



Apple & Pear Australia Ltd

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Response to the Biosecurity Australia
Issues paper for the import risk analysis for fresh apple fruit
from the United States of America

September 2008

Introduction

The Australian apple and pear industry takes this opportunity to express to Biosecurity Australia its extreme disquiet over the proposal to import apples from USA.

This document expresses in brief form a selection of the issues that the industry believes needs to be addressed by Biosecurity Australia in the course of a thorough import risk analysis.

This document does not include reference to all the issues that Australian apple and pear industry is likely to raise in the course of the IRA process. It is a response to the BA Issue Paper.

Fire Blight

Clearly, Biosecurity Australia will await the outcome of the New Zealand / Australia case at the WTO before proceeding with any issues surrounding the question of fire blight and US apples.

It also seems important that the results of research regarding the ability of VBNC fire blight bacteria found on mature apples sourced from fire blight host orchards currently being carried out in Spain be taken into account as part of this IRA process. This ground-breaking research may well provide some long-awaited answers regarding the establishment pathway of fire blight.

Section 2.3

The figures quoted in section 2.3 of the Issue Paper are clearly incorrect and need to be reviewed. It seems likely that a conversion error has occurred.

Other Pests and Diseases

APAL is of the opinion that comment on the pest and disease list is best left until the IRA is published at which time specialist personnel will be recruited to review the conclusions drawn by BA.

Of particular concern at this point are the two pests which are included in the Australian Apple & Pear Industry Biosecurity Plan and which also occur in USA. These are *Rhagoletis Pomonella* (apple maggot), *Bactrocera Dorsalis* (oriental fruit fly), *Dysaphis Plantaginea Paserini* (rosy apple aphid). APAL will be closely examining the BA response to these particular pests.

Another issue of particular concern in the USA application is the presence of Cedar Apple Rust. This pathogen appears to attack mostly leaves of apple trees. The literature suggests that in Spring it can disseminate from overwinter host plants up to 7 kilometres which of course will make certification of orchards or orchard blocks for export very difficult. The maximum time for which plants can be asymptomatic is apparently unclear. It seems that investigation into this is of vital importance to ensure that mature apples that are infected but displaying no symptoms are not exported to Australia.

Conclusion

The Australian apple and pear industry holds grave concerns over the importation of US apples and urges Biosecurity Australia to make a most detailed and in-depth exploration of all the issues surrounding this application especially those highlighted in this paper. The USA is well known as the original source of fire blight and is also host to a number of other pests and diseases that are highly undesirable imports.