



14 December 2016

Biosecurity Advice 2016/35

Draft group pest risk analysis for thrips and tospoviruses on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut-flower and foliage imports

This Biosecurity Advice notifies stakeholders of the release of the *Draft group pest risk analysis for thrips and tospoviruses on fresh fruit, vegetable, cut-flower and foliage imports*.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (the department) is improving the effectiveness and consistency of pest risk analysis (PRA). A key step in this process is the development of the group PRA, which analyses the biosecurity risk posed by groups of pests with similar biological characteristics across numerous import pathways. It applies the significant body of scientific knowledge available to the department including pest interception data and previous PRAs. This improved approach also provides significant opportunities to identify and address new and emerging risks in order to maintain Australia's high level of biosecurity protection.

This is the first group PRA to be released for public consultation. It considers the biosecurity risk posed by thrips across all fresh fruit, vegetable, cut flower and foliage import pathways. It also assesses the current and emerging risks posed by tospoviruses, which are transmitted by some thrips. It does not address the risks posed by thrips or tospoviruses on nursery stock imports. These will be considered in a separate review.

This draft report is being issued for an extended 90 calendar day consultation period due to the Christmas break. Written comments and submissions are invited by 14 March 2017.

Pest risk analysis (PRA) is the process of evaluating biological or other scientific and economic evidence to determine whether an organism is a pest, whether it should be regulated, and the strength of any phytosanitary measures to be taken against it ([FAO 2015](#)). International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures 2: *Framework for pest risk analysis* ([FAO 2007](#)), states that 'organisms may ... be analysed individually, or in groups where individual species share common characteristics'. This is the basis for the group PRA in which organisms are grouped if they share similar biological characteristics resulting in similar likelihoods of entry, establishment and spread and comparable consequences – thus posing a similar level of biosecurity risk.

The group approach to PRA is a 'building block' that can be used to review existing trade pathways or be applied to prospective pathways for which a specific PRA is required. For example, it can be used as a component of a commodity based risk analysis.

The first group PRA considers the biosecurity risk posed by all members of the insect order Thysanoptera (commonly referred to as thrips) and all members of the virus genus *Tospovirus* that are (or are likely) to be associated with fresh fruit, vegetables, cut flowers or foliage imported into Australia as commercial consignments.

This report does not address the risk posed by thrips and tospoviruses on nursery stock imports. These will be considered in a separate review.

Thrips and the tospoviruses they transmit can cause considerable economic consequences across a wide range of fruit, vegetable, legume and ornamental crops by reducing yield, quality and marketability. Tospoviruses are a significant emerging risk to Australia with many recent reports of new species with rapidly expanding host plant ranges, geographic distributions and thrips vectors.

The draft report identifies the key quarantine pests of biosecurity importance to Australia in these two groups of organisms. It uses 18 years of PRAs undertaken by the department – all of which were subjected to robust scientific analysis and extensive processes of stakeholder consultation. These showed marked consistency in the level of biosecurity risk posed by thrips relative to the appropriate level of protection (ALOP) for Australia. They also indicated that certain thrips species are ‘repeat offenders’ that are associated with a broad range of plant commodities from many countries.

The report’s conclusions have been validated with available scientific evidence including 26 years of interception data collected at Australia’s borders, an extensive literature review and includes significant pests that have been recognised internationally, by Australian industry and regionally for Australia.

The thrips of potential biosecurity importance to Australia are phytophagous (plant-eating). Within this group, 80 thrips species were confirmed as quarantine pests for Australia. The draft group PRA also identified 27 tospoviruses that are quarantine pests for Australia.

These thrips and tospovirus quarantine pests were all estimated to have an ‘indicative’ unrestricted risk estimate of ‘low’ which does not achieve the ALOP for Australia. These risk estimates are ‘indicative’ because the likelihood of entry for quarantine pests can be influenced by a range of factors relating to specific trade pathways.

This group PRA proposes that the quarantine status of three thrips species that are present in Australia be changed from their current non-regulated status to regulated—*Frankliniella schultzei*, *Scirtothrips dorsalis* and *Thrips tabaci*—because these thrips can carry and transmit quarantine tospoviruses. This change is not expected to significantly affect trade.

Phytosanitary measures are identified in the draft report for use in specific cases where measures are required. These measures are consistent with long-standing established policy for quarantine thrips and also mitigate the risk posed by the quarantine tospoviruses they transmit.

Measures include:

- For fresh fruit and vegetables, consignments must be verified as not infested with quarantine thrips by standard visual inspection procedures. Consignments found to be infested with quarantine thrips, require appropriate remedial action(s).
- For cut flowers and foliage, which are routinely found to be infested with quarantine thrips, mandatory fumigation is an appropriate risk management option unless equivalent arrangements have been approved.

The draft report and information about the risk analysis process are available from the department's link agriculture.gov.au/biosecurity/risk-analysis/plant/draft-group-pra-thrips-tospoviruses. Printed copies of the report are available, if required.

Lodging a submission: There is no specific format for submissions, but they must be in writing, and identify the relevant technical biosecurity issues being raised with supporting evidence. Submissions should be received by the department within the stated comment period.

Submissions are due by 14 March 2017. They may be lodged in the following ways:

- email to plant@agriculture.gov.au
- mail to:

Plant Biosecurity
Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601
AUSTRALIA

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