% of Candidate plants are tested. Testing would need to be specifically arranged for the other genera to meet New Zealand import requirements.

Naktuinbouw will answer in detail any specific questions from authorities that relate to the substantive implementation and control, and all guarantees concerning the work of Naktuinbouw Elite Ornamental Crops (page 95).

Offshore Parent Plant Testing

NZ Plant Producers supports an option for tissue cultures from parent plants which have been tested for *Xylella fastidiosa*.

Australia currently accepts offshore mother stock testing for tissue cultures. The testing may be performed by any laboratory, with the results certified on the phytosanitary certificate.

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity-trade/policy/risk-analysis/plant/xylella>

Australian requirements do not require the testing certificate to be attached to the phytosanitary certificate. We think this may be possible in instances where the tissue cultures are being sent directly to New Zealand from the production facility. It may not be possible if the cultures are being sent via a second country, e.g. Australia, and the exporting NPPO may not endorse testing which was completed under oversight of a different NPPO.

Plant Pass

We see merit in the option for nurseries importing tissue cultures under the Offshore Parent Plant testing option to be certified to Plant Pass as an alternative to testing & quarantine requirements. We think this option could be extended to nurseries importing from HHS as well.

We believe that Plant Pass certification can provide a key risk management step in the plant imports pathway, if it is widely adopted and supported by MPI & the industry.

Thank you for considering the points raised in our submission.