NEW ZEALAND PLANT PRODUCERS INCORPORATED

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**Prunus Import Health Standard Review Update**

The Ministry for Primary Industries are reviewing the biosecurity risks associated with imported *Prunus* nursery stock (apricot, cherry, nectarine, peach and plum). They are taking a new approach to analysing risk and developing import health standards (IHS). This work is a high priority for MPI and the time frame has been reduced from 18 months to 6 months.

NZPPI has been involved in this work from the start. We're satisfied with the progress MPI are making. They have drafted a risk assessment and are now consulting with industry as to what to include in the IHS.

NZPPI recently attended the pre-consultation meeting and some of the items covered were:

1. MPI are adopting a streamlined approach to risk analysis that puts more focus on assessing higher risk pests and less focus on those which are managed by minimum requirements, such as insects managed by insecticide treatment and inspections.
2. The new *Prunus* standard will be released as a stand-alone document and look very similar to the kiwifruit (*Actinidia*) IHS published last year.
3. MPI no longer intend to publish reduced post-entry quarantine (PEQ) requirements for material imported from accredited offshore facilities and will make the decision about the level and duration of PEQ on a case-by-case basis.
4. Measures to manage fungal pests have been significantly strengthened and this could have an impact on the cost of PEQ in New Zealand and the feasibility of using accredited facilities offshore.
5. The use of alternative testing methods, particularly those involving new technologies such as High Throughput Sequencing. These technologies could eventually replace some expensive and time-consuming methods such as woody (graft) indexing. Any change will be at least a year away and MPI need to run the new method in parallel with existing methods in order to validate the approach.

NZPPI are generally happy with the progress that has been made and the approach taken. We have some concerns over some of the technical requirements that MPI are considering, such as the use of environmental controls (temperature and ambient humidity) to simulate seasonal growing conditions. As currently written, these will be expensive and technically challenging to implement and could have a detrimental effect on the health of the *Prunus* plant material while in PEQ.

NZPPI are advocating for a safe and workable pathway and will remain involved in the review and consultation process.

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