

***Phytophthora ramorum* – Operational Procedures in Scotland as of 17 October 2011: Interim Guidance**

1) Q: Why is FCS issuing this guidance now?

Answer: *P. ramorum* infection has been detected in Japanese larch in south west Scotland for the first time. In common with all previous UK incidences of this disease in forest trees this prompts us to consider what is most appropriate in terms of;

- The zonation of the country in terms of applying plant health measures which are designed to help contain the disease to prevent development of an epidemic.
- The detail of our approach to giving tree felling permission and funding the use of larch when we grant aid regeneration proposals.

2) Q: Will Statutory Plant Health Notices only be applied to Japanese larch?

Answer:

If *P. ramorum* infection on larch is detected a Statutory Plant Health Notice (under the Plant Health (Forestry Order) 2005) will be served on the owner once the full extent of the infected area and a suitable buffer has been defined (an equivalent approach operates for the national forest estate). That notice will specify that all sporulating hosts of *P. ramorum* need to be removed by a given time period (depending on practical issues, this time period will aim to have the larch felled before the spring flush or before its main sporulating period in late summer). The sporulating hosts will be named in the SPHN, larch and *R. ponticum* being the most frequently encountered.

The currently agreed draft strategy (see attached – vs 5, 18 May) is to fell all larch within 100m of known symptomatic larch and to consider whether felling out to an additional 150m (i.e. total radius of 250m) is required e.g:

- If a woodland is isolated in the landscape from other potential host plants then there is lower risk of onward spread and no justification for extended clearance. But if there are other host plants {e.g. further larch woodland, rhododendron, *Vaccinium*, retail plant businesses or ornamental gardens} in the vicinity

{within 500m} then consideration should be given to extending the clearance zone in the direction of those locations. All sporulating hosts within that zone will also need to be killed).

If the owner needs to fell additional areas to make the larch felling more 'economic' every effort should be made to allow forest plans/FLAs to accommodate that.

There will be no requirement to fell non-larch tree species within SPHNs. However, should an owner choose to harvest, extract and despatch such timber the material will be treated as if it were infected and movement controls implemented.

No timber movement controls will be required for non-larch species or uninfected larch outside the area of SPHNs. Good biosecurity practice should, however, be observed.

As part of the SPHN, biosecurity adherence will be required as per:

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf/\\$FILE/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf/$FILE/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf)

3) Q: Why has GB been divided into risk zones for *P. ramorum*?

Answer: For the current risk zones map and its purpose see: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forestry.nsf/byunique/infd-86ajqa>. In summary:

- Zone 1 encompasses the general area of higher climatic risk where infection has been, or is considered most likely to be, found on larch.
- Zone 2 takes in remaining areas of higher climatic risk, but where no infection has yet been found; and
- Zone 3 represents areas of lower climatic risk where no larch infections have been found to date.

Currently Scotland now has two areas of Zone 1 (see map).

4). Question: What changes to the previous risk zone map were made as a result of the new larch infection in SW Scotland?

Answer: A new INTERIM risk zone 1 became operational as from 17 October. It is shown on the attached. The boundaries of the new zone 1 are:

1. From the Solway Firth to Dumfries following the River Nith.
2. Dumfries to New Galloway via the A75 and A 712.
3. New Galloway to Ayr via the A762 and A713.
4. Follow coast back to River Nith entry point.

5) Q: Why is the new Zone 1 so large?

Answer: We know SW Scotland is climatically high risk for *P.ramorum*. The new detection occurred at the end of the season and with persistent concerns about other potential infections in this important timber producing area we wish to take a precautionary approach until such time as we are satisfied that we have not missed other infections. One of its key purposes is to give a strong signal to the sector that enhanced vigilance is required throughout this zone.

6) Q: What is the status of felling licences (including those contained within approved forest plans) which were issued before 17 October 2011?

