

**BEFORE THE HEARINGS PANEL APPOINTED BY FAR NORTH DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act 1991
(the Act)

AND

IN THE MATTER of hearing of submissions on The Proposed
Far North District Plan

Hearing Stream Hearing 4 - Natural
Environment Values & Coastal
Environment

**INDUSTRY STATEMENT OF SARAH CAMERON FOR HORTICULTURE NEW
ZEALAND**

22 July 2024

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

1. This statement responds to the Section 42A report recommendations in regard to the Horticulture NZ submission and further submissions to be considered at hearing 4, specifically:
 - The clearance of indigenous vegetation pruning, trimming and clearance and any associated land disturbance for biosecurity reasons
 - Artificial crop protection structures

INTRODUCTION

2. HortNZ is the industry body for the horticulture sector, representing growers who pay levies on fruit and vegetables sold either directly or through a post-harvest operator, as set out in the Commodity Levies (Vegetables and Fruit) Order 2013.
3. On behalf of growers, HortNZ takes a detailed involvement in resource management planning processes as part of its national and regional environmental policy response.
4. My name is Sarah Cameron. I am a Senior Environmental Policy Advisor at Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ). I am involved in HortNZ's national, regional, and district planning processes across New Zealand. I have been in this role since 2 May 2022.

CLEARANCE FOR BIOSECURITY PURPOSES

5. There is a need for a rapid response in the event of a biosecurity incursion of an unwanted organism (i.e. a plant pathogen or pest). Vegetation removal, burial, burning and spraying of material are methods that may be used. In those cases, infected or infested host plant material must be removed to eliminate or contain and prevent spread of the organism.
6. The year 2020 marked 10 years since the plant pathogen *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Actinidiae* (PSA) (the kiwifruit vine canker disease agent) infected New Zealand kiwifruit vines and crippled the kiwifruit industry. At the time of the event, it was evident that regional and district plans can unintentionally be regulatory hurdles to rapid response through provisions such as limiting earthworks for burying infected material or clearance of infected vegetation.
7. Only when a biosecurity emergency is declared by the Governor-General on the recommendation of a Minister (s144 Biosecurity Act¹), can the

¹ <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0095/latest/DLM316395.html>

emergency provisions in the Biosecurity Act override the RMA provisions. Such a declaration has never been made.

8. In other situations, a Chief Technical Officer can notify the MPI, Director-General about an unwanted organism, but the biosecurity response mechanisms are still subject to RMA plan controls. With such a declaration, the regional and district plan rules still need to be met regarding the disposal of infected material. Given the urgency required in such a situation, it is not practical to have to obtain resource consent.
9. In the 2010 PSA incursion, only a Chief Technical Officer declaration was made, so regional and district plan requirements still needed to be met. This presented challenges in terms of timely and appropriate destruction of material which is what resulted in the rapid spread of and destruction from the disease.
10. If an incursion of an unwanted pathogen was unable to be appropriately managed due to regulatory barriers, it could have a significant impact on the region and the local economy.
11. The effects of a biosecurity incursion are not just limited to rural production. Such incursions can also affect wider biodiversity and indigenous flora and fauna. It is therefore appropriate that exclusions are provided for within the policy and planning framework which allow for the clearance and burial of any vegetation (including indigenous and that of significance) in the event of a biosecurity emergency declared under the Biosecurity Act or by a declaration of a Chief Technical Officer.
12. By adding a definition of pests in the proposed plan 'pest means an organism specified as a pest in the current Northland Pest Management Plan' restricts a permitted activity response to only those listed.
13. There are significant omissions in the Pest Management Plan that are likely to impact the horticulture sector.

Pseudomonas syringae pv. Actinidiae (PSA)

14. Psa is a bacteria that can result in the death of kiwifruit vines. It was first discovered in New Zealand in November 2010 and rapidly caused widespread and severe impacts to New Zealand's kiwifruit industry.
15. First detected on a Te Puke orchard, Psa has since been identified in numerous kiwifruit growing regions across New Zealand including Northland.
16. Growth of Psa bacteria outside/inside of kiwifruit vines can result in leaf spotting, cane/leader dieback and vine death.

Picture one: Damage to kiwifruit vines from PSA



17. PSA infected 80% of kiwifruit orchards nationwide and is estimated to have cost the industry up to \$1 billion in lost exports².
18. While PSA is not included in the current Northland Pest Management Plan it is an unwanted organism and is included in the Northland Regional Council environment – weed and pest page³ on their website including ways to report sightings immediately such is the risk to the region.

Halyomorpha halys

19. *Halyomorpha halys* (Brown Marmorated Stink Bug)⁴ is an agricultural and horticultural pest found in Asia, notably China, Japan, and Korea. It has aggressively invaded the US and Europe and has been caught at New Zealand borders many times.

