

**Biosecurity Programme Board
Meeting
Silvan House
15th November 2011**

Minute

Present: Roger Coppock ([Corporate and Forestry Support, Chair](#))
 Richard Siddons ([Forestry Commission Wales](#))
 John Morgan ([Corporate and Forestry Support](#))
 Bruce Rothnie ([Forestry Commission England](#)), (item 5 via telecon)
 David Slawson ([The Food and Environment Research Agency](#)),
 Hugh Clayden ([Forestry Commission Scotland](#))
 Chris Inglis ([The Confederation of Forest Industries](#))
 John Speirs ([Rural and Environment Directorate, Scottish Government](#))
 David Sulman ([The United Kingdom Forest Products Association](#))
 Joan Webber ([Forest Research](#))
 Jon Heuch ([Arboricultural Association](#))
 Andrew Sharkey ([Woodland Trust](#))
 Stewart Snape ([Corporate and Forestry Support, Secretariat](#))
 Charlton Clark ([Corporate and Forestry Support](#))
 John Dye ([Timber Packaging and Pallet Confederation](#))

Apologies were received from Nick Boulton ([Timber Trades Federation](#)) and Martin Williams ([Welsh Assembly Government](#)).

Summary of Action points

Agenda Item	Action
3. Matters arising	
a) Network mapping:	Action: Stewart Snape would circulate the contact list.
	Action: Members would review it and suggest any changes to Stewart.
c) List of publicity events	Action: Board members to forward suggestions for publicity events to Stewart Snape.
d) Reporting indicators	Action: David Slawson would review the questionnaire to extract items that could be used as reporting indicators.

<p>6) Question of funding assistance for restocking on sites issued with a PH notice.</p>	<p>Action: Roger Coppock would continue to explore the Public Opinion Survey option with Sheila Ward.</p> <p>Action: Roger Coppock would convene a meeting with country reps to take this forward.</p>
<p>4. Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan</p>	<p>Action: Roger Coppock / David Slawson / John Morgan would ensure that a more detailed plan was circulated in due course.</p>
<p>7. Biosecurity protocol</p>	<p>Action: Stewart Snape would edit the document accordingly.</p> <p>Action: John Morgan would review the flow chart.</p>
<p>9. Pests and diseases update</p>	<p>Action: Joan Webber and John Morgan would liaise over gathering more evidence and report at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action: Jon Heuch would contact tree officers to explore whether <i>P. lateralis</i> was something that they could take on.</p> <p>Action: Stewart Snape agreed to circulate Ron Melville's report to the board.</p> <p>Action: John Morgan agreed to contact Tony Laws to discuss this.</p>
<p>11. Dates for next meeting</p>	<p>Action: Stewart Snape to suggest dates for the next two meetings.</p>

1. Welcome and Introductions (Roger Coppock)

Roger Coppock welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Andrew Smith who had replaced Laura Jones as Forestry Commission England's representative.

2. Minutes of last meeting (Roger Coppock)

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3. Matters arising (Roger Coppock)

3a) Network mapping: Stewart explained that he had looked at the list and could not identify any names that seemed to be particularly over loaded. Members agreed to review the network map that had been circulated previously to highlight any problem areas.

Action: Stewart Snape would circulate the contact list.

Action: Members would review it and suggest any changes to Stewart.

3c) List of publicity events: Roger Coppock noted the lack of suggestions and asked whether this reflected the lack of importance of this item. The Board agreed that such a list was valuable. Attention should focus on the higher level events such as the Chelsea Flower Show, Royal Highland Agricultural Show and the APF International Forestry Exhibition.

Chris Inglis suggested that the APF International Forestry Exhibition scheduled for September 2012, offered an excellent opportunity to raise the level of Biosecurity awareness across the industry. Chris highlighted that the area chosen included a stand of larch trees. Andrew Smith suggested that it would be prudent to check their health status well in advance. Andrew would ensure that a Forestry Commission expert would attend the next APF planning meeting scheduled for 16th February. Chris commented that if the Board wanted to make the most of this opportunity, the exhibition's volunteer team would need additional support. Andrew Sharkey offered the services of Woodland Trust staff. Andrew Smith welcomed this approach and noted that it was an excellent demonstration of an industry-wide response to the issue.

Andrew Smith agreed to contact FCE Regional Directors to identify suitable local events.

