

8 December 2008

Dear Grower

Emergency measures for market access into Australia for tomatoes and capsicums

In mid November, in response to an industry request, MAFBNZ submitted a set of proposed interim measures to Biosecurity Australia (BA) in an endeavour to regain market access for tomatoes and capsicums and to get around the time lag created by the Australian risk assessment process.

Biosecurity Australia responded favourably to the concept of interim measures and late last Thursday promulgated a new version of their emergency measures for the importation of tomatoes and capsicums from New Zealand. The advice note from the BA website is on the reverse of this circular for your information.

It is expected that the implementation of the requirements will commence by the middle of this week. AQIS has confirmed the availability in NZ of its inspectors for preclearance, which is compulsory for all shipments. The growers and exporters also need to be ready to proceed with mandatory methyl bromide fumigation on all consignments of tomatoes (both loose and truss) and capsicums.

There are several other conditions and requirements that growers participating in the export programme need to meet; e.g. registration of all export greenhouses and packhouses, mandatory application of the industry code of practice for psyllids and extra psyllid monitoring and spraying requirements. These conditions will form a significant part of the MAF approved compliance programme that will be managed by the MAFBNZ accredited IVAs (Independent Verification Agencies).

In summary the emergency measures instigated by BA will provide our industry with access for tomatoes and capsicums into Australia this summer. However the measures are quite extensive, complex and costly so it is difficult to see growers, other than those who are committed to and experienced in exporting, taking part.

Please contact me if you require any additional information. Details of the Australian Emergency Measures and the resulting Compliance Programme can be found on the Fresh Tomato and Fresh Vegetable websites at either www.tomatoesnz.co.nz or www.freshvegetables.co.nz

Yours sincerely



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BIOSECURITY AUSTRALIA ADVICE 2008/35

Revised emergency measures for the importation of tomato and capsicum fruit from New Zealand

This Biosecurity Australia Advice notifies stakeholders that the emergency measures for the importation of tomato and capsicum from New Zealand are to be revised.

The revised emergency quarantine measures will allow imports of tomatoes and capsicums to recommence, subject to demonstrated control of the psyllid population in production sites (glasshouses) and mandatory methyl bromide fumigation.

A draft pest risk analysis report for *Candidatus Liberibacter* sp. affecting solanaceous crops is being developed. Until this PRA is finalised, the revised emergency measures will remain in place.

The revised emergency measures will commence on 10 December 2008.

Following the detection of a new bacterium, *Candidatus Liberibacter psyllaurous*, in New Zealand, Australia put emergency quarantine measures in place on 6 June 2008, prohibiting the importation of a number of solanaceous crops, such as tomatoes and capsicums, from New Zealand.

Consistent with international obligations, Biosecurity Australia commenced a risk analysis for the bacterium to characterize the risks posed by the importation of host commodities including tomatoes, capsicum, eggplant and tamarillo.

As a result of work undertaken by New Zealand to better understand the disease and its vectors and a series of site visits conducted by BA representatives, BA has revised the emergency measures to allow trade to recommence, while the risk analysis is being finalised.

The revised emergency quarantine measures will allow importations of tomatoes and capsicums, subject to demonstrated control of the psyllid population in production sites (greenhouses) and mandatory methyl bromide fumigation. Other solanaceous crops from New Zealand will remain prohibited.

See below for the actual detail of the **VARIATION TO THE EMERGENCY MEASURES**

VARIATION TO THE EMERGENCY MEASURES

The entry of tomato and capsicum from New Zealand will be allowed under the following conditions. These conditions will be reviewed following the finalisation of the Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) for *Candidatus* *Liberibacter psyllae* affecting Solenaceae crops and its vectors.

1. Tomato and capsicum fruit will be pre-cleared in New Zealand by AQIS. On arrival clearance in Australia will not be permitted.
2. In order to mitigate the risk of psyllids being imported in consignments of tomato or capsicum fruit, Biosecurity Australia (BA) proposes mandatory methyl bromide fumigation in New Zealand of all consignments at one of the following rates:
 - 48g/m³ for 2 hours at 10-15°C
 - 40g/m³ for 2 hours at 16-20°C
 - 32g/m³ for 2 hours at 21°C +
3. All tomato and capsicum fruit exported to Australia must be sourced from registered export greenhouses. Copies of the registration records must be available for audit by AQIS if requested. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ) will be required to register each export greenhouse prior to commencement of exports from that greenhouse.
4. All packinghouses intending to export fruit to Australia will be required to be registered with the MAFBNZ for trace-back purposes.
5. The application of the New Zealand “Code of Practice for the Management of the Tomato/Potato Psyllid in Greenhouse Tomato and Capsicum Crops” will be mandatory for growers wanting to export tomato and capsicum fruit to Australia, with the following additional requirements;
 - a. If the psyllid vector of the *Candidatus* *Liberibacter* sp. is detected on plants in the greenhouse, spot spraying of the affected area must be undertaken and any plants showing signs of psyllid feeding must be removed. Monitoring frequency must be increased to every second day for at least one week. Weekly monitoring can be resumed after one week’s nil detections of psyllids.
 - b. Where the psyllid vector is detected on plants at levels between 1-2% of the greenhouse crop, the greenhouse must receive a full insecticide spray with a chemical effective against the psyllid.
 - c. Where the psyllid vector is detected on plants at levels above 2% of the greenhouse crop, that greenhouse will be suspended from exporting to Australia. Consideration of re-instatement of affected greenhouses will be undertaken on a case by case basis.
6. MAFBNZ will verify that;
 - a. crop scouts and other personnel undertaking the monitoring for psyllids are properly trained,
 - b. the psyllid monitoring is carried out in accordance with the Code,
 - c. the above actions upon detection of plants infested with psyllids are carried out.
7. MAFBNZ will issue a phytosanitary certificate for each consignment after completion of the pre-export phytosanitary inspection and fumigation treatment. The objective of this procedure is to provide formal documentation to AQIS verifying that the relevant measures have been undertaken offshore. Each phytosanitary certificate is to contain the following additional declaration:

- a. *The (tomatoes / capsicum) in this consignment have been produced in accordance with the conditions governing entry of tomato and capsicum fruit to Australia and inspected and found free of quarantine pests*
 - b. Consistent with International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures No. 7 Export Certification Systems (FAO, 1997).
8. Consignments will be inspected by AQIS using the standard AQIS inspection protocol. The detection of live quarantine pests and/or regulated articles will result in the failure of the inspection lot.
9. AQIS pre-clearance inspectors will audit the above system on a random basis.