Picture two: Brown Marmorated Stink Bug



20. This insect feeds on more than 300 hosts, primarily fruit trees and woody ornamentals but also field crops.

² <https://newsroom.co.nz/2018/06/29/kiwifruit-psa-decision/>

³ <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/environment/weed-and-pest-control/pest-control-hub/?pwsystem=true&pwid=145>

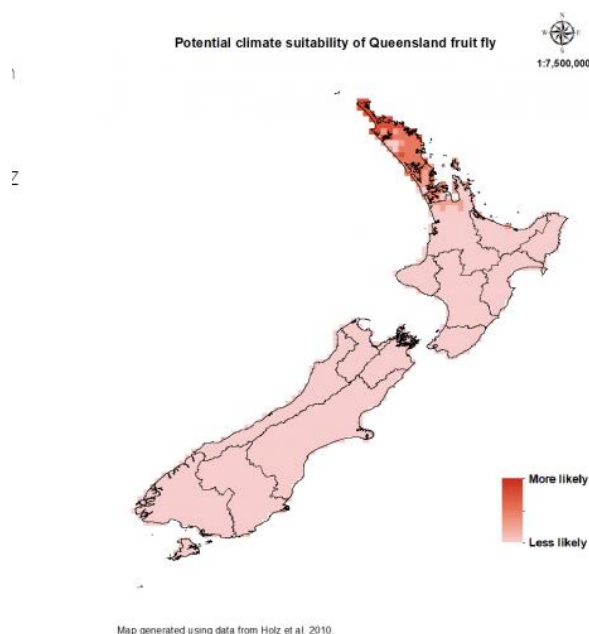
⁴ <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/10784-Brown-marmorated-stink-bug-fact-sheet#:~:text=It%20severely%20disfigures%20fruit%20and,but%20is%20a%20public%20nuisance.>

21. The bug is rapidly emerging as one of the most significant biosecurity threats to the New Zealand horticulture industry. The risk of this pest entering New Zealand is now considered extreme and if it were to arrive eradication would be a significant challenge with a low likelihood of success.
22. Brown Marmorated Stink Bug is included in the weed and pest page⁵ of the Northland Regional Council website including how to immediately report any sightings however is not included in the Northland Pest Management Plan.

Bactrocera tryoni

23. Bactrocera Tryoni (Queensland fruit fly) would jeopardise New Zealand's multi-billion-dollar horticulture industry, with 80% of New Zealand's horticulture crops susceptible to attack.
24. The fruit fly is a major and frequent pest and activity is greatest in warm humid conditions.

Picture three: Shows the suitability in New Zealand of a fruit fly outbreak



25. Fruits and vegetables attacked by Queensland fruit fly are inedible and any fruit and vegetables would be subject to trade restrictions. The insect is an unwanted and notifiable organism.

⁵ <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/environment/weed-and-pest-control/pest-control-hub/?pwsystem=true&pwid=1056>

26. In 2014, a male fruit fly was found in a surveillance trap in Whangarei⁶ and 10 male flies were caught in Auckland 2019⁷. Surprisingly the fruit fly is not included on the weed and pest page⁸ of the Northland Regional Council website.

ARTIFICIAL CROP PROTECTION STRUCTURES

27. Artificial Crop Protection Structures (ACPS) are critical for a number of crops. They provide a range of benefits including protection from sunburn, windburn, hail, frost and birds, assistance with spray coverage and reduced mowing and weeding requirements.
28. ACPS are structures that use permeable materials to cover and protect crops that are grown in soil and are typically permanent structures with considerable investment in materials (wire, poles, cloth).

Picture four: green and black cloth used on vertical face of ACPS structures



Picture five: white cloth on horizontal face



29. The height of ACPS varies depending on the crop but typically require headroom for the crop canopy and farm machinery. Most ACPS range in height from 5-7m.

⁶ <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news/media-releases/fruit-fly-find-under-investigation-in-northland/>

⁷ <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/exotic-pests-and-diseases-in-new-zealand/pests-and-diseases-under-response/queensland-fruit-fly/>

⁸ <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/environment/weed-and-pest-control/pest-control-hub/?pwsystem=true&pwid=1056>

30. ACPS are typically positioned to assist with access and ongoing maintenance with typically, a track or space is provided for farm machinery access between the ACPS and the crop.
31. ACPS tend to be placed on or near the boundary as to utilise as much (normally highly productive land) as possible.
32. The effects of concern need to be considered in the context of the environment within which these structures are used (general rural and rural production zones), the activities they support which are anticipated in those environments (primary production) and standards that can be adopted (consistently) to manage these effects.

CONCLUSION

33. A biosecurity response needs to be rapid. If an incursion occurs of a pest/unwanted organism or disease which has not been listed in the Regional Management Plan, a consent would be required to undertake clearance work. This would enable the incursion to spread causing widespread damage.
34. The district plan needs to have a robust permitted activity framework in place that supports a rapid response.
35. ACPS are an essential activity that supports horticulture and should be considered under the planning framework as a permitted activity
36. I support the evidence of Mr Hodgson regard.

Sarah Cameron

22 July 2024