Roger Coppock asked all members to consider which events offered the best potential to raise awareness of Biosecurity and to submit suggestions to Stewart Snape.

Action: Board members to forward suggestions for publicity events to Stewart Snape.

Action: Andrew Smith would arrange for an FCE expert to attend the APF planning meeting scheduled for 16 February (note: this has been arranged).

Action: Andrew Smith would ask Regional Directors to identify suitable events in their areas.

Action: Andrew Sharkey and Chris Inglis would liaise over the question of staff resources.

3d) Reporting indicators: David Slawson agreed to follow this up with reference to the Biosecurity Questionnaire that he had produced previously.

Roger Coppock reported that he had discussed the suggestion of adding questions to the Public Opinion Survey with Sheila Ward and although it was possible in principle, there were potential resource implications that needed to be considered. Roger would discuss this further with Sheila.

Action: David Slawson would review the questionnaire to extract items that could be used as reporting indicators.

Action: Roger Coppock would continue to explore the Public Opinion Survey option with Sheila Ward.

6) Possible funding assistance for restocking on sites issued with a Plant Health notice.

Roger Coppock reported that he had written to Andrew Smith and Richard Siddons about this but he had received divergent replies.

Andrew Smith explained that his main concern was over the possibility of a legal challenge over the use of public funds for what is essentially a legal requirement. Richard Siddons concurred that we may be on weak ground. Richard noted that funding to address biotic catastrophe (windblow) is available via the Rural Development Programme (EU) and concluded that progress is being made. Hugh Clayden commented that because Scotland was still in the very early stage of Ramorum disease on larch there was no evidence that there would be problems in securing restocking following the issue of Statutory Plant Health Notices to fell infected crops. Accordingly, no enhancement were being proposed for the SRDP- RP restructuring felling and restructuring regeneration grants.

Richard Siddons noted that there is a risk that owners will seek to change the land use e.g. to agriculture, but he believes that, although it may be a weak option, the EIA regulations could be used to combat this.

Andrew Smith emphasised that the key issue was to ensure that the enforcement of *P. r.* regulations did not result in net deforestation.

Andrew Sharkey commented that it would be useful if the FC could guide the industry on what measures they should be lobbying politicians to pursue.

Andrew Smith preferred that we did not get into this position in the first place. Andrew Sharkey agreed but noted that we need to agree a fall back position. Andrew Smith reflected that perhaps we should be prepared to change the regulations, even though this may meet government resistance over additional burdens being placed on landowners.

Roger Coppock asked whether this was an issue that country leads needed to address. Andrew Smith replied that it was more a fundamental policy issue.

Hugh Clayden suggested that this group make a recommendation for consideration by the Executive Board. Roger Coppock agreed to convene a cross-country discussion to explore this.

Action: Roger Coppock would convene a meeting with country reps to take this forward.

4. Tree Health and Biosecurity Action Plan (David Slawson and John Morgan)

Roger Coppock thanked David and John for their presentation and asked for questions.

John Dye emphasised the need for well-balanced Biosecurity messages that did not undermine the market presence of a well regulated (ISPM 15) wood-using industry that is facing the threat of product substitution from a powerful plastics lobby.

Jon Heuch requested more detail about how the plan would be implemented.

David Slawson highlighted the importance of stakeholder input to ensure successful implementation.

Action: Roger Coppock / David Slawson / John Morgan would ensure that a more detailed plan was circulated in due course.

5. *Phytophthora ramorum* programme progress report (Andrew Smith and Bruce Rothnie)

Andrew commented that a formal end of season report would be published by the end of November.

It was noted that the total cost of the aerial survey programme for 2011 was £195,000 for 150 hours of flying. David Slawson noted that in 2010 the whole aerial surveillance programme including flights over Scotland and Northern Ireland had been funded from

the Fera-managed Programme. In 2011, Scotland and Northern Ireland have funded their flights.

In reply to a question from Chris Inglis, Andrew Smith explained that visual assessment was often the primary basis upon which Statutory Notices were served. It was emphasised that the initial assessment was made by staff who were very experienced in analysing aerial images of suspect sites.

Bruce Rothnie explained that it was very difficult to understand the dynamics of disease spread. Bruce highlighted the fact that only 15% of larch in the southwest, despite it being a hotspot for the disease, had shown signs of infection. It was notable that significant areas of larch woodland adjacent to infected trees, showed no signs of infection. This did not of course mean these areas were free from infection, just that they were not showing symptoms. Joan Webber explained that, due to the intensity of sampling required and the subsequent analysis, proving that asymptomatic trees were free from infection was not feasible.

