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Date 29 October 2008

Dear Harry

PEST RISK ANALYSES AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

Further to our letters of 2 April 2007 and 8 August 2008 I am writing to let you know the outcome of the most recent consultations on pest risk analyses for pests found in the UK. As previously indicated, the pest risk analyses are made publicly available and comments invited (see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/pratab.htm>).

Following consultation and internal discussion within the UK, the Commission will wish to be aware of the outcome of this process for the organisms indicated and, where relevant, consider the implications in relation to listings in Directive 2000/29/EC. Annex A provides a brief summary of our conclusions (full details are available through the web reference above). Section 1 includes those organisms where our conclusions indicate that there may be implications in relation to listings and/or requirements in Directive 2000/29/EC. Section 2 includes those organisms where no further statutory action will be taken in the UK.

In addition, there are two other harmful organisms which we have flagged up under 'miscellaneous' at previous meetings of the Standing Committee which require consideration; PRAs are in preparation for these. The first concerns the present listing in Annex II A of *Scirrhia pini* (red band needle blight), now recognised as two separate organisms, *Dothistroma pini* (not present in the EU) and *D. septosporum* (present in the EU). The second is *Chalara fraxinea* (Ash dieback), which has been reported to be present and causing damage in a number of member States and which we believe warrants appropriate listing in the Annexes.

We have also requested a discussion on the report from Portugal of the detection of *Gibberella circinata* (pine canker) and consideration of an amendment to Commission Decision 2007/433/EC on provisional emergency measures to prevent the introduction into and the spread within the Community of *Gibberella circinata* Nirenberg & O'Donnell.

I am copying this letter to other member states, so they are aware of developments regarding the organisms referred to. We look forward to consideration of the conclusions referred to in due course.

Yours sincerely

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ANNEX A

UK PEST RISK ANALYSES AND MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

1. UK requests for consideration of new or amended status in the Plant Health Directive

a. *Aculops fuchsiae*

Aculops fuchsiae (fuchsia gall mite) is listed in Annex IIAI of Directive 2000/29/EC, specifically regulated on *Fuchsia* plants for planting. It causes severe distortion to *Fuchsia*, particularly the growing points and is very difficult to control once it has become established. The South American mite is present in the Channel Islands, France and Germany. *Aculops fuchsiae* was confirmed for the first time in the UK during 2007, with further findings in 2008. Negative impacts on hosts are expected. Insufficient information is currently available to permit an accurate estimate of the likely area within which *A. fuchsiae* can establish, although there has not been recurrence this summer in gardens where it was found last year. Regulatory measures will assist eradication but are unlikely to be completely successful if the climate proves suitable for the pest. Regulatory measures aimed at slowing the spread of the pest are justified. Therefore a suppression campaign is being pursued. On commercial premises phytosanitary measures will include destruction of infested plants and hard pruning of nearby plants. In private gardens there will be strong advisory recommendations to gardeners to hard prune all *Fuchsia* and dispose of the cuttings safely (burning, double bagging or deep burial). We request that the position on plant passporting of *Fuchsia* should be clarified by the SCPH and the status of *Aculops fuchsiae* reviewed in light of these developments.

2. Organisms where no further statutory action will be taken in the UK

a. *Acizzia uncatoides*

Acizzia uncatoides is a psyllid pest found on *Acacia* and *Albizia* species, popular conservatory plants in the UK. The organism originates in Australia but has spread to a number of regions around the world, most notably the Mediterranean, and has been detected in the UK on several occasions. *Acizzia uncatoides* is unlikely to be a serious pest in the UK, on the grounds that its host plants are limited in distribution, both in gardens and naturalised, and temperatures, except in the sheltered southern areas where its hosts are found, are unlikely to be suitable for its reproduction. There are effective chemical controls available and a known effective predator is native to the UK. Individual plants in private homes are probably at most risk, particularly when purchased and already infested. While plants from an infested batch may be widely distributed geographically, the plants are usually relatively isolated and the psyllid is unlikely to spread and cause widespread damage. Having established itself in the Mediterranean, *A. uncatoides* is a minor pest and is not listed by either EPPO or the EC and there is no recommendation that it should be. While awareness of this pest amongst growers will be raised, especially as low level infestations may be difficult to spot, statutory control will not be taken in the UK as it is considered a low priority in terms of damage.