Any formal permissions to fell issued by FCS before this date will be honoured. However our Conservancy office staff will be contacting anyone who has a current felling licence/permission , within a 10km radius of a known infection in Zone 1, and making them aware of the recent change in the status of *P. ramorum* disease and encouraging them to voluntarily;

- Delay the felling of larch until after May 31st 2012 so that the presence or otherwise of infection can be determined by FC staff.
- If delayed felling of larch is not possible/desirable, send all larch timber to mills which are approved to handle it as infected under the current plant health provisions for *P. ramorum* (see: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-876D2B>)

- Apply current best practice in bio-security measures to the above material to minimise the spread of *P. ramorum*. See: [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf/\\$FILE/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf/$FILE/phytophthoraprotocol30apr2010.pdf) and [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/PR_bio-security_additional_advice_for_advisors_and_agents_110907_v3.pdf/\\$FILE/PR_bio-security_additional_advice_for_advisors_and_agents_110907_v3.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/PR_bio-security_additional_advice_for_advisors_and_agents_110907_v3.pdf/$FILE/PR_bio-security_additional_advice_for_advisors_and_agents_110907_v3.pdf)
- Consider whether their plans for regenerating trees on harvested sites should be modified to reduce or eliminate the use of larch (see below).

Outside a 10km radius of known infections owners with existing felling permissions should also be encouraged to delay felling larch until after 31 May so that the site can be inspected for the presence/absence of *P. ramorum*. If the owner does not agree to that then no further action need be taken at this stage.

7) Q: We know from existing guidance on *P. ramorum* disease on larch that it is very difficult to detect potentially infected trees and even then it is not always possible to reach a reliable diagnosis during the period covering autumn needle drop through to the appearance of new needle growth in early summer. Does that mean that FCS will not approve any new proposals for the felling of any larch in zone 1 in the period October to May?

Answer: No. We appreciate that it is just not practical to expect managers to suspend their harvesting activities over the greater part of the year over such a large area. For this reason we propose to offer the following Options, for felling proposals in Zone 1, which are received from 17 October 2011 through to 31 May 2012;

Provided the site is not already subject to a SPHN we can:

- Issue a felling licence /permission conditional on delaying the felling of any larch until after it has been inspected by FC in late spring (after 31 May). All other trees can be felled and removed without restriction. Pending inspection, in circa June 2012, the

delayed felling will either be authorised to proceed under a felling licence/permission or served with a SPHN.

- If the owner cannot or does not want to delay felling, the larch can be felled under a SPHN. Other trees can be felled and moved as normal under a felling licence/permission. This is not our preferred option as restocking conditions cannot then be imposed.

8) Q: Will FCS approve the use of larch as a species for regeneration of felled sites, or woodland creation, in Zone 1?

Answer:

Within 10km of a known infection:

Larch will not be grant aided

Outwith 10km of a known infection:

Larch will continue to be grant aided but it should be noted by forest managers/owners that the normal contract conditions attached to grant payments will apply. In particular, grant recipients will be expected to replace trees which fail because of disease (or any other biological hazard) at their own expense and that the target average stocking density must be achieved within the contract period. Force majeure will not apply to a contract Breach resulting from *P. ramorum* disease or any other reasonably foreseeable hazard.

10) Q: What about timber harvesting of larch and the planting of larch in Zones 2 and 3?

Answer: There are no timber harvesting restrictions on larch in Zones 2 or 3.

Owners/managers will be encouraged to plant alternative species to larch in Zone 2 provided these meet the management objectives. Grants will still be paid for the planting of larch although normal contract conditions will apply.

11) Q: This guidance is, in some respects, slightly different to that which is applied in England and Wales – does that mean that England and Wales have got it wrong?

Answer: No, the guidance which is being applied in England and Wales is appropriate to their circumstances. The guidance in Scotland is interim and will be reviewed and refined as we learn more about the nature and full distribution of *P.ramorum* disease in Scotland and learn more about the risk factors most relevant to disease spread.

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