

11 July 2008

UPDATE – *Candidatus Liberibacter* species

Market Access

Following successful negotiations, French Polynesia has confirmed conditions for seed potatoes and potatoes for consumption and trade has now recommenced.

Fiji suspended potato imports as well as capsicums and tomatoes on 1 July while their quarantine and inspection services review import conditions through import risk analysis. MAFBNZ has provided further information to assist in this process and has invited senior Fijian officials to visit New Zealand next week to review the science and management of the incursion of this bacterium. Fiji is the only country that has suspended import of New Zealand potatoes.

Senior MAFBNZ officials visited Japan in mid June to discuss the recommencement of tomato and capsicum imports. Japan is now considering the detailed technical and science MAFBNZ provided on Friday 11 June but it is likely that they will request further science information about the bacterium. MAFBNZ has since followed up this discussion with a letter.

MAFBNZ are working closely with Horticulture New Zealand in the market access decision-making process and strategy development and this process is progressing as quickly as possible.

Surveillance

The survey currently being carried out will help us gather information for determining management options, including market access negotiations. Information gathered should also determine how disease symptoms in affected host plants are expressed.

The active surveillance programme includes 53 sites across the country – 31 glasshouse tomato and capsicum sites, 12 potato sites and 10 tamarillos sites.

The survey of glasshouse tomato and capsicum has now been completed. The samples are being processed and the final results are expected by mid July. Growers at the sites surveyed are being notified of their individual results by telephone and letter as these become available.

The survey of seed potatoes and potatoes for consumption has begun and will be completed early next week. Results should be confirmed by late July.

A survey of all ten exporting commercial tamarillos sites is due to get underway early next week. Australia has banned importations of tamarillos although these are not known to be a host of *Candidatus Liberibacter* species. MAFBNZ has decided to test all sites to enable a full set of results to be presented to Australian officials and will be contacting growers to make arrangements to take samples. Survey results are expected by August.

Science programme

MAFBNZ scientists are investigating a number of issues to help us establish some key information such as how the bacterium is transmitted. This includes investigation into seed and graft transmission and the role of the Tomato/Potato psyllid (TPP).

These results will help determine what actions growers can take to protect their crops.

Images and symptom reminders can be found on the MAFBNZ website:

<http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/surv-mgmt/resp/tom-cap-bacterium>

ENDS