b. Florida passion flower virus

The first findings of Florida passion flower virus (synonym *Passiflora chlorosis virus*) in the UK occurred at 3 nurseries between November 2007 and March 2008 on plants of *Passiflora caerulea* 'Constance Elliot'. This virus was first described in 2007 (2004 and 2006 records on *Passiflora incense* – passion fruit) from Florida, USA and is not subject to statutory control anywhere in the world. Although the first UK outbreak was symptomatic, with 700 plants showing foliar symptoms, the next two findings were symptomless. The full distribution and host-range of the virus is not known but it may already be present in the UK as the plants were of UK origin and CSL have previously diagnosed unknown potyviruses on *Passiflora* spp. on UK material. Because it is a potyvirus its principal mode of transmission is by aphids but it could also be mechanically transmitted or (less likely) transmitted by seed or pollen. Although plants of *Passiflora* spp. are valuable this is not a major UK crop and it has been concluded that the industry can, in the event of further findings, manage the virus themselves. In the longer-term, the *Passiflora* production industry should be able to produce and maintain virus-free stock material as has happened with similar cases of new viruses in ornamentals. Bearing these factors in mind, it has therefore been decided that Florida passion flower virus should not be subject to statutory control in the UK, but instead advice will be given to the horticultural industry regarding measures that can be taken to prevent or respond to new findings. For propagators, advice will include destruction of infected material, maintenance of virus-free stock plants that are used for propagation, good hygiene practice for preparation of cuttings and grafts, and the use of aphicides to control any potential aphid vectors.

c. *Puccinia graminis f.sp. tritici*

Stem rust or black rust of wheat is caused by the fungal pathogen, *Puccinia graminis* f.sp. *tritici*. Historically, stem rust has caused massive yield losses of wheat wherever it occurred, but in recent years it has been effectively controlled through selection and breeding for stem rust resistance genes known as *Sr* genes. There are at least 50 *Sr* genes which confer resistance to different races of stem rust. Globally, the pathogen has virulence for many of these genes and so they cannot be deployed in wheat breeding programmes. Significantly, in 1999, virulence to *Sr31* was detected in Uganda; this race has virulence to a number of other *Sr* genes and is known as Ug99 (or TTKS). *Sr31* was derived from Petkus rye and has been used extensively as the main source of resistance to stem rust in breeding programmes for many wheat cultivars. In 2006, stem rust monitoring in Kenya detected isolates of Ug99 which had virulence to *Sr24*. This gene was described as previously being effective against most races of stem rust worldwide. By overcoming the main sources of host resistance in the varieties of wheat that are commonly grown in Africa and Asia, Ug99 has spread from Uganda to Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen and Iran. It is now surmised that it may also be in Pakistan. Ug99 is highly damaging to wheat production and is reported to have caused yield losses of up to 71% in experiments. Breeding for multigene resistance to Ug99 will take at least five years. There is a potential risk of spread to Europe if Ug99 spreads to northern Africa. However, it would have to arrive before the wheat crop had fully matured in order to be able to infect, and the temperature and moisture requirements are such that the weather in northern Europe would have to be exceptional at heading, for infection, disease and crop losses to

occur. Crop monitoring in the UK, including that undertaken by NIAB (the UK Cereal Pathogen Virulence Survey) should detect the pathogen. However, should the pathogen arrive and the climate become favourable for establishment, if UK wheat cultivars are susceptible, the long-term strategy for control would be breeding for resistance, which needs to be done in advance and must be durable. The UK's assessment is that *Puccinia graminis f.sp. tritici* could not be controlled effectively through statutory quarantine requirements.