Hugh Clayden commented that he was considering whether there was a need to extend the level of rhododendron inspections in Scotland, on sites where it was “within range” of infected larch.

6. Communication report

Refer to Charlton’s report (to be attached once received from Charlton)

7. Biosecurity Protocol (John Morgan)

John Morgan reported that the final draft of the Biosecurity Protocol had been circulated and asked for comments.

Jon Heuch commented that Annex A would be more effectively placed on the website and referenced in this document. The board agreed. Stewart Snape explained that he had intended to remove the reference to potatoes and would do so in the next revision. John Morgan agreed to review fig 1. Andrew Sharkey suggested that it would be helpful to explain on the website just what the risks were, e.g. *P. ramorum* can be spread on clothing etc.

Roger Coppock commented that it would be made clear on the website that the protocol was aimed at FC staff and was meant to establish the policy direction. For operational needs a suite of Standard Operating Procedures could be developed for specific contexts. Ian Brownlee had been working with Procurement colleagues to source a standard Biosecurity kit.

Action: Stewart Snape would edit the document accordingly.

Action: John Morgan would review the flow chart.

8. Recent events on pests and diseases (Roger Coppock)

Roger Coppock referred to his paper and reported that he had attended some stimulating meetings over the last few months. Roger noted in particular the importance to think more holistically about possible ways to adapt our management to improve the resilience of our forests. In particular, there was scope to investigate the relationship between soil fungi and the role these may play in helping trees to resist tree pests. Key themes were:

- What can we do to improve the resilience of trees for the future?
- What is the relationship between silviculture and soil flora/fauna constituents?

9. Current status of pests and diseases (John Morgan/Stewart Snape)

John and Stewart provided updates on *P. lateralis*, Acute Oak Decline, ash dieback, bronze birch borer, Pine-tree lappet Moth and Oak Processionary Moth.

Hugh Clayden reported that there was a resourcing issue for pursuing *P. lateralis* in the Scottish urban environment. Jon Heuch suggested that more use could be made of academic institutions, particularly for the analysis of samples. Joan Webber agreed.

Joan Webber commented that the form of *P. lateralis* identified at Balloch, which seemed different to known lineages, raised questions about potential pathways.

There was some discussion about the importance of *P. lateralis* as a forest pest. Chris Inglis emphasised that a risk-based approach should be adopted. If there are only 200ha of the public estate at risk then it is a low risk. Roger Coppock noted that Lawson cypress was important in a horticultural context.

Roger Coppock noted that if the board decided that *P. lateralis* was no longer of significance then it was important to ensure that they did not leave a vacuum. Jon Heuch suggested that local tree officers could fill the void.

Action: Joan Webber and John Morgan would liaise over gathering more evidence and report at the next meeting.

Action: Jon Heuch would contact tree officers to explore whether *P. lateralis* was something that they could take on.

John Morgan reported that the European Plant Protection Organisation had published a Pest Risk Assessment for Bronze Birch Borer. Fera had launched a consultation on it and has sought contributions from FC in relation to how best to implement regulatory controls. The consultation would be available on the FC website soon.

Stewart Snape briefed the board about the outbreaks of Oak Processionary Moth and Pine-tree lappet moth in London and Scotland respectively. Stewart reported that at the recent OPM meeting in London there was overwhelming support for FC to continue to seek to control the spread of OPM. Stewart reported that Ron Melville had produced a report following his fact finding visit, earlier this year, to Germany.

Action: Stewart Snape agreed to circulate Ron Melville's report to the board.

John Morgan reported that some Juniper trees in Scotland were showing symptoms of Phytophthora infection. Initial suspicions that it could *P. undulata* had been discounted by Forest Research (Sarah Green). John highlighted the importance for all people visiting these sites to follow good biosecurity procedures to minimise the risk of further spread.

Action: John Morgan agreed to contact Tony Laws to discuss this.

10. AOB

Hugh Clayden suggested that it would be helpful to provide training on how to recognise sick (and healthy) trees. Joan Webber agreed that this was something that FR could provide.

John Morgan reported that he would like to approve Fera to work on tree pests. The Board had no objections.

11. Date for the next meeting

Action: Stewart Snape would propose dates for the next two meetings as soon as possible.